

TIMOR-LESTE

HIGHLIGHTS

Timor-Leste Mayors Summit: Uniting to combat tobacco, NCDs, and TB

Declaration endorsed and Timor-Leste Mayors Alliance for Health and Development established



Delegates of the opening session of 1st Timor-Leste Mayors Summit

The first-ever Timor-Leste Mayors Summit for Health and Development concluded in Dili with a unanimous adoption of a Declaration, highlighting the need for stronger local actions in tobacco control, non-communicable diseases (NCDs) prevention, and ending tuberculosis (TB). Over 90 participants, including mayors, government officials and experts, gathered to recognize the pivotal role of mayoral leadership in promoting healthy behaviours and reducing smoking rates.

Timor-Leste currently faces high tobacco smoking rates, particularly among males, which increases the risk of NCDs and TB. The Summit stressed evidence-based measures for tobacco control. Mayors and local officials were urged to enforce smoke-free policies, limit tobacco advertising, and encourage healthy behaviours within their communities.

During the Summit, Dr. Odete Maria Freitas Belo, Minister of Health, emphasized the need for collaboration with the Mayors Alliance to strengthen regulations, conduct inspections, enforce age restrictions, and ban smoking in public places. Rui Augusto Gomes, Minister of Finance, highlighted the importance of controlling the sale and distribution of tobacco, especially illicit cigarettes.

The Summit's Declaration called for the implementation of smoke-free policies, the prohibition of tobacco and alcohol advertising and sponsorship, improvement of TB control programs, and adoption of a One Health approach for pandemic preparedness. The collaborative efforts demonstrate the commitment of local leadership to address health challenges and improve the well-being of Timor-Leste's population.

Most significantly the summit announced the formation of the Mayors and Administrators Alliance for Health and Development (APSAD).

Mayors and Administrators Alliance for Health and Development (APSAD)

Established on June 19 2023, the alliance aims to empower mayoral leadership in implementing effective health policies. It focuses on reducing tobacco use, alcohol consumption, unhealthy diets and prevention of TB. The Alliance also emphasizes mayoral accountability in resource allocation, stakeholder engagement, and regular evaluation of health policies and programs. The Mayor of Dili was appointed as the Chair, with The National Alliance for Tobacco Control, Timor-Leste (ANCT-TL), serving as the Secretariat.

The event was organized by the Asia Pacific Cities Alliance for Health and Development (APCAT), in collaboration with The Union, Mayors of Dili and Ermera Municipalities, Ministry of Health, and the National Alliance for Tobacco Control, Timor-Leste (ANCT-TL).



Mayors of the newly minted APSAD share lessons learnt on implementing tobacco control in their respective cities

Voices of change: Children demand a tobacco-free future



Commemorating World No Tobacco Day 2023



Children Ambassadors with the Vice Minister of Health

The Union, along with its grantee Indonesian Child Protection Agency (LPAI), extended support to the Ministry of Health's World No Tobacco Day 2023 commemorative event. More than 100 youth actively participated and expressed their concerns and demands through the Suara Anak Sehat Tanpa Rokok Declaration (Voices of Healthy Children Without Smoking). The children emphasized several key points, including the need for government measures to restrict children's access to cigarettes, regulate product distribution, enforce bans on tobacco advertising and e-cigarettes, establish smoke-free areas, prioritize nutrition in families instead of smoking, incorporate anti-smoking education in schools, provide child-friendly smoking cessation services, intensify media campaigns, and involve children in efforts to protect them from the dangers of smoking. The event was attended by 350 individuals representing national and subnational government bodies, civil society organizations, farmers, media personnel, and youth.

Simultaneously, LPAI organized a series of workshops called "Keluarga SABAR" (Family Education Program on the Dangers of Tobacco) in collaboration with the Demographic Institute at the University of Indonesia. These workshops aimed to educate families about the negative consequences of smoking on health and finances. The workshops received support from the Depok City Health Office and the University of Indonesia Student Council. The Deputy Mayor of Depok highlighted the importance of families avoiding smoking to prevent stunting and prioritizing nutrition for children rather than spending on cigarettes.

