

5th APCAT- The Asia Pacific Summit of Mayors

Report: 17th December 2020,

Mayors and subnational leaders are responsible to lead communities through the threat of pandemics.

In 2020 the world has faced an unprecedented pandemic that has thrown public health into limelight. Evidence has emerged that those most at risk of dying or becoming extremely ill from COVID-19 are those with pre-existing non-communicable diseases (NCDs). These NCDs include cardiovascular diseases (such as hypertension, heart attacks, other heart diseases or stroke), diabetes, cancers, and chronic respiratory diseases. Tobacco is a leading common risk factor for major NCDs that account for over 70% of untimely deaths globally, and it also increases the risk of communicable diseases (CDs) like world's biggest killer infectious disease, TB. The tobacco pandemic is entirely preventable and avoidable.

The 5th APCAT- The Asia Pacific Summit of Mayors helped to show the urgency of having integrated responses for NCDs, CDs, and tobacco control during the COVID-19 pandemic. The theme for this year's summit was **"Mayor's Response to NCDs, Lung Health and Tobacco Use during COVID-19"**. The 3-hour summit was attended by 543 participants from 20 countries globally (out of 759 registrations). Participants represented national and subnational governments, academicians, civil societies, health professionals and other professional organizations, students, and the media. Shobha Shukla from Citizen News Service (CNS) and Coordinator of APCAT Media moderated the session.

The summit was jointly organised by The International Union Against Tuberculosis and Lung Disease (The Union); Bharatpur Metropolitan, Nepal; Bogor City, Indonesia; Balanga City, Philippines; Ministry of Health and Sports, Myanmar; Ministry of Health, Indonesia; APCAT Parliamentarians, APCAT Media and World Health Organization Civil Society Working Group for

NCDs. The Union Asia Pacific is the permanent Secretariat of APCAT.

The summit consisted of 4 parts: Opening segment, Experts panel, Mayors' panel and Closing. There was a total of 20 speakers for the summit, key highlights of each of their presentations will be outlined in the following sections.



Opening Segment

Strong Political Commitment, policies and health systems have seen Bharatpur through the pandemic.



“In 2020, several efforts have been made to advance tobacco control – placing clear signages in all public places, implementing penalties for violations and setting up cessation services in B.P Koirala Memorial Cancer Hospital. Bharatpur strengthened its health system by ensuring sufficient beds, selected free healthcare services and medicines as well as ensuring services such as delivering TB medicines has not been disrupted.” – **Renu Dahal**, Mayor, Bharatpur Metropolitan

Deaths from the 4 pandemics (of COVID-19, NCDs, TB and tobacco) can be avoided with strong political leadership.



“This APCAT Summit’s importance is unlike any other ones in the previous years. Over 72 million cases of COVID-19 worldwide have occurred and over 1.6 million people have died. Millions more lives, families, and livelihoods upended. This is the heart-wrenching heavy price the world has had to pay for weak health systems, poor tobacco control, ineffective prevention of non-communicable diseases (NCDs), and weak action on communicable diseases and other social and commercial determinants of health. At this juncture, we stand united in solidarity – as we not only face a shared threat, but also have a shared responsibility. All these deaths from these four pandemics (of COVID-19, NCDs, TB and tobacco) are preventable. This is where political leadership is so critical” – **Dr Guy Marks**, President of the International Union Against Tuberculosis and Lung Disease (The Union)

Deadly partnership – COVID-19, NCDs and Tobacco Use.



“The Asia Pacific region accounts for 2.3 million of the eight million deaths caused by tobacco worldwide each year, and has the highest smoking rates in the world, with two-thirds of all men using tobacco. Tobacco use is also a significant risk factor for Non-communicable diseases (NCDs). We know that people with underlying NCDs are at greater risk of dying from COVID-19. It makes us realise that we need to double down on NCDs prevention. One way we can all help is by passing proven MPOWER policies” – **Kelly Larson**, Bloomberg Philanthropies

Addressing NCDs during and after COVID-19 is the way to build back a better world.



