

# UNBS destroys substandard goods

By Ashraf Kasirye

The Uganda National Bureau of Standards (UNBS), this week, destroyed substandard goods worth sh900m. The goods, which were destroyed at Nakasongola Barracks in Luwero district were seized during a nationwide operation.

The operations, which have been going on in markets, warehouses, shops, factories and traders' stores, were conducted by UNBS market surveillance team and the Criminal Investigations Department of the Police.

They targeted substandard, fake and expired goods. These included 500 pieces of iron sheets, 500 mattresses, 3,000kg of cement, under-garments, cosmetics, foodstuffs, sanitary ware, electronics, secondhand clothes, building materials and weighing machines, among others.

The UNBS deputy executive director in charge of compliance, John Paul Musimani, said the destruction is part of the body's effort to protect consumers from dangerous products.

"These products are not only dangerous to the health and wellbeing of consumers; they are a threat to the



The waste management employees of Luwero Industries at Nakasongola Barracks offloading fake and substandard goods from trucks. Photos by Ashraf Kasirye

economic development of our country. So, the operations are continuous. We still have more seized products in our stores pending court hearings and rulings, before we destroy them. The culprits will pay fines to the Government," Musimani said.

During the destruction, the UNBS principal surveillance

officer, Vincent Ochwo, said their focus is on substandard, expired and fake products.

"Take cement, for example. Most of the bags have been adulterated by adding odd materials, such as sand, clay and ash. Some of the products are underweighted and juice products are expired. Others have been made with

prohibited ingredients, which are harmful to human life. Electric cables are substandard and the gauges of iron sheets have been changed," Ochwo said.

He called on the public to become more vigilant, saying once fake goods are identified, seized and destroyed, the move saves people's lives, the

but also highly cost both the trade and health systems of the country. The Luwero industries waste management supervisor, Joseph Ssekamatte, said the goods are very toxic and dangerous for human life and the environment; and that was why they are taken to as far as Luwero.

He added that their employees are also highly protected from effects that could arise out of the pollution and the gases coming from the burnt items. Access to the area is restricted.

UNBS last year inspected about, 1090 business outlets and destroyed goods worth sh6b, including solar panels, primary batteries, percolators, sockets, compact fluorescent lamps, tiles and blenders, among others.

UNBS also banned the sale of second-hand undergarments and cosmetics containing mercury and hydroquinone, which it said are harmful to human health.

However, Musimani said some of the goods continue to be imported by smugglers through porous borders.



environment and the economy.

Ochwo added that substandard, fake or expired goods on the market not only paint a bad image of the country's investment progress,



OYAM DISTRICT LOCAL GOVERNMENT

CHIEF ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER