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Dear concerned citizen, member of our precious public and loyal CANSA friend

With reference to the Sunscreen News

CANSA has always and will always consider first our responsibility towards you as a loyal supporter; also as this is the reason for our existence and focus as Cancer watchdog. We have never and WILL NEVER let the industry, or money for that matter, influence our focus or the independence of our function.

From the start of our watchdog focus approximately five years ago, we decided never to be emotive, but to stay focused in our quest to do what is right and work behind the scenes to ensure that we give the public the benefit of our scientific findings once we had 'done our homework in full.' It is our goal to influence the government and industry to ensure a healthier environment through policy and/or legislation changes. We further took on the watchdog role knowing that we would not always be able to 'please all people at all times'.

At this point we are investigating many environmental issues and it would be foolish to run to the press without insight into the bigger picture of the issues at hand and with only a few tests results, or – worse still - with some ulterior motive to make waves, scare the public and position CANSA as 'making a difference.'

We have always taken the stance not to blame and shame - but also never to be hesitant to speak openly and directly to anyone in the industry once we have enough evidence to build a case and prove our point.

We have done meaningful work in the past three years on plastics with emphasis on plasticisers in cling-wrap and Bisphenol A (BPA)-containing consumer products. We are grateful for the plasticiser-free supermarket cling wrap brands (produced by Tuffy) and Glad-wrap for joining our 'Smart Choice' range; also to NUK and Nuby for joining us as partners and seal-bearers in our BPA-free baby bottle awareness quest to ensure that the public knew about their right to smart choices. All margarines were further tested over a 12-month period through our own independent initiatives – full results posted on the website – and only then did we, in accordance with the full research findings, decide to endorse the Blossom Canola products as 'Smart Choices'.



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Cancer affects us all...

Non-Executive Directors: L Johnstone (Chairperson) | B Pancha (Vice-Chairperson) | Prof. E McIntosh | D Foster | Dr C Masuku | T Mashaba
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The same principle applies to the sunscreen industry. CANSA had to first obtain enough factual evidence to ensure a viable case which would enable us to influence the industry to improve their standards in adherence to the new European Harmonized Colipa UVA Protection Claim - which set a higher requirement in respect of UVA protection than our current South African standard.

CANSA has always endorsed sunscreens in accordance with the applicable South African Standards and scientific knowledge available at the time. However, a few years ago the Europeans adopted more stringent standards to provide extra protection against UVA rays; the USA only recently adopted stricter standards to ensure compliance to the amended European Colipa Standards.

CANSA has been in discussion with the Regulatory Body of the South African industry (CTFA) for a few years and was informed of their representation on the international committee investigating the ideal ISO standards to be implemented. Approximately two years ago we decided to initiate our own investigation with regards to the standard of local sunscreens (particularly the CANSA seal-bearing products) in relation to the new European standards.

CANSA initially did not want to use the only commercial laboratory available and commissioned a university to conduct the tests, but waited in vain for final results. Our Research Department then made the call to spend a further R60 000 to commission the commercial laboratory which was known to be well equipped and reputable.

A small sample of local and imported sunscreens was tested (less than 10% of all listed products) to assess the compliance with the European standard. Although all the sunscreens adhered to the relevant South African National Standards (SANS), some of the local and imported brands were found to provide less than optimal UVA protection as determined by the EU Standard. CANSA concluded from the test results that we needed to request and ensure adherence to the EU standards as soon as possible for more effective protection against UVA .

We were given no choice but had to agree to a 'gagging' clause or else we would not have been able to get these tests done. CANSA however, **was free to use the results as intended, i.e. to put pressure on the industry to meet the EU standards - compulsory for CANSA seal-bearing sunscreen by end of March 2013.** We have also notified the industry of our new set standards and expectations – higher than what are currently prescribed by the CTFA as regulatory body.

We saw no public benefit in disclosing the results of the sample test done whilst the majority of merchandised sunscreens still remain untested in terms of the EU standard. Also, many manufacturers had already been upping their own standards before and since the tests were done, some as a result of our continued one-on-one negotiations.

CANSA is grateful for the new regulations which were published for comment at the end of June this year and which, once finalised, will soon form part of the new local standards.

- However, realising our responsibility as the Cancer watchdog towards the public, CANSA has decided to make the names of all products adhering to the EU standards available on our website. Manufacturers have been requested to submit their information and certification to CANSA for this purpose – effective as of Monday, 3 September 2012.
- CANSA has therefore also called on all manufacturers within the industry to assist us by forwarding their information to Braam van Reenen at info@cansa.org.za to ensure that the public has access to the information they require to make 'Smart Choices'.
- All products adhering to the EU standards and underwritten by CANSA will in future exhibit the new '**CANSA SunSmart Choice Seal**' - instead of the original CANSA Seal of Recognition - to assist with the identification of improved formulations.
- ***Please note that our health message has never changed at all: we firstly recommend the avoidance of direct sunlight between 10:00 – 15:00; also wearing of protective clothing and hats; and as a third line of defence against UV rays only: the use of a sunscreen (preferably SPF 30-50 for fair to very fair skins respectively) that is to be generously applied every 2-3 hours.***

As the proud leader of CANSA – identified by the **Ask Africa** Trust Barometer as a trustworthy organisation, but also as a cancer survivor myself and further having lost a loved one to melanoma a few years ago, I want to assure you that CANSA will always be there to look after the needs and rights of our fellow citizens and precious cancer survivors.

Please feel free to contact me directly should you have any further queries in this regard.

Sincerely yours



Sue Janse van Rensburg
CEO
CANSA



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