

PARLIAMENT OF UGANDA

**REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE ON DEFENCE AND INTERNAL AFFAIRS
ON THE FORENSIC AND SCIENTIFIC ANALYTICAL SERVICES BILL, 2025**

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**Office of the Clerk to Parliament
P.O.Box 7178, Kampala
MARCH, 2026**

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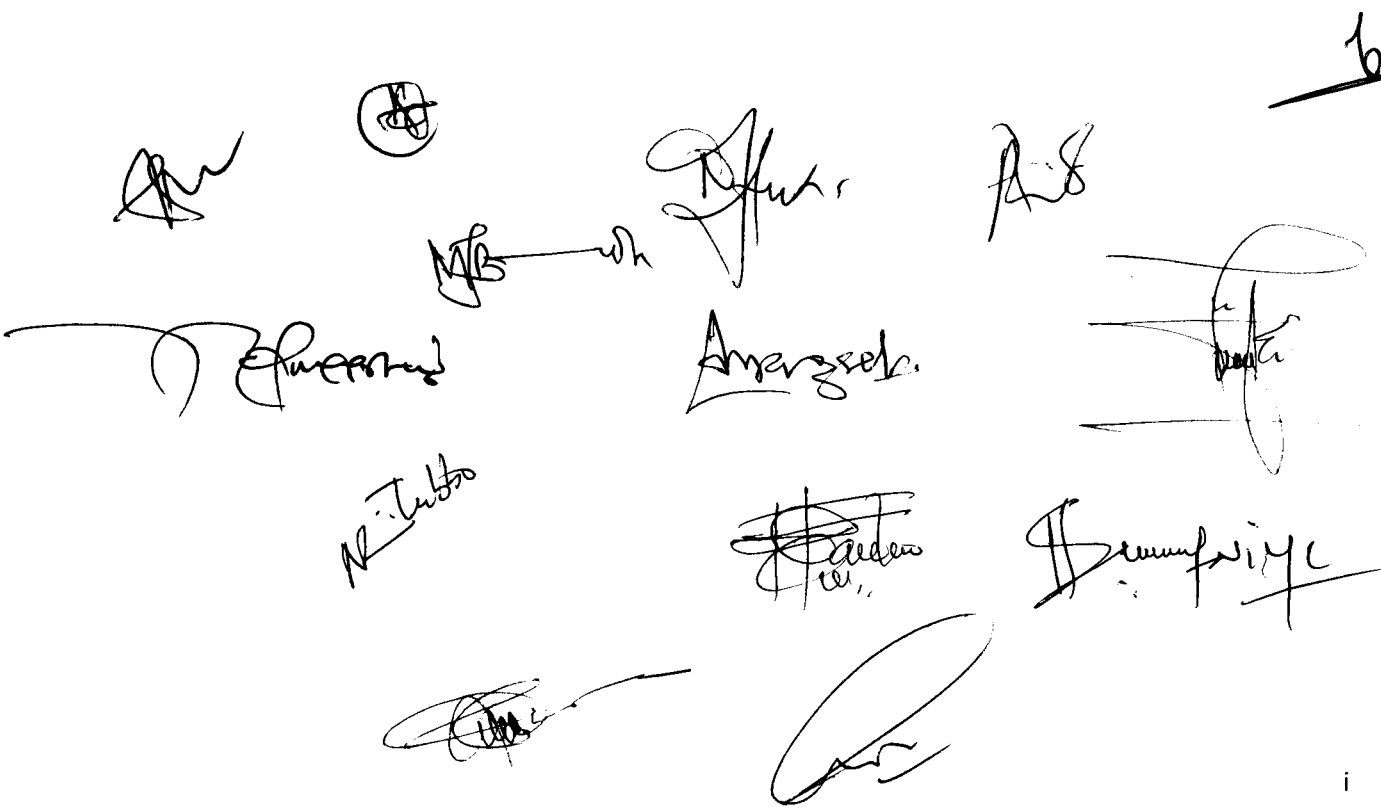
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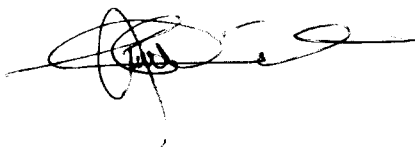
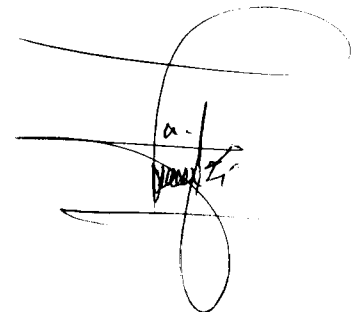
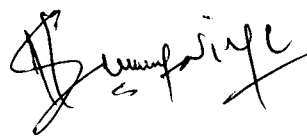
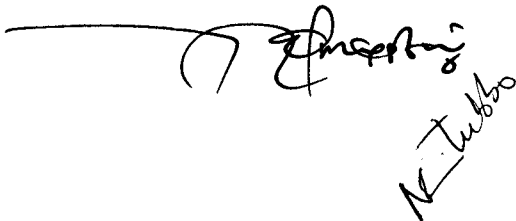
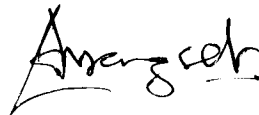
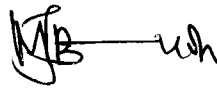
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LIST OF ACRONYMS

