

This bulletin highlights the key activities, focusing on Tobacco Control and TB, carried out in Bangladesh, Cambodia, Indonesia, Nepal, Philippines and Timor-Leste during December 2022 - January 2023.

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INDONESIA

HIGHLIGHTS

The Union meet with Indonesia Health Minister to end TB

On 6 December, 2022, The Union team, led by Prof Guy Marks, President and Interim Executive Director, had a meeting with HE Budi Gunadi Sadikin, Minister of Health, Republic of Indonesia, HE Dante Saksono Harbuwono, Vice-Minister of Health and their team at the Minister's office. Tuberculosis (TB) is a big problem in Indonesia, with incidence and death rates about 100 times higher than in low-burden countries in the region. Over 70 million tobacco smokers are exposed to TB and non-communicable disease risks. Currently in Indonesia, the TB rates are not declining as many people with TB do not have symptoms nor are they aware of having it and unintentionally spread the disease to others, so the TB epidemic is sustained. Prof Marks shared the strategy of finding and treating all people living in the community who have TB - the only way to find all, or nearly all, people with TB is **to test everyone**. It is important that those found to have TB must link to effective treatment programmes, which includes need medical, psychosocial, and financial support to ensure treatment is completed. This is in the public interest, as failure to complete treatment will inevitably lead to TB continuing to spread.



HE Budi Gunadi Sadikin with Prof Guy Marks of The Union



Minister and Vice-Minister of Health, Republic of Indonesia with The Union team

Such a strategy would need to be sustained for 5-10 years to end the endemic transmission of TB. However, it is not feasible or appropriate to launch this strategy in the entire country immediately. Initially, it should be launched and refined in an appropriate province or district.

HE Budi Gunadi Sadikin stated: "Indonesia is committed to end TB by identifying every case from the community through mobilizing primary health care, public-private partnership, community-based organizations and maximum use of digital technologies." He further said that he puts all possible efforts into improving tobacco control and recognized a big room for improvement in taxing on tobacco products.

Prof Marks said: "It was a great honour to speak with the Minister of Health about how to tackle the problems Indonesia is facing with TB and tobacco, and how they can look to implement new strategies that can make a real difference to people's lives."

Working with Bloomberg International Partners to synergize strategies for 2023



Snap shot from BI Partners Meeting in Bali, December 2022

In December 2022, The Union organised two meetings with Bloomberg International Partners and their grantees working in Indonesia to establish a common vision and focus for tobacco control. The meeting identified priority actions and developed realistic strategic targets to be achieved in 2023 at national and subnational levels. The meetings also identified opportunities, challenges and countermeasures to advance tobacco control. The meetings developed three key objectives for 2023: 1) Sustain efforts to improve national tobacco control policies on pictorial health warning, ban tobacco advertising, promotion, and sponsorship, ban display of tobacco products at the point-of-sale, and ban sale of single stick; 2) Sustain policy work to raise tax at least 25% and reduce the number of tiers; 3) Strengthen subnational tobacco control in policy development and implementation.

Strengthening smoke-free enforcement in Depok, Makassar and Pontianak

Depok City: The Union held a productive high-level policy meeting with The Vice Mayor. The meeting produced a comprehensive plan for 2023 which outlined priorities and key activities. Key activities include a public opinion poll on smoke-free, a no smoking signage campaign and a circular letter to strengthen smoke-free implementation.

Makassar City: The Union has been working closely with Makassar City government to provide strategic guidance and technical support. In December 2022, Makassar Mayor issued the Instruction No. 7414/2022 on smoke-free implementation. The instruction mandates all the government agencies, hotel, restaurants, and café business owners, worship places managers, and public transport operator to immediately adhere to and implement smoke-free policies.



Meeting with Vice Mayor of Depok City



Distribution of No-Smoking signages during smokefree program in Makassar

Pontianak City: Smoke-free workshop for joint smoke-free taskforce was held on 8th December 2022. The taskforce consists of all the agencies under the law, including Indonesian National Armed Forces and Police. It was conducted to exchange information on current challenges on smoke-free implementation and to strengthen their commitment on policy implementation. As a result of the workshop, the taskforce team committed to conduct regular inspection and to establish smoke-free taskforce in each internal government agencies.

