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ENSURE NO ILLEGAL ENTRY OF ANY GMO PRODUCTS INTO THE COUNTRY- NBA CHIEF

As the Authority trains Ports of Entry Inspectors and intensifies inspections for GMO products

LUSAKA, ZAMBIA- THE National Biosafety Authority (NBA) has trained 14 Inspectors to help execute the Authority's mandate and monitor the inflow of products that may contain GMOs at ports of entry.

The training which was held in Lusaka at Mika Hotel, last week, was aimed at equipping the officers with the Authority's mandate and matters related to GMOs.

The Inspectors, who are from the Ministry of Health, will enforce the provisions of the Biosafety Act together with the provisions of the Food and Drugs Act and the Public Health Act.

The Inspectors based at the critical ports of entry will help beef up the inspectorate wing of the NBA. The Health Inspectors came from Kazungula, Katima Mulilo, Kasumbalesa, Nakonde, Chanida, Mwami, Harry Mwanga Nkumbula, Victoria Falls, Simon Mwansa Kapwepwe and Kenneth Kaunda International Airport.

NBA Chief Executive Officer, Mr Lackson Tonga, during the official opening of the training said the role of the inspectors at the ports of entry was critical in executing the NBA mandate.

"Your role in executing the NBA mandate is crucial. You are based at the entry ports where products of GMOs pass. You will have to ensure that such products coming in the country have prior authorisation by the NBA before they enter the country so that we ensure the safety of the humans, animals and the environment," Mr Tonga told the ports of entry Health Inspectors.

"It is important that you ensure that there is no illegal entry of any GMO products into the country. All products that must enter the country must have a permit to import. Whilst inland products must have permits to place on the market. For transiting products there is need for

the entry and exit ports to communicate effectively and ensure that such products have indeed left the country.”

MoH Chief Environmental Health Officer, Doreen Sakala, said it was important that the ports of entry Health Inspectors understood their role and adhered to the provisions of the Biosafety Act No. 10 of 2007.

Mrs Sakala said the training was key for the Inspectors as it provided knowledge for them to critically understand how they will operate.

In 2018, the NBA and the Ministry of Health (MoH) signed a Memoranda of Understanding (MoU) which aimed enhancing public health and food safety. The MoU entails that the MoH provides the NBA with Port of Entry Health Inspectors who will perform some of the Authority’s functions.

The MoU was necessitated by the need to collaborate as partners in ensuring the safety of the Zambian consumers. The Biosafety Act has provision to appoint Inspectors who shall conduct inspections on behalf of the Authority.

The objectives of the MoU include ensuring the enforcement of food legislation in Zambia is carried out in an effective, consistent and coordinated manner and promoting efficient enforcement of food regulations and minimize undue regulatory burdens on food business. The MoU also aims at encouraging closer cooperation, liaison and information exchange.

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ISSUED BY: SANDRA LOMBE

COMMUNICATIONS OFFICER

Email: nbacomcommunications1@yahoo.com or lombe2@gmail.com

+260 211 278316 /0977854716/ 0961439503

About NBA

NBA was established under the Biosafety Act No. 10 of 2007. Through the Act the NBA regulates the research, development, application, importation, export, transit, contained use, release or placing on the market of any GMO/LMO whether intended for use as a pharmaceutical, food, feed or processing, or a product of a GMO also to ensure that any activity involving the use or a product of GMO prevents any socio-economic impact or harm to human, animal health and the environment in the country.

Some of the functions of the NBA include processing notifications and applications of GMOs or products of GMOs into the country, in accordance with the requirements of the Biosafety Act, promoting public awareness and education concerning the activities regulated under the Act such as risk assessment, risk management and authorization processes; keeping any GMO or any product of a genetically modified organism under review and to ban its handling or release in Zambia. NBA furthermore, establishes and maintains a database of GMOs and their products as well as making available such information to the public.

For more information about NBA visit: www.nbazambia.org.zm.

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