GAL	Government Analytical Laboratories
MIA	Ministry of Internal Affairs
MoH	Ministry of Health
NIRA	National Identification and Registration Authority
NPIC	National Poison Information Centre
ODPP	Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions
ULS	Uganda Law Society
UMA	Uganda Medical Association
UPF	Uganda Police Force
WHO	World Health Organisation



2 INTRODUCTION

On Tuesday, 29th July 2025, the **Forensic and Scientific Analytical Services Bill, 2025** was read for the first time and referred to the Committee on Defence and Internal Affairs for scrutiny and reporting under Rule 135 of the Rules of Procedure of Parliament.

The Committee has since considered the Bill in consultation with various stakeholders and now presents its report. This report provides an overview and analysis of the Bill, including its objectives, key provisions, implications, and the Committee's recommendations.

3 OBJECTIVES OF THE BILL

The object of the Bill is to;

- i. Provide for the regulation of forensic and scientific analytical services;
- ii. Establish the Government Analytical Laboratory;
- iii. Designate the Government Analytical Laboratory as the national centre for forensic and analytical services;
- iv. Designate the Department of Inspection and Legal Services in the Ministry of Internal Affairs as the regulator of forensic and scientific analytical services;
- v. Provide for the collection, taking, and use of bodily samples for investigative purposes;
- vi. Designate the Government Analytical Laboratory as the National Poison Information Centre; and
- vii. Provide for related matters.

4 DEFECTS IN THE EXISTING LAW

The **Forensic and Scientific Analytical Services Bill, 2025** seeks to establish a legal framework for regulating forensic and scientific analytical services in Uganda. Currently, there is no comprehensive legislation governing the sector, nor is there a national poison information centre

responsible for handling and disseminating information on poisoning incidents.

Although the Government Analytical Laboratory has been the primary provider for forensic and scientific analytical services, it has not been formally designated as the national referral institution for such services. The absence of a dedicated regulatory framework has limited effective oversight, standard-setting, quality control, and the systematic development of forensic and scientific analytical services in the country. The Bill, therefore, seeks to address these gaps by establishing a structured regulatory regime.

5 METHODOLOGY

5.1 Meetings

The Committee met with and received written memoranda from the following stakeholders:

- i. Ministry of Internal Affairs (MIA)
- ii. Ministry of Health (MoH)
- iii. Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions (ODPP)
- iv. Dr. Sylvester Onzivua (Rtd), Pathologist
- v. Mr. Rogers Mwesigwa, Director – Nikao Engineering and General Services Ltd.

The Committee also reviewed written submissions from:

- i. The Attorney General
- ii. Uganda Law Society (ULS)
- iii. Uganda Medical Association (UMA)

5.2 Document Review

In conducting its analysis, the Committee referred to the following documents:

- i. The Constitution of the Republic of Uganda, 1995
- ii. The Evidence Act, Cap.8
- iii. The Police Act, Cap. 324

- iv. The Public Health Act, Cap. 310
- v. The Inquest Act, Cap.13
- vi. The Medical and Dental Practitioners Act, Cap. 300
- vii. Allied Health Professions Act, Cap.145
- viii. The National Environment Act, Cap.181

6 SALIENT OBSERVATIONS ON THE BILL

The Committee reviewed the Bill with particular focus on the clarity of its scope, the consistency of its definitions, and the strength of its regulatory framework. In addition, the Committee examined the legal basis for licensing analytical laboratories and assessed whether enforcement mechanisms, including inspections and licence revocation, provide adequate safeguards against arbitrary action.