Exploring ways to efficiently use subnational tobacco tax

The Union and its grantees, the University of Indonesia and Muhammadiyah University of Magelang, held a Focus Group Discussion (FGD) to discuss the effective use of DBHCHT (aka Tobacco Excise Revenue Sharing Fund or subnational tobacco tax). These funds can be used to improve farmers' welfare and health by aiding skills and equipment upgrade to grow alternative, more profitable crops instead of tobacco. The FGD was conducted in Magelang City, Central Java Province, with participation from the Ministry of Health, Ministry of Finance, Ministry of Home Affairs and Agriculture offices, Indonesian multicultural farmers forum and tobacco farmers from Magelang and Temanggung districts. The results of this FGD will be used to develop guidelines for implementing the use of regional cigarette excise funds. Magelang and Temanggung districts will be pilots for this project.



Focus Group Discussion conducted in Magelang City, Central Java Province

Ministry of Health takes a lead role to push for the amendment of PP109/2012

Tobacco control components included in National law PP109/2012 amendment comprise a) increasing a size of pictorial health warning; b) regulating e-cigarettes; c) prohibition of advertising, promotion, and sponsorship of tobacco products in media (IT); d) banning sale of single stick; e) monitoring of the advertisement, promotion, and sponsorship of tobacco products in broadcast media, indoor and outdoor advertising, and information technology; f) improving enforcement and prosecution and g) implementation of smoke-free and media mobilisation.

The amendment of PP109/2012 has been included in the 2023 Presidential Decree No. 25 with the aim to complete the discussions by June 2023. Ministry of Health will lead to report the progress of the amendment to the Ministry of Law and Human Rights. The Ministry of Health has developed a comprehensive schedule of meetings internally, with other ministries and with civil society. The Union and its grantees are providing strategic and technical support.

Protecting people from the harms of novel tobacco products



Examples of novel tobacco products

The Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) has issued the implementing rules and regulations (IRR) of Republic Act No. 11900 – law regulating vaporized nicotine and non-nicotine products – through DTI Administrative Order 22-16 Series of 2022, dated December 5. The IRR shall apply to any person, natural or juridical, that is engaged in the importation, assembly, manufacture, sale, packaging, distribution, advertisement promotion, and sponsorship of all vaporized nicotine and non-nicotine products regardless of whether locally manufactured or imported, in an online or offline platform, or purchase or use of the same, as well as to all those responsible for ensuring compliance on public use and in Designated Vaping Areas.

Building local evidences for policy change

The Ateneo School of Government (ASOG) through the Ateneo Policy Center, and in partnership with Smoke-Free Aklan, spearheaded a workshop on evidence-based policy making on 6-7 October 2022 in Iloilo City. The aim is to build the capacity of Western Visayas Local Government Units, which already passed FCTC-compliant ordinances, through training for the tobacco control coordinators/personnel and will lay down the importance and basics of policy research in advancing reforms and policies at local government and provincial level supported by local evidence and data.



Ateneo School of Government Evidence-Based Policy Making Workshop

Compliance monitoring in Metro Manila

The Metro Manila Development Authority inspected a total of 3,040 stores located within the 100-metre perimeter of schools and found two stores selling e-cigarettes, 1,037 selling cigarettes, and 86 with tobacco ads. On one hand, out of 52 public utility terminals, 50 did not have anti-smoking signages; while 656 public utility vehicles out of 1,128 inspected had no anti-smoking signages.



Inspection of 100-metre perimeter of schools in Metropolitan Manila

Capacity building of local government



Capacity-building for WHO-FCTC Local Implementers of Benguet Province and Baguio City

With the support from The Union, Transcend/Smoke-Free Benguet in partnership with the Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids (CTFK) and HealthJustice Philippines, organised and facilitated the three-day Capacity Building for WHO-FCTC Local Implementers of Benguet Province and Baguio City on 12-14 October 2022. A total of 32 representatives (attorneys, medical health officers, councillors and other members of the Smoke-Free Task Force) from seven municipalities of Benguet, Provincial Health Office, Cordillera Network for Youth Health (CNYH), Smoke-Free Baguio, and some partners outside Benguet, including Metropolitan Manila Development Authority (MMDA) and Smoke-Free Aklan joined the training.

