

Report of High-Level Policy Meeting, 16 March 2021, Jakarta

Our Shared Responsibility - Ending Epidemics: Smoking and COVID-19 in Indonesia

Summary: A National webinar entitled “Our Shared Responsibility, Ending Pandemics: Smoking and COVID-19 in Indonesia” was held on the 16th of March 2021. It was attended 804 participants who consisted of national governments, subnational governments, civil society, NGOs, academicians, media and others. Under the leadership of Minister of Health and Vice Minister, The Ministry of Health is pursuing several strategies such as the revision of regulation PP 109/2012 to accommodate stricter tobacco control regulations including, the increment of a pictorial health warning on tobacco products from 40% presently, to 90%. They also support the increment of tobacco tax; national consultation for smoking cessation services; increasing education to the public through social media and the involvement of multi-stakeholders to accelerate Smokefree Area (SFA) at the regional level. High level officials from Ministry of National Development Planning, Ministry of Home Affairs, Ministry of Finance, Coordinating Ministry for Human Development and Culture, Mayor of Bogor city and Head of ADINKES were also present. The high-level meeting concluded with 6 action points. Feedback from participants was very positive. 25 media articles were generated. The webinar can be viewed on [Facebook](#) & [Youtube](#).

Strong National and Subnational Leadership is essential to end epidemics of smoking and COVID-1

Tobacco use is the leading risk factor for a range of noncommunicable diseases (NCDs) and a major contributor to the high burden of



diseases and deaths in Indonesia. RISKESDAS 2018 showed that the top causes of death in Indonesia are cancer, stroke, chronic kidney disease, diabetes, and hypertension; all of which have one common risk factor: tobacco use. Indonesia has one of the highest smoking rates in the world, with 63% of males (10 years & above) smoking thereby exacerbating the high incidents of NCDs. Smoking has contributed to over 235,000 deaths each year. Evidence has emerged that those who smoke and/or have pre-existing conditions are at higher risk of more severe COVID-19. It is clear that smoking and COVID-19 should be tackled concurrently. This webinar was organised in response to the urgency of having integrated responses for the COVID-19 pandemic and the tobacco epidemic.

With the technical assistance of The Union, the high-level webinar was jointly organised by Ministry of Home Affairs (MOHA); Ministry of Health (MOH); The Association of All Indonesian Health Offices (ADINKES) and Asia Pacific Cities Alliance for Health and Development (APCAT). The objectives were to frame national government’s strategies and inter-ministerial coordination and strengthen tobacco control policies and programs at national and sub-national level.

The webinar was participated by **804** participants over zoom consisting of national/subnational governments (505), civil society/NGOs (161), academicians (75), media (16) and others/student (47).

The webinar consisted of 2 parts: opening segment, and government’s high-level panel. There was a total of 9 speakers for the webinar. Key highlights of each speaker have been outlined in the following sections.

BUDI GUNADI SADIKIN, Minister of Health, Indonesia prioritises tobacco control in responding to COVID-19, noncommunicable diseases, tuberculosis and outlines amendments of government regulation PP109/2012 as key strategy

Hon’ble Health Minister highlighted the facts and figures about COVID-19 and tobacco smoking, and the strategic directions of the Ministry of Health. He pointed out;

- Smokers are considered a vulnerable group for COVID-19 transmission and morbidity. Despite this, smoking prevalence has actually increased during this pandemic. Additionally, smoking is also a risk factor for tuberculosis and a range noncommunicable diseases which have high mortality rate in Indonesia. For these reasons, we must control the smoking prevalence in order to achieve our health goals.
- Smoking prevalence for youth is increasing. Over 9.1% of teenagers in Indonesia smoke. A contributing factor is the large number of cigarette advertising that children are exposed to. The Indonesian National Mid-Term Development Plan 2020-2024 (RPJMN) aims to decrease youth (10-19 years of age) smoking to 8.7% by 2024
- Data shows that families from low-income households are spending more money on cigarettes rather than essential food items.
- **Several strategies are being pursued by MOH including revision of the government regulation PP 109/2012 to accommodate stricter tobacco control regulation including the increment of a pictorial health warning**



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on tobacco products to 90%; prohibition of selling single sticks; regulate electronic cigarettes & heated tobacco products; and prohibition of tobacco advertising online and outdoor mediums. In addition, MOH is also increasing education to the public through social media; involving multi-stakeholders to accelerate Smokefree Area (SFA) at the regional level and support the increment of cigarette excise tax by as much as possible and introducing provision of national consultation for smoking cessation services.

