



April 17, 2026

TL2026/0417/1A

Dr. Obaidullah,
Chief Executive Officer (CEO)
Drug Regulatory Authority of Pakistan (DRAP)
Islamabad

Subject: Complaint Against Allegations of Lack of Clear Definition of Alternative Medicines in the DRAP Act 2012, Resulting in Ambiguity in DRAP's Upcoming Draft Rules on Alternative Medicines

Dear Sir,

Transparency International Pakistan has received a complaint against allegations of lack of clear definition of alternative medicines in the DRAP Act 2012, resulting in ambiguity in DRAP's upcoming draft rules on alternative medicines.

The complainant has made the following allegations:

1. As per the definition of DRUG given in DRAP Act 2012, it includes the following:

"any substance or mixture of substances that is manufactured, sold, stored, offered for sale or represented for internal or external use in the treatment, mitigation, prevention or diagnosis of diseases, an abnormal physical state, or the symptoms thereof in human beings or animals or the restoration, correction, or modification of organic functions in human beings or animals, including substance used or prepared for use in accordance with the Ayurvedic, Unani, Homoeopathic, Chinese or biochemic system of treatment except those substances and in accordance with such conditions as may be prescribed;" unquoted

2. Similarly, the Drug Act 2012 defines Alternative Medicines as follows:

"Alternative Medicine" means a product used exclusively in Homeopathic, Unani, Ayurvedic, Biochemic, Chinese or other traditional system of treatment;" unquoted

3. The proposed rules for Alternative Medicines drafted by DRAP define Alternative Medicines as follows:

"Alternative Medicine" means alternative medicines as defined under the DRAP Act, 2012 (XXI 2012); unquoted

4. The Drap Act 2012 remains ambiguous whether Alternative Medicines (Unani, Homeopathic, Ayurvedic, Chinese and / or Biochemic) are to be treated as "drugs" or "non-drugs" under the definition in DRAP Act, 2012.
5. This ambiguity will undermine the implementation of the proposed processing of licensing and registration rules of Health and OTC and Alternative Medicines, resulting in overlapping jurisdiction between divisions of DRAP, conflicting interpretations by regulatory authorities, and inconsistent treatment of similar products.

Transparency International Pakistan Comments

Transparency International Pakistan has reviewed the allegations of the complaint, prima facie, the allegations seem correct. Following are TI Pakistan's comments:



1. It is imperative that DRAP address the ambiguity before the enactment of the processing, licensing and registration rules for Health, OTC and Alternative Medicines, as the uncertainty will directly affect regulatory implementation of health and OTC products. For instance, the responsibilities of the Director Health and OTC Products include the following, quoted below:

“Responsibilities of Director Health and OTC Products (non-drugs) - He shall be incharge of the Division of Health and OTC Products (non-drugs) which shall be responsible for the assessment, licensing and registration of Alternative Medicines such as Ayurvedic, Chinese, Unani and Homeopathy, enlistment or registration of nutritional products and food supplements for human beings, animals and to perform other functions connected therewith;” unquoted


2. If Alternative Medicines are simultaneously covered under the definition of “Drug” and “Non-Drug”, this will create a contradiction in regulatory authority and enforcement powers.
3. DRAP must issue a consolidated definition of Alternative Medicines as part of the ongoing draft rules on Alternative Medicines to address the ambiguity.

Transparency International Pakistan Recommendations

Transparency International Pakistan requests the CEO DRAP to look into the allegations of the complaint and if found correct, issue directives for necessary action to address the legal ambiguity as part of the ongoing efforts on the processing, licensing and registration rules for Health, OTC and Alternative Medicines.

Transparency International Pakistan is striving for across-the-board application of Rule of Law, which is the only way to stop corruption, and achieve Zero tolerance against corruption.

Regards,


Advocate Daniyal Muzaffar,
Trustee/Legal Advisor
Transparency International Pakistan

Copies forwarded for the information with request to take action under their mandate to:

1. PSPM, PM House, Islamabad
2. Federal Minister, Ministry of National Health Services, Regulations and Coordination, Islamabad

Note:

This is to clarify that Transparency International Pakistan is not a complainant, it acts as a whistleblower and operate under Article 19-A, of the Constitution of Pakistan which gives the right to public to know how government is being run by public officers. Article 19-A makes the right to access of information pertaining to a public authority a fundamental right, and a three member bench in case of Mukhtar Ahmad Ali vs the Registrar, Supreme Court of Pakistan, Islamabad, headed by Chief Justice Qazi Faez Isa in the landmark judgment on 16 October 2023, in CP No. 3532/2023, has declared that

“What previously may have been on a need-to-know basis Article 19A of the Constitution has transformed it to a right-to-know, and the Access to information is no longer a discretion granted through occasional benevolence, but is now a fundamental right available with every Pakistani which right may be invoked under Article 19A of the Constitution”