Building public awareness on the impact of the Omnibus Bill

Drumming up public support for stronger national tobacco control provisions

The draft omnibus bill is awaiting final discussion in parliament. The Union and grantees have been actively working to build public awareness of the impact of the bill through their engagement with the media and the youth.

Twenty-two civil society organizations from the Tobacco Control Network organised a press conference attended by 50 representatives from national and subnational media, resulting in the publication of seventeen articles on the subject. Additionally, the IISD published two publications in national newspapers like the [Jakarta Post](#) and [Republika](#) for stronger provisions of tobacco control measures in Omnibus bill.



Joint press conference organized by Tobacco Control Network

Mayor of Magelang City commits to ban tobacco advertising



One to one meeting with Mayor of Magelang



An example of Tobacco Ads being taken down

On May 29, The Union and Muhammadiyah Tobacco Control Support Centre at the University of Magelang (MTCC UMM), held a one-to-one meeting with Dr. Muhammad Azis, Mayor of Magelang City. The meeting aimed to provide support for the city's smoke-free program, particularly as Magelang City was hosting the 8th International Conference on Tobacco or Health (ICTOH). The meeting also served as an opportunity to express gratitude for the ban on tobacco advertisements and their removal in Magelang City.

Regional Secretary of Bali Province instructs all districts and cities to promptly adopt TAPS ban policies



The Regional Secretary of Bali province graced the opening session

Udayana Central, a grantee of The Union, collaborated with the Bali Provincial Health Office to organize a coordination meeting. The purpose of the meeting was to discuss and promote the Circular Letter of the Governor of Bali, which prohibits outdoor cigarette advertising. This circular letter is the first of its kind in Indonesia to regulate outdoor cigarette advertising. The event was inaugurated by Mr. Dewa Made Indra, the Regional Secretary of Bali Province. He urged Regents and Mayors in Bali to adopt policies that ban cigarette advertisements and emphasized the importance of multisectoral coordination to support this ban. The meeting was attended by representatives from Health offices, other government officials, civil police, civil society organizations, as well as children's and youth organizations.

Advocating for expansion of subnational smoke-free policies

The Union grantee ADINKES in coordination with Ministry of Health and Ministry of Home Affairs continue their mission to expand subnational policy to all cities and districts in Indonesia. From February 2023 till now the team has meet with districts and cities from seven different provinces (West Java, Central Java, East Kalimantan, Papua, North Sumatera, Riau, West Kalimantan). In the month of June Riau and West Kalimantan provinces were visited. Representatives from 21 cities of these two regions were met.



Advocacy for Regional Regulations on No-Smoking Areas in Riau

Banda Aceh's enforcement drive removes 650 Tobacco Ads



Enforcement drive conducted in Banda Aceh during June

On June 26, a capacity building workshop was organized in Banda Aceh city, gathering 45 members of the smoke-free taskforce. The workshop built the team's technical capacity and knowledge, particularly in monitoring and evaluating the Tobacco Advertising, Promotion, and Sponsorship (TAPS) ban through random inspections led by the Civil Police. As a result of these efforts, a total of 650 tobacco advertisements were successfully removed during May-June 2023. The smoke-free taskforce will continue conducting activities such as smoke-free and TAPS ban random inspections, as well as a no-smoking signage campaign, to ensure compliance and maintain a smoke-free environment in the city.

Promoting smoke-free policies and enforcement in Palembang City

The Palembang City Health Office conducted two capacity building events to support a smoke-free environment. The first event trained 52 smoke-free program leaders from 42 Community Health Centers, empowering them to implement smoke-free policies in their respective areas. The second event focused on enhancing the technical skills of 54 participants from interdepartmental agencies involved in the smoke-free taskforce. Key activities such as random inspections and no-smoking signage campaigns will be continued by the taskforce team to ensure the enforcement of smoke-free policies in public places.

