



**PHARMACEUTICALS EXPORT PROMOTION COUNCIL**

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**Pfizer wages war on fake drugs with mobile detectors**

Global pharmaceutical giant Pfizer is distributing mobile detectors of fake drugs in a move aimed at halting trade in counterfeits, which has considerably eaten into its market in Africa.

The company on Tuesday donated a portable scanning machine worth Sh4.8 million (\$60,000) to be used by the Kenya Pharmacy and Poisons Board (PPB) inspectors at border points, just days after donating one to Ghana's Food and Drug Authority.

The company's executives said a similar device would soon be introduced in Uganda following the success of mobile fake drugs detectors in Nigeria.

"This is part of our contribution to fighting medicine counterfeiting in Kenya and Africa," said Enrico Liggeri, Pfizer's managing director for Nigeria, Ghana and East Africa.

The multinational hopes the efficiency of the scanning device –TruScan – will influence the poorly funded regulatory agencies to order for more, at least one for each entry point.

By Tuesday afternoon, the machine had not been cleared by customs officials at the Jomo Kenyatta International Airport. However, the Pfizer officials showed journalists a photograph of the device.

In Kenya, the Anti-Counterfeit Agency only confiscates drugs after receiving complaints from customs officials who normally base their assessment on suspicious physical attributes.

Experienced counterfeiters, however, beat physical inspections easily as they produce exact copies of genuine products.

Before the offender is penalised, the agency has to wait for weeks for PPB to test samples of the confiscated medicines in its labs.

TruScan has a memory that is already programmed with the chemical composition of every genuine drug, making it possible to detect even the slightest deviation in real time when a sample is passed through it.

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