

This edition of the Union Asia Pacific bulletin highlights successes and progress of Asia Pacific Cities Alliance for Health and Development (APCAT) members.

## About APCAT



Participants at the 7th Asia Pacific Summit of Mayors, 1 - 3 December 2022 in Bali, Indonesia

Established in 2016, the **Asia Pacific Cities Alliance for Health and Development (APCAT)** is a unique alliance of mayors and sub-national leaders from 122 cities of 12 countries (Bangladesh, Cambodia, India, Indonesia, Lao PDR, Malaysia, Myanmar, Nepal, Philippines, Singapore, Timor-Leste and Vietnam) that work collectively to gain political commitments to offer local solutions to local problems. It believes that sub-national leaders' role is the key to bring change through good city-level governance. The Union Asia Pacific is a founder as well as secretariat of APCAT.

The goal of the APCAT is to ensure a whole-of-government approach in offering health solutions through building stronger political commitments, new partnership opportunities, sustainable and effective use of resources and stronger health system performance and outcomes. APCAT also aims to accelerate progress towards eventually ending tobacco use, as well as preventing the avoidable burden of non-communicable diseases (NCDs), eliminating tuberculosis (TB) and viral hepatitis, and improving synergy between health and development programmes and promoting integrated responses through One Health approach where possible, and thereby averting untimely deaths.



APCAT countries in Asia Pacific Region



Evolution of the APCAT since its establishment



# 7<sup>th</sup> Asia Pacific Summit of Mayors

- Together we bring health solutions -

The 7<sup>th</sup> Asia Pacific Summit of Mayors was held on 1 - 3 December in Bali, Indonesia with the aim to:

- **Reinforce leadership:** reinforcing mayors' leadership to prioritise prevention of tobacco use, control of communicable and non-communicable diseases and improvement of vaccination in strategic and operational planning and in policy, fiscal and legislative instruments.
- **Build accountability:** hold mayors accountable to protect the development and implementation of public health policies from undue influence of unhealthy commodity industries. Ensure public-private partnership in implementation, monitoring programme performance and effectiveness.
- **Ensure sustainability:** invest in and sustain local health system capacity, and ensure a whole-of-government approach for prevention of tobacco use, and control communicable and non-communicable diseases, and improvement of vaccination. Share evidences, lessons learned and countermeasures to improve programme outcomes.

Over 500 delegates, including 48 mayors and vice-mayors, from 62 cities of 10 countries across the Asia Pacific region joined the Summit physically and virtually. More than 200 young people took part in 1st APCAT Tobacco Free Youth Festival that preceded the Summit to not only resolve to grow without tobacco, but also to foster leadership and accountability among the youth for advancing tobacco control. The Summit was jointly organised by APCAT, Ministry of Health, Indonesia; Ministry of Home Affairs, Indonesia; National Centre for Health Promotion, Ministry of Health, Cambodia; Bloomberg Philanthropies; cities of Bogor, Denpasar and Klungkung of Indonesia; Balanga City, Philippines; Association of All Health Offices Indonesia (ADINKES), Indonesia Mayor and Regent Alliance, Indonesian Public Health Association; Udayana Central; Campaign for Tobacco Free Kids, Vital Strategies; Tobacco Free Generation International; the International Union Against Tuberculosis and Lung Disease (The Union); APCAT Parliamentarians and APCAT Media.



Opening ceremony of 7<sup>th</sup> Asia Pacific Summit of Mayors



Talk-Show at 1st APCAT Tobacco Free Youth Leader Festival

This year, eight APCAT awards and one WHO World No Tobacco Day 2022 award were presented to outstanding cities, ministry and media for their achievements and leadership in integrating tobacco control within the government's plan, implementing smoke-free policy, banning of tobacco advertising, promotion and sale of single stick cigarettes, licensing tobacco vendors and countering tobacco industry interferences, thereby, safeguarding peoples' health.

APCAT Award 2022 winners include:

- Bali Province, Indonesia
- Dili Municipality, Timor-Leste
- Tangail Municipality, Bangladesh
- Ministry of Health, Cambodia
- Tabaco City, Philippines
- Purworejo Regency, Indonesia
- Palembang City, Indonesia
- Health Journalist Forum Nepal



APCAT Award Winners 2022

WHO World No Tobacco Day 2022 Award winner:

- Klungkung Regency, Bali, Indonesia



# 2022 APCAT Declaration

## -A healthy city is a resilient city-

The text of the Bali Declaration adopted by leaders of APCAT 2022 is as follows:

We, the delegates of the 7th Asia Pacific Summit of Mayors, recognise that APCAT is a vital platform to share experiences, shape local actions, and secure greater leadership as well as look for synergistic actions between specific health and development programmes.