Dr. Dante Harbuwono, Vice Minister of Health:

Hon'ble Vice Minister reemphasised that Indonesia must apply comprehensive strategies such as those mentioned by WHO in the MPOWER package. A revision of the national regulation PP109/2012 is a top priority for the Ministry of Health aside from vaccination roll out for COVID-19.



MOH is committed to include a 90% pictorial health warning on tobacco packs, ban outdoor and online tobacco advertising, prohibition of display of tobacco products at the point-of-sale and other provisions. The increase in youth smoking shows that attention to tobacco control policies needs to be more aggressive. Decreasing youth smoking is an important KPI for MOH. Early smoking is an indicator of life long adult smoking which also continues to increase in Indonesia.

Dr. Bima Arya, Mayor, Bogor City & Co-Chair of APCAT:

Hon'ble Mayor Dr. Bima Arya expressed that the key to controlling the tobacco epidemic is political will. contribution from every stakeholder national government, subnational government, public sectors, private sector, civil societies and public is needed. By undertaking this shared responsibility, Indonesia will be able to decrease youth smoking prevalence and to curb the tobacco epidemic.



In Bogor City, we are continuously strengthening, and not weakening, existing health policies. In the past there were attempts by pro-tobacco parties to weaken our policies, however, Bogor has managed to overcome them by implementing even stronger laws. Our advertising revenue has increased 100 billion rupiah from other type of advertising since initiating our comprehensive TAPS ban

showing that we need not rely on tobacco advertising. Besides tobacco control, Bogor City also promotes healthy lifestyles.

Preventive measures are most effective for NCDs- creating safe spaces for cycling, jogging or other physical activities are important if we want people to choose healthier lifestyles. He also proudly said that APCAT, a regional alliance of leaders from 78 cities that aims to gain political will and share experiences with the fellow mayors for improvements of our actions in tobacco control and NCDs.

Mr Pungkas Bah Bahjuri Ali, Director, Ministry of National Development Planning (Bappenas):

A package of fiscal and non-fiscal policies is the way forward to curb the tobacco epidemic. One such fiscal policy would be the simplification of the tobacco tax system and continual increase of tobacco tax in order to make cigarettes less affordable. At the same time, it is also important to mitigate the impact on tobacco industry workers and farmers. These strategies would require the support of various national and subnational stakeholders.



Budiono Subambang, Director, Ministry of Home Affairs:

MOHA provides technical and strategic support to all subnational governments to adopt and implement smokefree local policies. The goal is to have all local jurisdictions adopt and enforce comprehensive policies and achieve a high compliance rate. Regional governments should develop yearly targets and mid-term targets to control tobacco use. MOHA is responsible to ensure that national goals are implemented at the local level.



Dr Nancy Anggaraini, Deputy Assistant for Disease Control, Coordinating Ministry for Human Development and Culture:

A vital approach to curb smoking prevalence is to have strong national policies. The Coordinating Ministry urges all stakeholders to support the amendments of PP109/2012 so that Indonesia can achieve its RPJMN goals.



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Mr Febri Ardian Pangestu, Policy Analyst, Fiscal Policy Agency, Ministry of Finance:

The price of cigarettes in Indonesia remains one of the lowest in the world which contributes significantly to the high smoking rate. Higher tax will also generate revenue for governments which can be used as a source of funding for Universal Health Care, Health systems and Health programs all of which are being strained due to the presence of COVID-19.



The excise tariff policy negatively affects growth in 2020, cigarette sales have decreased by 322 million cigarettes or a 9.7% turn from 2019, the highest decrease is on type 1 cigarettes. However, we observe that the consumers shifted to lower priced cigarettes. MOF is also mitigating the impact of the policy to farmers. Revenue sharing of excise is one way (50% of the total allocation of DBHCHT fund; law enforcement 25% and health 25%). We can also provide farmers with training for other crop if they would like to exit from the tobacco farming.

To support the National Mid-Term Development Plan goals, the MOF will pursue the simplification of tobacco excise tariff structure and increase tobacco tax. MOF will also anticipate the policies for new products such as e-cigarettes given their increasingly heavy use among youth. MOF will work together with other national and subnational governments to develop policies that are optimal. It will also be important for the public to be educated on the impact of tobacco tax to health.