Countering tobacco industry interference in Bojonegoro

The Airlangga University organized a public hearing in Bojonegoro District to accelerate the adoption of smoke-free policies in response to the [interference from the tobacco industry](#). Fifty-six participants, including representatives from the local government, civil society, youth, and media, voiced their strong endorsement for the swift implementation of smoke-free policies.

PHILIPPINES

Capacity building in three municipalities for implementation of smoke-free



Smoke-Free Task Force Meeting in Atok led by Municipal Mayor

Atok Municipality: Mayor of Atok leads first smoke-free task force meeting: 15 Task Force members were trained on local smoke-free policies, emphasizing its benefits and clarifying the Task Force's roles. Planning for actions in the third and fourth quarters of the year was also discussed. Mayor Franklin Smith and Coun. Marilou Zarate, Chairperson of the Committee on Health, expressed their full support for the robust implementation of MO 85-2022 within the municipality.

Novotas Municipality : Navotas Municipality builds its smoke-free task force. 22 new recruits for the Navotas smoke-free task force were trained by the Metropolitan Manila Development Authority (MMDA). The session highlighted the need to pass an amendment to align the City Ordinance with RA 11900, indicating a need for legislative adjustment.



MPOWER & Deputization Training for the Itogon Smoke-Free Task Force

Itogon Municipality: Itogon Municipality trains 50 government officials trained on local smoke-free policies: Representatives from Local Government Units (LGUs), Barangay Local Government Units (BLGUs), the Philippine National Police (PNP), and the Department of Education (DepEd) received an orientation on local policies, learned about the health effects of smoking, vaping, and betel quid, and discussed enforcement guidelines. The training also included a workshop to identify implementation gaps and develop action plans. The training was organized by The Union grantee Transcend in collaboration with municipal health office.

Workshop on smoke- and vape-free policies

The Union, in partnership with the Provincial Government of Aklan, Campaign for Tobacco Free Kids, Ateneo School of Government, and HealthJustice Philippines, organized a two-day workshop on Boracay Island, Philippines. The workshop's main objectives were to review the proposed template ordinance for the National Tobacco Control Planning Strategies 2023-2030 and strategize the activities of Union Grantees for 2024. The event had 30 participants from partner local government units, civil society, and non-government organizations. Furthermore, a follow-up communication workshop is planned to facilitate the dissemination of the template ordinance.



BI Partners Meeting and Ordinance Template Workshop at Boracay Island

Promoting smoke-free terminals and public transportation at EDSA Carousel



Awareness-raising activity at EDSA Carousel

To commemorate World No Tobacco Day 2023, the MMDA (Metropolitan Manila Development Authority) launched an advocacy campaign promoting smoke-free terminals and public transportation. The activity took place on May 31 at the EDSA Carousel terminals, which are part of the Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) system in Metro Manila. MMDA personnel actively participated by displaying posters containing Graphic Health Warnings in multiple EDSA Carousel stations. Additionally, they distributed informative sheets to commuters, aiming to raise awareness about the hazards of tobacco use and motivate individuals to quit smoking. Moreover, MMDA personnel inspected the vicinity of 113 schools and 20 public transportation terminals in Metro Manila for selling tobacco/vapor products, TAPS and No Smoking signage display. A total of 996 violations were identified and reported to concerned LGUs for verification and appropriate intervention.

Raising awareness on harms of cigarette butt waste on the environment in Kapangan

An environmental clean-up event took place in Kapangan, Benguet on May 31, 2023, with the aim of addressing the issue of cigarette butt waste and raising awareness about its harmful effects on health and the environment. The activity saw the participation of Kapangan municipal officials, led by Acting Municipal Mayor Mayo Eslay, as well as employees, the Department of Health, and students. The dedicated participants successfully collected 1.5kg of cigarette butts. Kapangan has taken action by implementing Comprehensive Smoke-Free Ordinance No. 194 s. 2023, which imposes penalties for the sale, use, distribution, and advertisement of tobacco products in specific locations and includes penalties for violations.

