

MONTHLY
BULLETIN

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

July 2023

Vol. 011

BANGLADESH

HIGHLIGHTS

3rd Mayors' Summit of Bangladesh: Empowering healthy cities through local actions and tobacco control strategies



Group photo session with delegates of 3rd Mayors' Summit of Bangladesh

The 3rd Mayors' Summit of Bangladesh, themed "United Efforts for Healthy Cities," took place in Cox's Bazar, highlighting the significance of local actions in attaining global health objectives. Mayors from 30 municipalities convened to deliberate on strategies for enforcing tobacco control laws and local government guidelines. The summit focused on vital areas, including ensuring smoke-free public spaces and transportation, eradicating tobacco product advertisements, implementing compulsory licenses for tobacco sales, and allocating budgets for tobacco control initiatives.

During the opening session, esteemed guests from diverse health organizations underscored the pivotal role of mayors in managing public health issues. On the second day, 35 mayors from the Asia Pacific region participated, engaging in keynote speeches and discussions concerning leadership, accountability, and sustainability in safeguarding public health.



No Smoking Performance initiated by youths

The summit concluded with a declaration outlining various initiatives aimed at fostering healthy and liveable cities. Mayors committed to implementing measures within their respective jurisdictions to bolster the prevention system. These steps include reducing tobacco and alcohol use, promoting balanced diets and physical activity to prevent non-communicable diseases (NCDs), supporting effective implementation of tobacco control laws and local government guidelines, allocating budgets for tobacco control, avoiding interaction with tobacco companies, providing facilities for physical activities, encouraging urban agriculture, fostering coordination with NGOs and civil society organizations, and ensuring prompt action in response to emergency public health threats.

Strengthening partnerships for public health advancement

The Union team met with key figures in Bangladesh's public health sector.

- The team met with the newly appointed Secretary of Ministry of Liberation War Affairs, Mrs Ishrat Choudhry, a strong advocate for tobacco control in the country. Mrs. Ishrat assured her continued support for advancing tobacco control efforts.
- In a meeting with Dr Bardan Jung Rana, WHO Representative to Bangladesh, the team explored collaboration opportunities in NCDs, healthy cities, tobacco control, dengue prevention, and mayor engagement.
- The team also had a meeting with Dr Akramul Islam, Senior Director, Public Health Program at BRAC to discuss about possible collaboration in promoting smoking cessation within TB Control and The Union's role in the global fund for technical and research assistance.



Meeting with the Dr. Bardan Jung Rana, WHO Representative to Bangladesh



Meeting with Mrs Ishrat Choudhry, Secretary of Ministry of Liberation War Affairs

INDONESIA

National Tobacco Control

Civil Society Coalition rejects draft Presidential tobacco industry's roadmap

Letters expressing opposition to the Tobacco Industry Roadmap were collectively dispatched by a coalition of 20 civil society groups to the Indonesian President, the Coordinating Ministry for Economic Affairs, the Coordinating Ministry for Human Development and Culture, the Ministry of Industry, the Ministry of Manpower, the Ministry of Health, the Ministry of Women's Empowerment and Child Protection, Bappenas, and the State Secretariat. A total of 16 articles were generated regarding this rejection letter sent to the President.



Letter to President: 20 organizations Rejects on Draft Presidential Regulation on Tobacco Products

Unified call to action: Rally against Omnibus Bill

On 7 July, The Union grantee, Muhammadiyah Student Association, Smoke-free Jakarta and Indonesian Child Protection Agency (LPAI), alongside 20 health student community organizations, civil society organizations, and various youth organizations, collectively rallied outside the parliamentary premises to demand action against the Omnibus Bill.



Rally outside of parliament to demand actions against Omnibus Bill

Farmers' response to the draft Omnibus Law on Health

The Muhammadiyah Tobacco Control Support Centre at the University of Magelang organized a press conference with former tobacco farmers. These farmers from Magelang and Temanggung Regencies opposed the Omnibus Law on Health Draft due to insufficient involvement of stakeholders, particularly tobacco farmers, and the removal of important tobacco control measures, such as regulations on tobacco advertising, promotion and sponsorship. Nonetheless, they supported the government's effort to deter future generations from smoking.