The Committee also analysed the procedures governing forensic and scientific analysis and analytical reports and considered the need for transitional provisions to validate prior forensic work conducted before the commencement of the Act. The Committee's observations are presented under the following thematic areas.

6.1 Need for Clear Definitions and Interpretation

The Bill seeks to regulate forensic and scientific analytical services by designating the **Government Analytical Laboratory (GAL)** as the national referral for forensic and scientific analytical services and the **Department of Inspection and Legal Services** as the regulatory authority under the Ministry of Internal Affairs.

However, the Committee observed that certain key terms, including "*forensic practitioner*", forensic analysis and "*forensic science*," were not clearly defined in the Bill. The absence or the limited precise definitions could create ambiguity, confusion and potential overlap with medico-legal functions already regulated under existing laws, particularly

in relation to evidence under the Evidence Act, Cap.8 and post-mortems under the Inquest Act, Cap.13.

The Committee notes that several statutes already govern aspects of medico-legal practice within the health and justice sectors. Without clear distinctions, the Bill could lead to duplication or conflict between existing institutional mandates.

The Committee therefore proposes an amendment to introduce a broader definition of "*forensic practitioner*" and provide a clear definition for the term "*forensic science*." These amendments capture the diverse range of professionals involved in forensic science and enhance clarity and interpretive certainty within the legislation.

6.2 Scope and Application of the Act

The Committee observed that the Bill does not expressly provide for the general application of the Act. This omission creates uncertainty as to whether the Act would apply to analytical laboratories already regulated or registered under other existing laws.

The Committee notes that the proposed insertion of an **Application clause** clarifies that the Act applies only to analytical laboratories registered and licensed under the Act and excludes laboratories registered or regulated under other laws such as the Allied Health Professions Act, Cap.145, the Medical and Dental Practitioners Act, Cap.300 and the National Environment Act, Cap. 181. This amendment provides clarity and prevents regulatory overlap and ensures coherence within the broader existing legal framework governing analytical laboratories and their services.

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6.3 Administration and Institutional Arrangements

6.3.1 Regulation of Forensic and Scientific Analytical Services

The Bill, as provided in **Part II (Clauses 2–10)** and the Memorandum, establishes the institutional framework for oversight of forensic and scientific analytical services. It designates the **Department of Inspection and Legal Services** as the regulatory authority and the **GAL** as the national referral for forensic and scientific analytical services under the Ministry of Internal Affairs.

During stakeholder engagements, concerns were raised regarding potential conflicts of interest and jurisdictional overlaps arising from the fact that both the regulator and the service provider operate within the same ministry. It was argued that this arrangement could potentially affect impartiality, operational efficiency, and public confidence in the forensic system.

In response, the Attorney General advised that the designation of the Department as regulator is consistent with Government policy aimed at rationalising agencies and avoiding the creation of new statutory bodies, particularly in light of the existing moratorium on the establishment of additional agencies.

6.3.2 Institutional Framework

The Committee observed that the Government Analytical Laboratory (GAL) is designated in the Bill as the national referral for forensic and scientific analytical services. This designation affirms GAL's role as the principal national institution responsible for advanced forensic and analytical services, particularly in cases requiring specialised expertise, sophisticated technology, or independent verification of results.

However, the Committee noted that Clause 11(2) requires GAL to provide forensic services, while Clause 3(2) designates it as a national referral for forensic and scientific analytical services. Without clarity on the term

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“referral”, this implied dual role could lead to confusion about GAL’s structure and governance, raising concerns about hierarchy, independence in forensic work, and the credibility of its findings in court.

Nonetheless, the Committee observed that institutions with in-house analytical laboratories may refer samples to GAL for specialised testing, advanced technological capabilities, or an independent second opinion when necessary. The referral designation is intended to enhance technical capacity, ensure quality assurance, and facilitate advanced analyses within the national forensic framework, rather than mandating that all forensic and scientific analytical services to be processed by other institutions before being handled by GAL, as may be interpreted as provided in Clause 3(2) of the Bill.

Despite the concerns, the Committee is cognisant of the Attorney General's recommendation to keep GAL as the national referral for forensic and scientific analytical services. It emphasizes the need for the legislation to clearly define GAL’s dual role in providing forensic and scientific analytical services and serving as the national referral laboratory for advanced analyses.