Dr. Muhammad Subuh, Head, ADINKES:

ADINKES is always open to collaborate with all parties to end the smoking epidemic in Indonesia by working together with national and subnational governments, civil societies and the community. ADINKES supports local governments to adopting and implementing strategies such as smokefree areas, ban tobacco advertising and promotion and many other evidence-based policies. At national level, it coordinates with MOH and MOHA to improve government's regulation such as PP109. Subnational movements can move policy decisions for tobacco control and make tobacco control a priority. Tobacco control is the key to control noncommunicable and communicable diseases.



Kelly Larson, Bloomberg Philanthropies:

Leadership and political will are critical to the success of tobacco control. In Indonesia, hence, we are grateful to see the commitments of Minister of Health and other high-level officials from various Ministries. The pandemic has reinforced the need for strong tobacco control policies given that smokers are at greater risk of developing severe disease and death. Every year 235,000 people die as a result of tobacco use in Indonesia. Thus, strong tobacco control programs are critical to the fight against tobacco use and saving lives. Very strong subnational policies have been seen in cities such as Bogor of which Mayor Bima is leading the way. Our support is continued to implement WHO best-buys and evidence-based policies such as higher tax, TAPS ban, smokefree, larger graphic health warnings.



The Union:

The Union is the world's first global health organization, founded in 1920, working to improve health for people in low- and middle-income countries. We achieve our goals by conducting scientific research, working with governments and non-government agencies to translate research into policies and practice for better health of the people around the world, and delivering projects directly on the field, driving change to ensure the best quality care.

The Union is committed to continuing the support for the government of Indonesia in advancing tobacco control, the fight against TB, and NCDs. Our technical, education and research work in the field of TB and tobacco control has continued over several decades in Indonesia. We work together with a broad spectrum of individuals and groups from various backgrounds and sectors – policy makers, public health, health care, academic, voluntary. We work with MOH, subnational governments and with many professional and civil society organizations. Our professional partners are Indonesian Mayor and Regent Alliance for Tobacco Control and Prevention of NCDs, Indonesian Public Health Association, Association of Public Health Offices Indonesia (ADINKES), University of Indonesia, University of Udayana, University of Hasanuddin, University of Airlangga and our key civil society partners are Muhammadiyah and Nahdlatul Ulama.

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CONCLUSIONS AND KEY ACTIONS TO BE TAKEN

The webinar brought to light the linkages between tobacco use, COVID-19, NCDs and TB. The MOH and other government agencies and over 800 attendees in the webinar demonstrated enthusiastic support for strong tobacco control laws both at the national and subnational level, in particular revisions in government regulation PP109/2012 and improvement of tobacco taxation.

Key Agreed Actions to be taken immediately

1. Minister of Health and Vice-Minister of Health recognized the urgency for a strong tobacco control mechanism to curb smoking in Indonesia. Thus, Ministry of Health leads to ensure the amendment of PP109/2012 by end of 2021. The amendment should include a 90% pictorial health warning on tobacco packs, prohibition of internet and outdoor advertisement, ban display of tobacco products at the point-of-sale, prohibition of sale of single sticks, and 100% smokefree environments.
2. Ministry of Finance (MOF) and Ministry of National Development Planning (Bappenas) noted the importance of fiscal and non-fiscal measures to combat tobacco epidemic in Indonesia. Therefore, MOF takes a lead role in coordination with MOH and Bappenas to increase tobacco tax by at least 25% on average and simplify the tax structures
3. Coordinating Ministry for Human Development and Culture (PMK) demonstrated a key role in building inter-ministerial support for tobacco control. Thus, PMK coordinates with MOH to speed up the amendment of PP109/2012 with the provisions strong tobacco control measures.
4. Ministry of Home Affairs (MOHA) plays pivotal role to make subnational government accountable in tobacco control policy development and implementation. Thus, MOHA guides subnational government to ensure development and implementation of comprehensive smokefree policies included in city/district's annual plan and budget
5. Mayor's leadership shows a successful implementation of tobacco control and prevention of industry's interferences. Thus, Indonesian Mayor and Regent's Alliance in coordination with APCAT should expand its network by sharing experiences, lessons learned and countermeasures to their fellow mayors.

6. Civil Society, professional organizations including ADINKES and media play an important role to support government in policy development, implementation and monitoring. Thus, there is a need to strengthen coordination, collaboration and increase synergy between government and non-government sector to improve tobacco control in Indonesia.