Press Conference conducted at Muhammadiyah University of Magelang

Advocating for ban of online tobacco advertisings

Raya Indonesia conducted a workshop to share the findings of their survey on "Tobacco Advertising Ban Advocacy on the Internet." The workshop involved officials from both the Ministry of Health and the Ministry of Communication and Information. The Ministry of Communication and Information's Public Relations department acknowledged the results of the survey on monitoring tobacco advertising and forwarded to the minister to identify strategies to reduce or ban tobacco advertising on the internet



Participants of TAPS Ban workshop organized by Raya Indonesia

Sub-National Tobacco Control

Paving the way for smoke-free sub-districts in Palembang City



Virtual meeting on raising awareness about smoke-free policies

The Union's grantee, ADINKES, organized a virtual meeting with more than 3,000 participants from District Regulation Establishment Bodies (Bapemperda) across Indonesia. The meeting aimed to empower local governments about central policies for reducing smoking rates and promoting smoke-free policies. The initiative's ultimate goal is to declare three villages as smoke-free sub-districts in Palembang City. The meeting secured commitments from attendees to prioritize local tobacco control policies. The meeting was held in coordination with Ministry of Home affairs and engaged the head of Bapemperda.

Strengthening tobacco control policies enforcement in six cities



Social media campaign on Instagram

Jakarta: The Union grantee, Smoke-free Jakarta, re-assessed 294 locations in July to check for violations of tobacco advertising rules. This follows an earlier round of monitoring 6-8 months ago, with a total of 1,000 places to be reviewed. A detailed report will be available by end of August. A joint social media campaign with @jakisuperapp on Instagram started on July 5th, encouraging reporting of violations through the JAKI app. The Instagram account @jakisuperapp is managed by Jakarta Smart City, one of Jakarta's public service agencies.

Tulungagung: C-Strada Kediri, a grantee of The Union, is collaborating with the local health offices of Tulungagung to install 4,000 smoke-free signages in the cities. Currently, 1,000 signages have been successfully installed, with the active involvement of youth ambassadors.

Pontianak: A capacity building session was conducted to enhance the expertise of 60 smoke-free inspectors, providing strong support for the implementation of smoke-free regulations. During the past two months, more than 1,200 "no smoking" signs were installed in Pontianak city.



No Smoking Signage installation in Pagerwojo, Tulungagung



Meeting with the Council of Muslim Consultative Assembly

Aceh: The Union grantee, Aceh Institute, met with the Council of Muslim Consultative Assembly (MPU) on 11 July, seeking support for the issuance of an MPU circular letter to enforce smoke-free regulations in Aceh. The circular letter, backed by MPU's previous edict declaring smoking as haram, aims to strengthen smoke-free implementation in the city. Meanwhile, 23 Banda Aceh inspectors checked 46 venues, issuing warning letters to 13 non-compliant ones.

Depok: On 20 July, random inspections for smoke-free and TAPS (Tobacco Advertising and Promotion Sponsorship) ban compliance were carried out in Depok city at 50 venues. The inspectors promptly took action by removing ashtrays and tobacco banners.

Palembang: On 7 July, 2023, an interdepartmental meeting was convened by the Acting City Secretary and the Head of the Planning Bureau, along with the smoke-free task force, to provide support for the implementation of smoke-free policies in the city.



Interdepartmental meeting on smoke-free implementation in Palembang

Countering tobacco industry interference in Bojonegoro

Airlangga University, a grantee of The Union, provided support to Bojonegoro District in organizing its 3rd public hearing to gain support for local smoke-free policies. This followed a meeting between Tobacco Industry Factory workers and local policymakers in June. The event involved 70 participants from diverse groups, including local government, hotel associations, tobacco farmers, advertising associations, women's groups, students, academics, NGOs, and the media.

Uniting for smoke & vape-free Balanga City

The Union, Ateneo School of Government, and Campaign for Tobacco Free Kids organized a workshop on smoke-free/vape-free ordinance communication strategies in Balanga City, Bataan, from June 20 to 23, 2023. The workshop aimed to develop a successful communications and research plan to effectively implement these regulations. They also met with Balanga City Mayor Hon. Francis Anthony Garcia, Co-Chair of the Asia Pacific Cities Alliance for Health and Development (APCAT), to discuss tobacco control strategies for 2023 to 2024.