6.4 Forensic and Scientific Analysis

6.4.1 Management of the Forensic and Scientific Database (Part IV, Clauses 24–29)

The Bill establishes a national forensic database governing the submission, access, retention, correction, and non-disclosure of DNA data. The objective of this framework is to centralise forensic and scientific information while safeguarding privacy and ensuring accountability in the handling of sensitive genetic data.

During stakeholder consultations, concerns were raised that the Bill does not provide sufficiently robust privacy safeguards or clear timelines for the retention of DNA samples and profiles. It was argued that the

absence of such safeguards could potentially raise constitutional concerns relating to the protection of personal data and individual rights such as the right to privacy stipulated under Article 27 under the Constitution of the Republic of Uganda.

The **Uganda Law Society (ULS)** further submitted that although the Bill provides for certificates of analysis and court-ordered chemical or substance analysis, it may not fully respond to the evolving demands of modern legal practice in Uganda, where forensic evidence plays an increasingly central role in criminal investigations and prosecutions. In particular, it was noted that the Bill does not expressly provide for integration with other biometric databases such as fingerprint and facial recognition systems, which are widely used in criminal identification and recognised in contemporary forensic practice.

Stakeholders also observed that while sound evidentiary protocols are essential in legal practice, the Bill delegates several operational details to regulations under Clause 31. These include technical procedures for digital forensic management. Concerns were raised that the Bill does not explicitly address admissibility issues relating to emerging technologies such as facial recognition, which have in some contexts generated debate regarding accuracy, bias, and reliability.

However, the **Attorney General** advised the Committee that the practical modalities for linking the GAL database with other biometric systems, including those managed by the Uganda Police Force (UPF) and the National Identification and Registration Authority (NIRA), can be addressed through administrative arrangements, inter-agency agreements, and government policy directives. This approach, he explained, provides the necessary flexibility for government institutions to adapt to evolving technologies, data protection standards, and institutional capacities without requiring frequent legislative amendments.

The Committee appreciates this guidance and observes that, given the technical and rapidly evolving nature of forensic database systems, a degree of regulatory flexibility is necessary to accommodate technological developments and modern data management practices.

Accordingly, the Committee notes that Clause 26 already requires DNA data to be submitted in a prescribed form. To enhance operational efficiency, the Committee observes that DNA data may be submitted in a form prescribed by regulations. This will facilitate secure electronic submissions and modern data management systems while maintaining appropriate regulatory oversight.

6.4.2 Revocation and Suspension of Licences

The Committee noted that certain grounds for licence revocation are vague or duplicative. In particular, the ground that a licence holder may be an **“unfit and improper person”** is susceptible to subjective interpretation.

The proposed amendments therefore remove this provision to avoid abuse since the criteria or test for fit and proper person has not been provided for and therefore cannot be ascertained.

6.4.3 Laboratory Analytical Reports

The Committee observed that the Bill refers to the evaluation results of data from analysis conducted as **“a certificate of analysis”**. However, in forensic practice, examinations typically produce a comprehensive laboratory analytical report, which may include a certificate of analysis as part of the documentation.

The Committee therefore proposes an amendment replacing the term **“certificate of analysis”** with **“laboratory analytical report”** to better reflect standard forensic documentation practices.

6.5 National Poison Information Centre (Part V – Clause 30)

The Bill designates the Government Analytical Laboratory as the **National Poison Information Centre (NPIC)**, responsible for coordinating poisoning incidents, disseminating information, conducting research, and maintaining records through regional sub-centres.

The Committee noted that the **World Health Organization (WHO)** defines a poison centre as a specialised unit that provides information on the diagnosis, treatment, and prevention of poisoning to both the public and health professionals¹.

The Attorney General clarified that the Bill intends the NPIC to function primarily as a **policy coordination and information hub** rather than a provider of clinical or emergency services. Expanding the Centre’s statutory mandate to include 24-hour clinical services, emergency treatment advice, and multidisciplinary staffing would impose substantial unfunded obligations beyond the intended scope of the Bill.

Therefore, the Committee notes that the Bill allows NPIC some flexibility to collaborate with the Ministry of Health and emergency services to strengthen clinical advisory roles and toxicovigilance systems as resources allow.

6.6 Saving Provisions

The Committee observed that the Bill does not provide for the status of forensic examinations, analyses, or reports issued by the Government Analytical Laboratory prior to the commencement of the Act. The absence of such provisions could create uncertainty regarding the validity and admissibility of previously issued forensic reports.