**We commit to accelerate progress towards eventually ending tobacco use, as well as preventing the avoidable burden of NCDs, eliminating tuberculosis, and improving synergy between health and development programmes and promoting integrated responses where possible, thereby reducing disease burden and averting untimely deaths, by:**

1. Leading effective implementation of tobacco control programmes that include smoke-free environments; a complete ban on tobacco advertising, promotion, and sponsorship; promotion of larger graphic health warnings with plain packaging on tobacco packs; smoking cessation programmes; and a ban on electronic cigarettes, heated tobacco products, shisha, and other similar products;
2. Working with national government and policy makers to raise taxes and prices on unhealthy commodities (such as, but not limited to, tobacco products, alcohol, sugary and sweetened beverages);
3. Ensuring accountability to prevent interference and rejecting funding, logistics, donations, or grants from, and partnerships with, any entity related to any unhealthy commodity industries (such as, but not limited to, tobacco, alcohol, sugary and sweetened beverages);
4. Investing in tobacco control for prevention of tuberculosis, non-communicable disease, and stunting. It includes smoking cessation in TB and NCD clinics, and family health programs; universal screening for TB and NCDs
5. Adopting One Health approaches and processes to ensure that “a healthy city is a resilient city”.



The Union's Dr Tara Singh Bam with mayors co-hosting the Summit



Panel discussions with mayors from across the Asia Pacific region



Site visit to Klungkung Regency to observe implementation of tobacco control



Participants of 1st APCAT Tobacco Free Youth Leader Festival

## Mayor's Alliance for Healthy Cities in Bangladesh (MACH)

In 2019, the Mayor's Alliance for Healthy Cities in Bangladesh (MACH) was established. As of November 2022, 19 cities have joined the MACH. Key deliverables include creating an opportunity to exchange experiences among the mayors to protect public health and the environment, implementation of tobacco control laws, controlling tobacco use through licensing, ensuring open spaces, conserving water bodies and setting up parks to protect the environment and mental health.

## Bangladeshi Mayors joining hands to prevent tobacco-related diseases and deaths

Bangladesh mayors commit to prevent tobacco-related diseases and deaths at the Bangladesh Mayors' Summit for Tobacco Control and Disease Prevention in Cox's Bazar. During the two-day summit, 23-24 September, 18 city mayors decided that strong steps will be taken to implement tobacco control laws and local government guidelines.

The Mayor Alliance for Healthy Cities, Cox's Bazar Municipality, Dhamrai Municipality, Tobacco Control and Research Cell of Dhaka International University and Aid Foundation jointly arranged the event, with the technical support of The Union and APCAT.

Mujibur Rahman, Mayor of Cox's Bazar and newly elected chair of the Mayor Alliance for Healthy Cities, stated that tobacco is the leading threat to public health. To achieve the Hon'ble Prime Minister's goal to make the country tobacco-free by 2040, he committed to advance the movement by expanding the alliance membership from the remaining districts.

Ministry of Local Government's tobacco control guidelines apply to all the urban and rural institutions like municipal corporations, other municipalities, Zila Parishad and Union Parishad. The guidelines aim to protect people from the harms of tobacco and are directed to improve tobacco control law enforcement, build public awareness, allocate funds for tobacco control and limit tobacco products availability. APCAT and The Union are working and extending support to the ministry, the National Institute of Local Government, and some cities, including the municipal corporations of Dhaka, Khulna, Rajshahi and Barisal, to implement these guidelines.

Mr Mujibur Rahman, Chairman of Mayor Alliance for Healthy City and Mayor of Cox's Bazar Municipality, met with the Honorable Prime Minister of Bangladesh, Sheikh Hasina, at Ganabhaban on October 24, 2022. Mayor Mujibur Rahman informed the Honorable Prime Ministers that the Mayor's Summit Bangladesh 2022 was held to build a healthy city with the goal of creating a tobacco-free Bangladesh by 2040. The Honorable Prime Minister applauded such initiatives and encouraged the continuation of the tobacco-free programme. She emphasised that as tobacco is extremely harmful to public health, elected public representatives from local government institutions must step forward and play a significant role in protecting public health in order to make the country tobacco-free.



Bangladesh Mayors' Summit 2022



Meeting with the Honorable Prime Minister of the People's Republic of Bangladesh



# Philippines

## APCAT Philippines Forum 2022



APCAT co-chairs and delegates at APCAT Philippines Forum 2022

The first APCAT Philippines Forum was conducted in Manila on 17 -18 November 2022. In this two-day hybrid forum, over 100 participants across the country participated from 20 cities, 12 civil society organisations, three international organisations, and six national and regional government agencies.