Meeting with Mayor of Balanga City

MMDA inspections uncover 1,769 tobacco violations

MMDA (Metropolitan Manila Development Authority) personnel inspected 173 schools and 32 public transportation terminals in the region to assess the sale of tobacco/vapor products, compliance with TAPS regulations, and proper display of No Smoking signage. A total of 1,769 violations were reported to the respective Local Government Units for verification and appropriate action.



Smoke-free/vape-free ordinance communications strategy workshop



Meeting with Secretary of Health

Advocating for stronger TC implementation

On 26 June, The Union and its partners met with Health Secretary Dr Teodoro Herbosa. The focus was on emphasizing the importance of robust tobacco control (TC) implementation, and assigning personnel within the Department to monitor TC activities. The Union is planning to further address the allocation of budget for a permanent position within the Department to oversee the tobacco control portfolio.

Muntinlupa City's ENDS orientation: Raising awareness during No Smoking Month

As part of Muntinlupa City's No Smoking Month activities, an orientation on Electronic Nicotine Delivery Systems (ENDS) was held in Muntinlupa City. The orientation was attended by 57 high school students and teachers from different schools in the city. The main aim of the orientation was to educate the young adolescents about the harmful effects of vape-use and raise awareness about scientifically proven information concerning ENDS.



Muntinlupa City's Orientation on ENDS

Collaboration for Smoke-Free Ordinance compliance study in Mandaluyong City

On 13 June, MMDA, Mandaluyong's City Health Office, and Rizal Technological University (RTU) representatives collaborated on a Compliance Study for Mandaluyong's Smoke-Free Ordinance. The goal is to help the city evaluate policy enforcement effectiveness and enhance health protection for residents. Attendees included RTU's President and Research Faculty, Mandaluyong's City Health Officer, Tobacco Control Program Team, and MMDA's Smoke-Free Environment Project team. Discussions centered on the significance of conducting a policy compliance study and how it will be advantageous to the city's Smoke-Free Task Force.



MMDA meeting with Mandaluyong's City Health Office and RTU

Smoke, vape, and betel quid-free tourism sites launched in Kabayan, Benguet



Participants at Launching of Tobacco-Free Tourism Sites in Kabayan

On 16 June, the Kabayan Municipal Health and Tourism Offices, along with Transcend, organized the Launching of Smoke, Vape, and Betel Quid-Free Tourism Sites in Kabayan, Benguet. Coinciding with No Smoking Month, the event involved municipal officials, employees, tourist guides, and reporters. During the event, the Smoke-Free Municipal Ordinance No. 168 s. 2020 of Kabayan was highlighted, emphasizing the significance of safeguarding the health of people and the environment in tourist sites by declaring them free from smoking, vaping, and betel quid chewing. In an official announcement, the seven wonders of Kabayan, including Mt. Pulag and Four Lakes, were designated as tobacco-free areas.

Buruanga strengthen its Smoke-Free Ordinance by banning ENDS

On June 4, 2023, Smoke-Free Aklan conducted a Compliance Monitoring activity in LGU Buruanga. As a result of the monitoring, Buruanga aims to consider enhancing its Municipal Smoke-Free Ordinance, particularly regarding the sale and usage of Electronic Nicotine Device Systems, Non-Electronic Nicotine Device Systems, and Novel Products.

VIETNAM



The Director of the Tobacco Control Department met with various stakeholders for tobacco cessation efforts in Vietnam

Strengthening tobacco cessation efforts

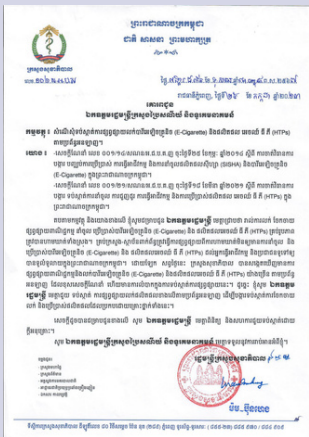
In July 2023, Gan Quan, Director of The Union's Tobacco Control Department, visited Vietnam to discuss priorities for The Union's support on cessation efforts in the country. He met with key stakeholders including the Ministry of Health, Vietnam Tobacco Control Fund, Bach Mai Hospital (national cessation quit line operator), WHO, and civil society representatives. The meetings aimed to identify specific-smoking cessation needs and challenges. Based on the discussions and assessments made during the visit, The Union expressed its commitment to providing support to Vietnam in implementing effective tobacco cessation initiatives.