¹(2020). *Guidelines for establishing a poison centre*. Geneva: World Health Organisation

8 PROPOSED AMENDMENTS TO THE FORENSIC AND SCIENTIFIC ANALYTICAL SERVICES BILL, 2025

INSERTION OF A NEW CLAUSE

Insert a new clause immediately before clause 1 as follows—

1. Application of Act


- (1) This Act shall apply to analytical laboratories registered under this Act.
- (2) This Act shall not apply to analytical laboratories registered or regulated under any other law.

Justification

To provide for the general application of the Act and exclude analytical laboratories already registered or regulated under any other law.

CLAUSE 1: INTERPRETATION

Clause 1 is amended—

- (a) in the definition of the word “forensic analysis” by substituting for the word “forensic analysis”, the words “forensic and scientific analysis”;
- (b) by substituting for the word “forensic analyst”, the following 

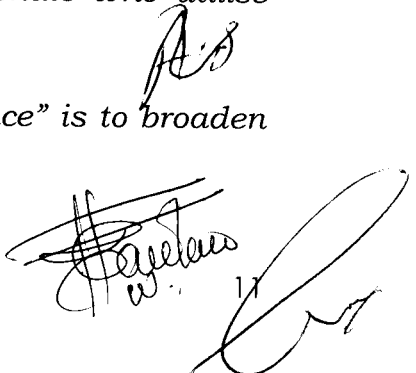
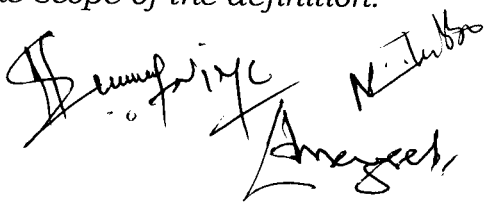
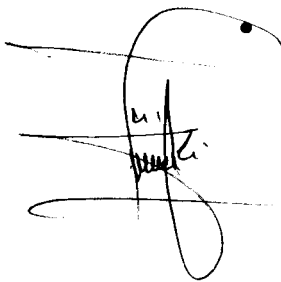
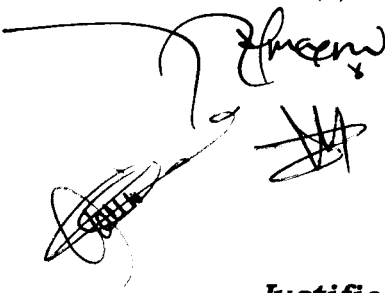
“forensic practitioner” means a professional who uses scientific, technical or other specific expertise to examine and analyse evidence in legal proceedings”

- (c) by substituting the definition of “forensic science”, the following —

“**forensic science**” means the systematic application of scientific methods, techniques and principles to the collection, preservation, investigation, analysis, presentation and interpretation of evidence for the purposes of law enforcement or legal proceedings” ;

Justification

- *The substitution of the word “forensic analysis”, for the word “scientific and forensic analysis” is to provide consistency in the Bill.*
- *The substitution of the word “ forensic analyst”, with the word “forensic practitioner” is to provide for a broader term that encompasses the different categories of professionals who utilise forensic science.*
- *The substitution of the definition of “forensic science” is to broaden the scope of the definition.*



CLAUSE 5 : FUNCTIONS OF DEPARTMENT

Clause 5 is amended—

(a) by substituting for paragraph (b), the following—

“(b) monitor compliance with the code of practice for forensic practitioners”;

(b) in paragraph (e) by inserting the words “and scientific” immediately after the word “forensic”

Justification

- *To provide for the monitoring of the code of practice for forensic practitioners as opposed to monitoring of forensic ethical and privacy matters which cannot be ascertained.*
- *The insertion of the words “and scientific” is to provide for consistency in the Bill.*

CLAUSE 11: FORENSIC AND SCIENTIFIC ANALYTICAL SERVICES

Clause 11 is amended by inserting a new clause immediately after subclause (2) as follows—

“An analytical laboratory shall, in the performance of the services under subsection(1), act independently and shall not be subject to the direction or control of any person,including the Department.”

Justification

To grant an analytical laboratory the independence to carry out their functions without the interference of any person.

CLAUSE 12: REGISTRATION OF ANALYTICAL LABORATORIES

Clause 12 is amended—

(a) in subclause (1)(a), by inserting the word “analytical” immediately before the word “laboratory”

(b) by deleting subclause (6); and

(c) by substituting for subclause (7) the following—

(7) Subject to section (1), a person shall not provide forensic services without a licence issued under this Act.

