PRE-INCORPORATION CONTRACTS



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PRE-INCORPORATION CONTRACTS

- Companies Act No.07 of 2007Section 23 Section 25
- Case Law

PRE-INCORPORATION CONTRACTS

• What is a pre-incorporation contract?

A contract entered in to before the incorporation of a corporation

- Sec 23
 - "pre-incorporation contract" means
 - a. A contract purported to have been entered into by a company before its incorporation; or
 - b. A contract entered into by a person on behalf of a company before and in contemplation of its incorporation.

Warranties Implied in Pre-Incorporation contracts

- Sec 24(1)-
 - > Notwithstanding anything to the contrary in any law
 - ➤ In a pre-incorporation contract,
 - There shall be an <u>IMPLIED WARRANTY</u> by <u>the person who</u> enters into the contract in the name of or on behalf of the company-
- A. That the <u>company</u> will be <u>incorporated</u> within such period as <u>specified in the contract</u> OR if no period is specified, within a <u>reasonable time</u> after the making of the contract.

AND

B. That the company will <u>ratify the contract</u> within such period as specified in the contract OR if no period is specified, within a reasonable time after the <u>incorporation of such company</u>.

Breach of Implied warranties

• Sec 24(2) –

The amount of <u>damages recoverable</u> in an action for breach of an implied warranty



the amount of damages that is recoverable in an action against the company for an <u>unperformed obligation</u> under the contract by the company if the contract had been ratified by the company.

 According to the Companies Act of 2007, a promoter's liability can be avoided in 2 methods:

- A. Ratification Sec 23(2)
- B. The Company makes a fresh agreement with the third person Sec 24(3)

Ratification

• Sec 23(2) -

Notwithstanding anything to the contrary in any law, a pre-incorporation contract may be ratified

Within such <u>period</u> as may be <u>specified</u> in the <u>contract</u> OR

If no such period is specified, within a reasonable time after the incorporation of the company

Sec 23(3) -

A ratified pre-incorporation contract should be as <u>valid and enforceable</u> as if the company had been a party to the contract at the time it was entered into.

Fresh Agreement

- Sec 24(3)-
 - □ After the incorporation of a company,
 - □ When the company enters into a contract in the same terms as or in substitution for a pre-incorporation contract (not being a contract ratified by the company under section 23)
 - □ The liability of a person who purported to enter in to a contract in the name of the co. or on behalf of the co. *should be discharged*.

Failure to Ratify

Sec 25-

- The court can make an order—
 Where a company has acquired property pursuant
 to a pre-incorporation contract
 A. Directing the company to return property acquired
 - under the pre-incorporation contract, to that party;
- ☐ That has not been <u>ratified</u> by the company after its incBrivalidating, the contract in whole or in part; or
- On an application made in that behalf by the party from whom the property was acquired,

Case Law

A co. becomes a legal person only after it is incorporated

• Therefore, before the incorporation, a co. cannot make a contract either personally or through an agent (as there cannot be an agent to a non-existing principal)



A pre-incorporation contract <u>does not bind</u> the company



 Therefore, the person who entered in to the contract is bound by it unless the co. ratifies it afterwards

Kelner v. Baxter

A pre-incorporation contract binds the promoter not the co.

Re English Colonial Produce Co. Ltd

The mere fact that a benefit was taken does not change this position.