Exploring tobacco tax impact on SDGs for enhanced public support in Vietnam

During June 29-30, 2023, Central Institute for Economic Management (CIEM) hosted a training workshop in Ho Chi Minh City on the modelling of tax impacts on Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). It included 30 participants from provincial departments, focusing on how tobacco tax can contribute to achieving SDGs targets in Vietnam. Additionally, the workshop sought to garner public support for raising tobacco taxes as a means to advance the country's progress towards SDGs.

CAMBODIA

Cambodian Ministry of Health urges ban on online sales and ads of e-cigarettes and HTPs



The Cambodian Ministry of Health (MoH) has formally asked the Ministry of Post and Telecommunications for help in banning e-cigarettes and heated tobacco products (HTPs) from online platforms and social media. Despite strict prohibitions on these products in Cambodia, the MoH's National Center for Health Promotion (NCHP) noticed an increase in online ads and sales, violating guidelines. The MoH aims to collaborate with the Ministry of Post and Telecommunications to effectively reduce the online presence and promotion of these products.

Monitoring of tobacco cessation clinic in at Sre Sdok Health Center in Pursat Province

BAT appeals court's ruling after MoH's legal victory

In 2022, Cambodia's Ministry of Health achieved a legal victory against tobacco companies, including British American Tobacco (BAT), for violating Tobacco Advertising, Promotion, and Sponsorship (TAPS) ban and Pictorial Health Warning requirements. The court ordered them to pay fines and reimburse the government. However, BAT has not complied, prompting the MoH's lawyers to pursue the case further. BAT's legal representatives have now appealed for it.

NEPAL

Lalitpur Metropolitan's initiatives to advance smoke-free zones and tobacco control



On July 17, 2023, a meeting was held with Lalitpur Metropolitan City Mayor and Metropolitan Police Chief to discuss measures for controlling tobacco use and creating smoke-free zones in the city. The Mayor reported that four areas have already been designated as smoke-free zones, and he expressed commitment to allocate resources for effective tobacco control. The Metropolitan Police Chief discussed an ongoing awareness campaign and conveyed commitment to work towards declaring four more smoke-free areas within the city this year. The meeting involved eight participants, including media journalists and Lalitpur Metropolitan City officials.

Meeting with Mayor of Lalitpur Metropolitan

Proactive measures to establish smoke-free zones in Ward 7 of Bharatpur Metropolitan

Ward 7 authorities in Bharatpur Metropolitan have designated all public places, educational institutions, and government buildings as smoke-free zones. They've installed 50 "No Smoking" signs in places like government buildings, public spaces, and more. Offenders will be penalized as per tobacco control laws. The authorities are committed to maintaining these smoke-free zones through enforcement, awareness campaigns, and collaborations with stakeholders, including community, civil society, and non-governmental organizations, to create a healthier and cleaner environment for residents.



Posting "No Smoking" signages in public places of Bharatpur Metropolitan

TIMOR-LESTE



Meeting with new members of Parliament

Advocating tobacco policy and tax increase for public health

ANCT-TL held a policy meeting with heads of five parliamentary committees at the National Parliament to raise awareness about tobacco policies and the significance of increasing tobacco taxes. They presented final reports on tobacco advertising, smoke-free surveys, and tax policy. The parliamentary members welcomed the survey findings and policy recommendations, and ANCT-TL was invited to present those findings and recommendation to Commission E during their annual meeting with the government.

Calling for action on illicit cigarette sales to enforce tobacco laws

ANCT organized a press conference to unveil the findings of their monitoring of the prevalence of illicit cigarettes being sold in the country. The primary objective was to urge enforcement agencies and the government to promptly enforce tobacco laws. The press conference received extensive coverage, being broadcasted by six local media outlets, including Timor-Leste National TV and three other local media channels. As a result of this initiative, enforcement agencies conducted inspections nationwide, resulting in the confiscation of illicit cigarettes and the imposition of fines.



Press Conference on monitoring of illicit cigarettes

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