Justification

- *The insertion of the word “analytical” is to provide consistency with the term laboratory.*
- *The deletion of subclause (6) is consequential arising from the proposed application clause(1).*

- The substitution of subclause (7) is to ensure that a person who intends to operate an analytical laboratory obtains a licence.

CLAUSE 19: REVOCATION OR SUSPENSION OF LICENCE

Clause 19 is amended—

(a) in subclause (2) by deleting paragraph (f);

(b) by deleting subclause (3).

Justification

- The deletion of paragraph (f) is to avoid abuse that would arise in the determination of an unfit and improper person to hold a licence since there is no set criteria.
- To provide an independent provision for cancellation of a certificate of registration.

INSERTION OF NEW CLAUSE

Insert a new clause immediately after clause 19 as follows—

“CANCELLATION OF CERTIFICATE OF REGISTRATION

The department shall—

“(a) before cancelling the certificate of registration of an analytical laboratory, give the owner of the analytical laboratory an opportunity to show cause why the certificate should not be cancelled;

(b) after cancelling the certificate of registration of an analytical laboratory, the department shall publish the cancellation in the *Gazette*.”

Justification

This is a consequential amendment.

CLAUSE 21: REQUEST FOR ANALYSIS

Clause 21 is amended in subclause (3), by inserting the word “or substance” immediately after the word “chemical”;

Justification

To achieve consistency and clarity on the request for an analysis on a chemical or substance.

CLAUSE 23: CERTIFICATE OF ANALYSIS

Clause 23 is amended—

(a) by substituting for the head note, the following—

“23. Laboratory analytical report”

- (b) in subclause (1), by substituting for words “certificate of analysis or report”, the words “laboratory analytical report” and wherever the words appear in the clause;

Justification

The substitution of the “certificate of analysis is to provide for a laboratory analytical report which is more elaborate and includes a certificate of analysis.

CLAUSE 32: RECORD KEEPING

Clause 32 is amended by inserting the word “analytical” immediately after the word “registered”.

Justification

For consistency with the term analytical laboratory used in the Bill.

CLAUSE 33: REPORTING

Clause 33 is amended in subclause (1), by inserting the word “analytical” immediately after the word “registered”.

Justification

For consistency with the term analytical laboratory used in the Bill.

CLAUSE 36: OFFENCES AND PENALTIES

Clause 36 is amended—

- (a) in subclause (3) by substituting the words “analytical report” the words “laboratory analytical report”

- (b) by inserting a new paragraph as follows-

“a person who uses a DNA profile, or accesses a DNA profile and information without the authorisation of the Government Analytical Laboratory;”

- (c) by deleting in subclause (7).

Justification

- *The substitution of the term “analytical report” is to provide for the broader document of an analysis since the laboratory analytical report includes a certificate of analysis.*

- The insertion of the new paragraph is to provide clarity on subclause (7).
- The deletion of subclause (7) is a consequential amendment.

INSERTION OF A NEW CLAUSE

Insert a new clause immediately after clause 37 as follows—

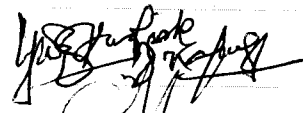

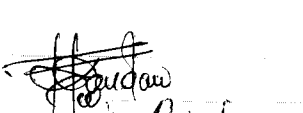

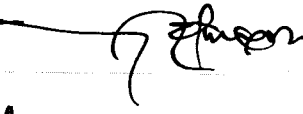
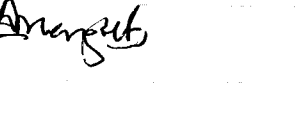

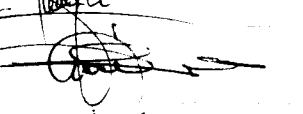

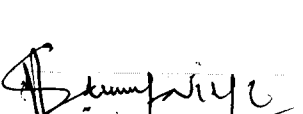



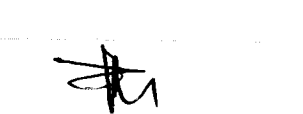




Saving Provision

Any examination, analysis, report, certificate, opinion or other work undertaken or issued by the Government Analytical Laboratory which prior to the commencement of this Act shall remain valid and admissible for all legal and other purposes as if the examination, analysis, report, certificate, opinion or other work had been undertaken or issued under this Act.”

Justification

This is to ensure that the documentation and the work conducted by the Government Analytical Laboratory is not rendered invalid.

COMMITTEE ON DEFENCE AND INTERNAL AFFAIRS MEMBERSHIP – 4TH
SESSION

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