Smoking cessation initiatives in three cities

Tangalan and Nabas: Smoke-Free Aklan, together with Smoking Cessation Clinic Coordinator, provided follow-up check-ups to 24 individuals receiving smoking cessation counseling, distributing nicotine patches to aid in quitting and reduce withdrawal symptoms.

Baguio: A Smoking Cessation Retooling program was conducted in Baguio City, involving 100 participants from various healthcare sectors. The training, facilitated by the Baguio General Hospital and Medical Center Tobacco Control Unit, focused on setting up a smoking cessation clinic and prioritizing activities for information dissemination.

CAMBODIA

Evaluating the effectiveness of tobacco cessation and counselling services in Kep and Pursat Provinces



Monitoring of tobacco cessation clinic in at Sre Sdok Health Center

After providing tobacco cessation and counselling support trainings in April 2023, The National Centre for Health Promotion (NCHP) of the Ministry of Health conducted monitoring of the Tobacco Cessation and Counselling Services in 12 health centers and one hospital in Kep, as well as 5 Health Centers in Pursat. NCHP not only assessed the effectiveness and quality of these services in helping individuals quit tobacco use, but also observed the counselling services, availability of resources, adherence to protocols, and overall implementation of the programs.

Gandaki Province takes initiatives to control tobacco use



Workshop on the implementation of provincial Tobacco control policies in Gandaki province

Gandaki Province in Nepal is taking significant strides to control tobacco use and reduce associated health risks. It stands out as the only province in the country with a dedicated tobacco control law, although effectively implementing it remains a challenge. A workshop organised by The Union grantee Action Nepal with the aim of improving the implementation of tobacco control policies. The participants agreed on the need for coordination among the government, NGOs, and public health bodies to ensure successful implementation. The workshop brought together 30 representatives from various organizations, including the district public health office, the Ministry of Social Development and Health, the Pokhara Academy of Health Sciences, the Press Council, and journalists. This collaborative effort reflects a strong commitment to combat tobacco use and improve public health in Gandaki Province.

Vietnam approves national tobacco control strategy : A comprehensive approach to reduce tobacco use

On May 24, 2023, the Deputy Prime Minister of Vietnam approved the National Tobacco Control Strategy, which will be in effect until 2030. The Strategy comprises seven key approaches aimed at reducing tobacco use in the country. These approaches include enhancing the policy framework, enforcing tobacco control laws, raising awareness about the harms of tobacco and the relevant laws, promoting leadership in tobacco control, improving monitoring and evaluation of tobacco control programs, and developing human resources for tobacco control. The Strategy also defines the specific responsibilities of various ministries, media outlets, and local governments in implementing the Strategy. The Union collaborated closely with the Vietnam Tobacco Control Fund in assessing the previous Strategy and formulating this new Strategy.

Exploring tax impacts on SDGs to encourage tax raise for sustainable development

A workshop on the modeling of tax impacts on Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) was conducted by the Central Institute for Economic Management (CIEM), a grantee of The Union, in Da Nang province on 26-27 May 2023. The workshop was attended by 50 participants from local departments of planning and investment, industry and trade, health, and researchers from central provinces. The trainers provided insights into the relationship between tobacco and SDGs, highlighting how tax increases can contribute to improving SDGs globally and in Vietnam. CIEM also shared a portion of their model and its results, including hypothetical scenarios demonstrating the potential increase in budget allocation to local governments from the additional excise tax revenue. CIEM plans to continue organizing similar workshops for participants from southern provinces to garner support for raising tobacco taxes.



Workshop on the modeling of tax impacts on Sustainable Development Goals

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