AUDIENCE RESPONSE

Of the 804 attendees, slightly over half (405) of them provided webinar feedback:

- 1) 94.1% of respondents agreed/strongly agreed that tobacco control helps COVID-19 response.
- 2) 96.5% of respondents agreed/strongly agreed that they were now aware that tobacco use exacerbates COVID-19 and can worsen other comorbidities.
- 3) 63.7% of respondents felt that national and subnational government should have sufficient coordination and communication to curb tobacco use
- 4) 96.8% of respondents felt that the webinar delivered information they expected; 96.7% felt that the information was presented clearly; 89.9% felt that the duration of the webinar was sufficient.
- 5) 96.5% of respondents felt that they gained new knowledge useful to their work
- 6) 67.5% of respondents noted that Ministry of Home Affairs has a central role to coordinate and communicate with subnational governments.

WATCH

[Facebook](#) & [Youtube](#)

MEDIA GENERATED

1. Indonesia; The Jakarta Post; [Indonesia faces triple health burden: COVID-19, TB and smoking.](#)
2. Indonesia; National Kontan; [Pursuing the target of reducing the prevalence of smokers, the affordability of cigarette prices is in the spotlight](#)
3. Indonesia; Nasional Tempo; [Lentrara Anak Urges Minister of Health to PP on Tobacco To Reduce Child Smokers](#)
4. Indonesia; Akurat.co; [Smokers are Venerable to COVID and Threatened Children with Stunting](#)
5. Indonesia; Suara.com; [Urgent! Revision of PP 109/2012 is Mandatory to Prevent the Increase of Child Smokers](#)
6. Indonesia; Suara.com; [Pressing the Prevalence of Smokers, Supervision of Cigarette Prices is in the Spotlight](#)
7. Indonesia; Liptan6.com; [Cheap Cigarette Prices Become a Spotlight, Customs Conducts Periodic Monitoring](#)
8. Indonesia, Sumbawa News; [The Covid-19 Pandemic Has Potential to Increase Child Smokers, Lentara Anak Supports the Minister of Health to Immediately Revise PP 109/2012](#)

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9. Indonesia; Tribune Medan; [Minister of Health: Alert, Vulnerable Smokers Exposed to Covid-19, YPI Asks to Strengthen the Regional Regulation on KTR](#)
10. Indonesia; medcom.id; [The government is asked to tighten the control of cigarette prices in order to reduce the prevalence of smokers.](#)
11. Indonesia; Headtopics.com; [The COVID-19 Pandemic Increases Child Smokers – these are the steps being considered by the Minister of Health](#)
12. Indonesia; Gosumut; [Minister of Health – Smokers are vulnerable to COVID-19 exposure.](#)
13. Indonesia; Teras Medan; [Minister of Health – Smokers are vulnerable to COVID-19 exposure.](#)
14. Indonesia; Matalinga.com; [Minister of Health: Alert, Smokers Are Vulnerable to be Exposed to Covid-19](#)
15. Indonesia; Lensa Medan; [Minister of Health: Alert, Vulnerable Smokers Exposed to Covid-19, Need to Strengthen the Regional Regulation on KTR and Revision of PP 109](#)
16. Indonesia; Viva; [The COVID-19 Pandemic Increases Child Smokers – these are the steps being considered by the Minister of Health](#)
17. Indonesia; Mimbarakyat; [Minister of Health: Alert, Smokers Are Vulnerable to be Exposed to Covid-19](#)
18. Indonesia; Kongkrit.com; [Minister of Health: Alert, Vulnerable Smokers Exposed to Covid-19, Need to Strengthen the Regional Regulation on KTR and Revision of PP 109](#)
19. Indonesia; ebdesk.com; [Lentara Anak support revision of PP109/2012](#)
20. India; Citizen News Service; [Embarrassment of Riches: Are we doing enough to avert tobacco deaths in Indonesia?](#)
21. Kashmir; Kashmiri Times; [Embarrassment of Riches: Are we doing enough to avert tobacco deaths in Indonesia?](#)
22. India; Mangalorean; [Embarrassment of Riches: Are we doing enough to avert tobacco deaths in Indonesia?](#)
23. SD 24 News; [Embarrassment of Riches: Are we doing enough to avert tobacco deaths in Indonesia?](#)
24. India; ISMA Times; [Embarrassment of Riches: Are we doing enough to avert tobacco deaths in Indonesia?](#)
25. Pakistan; Pakistan Christian Post; [Embarrassment of Riches: Are we doing enough to avert tobacco deaths in Indonesia?](#)