

UNBS gets tough on local manufacturers

MBARARA

By Abdulkarim Ssengendo

The Uganda National Bureau of Standards (UNBS) has set September as a deadline for all local manufacturers to register their businesses or face closure.

This was disclosed by the bureau's executive director, Ben Manyindo, who said this will help to eliminate fake products.

Manyindo said the challenge with local manufacturers was that they start producing goods before being certified. He disclosed this during a manufacturers' meeting held at Oxford Inn in Mbarara last week.

"We have tried to manage imports but the major challenge is local manufacturers who have made it a habit to produce substandard goods. We have agreed that before you produce and go to the market

"Before you produce anything, you have to first register with us," Manyindo

you have to first register with us and then get mark," Manyindo said.

He added that UNBS would work with the Uganda Revenue Authority to address the challenge of lack of manpower to crack down on smugglers importing counterfeit goods.

He also warned companies that use the UNBS mark without their consent and certification. "Those impostors will be arrested and charged," he added.



Manyindo after meeting manufacturers in Mbarara last week. Photo by Abdulkarim Ssengendo

The Mbarara resident district commissioner, Capt. Martha Asiimwe, expressed dissatisfaction with UNBS, saying it had not done enough to protect consumers,

especially in rural areas, where most of the fake goods are sold. "I have seen many fake products on the market, especially in the villages; do you think these people have a choice? The moment they see a cheap product they will consume, you are not visible on the ground," Asiimwe said.

She tasked UNBS to enforce hygiene and sanitation by companies in the production of soft drinks.

"You must ensure that these companies have quality assurance managers to look at the hygiene and sanitation of the commodities they produce," she added.

Ronald Ahimbisibwe, the principal certification officer at UNBS, attributed the laxity of companies in getting certification to UNBS operating under voluntary certification scheme.

"This time it is going to be mandatory and a standards and utilities court will be set up in Kampala to handle all the defaulters," he said.