APCAT Co-Chairs, Mayor Francis Anthony Garcia and Mayor Bima Arya Sugiarto, delivered the keynote speech. The delegates committed to accelerating efforts against tobacco use, reducing the burden of NCDs, eliminating TB, and improving synergy between health and development programmes.

# Cambodia

## Cambodian Alliance for Tobacco Control and NCD Prevention

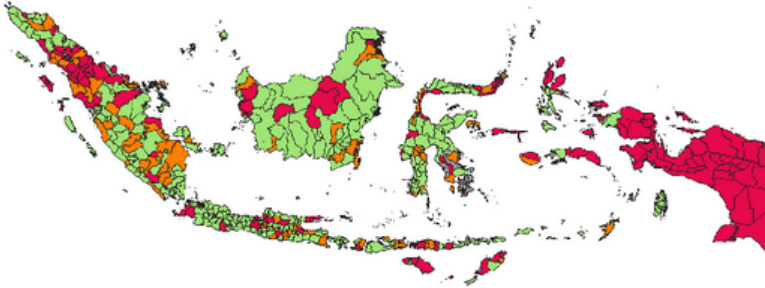
The Cambodian Alliance for Tobacco Control and NCD Prevention (CAT) was established in 2017 with the objective to make effective implementation of smoke-free, ban tobacco advertising, promotion and sponsorship, and identify local solutions for local problems. National Centre for Health Promotion, Ministry of Health, Cambodia in coordination with CAT and APCAT, held a virtual round table meeting to share lessons learnt, best practices, identify local problems and discuss appropriate solutions related to CAT cities in order to enforce implementation of tobacco control programmes, especially in the context of COVID-19. This summit engaged governors from 12 provinces to affirm commitments for adoption of tobacco control policies. CAT is now expanded to 16 provinces in Cambodia.



Capacity building training for Tobacco Control Inspection Officers at Phnom Penh, Ratanakiri, Prey Veng, Kampong Chhnang, Kampong Cham provinces

# Indonesia

100% smokefree	309	192 million pop. (72.2%)
Partial ban of smoking	80	34 million pop.
No policies	125	40 million pop.



Expansion of smoke-free policy development in Indonesia

## Indonesia Mayors' Alliance

In Indonesia, the Mayors' Alliance was established in 2011 with 12 mayors. Currently, it has over 150 mayors as members. The alliance has been the main driver of sub-national progress in smoke-free, ban tobacco advertising and preventing industry interference. As of November 2022, 309 cities and districts adopted local smoke-free laws, 17 cities ban display of tobacco products and 33 cities ban outdoor tobacco advertisements. The alliance now became a key ally and strategic partner to the Ministry of Health in responding to tobacco control, COVID-19 and any other health programmes.

# India

## Initiatives to make Bengaluru smoke-free

To support the national cigarette & order tobacco products act 2018, Bengaluru has taken a bold decision to remove the designated smoking areas in all public places, therefore making these places truly smoke-free. The city became the first in India for such initiative. With the support of Special Commissioner, Health, Bruhath Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike (BBMP), Smoke-free Bengaluru Initiative conducted several activities, including roundtable discussions, public awareness campaigns and capacity building of enforcement officers, to strengthen the implementation of tobacco control law in the city with focused enforcement drives and worked on advocacy to regulate hookah bars/cafes, which has become a major issue in the city, especially around educational institutes.



Tuk Tuk Campaign

# Malaysia

## Smoke-free Kuala Lumpur by 2025



MOU Signing Ceremony for making smoke-free bridges and pedestrian walkways

Kuala Lumpur City Hall (DBKL) has started an initiative to reduce the prevalence of smoking and to educate non-smokers on the risks associated with second-hand smoke. DBKL has pledged to make Kuala Lumpur a smoke-free city by 2025 - an initiative towards Smoke-Free Kuala Lumpur or Kuala Lumpur Bebas Asap Rokok. DBKL is leading the change and has called on the Minister of Health for a strong smoke-free enforcement drive in Malaysia.



## Smoke-free initiative in Nay Pyi Taw

Myanmar's capital city, Nay Pyi Taw has issued a decree extending the requirements specified by the country's national tobacco control law and making smoke-free legislation more comprehensive in the Nay Pyi Taw region. Smoking is now prohibited in hospitals, clinics, workplaces, children's playgrounds, education facilities and commercial accommodation. This city level decree, issued by the Nay Pyi Taw Development Committee (NPTDC), is the first of its kind in Myanmar, and is intended to close gaps and ensure effective implementation. The Ministry of Health is promoting the city's success to other states and regions in Myanmar.



Awareness-raising Billboard erecting at central Nay Pyi Taw

## Committing Bharatpur Smoke-free

The Mayor of Bharatpur city released a notification to ensure the city will be 100% smoke-free by 2023. The notification mandates to allocate budget for capacity building, enforcement, monitoring and evaluation. Budget from National Health Fund is available for tobacco control programmes.

