

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

MONTHLY BULLETIN

September 2023

Vol. 013

INDONESIA

HIGHLIGHTS

Towards a smoke-free future: Papua's landmark Governor's regulation



Capacity building training on implementation of the new smoke-free policies

The Papua Provincial Government in Indonesia has passed a groundbreaking regulation (Regulation No. 29 of 2023) mandating comprehensive smoke-free policies in public places, workplaces, and public transportation, including a ban on e-cigarettes and all forms of tobacco. This regulation also prohibits tobacco advertising, promotion, sponsorship, and the display of tobacco products at the point of sale throughout the entire province. Papua Province, with a population of approximately 3.4 million residents, spans nine regencies and cities, and this regulation requires prompt implementation at the local level within these districts and cities. The success of this achievement is attributed to collaborative efforts by organizations such as The Union, Yassin Jayapura, Asia Pacific Cities Alliance for Health and Development (APCAT), Association of All Health Offices Indonesia (ADINKES), Ministry of Health and Ministry of Home Affairs, which have provided support and assistance since 2020. The successful outcome underscores the effectiveness of a cooperative approach and the dedication of regional and local leaders. A training for 53 government officials was also held to build capacity on implementation of the new policy.

Dr Tara Singh Bam, Director of The Union Asia Pacific said, "This regulation is a milestone to protect millions of people from tobacco smoke, protect youth from tobacco marketing, and showcases the pivotal role of local leadership in tobacco control, as seen in Papua. This smoke-free rule will ignite hope for a tobacco-free future across Eastern Indonesia and beyond."

The next critical phase of implementation will involve disseminating this policy across the nine regencies and cities within Papua. The Union and Yassin Jayapura will continue to support mayors and regents to adopt and implement local tobacco control policies aligned with the new regulation. This smoke-free regulation is expected to have a positive ripple effect, particularly in Eastern Indonesia, by inspiring other provinces and districts to adopt similar measures in the ongoing battle against tobacco use.

Ministry of Health push for stronger tobacco control regulation

The Ministry of Health organized an inter-ministerial meeting on September 25th and 26th, along with a public hearing on September 20th, to collect feedback on the draft government regulation. The Union and its partners assisted the Ministry of Health in providing evidence-based responses to the feedback received. Despite requests to weaken the provisions, particularly regarding e-cigarettes and implementing 90% pictorial health warnings, the Ministry of Health remained steadfast in maintaining the integrity of the draft. The ministry plans to continue these inter-ministerial meetings over the next two weeks, aiming to finalize and pass the regulation before the end of 2023.

Collaborative efforts for human rights-centered tobacco control in Indonesia



Meeting with the National Commission of Human Rights

The Union's grantee, Rumah Mediasi Indonesia (RMI) in collaboration with the tobacco control network met with the leadership of the National Commission of Human Rights (KOMNAS HAM) with the objective of engaging the agency in the overall tobacco control discussion. KOMNAS HAM has agreed to lead to build the capacity of human rights groups across Indonesia in Tobacco control.

On the 20th of October, KOMNAS HAM will convene a meeting with key Human Rights Institutions, including Komnas HAM, KPAI (Child Protection Commission), KND (National Disability Commission), Komnas Perempuan (National Commission on Violence Against Women), Tobacco Control networks, and representatives of women, children, and persons with disabilities.

Joint press conference against tobacco advertisements & youth smoking initiation

On September 7, Smoke-free Jakarta, in collaboration with the Center of Human and Development (CHED), Ahmad Dahlan Institute of Technology and Business, held a press conference. The event included representatives from Smoke-free Jakarta, Raya Indonesia, the Indonesian Child Protection Agency (LPAI), and Udayana Central. At the conference, the Tobacco Control network released a statement condemning the display of tobacco advertisements at events, emphasizing its harmful impact and aiming to deter youth smoking initiation.



Press conference against TAPS and youth smoking initiation

Engaging youth in tobacco control

Airlangga University and TheCenter for Tobacco Control and Health Development STRADA University organized events to involve young people in tobacco control efforts. These events aimed to raise awareness about the connections between tobacco use and health, social, and economic challenges. In Surabaya, youth that attended the forum will go on to be engaged in more tobacco control activities to build their leadership in the field. In Kediri, with the assistance of 766 primary school students, 4,000 no-smoking signs were installed.



Smoke-free school campaign at Vocational High School, Hasanudin Pare, Kediri, East Java



Youth Forum on Healthy Lifestyles organized at Airlangga University, Surabaya

Enforcement of tobacco control policies

Banda Aceh: 63 personnel were deployed in Banda Aceh for a campaign to install over 3,000 no smoking signs in 1,116 establishments. Additionally, 49 venues were inspected, with 14 found non-compliant with smoke-free regulations, leading to verbal warnings. On 9 Sep, a follow-up meeting with the Council of Muslim Consultative Assembly (MPU) regarding the issuance of an MPU circular letter in support of smoke-free implementation.

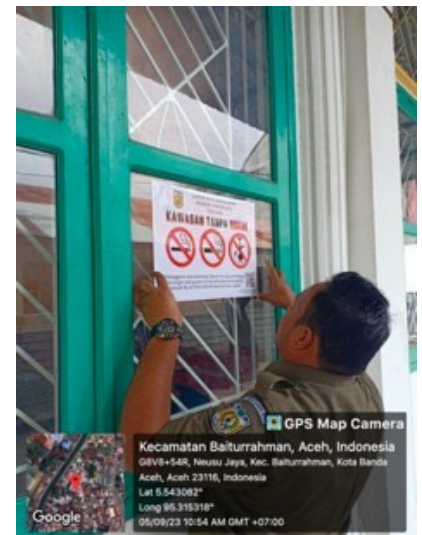
Denpasar: Udayana Central, a grantee of The Union, assisted Bali's local governments in conducting random inspections of 12 prominent hotels and schools in the region. Among these, three non-compliant venues received training on local policies. Additionally, by the end of September, more than 2,000 no smoking signages had been installed throughout the city.

Depok: Depok city achieved third place in the Asean Smokefree Award among 10 cities. They inspected 112 venues, with 86 found non-compliant with smoke-free regulations. A coordination meeting on smoke-free initiatives was held on September 29, engaging 30 participants, including city leaders and youth communities. The City Secretary also shared insights on Depok's smoke-free efforts during The Union Implementation Hub webinar.

Makassar: A technical meeting for the no smoking campaign took place on September 29 and involved teams from Community Health Centers, volunteers, and the Civil Police. By the end of September, over 1,000 venues in the city had been equipped with no smoking signs.

Palembang: Palembang is actively implementing a no-smoking signage campaign, resulting in the installation of 3,500 signs in more than 1,800 venues by the end of September. Additionally, random smoke-free inspections have been conducted, with 315 venues inspected, and 300 of them found to be compliant with smoke-free regulations. Non-compliant venues received warning letters.

Pontianak: 286 establishments were inspected in Pontianak city during September. Compliance was 72.7% with only 78 venues found to have violations. By the end of September, more than 4,300 no smoking signages had been posted in 1,759 venues.



No smoking signage campaign in Banda Aceh

Dhaka program tackles illegal tobacco advertising

On September 26, 2023, National Anti Tuberculosis Association of Bangladesh (NATAB) organized a program in Dhaka titled "Use of Technology in Implementation of Tobacco Control Act: Research and Publication of Results." The event featured the Additional Secretary of the National Tobacco Control Cell, Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, as the chief guest and was attended by delegates from The Union and Bangladesh Cancer Society. The program aimed to collect data on illegal tobacco company advertising campaigns and provide it to district task force committees for law enforcement. The chief guest emphasized the importance of accurate information in enforcing the law and highlighted the government's commitment to making Bangladesh tobacco-free by 2040, aligning with SDG Goal-3 for health.



Program organized by National Anti Tuberculosis Association of Bangladesh

Bangladesh Road Transport Authority leads talks for smokefree public places



Meeting organized by Bangladesh Road Transport Authority

On September 4, 2023, the Bangladesh Road Transport Authority (BRTA) held a discussion meeting in collaboration with Development Activities of Society (DAS) and the Bangladesh Anti-Tobacco Alliance (BATA). BRTA affirmed its dedication to enforcing smoke-free regulations in public places and public transport through measures such as mobile courts. The meeting, chaired by BRTA Chairman Noor Mohammad Majumdar and attended by key officials, aimed to enhance public health and advance the cause of a tobacco-free Bangladesh. During the session, The Union presented a concept paper and strategies were discussed under the guidance of notable figures in attendance.

Singra municipality strives to become a model in tobacco control

On September 21, 2023, a significant meeting took place in Singra Municipality, led by Mayor Mr. Jannatul Ferdous. The focus was on implementing tobacco control initiatives, aiming to transform Singra into a model municipality for tobacco control in alignment with the national objective of achieving a "tobacco-free Bangladesh before 2040," as declared by the Prime Minister. The meeting brought together participants from the AID Foundation, municipal authorities, educators, mosque leaders, and several anti-tobacco organizations.



Meeting on developing Singra as a tobacco free city

Bilateral meeting for successful implementation of LGI guidelines for tobacco control at district level

On September 20, 2023, the AID Foundation held a bilateral meeting with Mr. Md. Amin Ul Ahsan, Additional Secretary of the Cabinet Division (District and Field Administration Division). The primary agenda of the meeting was to discuss the implementation of Local Government Institutions (LGI) guidelines for tobacco control at the district and field levels. The meeting emphasized the importance of applying LGI guidelines effectively to support tobacco control activities. The Additional Secretary pledged to contribute to this effort.



Bilateral meeting with Additional Secretary of the Cabinet Division

Collaborative efforts to ban smoking scenes in Bangladesh's film industry



Meeting with Vice Chairman of the Bangladesh Film Censor Board

On September 25, 2023, the Vice Chairman of the Bangladesh Film Censor Board, Muh. Saifullah, and Censor Board officials met with representatives from the Association for the Prevention Drug Abuse (MANAS), The Union, and Vital Strategies. The purpose of the meeting was to discuss and implement measures to prevent the portrayal of smoking scenes in films that violate the Tobacco Control Act. They also addressed the importance of adhering to the Tobacco Control Act in all activities associated with the Censor Board and the possibility of legal action against those who have already violated the Act. The Vice Chairman of the Bangladesh Film Censor Board assured the delegation of their full cooperation in these efforts.

PHILIPPINES

National Tobacco Control

Fueling healthcare progress: The Union's commitment in the Philippines

On August 11, 2023, The Union participated in the Department of Health's 2nd Multi-Sector Governance Council Meeting for 2023, held at the Bayleaf Hotel in Intramuros, Manila. Dr. Madeleine Valera and Reiner Lorenzo Tamayo represented The Union during the event. During the meeting, The Union reaffirmed its dedication to assisting the Philippines' healthcare sector strategy and Secretary Teodoro Herbosa's comprehensive eight-point action agenda. The Union expressed its continued commitment to collaborating with the Department of Health to achieve the country's healthcare objectives.



DoH's 2nd Multi-Sector Governance Council Meeting

Smoke-Free Aklan empowering enforcers and communities for a tobacco-free future



MPOWER training sessions in LGU Libacao

Smoke-Free Aklan organized training sessions with 50 participants in Local Government Unit (LGU) Malinao on the 8 August and 57 attendees in LGU Libacao on the 10th. These sessions focused on the MPOWER strategy, ordinance enforcement, and concluded with participants pledging their commitment to ensuring a smoke-free environment.

In late August, Smoke-Free Aklan conducted an Enforcers Training in LGU Makato, which was attended by 40 representatives from various agencies. The training included topics such as the municipal ordinance, the health effects of smoking and vaping, and concluded with a commitment pledge administered by the Association of Barangay Chairman President.

MMDA inspections uncover 1,282 tobacco violations

MMDA (Metropolitan Manila Development Authority) personnel inspected the vicinity of 131 schools and 27 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 1,282 violations were reported to the respective Local Government Units for verification and appropriate action.

San Juan city declares smoke-free parks for youth awareness event

On August 24, 2023, Mayor Francis Zamora of San Juan City, officially designated all parks, including Adopt-a-Park (El Polvorin Park), as smoke-free areas. This initiative aims to educate local youth about the risks of smoking and vaping in a smoke-free park environment. Approximately 100 San Juan City youth attended the event, which included an educational booth provided by Vital Strategies, featuring interactive activities to inform participants about the adverse effects of smoking and vaping.



Launching of smoke-free parks in San Juan city

Working towards a healthier future: Quezon city's smoke-free strategy



Exploratory meeting with the Quezon City Smoke-Free Task Force

On August 3, 2023, the Metropolitan Manila Development Authority (MMDA), The Union, and the World Health Organization (WHO) joined forces to host an exploratory meeting with the Quezon City Smoke-Free Task Force. The objective of this gathering was to outline a strategic response to the 2021 Global Adult Tobacco Survey findings within the city. Various enforcement departments from the Quezon City Government participated in this meeting. The main outcome emphasized the need to revise the ordinance to align it with current national laws and ensure more effective enforcement. A consultative meeting with legislators is set for September 11, 2023, and potential enforcer training is scheduled for October 4-6, 2023.

Mayor of Atok leads an information dissemination campaign on smoke-free

On August 25, 2023, Franklin Smith, Mayor of Atok, led an Information Dissemination Campaign on the Implementation of Ordinances through Citation Tickets at the Municipal Hall Covered Court in Sayangan, Paoay, Atok, Benguet. The campaign aimed to raise awareness about local ordinances and promote a smoke-free and tobacco-free environment in Atok. Under the leadership of Mayor Smith and the Mayor's Office of Atok, the event provided a platform for the community to gain a comprehensive understanding of these vital local regulations. The Mayor emphasized the ordinances' importance in safeguarding the health and well-being of Atok's residents, fostering a collaborative effort to ensure their effective implementation, and creating a healthier and safer environment for all in Atok.



Information Dissemination Campaign on smoke-free

PNP-CARTC and Transcend's joint efforts to foster smoke-free communities



Enhanced Community Immersion Program in Benguet

The Philippine National Police Cordillera Administrative Region Training Center (PNP CARTC) recently conducted a 4-day Enhanced Community Immersion Program at San Pascual Elementary School, Tuba, Benguet. On August 8, 2023, Transcend - TICl staff joined them to address around 150 attendees, including parents, students, and police personnel. The discussion focused on the health risks associated with smoking, vaping, betel quid chewing, and the importance of upholding Tuba's Smoke-Free Ordinance. PNP-CARTC actively collaborates with Transcend and the Baguio Health Services Office to advance tobacco-free advocacy and programs in Baguio and Benguet. This partnership highlights the shared commitment to creating a healthier, smoke-free environment.

Strengthening smoke-free initiatives in Benguet

On August 24, Transcend provided technical assistance to the Technical Working Group for Health/Provincial Tobacco Control Network in Benguet, which was attended by various organizations. The primary objective of the meeting was to discuss quarterly activities, challenges, and fund utilization to reinforce smoke-free initiatives while preventing tobacco industry interference.

Malay municipal hospital and Ciriaco S. Tirol hospital excel in smoke-free policy implementation

Smoke-Free Aklan recently conducted an evaluation of policy implementations and documentation at Malay Municipal Hospital and Ciriaco S. Tirol Hospital. The assessment revealed that both hospitals demonstrated a strong adherence to their No Smoking Policy, underscoring their resolute dedication to upholding a smoke-free environment.

Removing tobacco advertisement at the point-of-sale

Action Nepal has been actively involved in ongoing efforts to address the issue of tobacco advertising, particularly at the point of sale. Through consistent follow-up and dialogue with relevant authorities, the team has successfully advocated for stricter regulations to control the promotion of tobacco products. As a result, no new tobacco advertisements were found during our recent monitoring in Kathmandu, Lalitpur, and Bhaktapur in September. 150 point of sale were inspected and found no new tobacco advertisements, marking a significant achievement in curbing such advertising in these areas. Additionally, Action Nepal used this opportunity to educate retailers about the importance of adhering to tobacco advertising laws and regulations.

Lowest tobacco use among ASEAN youth: Insights from the Global Tobacco Survey



Dissemination workshop on GYTS in Siem Reap

In September, two dissemination workshop were conducted in Phnom Penh and Siem Reap, focusing on the findings of the Global Youth Tobacco Survey (GYTS). These workshop engaged total 143 participants (85 in Phnom Penh and 58 in Siem Reap), including government representatives from various Cambodian ministries, provincial health departments, and WHO officials. The survey, conducted in collaboration with the Ministry of Health and the Department of Education, Youth, and Sports, involved 34 schools across Cambodia. The 2022 survey results highlighted a low prevalence of tobacco use among Cambodian youths in this age group, with a national rate of 3.5%, 4.4% among boys, and 2.8% among girls, which is the lowest prevalence of tobacco use among ASEAN countries . The survey also noted a decrease in secondhand smoke exposure in public places and a decline in tobacco industry advertising targeting youth. However, emerging concerns included the use of new tobacco products such as e-cigarettes and heated tobacco products (HTPs) among youths. During the workshop, the participants requested more training on new tobacco products' effects, additional prevention measures, and evaluation for smoke-free city status, similar to Kampot. Officials from Kep province requested for quicker fine processing for tobacco and alcohol violations.

Meeting with mayors: Strengthening retailer compliance & future initiatives



Policy meeting with Deputy Mayor of Bobonaro

In September, National Alliance of Tobacco Control Timor-Leste (ANCT-TL) conducted a meeting with the mayors of Oecusse and Bobonaro to discuss organizing a workshop on retailer compliance within their municipalities. The ANCT-TL team also sought the participation of the mayors in a site visit to local markets and retailers, aiming to identify and address any instances of tobacco promotion materials in shops, kiosks, and public spaces in alignment with their commitment to the Mayor's Declaration and the Baucau Declaration. Additionally, the meeting included discussions about the mayors' priorities for the year 2024.

Collaboration with AIFAESA inspection authority to ensure retailers' compliance

National Alliance of Tobacco Control Timor-Leste (ANCT-TL) met with the Inspection Authority for Food and Sanitation (AIFAESA I.P) to present the results of the survey on smoke-free environments, TAPS (Tobacco Advertising, Promotion, and Sponsorship) and illicit cigarettes. During this meeting, discussions also focused on upcoming retailer workshop organized by ANCT-TL and the mayor alliance in three municipalities and future collaboration plans for 2024. AIFAESA will participate in the workshop and provide insights on inspections, including the launch of retailer compliance for 180 shops in these municipalities. Moreover, the inspection authority recommended continued support from ANCT-TL in providing evidence and coordinating multi-sector efforts.



Meeting with AIFAESA inspection authority

ANCT's media interview: Survey findings & recommendations on tobacco control



ANCT-TL interview with local media

In September, ANCT participated in an interview with National Radio and Television of Timor-Leste (RTTL) to disseminate the findings and recommendations from the surveys on TAPS, smoke-free environments and illicit cigarettes. The director of ANCT-TL, Sancho Fernandes, recommended relevant stakeholders on the importance of implementing and enforcing tobacco laws, in order to protect the people of Timor-Leste from the hazards of tobacco. He also emphasized the significance of raising tobacco taxes and prices, as well as adopting a best-practice taxation system to reduce tobacco use in the country.

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