Providing technical assistance to reduce the burden of TB, NCDs and tobacco use

The Union met the Department of Health's Health Promotion Bureau and Bureau of International Health Cooperation in Manila. Dr Gan Quan and Catlin Rideout from The Union provided an overview of its global and national priorities in the Philippines. While the DOH gave an overview of the current and future strategies it will employ to curb not only tobacco use, but also tuberculosis and non-communicable diseases.



Meeting with Department of Health, Manila City, Philippines

BANGLADESH

Advancing tobacco control policies

The National Tobacco Control Cell coordinates government and non-government tobacco control activities in Bangladesh. Recently, under the supervision of the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, the Tobacco Control Cell has taken the initiative to amend the Tobacco Control Act, including single stick sale ban, licensing system. The draft amendment was opened for public hearing and after reviewing all the comments, it has been finalised and now it is in the process of being placed in the Cabinet meeting. To support the amended law, The Union's grantees and partners are doing various activities to sensitise the policy makers, government officials, influential persons and media.



Honorable Minister of Railways declaring Bangladesh Railways tobacco free

All railway stations and trains in Bangladesh are now smoke-free

Honorable Minister of Railways declared that all the areas under Bangladesh Railway, including train compartments, railway stations and platforms, have to be tobacco-free zone. To raise awareness on the new policies leaflets and signages were distributed during Railway Service Week 2022. Violations to the policy will result in a 5,000 taka fine.

Strengthening tobacco control measures by licensing tobacco sellers

19 municipalities have implemented the Department of Local Government's "Guidelines for Implementing Tobacco Control Programs in Local Government Institutions". More than 2,000 vendor licenses have been issued. 37 municipalities have uploaded the guidelines on their own websites. To monitor the implementation, an inter-ministerial meeting was held by the central monitoring team. According to the guidelines, the sale, use and promotion of all types of tobacco products within 100 metres of healthcare centres and educational institutions is prohibited.



A copy of Tobacco vendor license

CAMBODIA

Strengthening the implementation of smoke-free public places

Monitoring and evaluation on the implementation of smoke-free workplaces and public places were conducted in four provinces - Prey Veng, Svay Rieng, Kampong Cham, and Tbong Khmum, with the aim to

- Strengthen the implementation of the sub-decree on prohibition of smoking or fumigation of tobacco products in the workplace or public places
- Monitor the presence of no-smoking signs according to the Prakas (guidelines/instructions) of the Ministry of Health.



Monitoring on compliance to smoke-free sub-decree

Cessation counseling to promote quitting

Community meetings and discussions on smoking cessation was conducted in Svay Rieng province. Moreover, monitoring and evaluation of the tobacco cessation programs were conducted in Siem Reap, Kampong Thom, Kampot and Battambang provinces, with the aim to –

- Assess the performance of the trained health care providers (health staff) in providing brief tobacco intervention and smoking cessation counselling services to patients and community
- Monitor the reach and impact of displayed banners, posters at health facilities, community.



Monitoring of Tobacco Control Programs

NEPAL

Lalitpur Mayor taking a lead to create smoke-free, pandemic-resilient cities

The Union's partner, Action Nepal, held meetings with the Mayor of Lalitpur Metropolitan and the Chief of Metropolitan Police to learn about their efforts to create a pandemic-resilient, sustainable city. Both the Mayor and the Police Chief were updated on the implementation status of tobacco control laws in the city, including smoke-free laws. A compliance survey was also carried out to assess the implementation of smoke-free laws in Lalitpur Metropolitan City, and while interacting with the Mayors of Lalitpur Metropolitan, he made a strong commitment to ensure compliance with tobacco control laws in the metropolitan areas and to build and sustain his city as pandemic-resilient and smoke-free city.



Meeting with Mayor of Lalitpur Metropolitan and the Chief of Metropolitan Police

Developing scientific evidence on taxation



Policy Brief on Tobacco Taxation was prepared by the Action Nepal team and will be disseminated to all concerned authorities such as Ministry of Health, Ministry of Finance, and media etc. for making advocacy to raise tax on tobacco in forthcoming budget 2023/2024.

For more information, please contact

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