## Gaining commitment in responding burden of tobacco use

A multi-sectoral interaction programme entitled "Government's Accountability to Promote Tobacco Control in Nepal" was held in October 2022. Over 50 participants took part, including government officials, representatives from The Union and APCAT, tobacco control advocates, civil society and the media. The objectives of the programme were to identify actions and responsibilities and gain their commitment in responding to the burden of tobacco use in Nepal. The programme was jointly organised by Action Nepal, Health Journalist Forum Nepal, The Union, and APCAT.



Participants of "Government's Accountability to Promote Tobacco Control in Nepal" programme



The Union's Dr Tara Singh Bam speaking at the programme

# Vietnam

## Working together to strengthen tobacco control law enforcement

Vietnam Tobacco Control Fund coordinated a high-level policy workshop to build tobacco control capacity. Delegates shared their experience of inspecting and monitoring the implementation of tobacco control policies and discussed measures for strengthening enforcement. Best practices including integrating tobacco control within food safety inspections and applying technology to mobilise communities were shared. More than 100 delegates from ministries and provinces across the country participated, including representatives from the National Assembly's Social Committee and Office of the Government.



Policy workshop on tobacco control law enforcement

# Timor-Leste

## Raising tobacco taxes to protect Timorese from the devastating health consequences and increasing State revenue

On 17 November 2022, Timor-Leste determined that it would raise tobacco excise tax for all types of tobacco products, effective from January 2023. The excise tax will be doubled, increase from USD 50/kg to USD 100/kg, and import tax from 2.5% to 5%. With the raise of the tobacco tax, the tobacco price will be rising from USD 2.00-2.30 per pack to USD 3.00-4.00 per pack for major selling cigarettes such as L.A, Marlboro and Surya Gudam Garam.

"The tax change aims to discourage tobacco consumption in Timor-Leste, protecting Timorese from the devastating health consequences and increasing State revenue. Although we raise to \$100/kg, it is still low compare to countries like Australia and Singapore, so, if the Parliament would raise it to USD 300/kg, I will be so delighted" said Dr. Rui Augusto Gomes, the Minister of Finance.

The proposal to raise the tobacco taxes was presented by the Ministry of Finance at the general debate on Timor-Leste 2023 annual budget and was approved by the Parliament, with 40 votes, against 10 and abstain 11.

The approved proposal was submitted to the President of the Republic for promulgation.





## APCAT Media responds from the frontlines in Asia Pacific on improving responses to COVID-19, NCDs, TB during the pandemic

When the COVID-19 pandemic struck the Asia Pacific region, members of the Asia Pacific Media Alliance for Health and Development (APCAT Media) were at the forefront of frontline reporting, which strengthened science and evidence-based coverage on COVID-19, as well as its linkages with NCDs, TB, and risk factors such as tobacco use. APCAT Media also played a key role in advancing science-based reporting of COVID-19 vaccination.

Be it Myanmar, Nepal, Bangladesh, Indonesia, India, we saw detailed and consistent coverage of these issues in print and online media.

APCAT Media hosted several webinars to raise the alarm on how COVID-19 is threatening the “Health For All” goal and also co-hosted the “People living with HIV but dying of TB, NCDs, and viral hepatitis” session at the 24th International AIDS Conference. APCAT Media also fully supported the coverage of online sessions hosted by APCAT during the pandemic.

Violence against women, girls, and people of other gender diversities, increased during COVID-19. In 2020, APCAT Media worked closely with 10th Asia Pacific Conference on Reproductive and Sexual Health and Rights in Cambodia for year-long coverage of producing a series of 14-15 thematic articles. These articles used a gender-equality lens while documenting voices of persons with disabilities, older people, young people, people living with HIV, among others.

With support from APCAT, APCAT Media Fellowships helped support more consistent coverage of neglected public health priorities in the Asia Pacific region using a local-action lens. We held special online sessions connecting APCAT Media members with global and regional, national, and sub-national experts on a range of issues, such as asthma, the launch of new 2023-2030 Global Plan to End TB, viral hepatitis and the One Health approach.

APCAT Media also led coverage of tobacco industry interference during the pandemic and helped protect public health. For example, in April 2021, APCAT Media exposed the tobacco industry for trying to greenwash its image in Nepal.

In November 2022, APCAT Media was a lead organiser of the 2nd Annual Global Media Forum around World Antimicrobial Awareness Week 2022. APCAT Media hosted the forum with 16 other media organisations and national journalists associations in Asia Pacific and African region. Antimicrobial resistance experts WHO, UNEP, WOA, and FAO all attended the event.



One of the webinars hosted by APCAT and APCAT Media during pandemic

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