MEDICINES AND RELATED PRODUCTS ACT (AMENDMENT) BILL, 2023

A BILL ENTITLED

AN ACT to amend the Medicines and Related Products Act, 2014 to provide for an alternative mechanism to the registration of medicine and related products manufactured in the United Kingdom, United States of America, and countries in the European Union and for connected matters.

ENACTED by the President and the National Assembly.

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1. Short title

This Act may be cited as the Medicines and Related Products (Amendment) Act, 2023.

2. Amendment of the Medicines and Related Products Act, 2014

The Medicines and Related Products Act, 2014 (in this Act referred to as “the Principal Act”) is amended as set out in this Act.

3. Amendment of section 26

Section 26 of the Principal Act is amended by inserting after sub-section (4) the following new subsection:

(5) Notwithstanding sub-section (4), the Agency may adopt a mechanism other than registration permitting a person to import, distribute, sell, supply, or exhibit for sale any medicine or related product manufactured or produced in the United Kingdom, United States of America, or a country in the European Union.

OBJECTS AND REASONS

This Bill seeks to remedy an evident gap in the Medicines and Related Products Act 2014 relating to the issue of registration of medical commodities. Unfortunately, by virtue of the provisions contained in the Act and Regulations, medicine emanating from Europe, America and the United Kingdom cannot be registered in The Gambia in accordance with the Medical Control Agency (MCA) guidelines as registration of medical and pharmaceutical products involve intricacies that prove exaggeratedly bureaucratic so much so that stringent compliance may undermine quality control and create room for sub-standard and contaminated products as well as a shortage of essential medical products in the country.

Stakeholders undergo insufferable measure to register products from certain countries because the manufacturers there prioritise registration in high population nations to ensure early return on investment. They only find profit in registration in countries with large consumption populations where the turnover is profitable. For instance, the United Kingdom harbours a population of over 67 million people, while our regional counterparts Nigeria, have over 223 million; in Ghana, it is over 34 million; in Senegal, 17.5 million, in Sierra Leone it is above 8.7 million, and in Liberia, 5.4 million. The Gambian population is slightly below 3 million.

It is clear one face value that the revenue for any manufacture for or import to a small economy such as The Gambia for such products is objectionable. Consequently, manufacturers are hesitant to submit themselves to the rigours of the tedious registration process.

This amendment will neutralise the imminent adverse implications that may arise due to the scarcity of quality medicine, particularly essential and life-saving medicine.

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HON. AMADOU CAMARA
NATIONAL ASSEMBLY MEMBER FOR NIANIJA