

“Impoverished consumers” shun wines, spirits

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Branded wines and spirits maker, African Distillers (Afdis), says consumer “impoverishment” had significantly weakened demand for its products on the Zimbabwean market, where demand for cheap beer has in the past been blamed for turning the country into “a nation of drunkards”.

While demand for wines and spirits is normally low in January and February, Afdis said weak demand had recently been “a reflection of the general impoverishment of consumers” in the hyperinflationary country.

Afdis makes a range of products, including brown spirits (whisky, brandy, and golden rum), white spirits (gin, rum, vodka, ouzo) and a variety of wines. It also makes flavoured drinks.

The company said, however, that it was on a recovery path, largely underpinned by “a return to a more formal economy, to which the company is more suited and better able to compete”.

“Partnerships with our principals and brand providers remain strong and active and will assist the recovery process,” the company's board said in a statement.

Afdis principals include Delta Corporation, an associate company of South African Breweries which is into larger and traditional beer brewing.

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