“Before COVID-19, only 17 of 194 WHO member countries were on track to meet SGD 3.4 for women and 15 for men. 7 of the 10 leading causes of death globally are NCDs (compared to 4 out of 10 twenty years ago). These rapidly increasing numbers in death from NCDs drain resources, undermine trust in institutions and exacerbate inequalities. We must redouble our efforts to stamp out this affront to public health and socio-economic development. What works best is WHO best buys. It is a clear and proven public health interventions. The deadly interplay between COVID-19 and NCDs has brought us to this critical juncture. COVID-19 has left many people living with NCDs - undiagnosed, untreated and unprotected. This will lead to a surge and pressure on the health system in the coming years. Solidarity is humanity. Solidarity is survival.” – **Dr Guy Fones**, Head Secretariat of the Global Coordination Mechanism on NCDs (GCM/NCD), World Health Organisation, Geneva.

Bogor City's strategy – Contact tracing, Testing, Education and Health system preparedness



“APCAT’s vision is to build strong tobacco and NCD control through political commitment, new partnerships and new sustainable and effective utilization of resources. The vast majority of those that succumbed to COVID-19 in Bogor had underlying health

conditions such as NCDs and Lung Diseases. Bogor City adopted 4 strategies, 1) Contact tracing, 2) Testing, 3) Education and 4) Health system preparedness. Bogor city has never relaxed on Smokefree enforcement during this period, instead we have adapted safe ways for law enforcement to carry out random checks and protocols. To the cigarette industry, I say, you will not be entering the city of Bogor. For NCDs we have implemented monitoring by WhatsApp, thereby allowing follow ups from the safety of a patient’s home.” - **Dr Bima Arya Sugiarto**, Bogor City, Indonesia and co-chair of APCAT.

Balanga City issued ordinances and Smokefree systems to ensure life could resume and adopt a new normal.



“Lockdowns have been critical to give cities time to assess the situation, obtain testing tools, sufficient PPE, build strategies and health system preparedness. The province of Bataan has set up a state-of-the-art PCR lab to ensure testing is efficient and accurate.

Contact tracing is also another vital tool that we have used to contain cluster outbreaks. People in Balanga are used to a Smokefree and regulated environment and this did not lapse during this year. We have issued ordinances to ensure safe distancing and allow for safe reopening of our city. Every death is a death that can be prevented. With all these measures in place, we hope to limit the additional deaths. Each additional loss of life serves as a reminder that we cannot let our guard down. To adapt, we have also moved some fitness classes online such as online Zumba. All our other health programs have also found ways to adapt during this period instead of stopping.” – **Francis A. Garcia**, Mayor, Balanga City, Philippines & Co-chair of APCAT.

Indonesia government continues to make efforts to achieve a healthier Indonesia.



“One of the tobacco control strategies in Indonesia is implementing smokefree public areas. 397 subnational regions in Indonesia have adopted these local policies. Our hope is that this will be expanded, efficiently implemented and adopted comprehensively in all jurisdictions. Indonesia is also developing a roadmap for tobacco control with a goal to create a healthier society. I would like to take the opportunity to remind us that we need to work together. We hope that this summit will strengthen our commitments to creating and improving health programs by adopting a new normal in the COVID-19 era. We also aim to achieve sustainability for the NCDs and TB health services. I believe we are going to get through this together.” – **Dr Oscar Primadi**, Secretary General, Ministry of Health, Indonesia

It is the shared responsibility of all – national, subnational, community and individual to overcome COVID-19.



“This Pandemic has brought about additional challenges for us to achieve SGD targets. Since the first outbreak in March 2020, the government of Indonesia has conducted various strategies to limit the spread. Primarily we have encouraged the 3 principles for the public: 1) wearing facemasks, 2) safe distancing and 3) handwashing. We have also adopted the 3 Ts, 1) Testing, 2) Tracing, 3) Treatment. The government has also created a task force, which includes all stakeholder ministries that has a mandate to see us through this pandemic and support the recovery during post pandemic. This pandemic is a community health emergency and is therefore all our shared responsibility - national, subnational, community and individual to respond to overcome it. Additionally, the government will make the vaccine available for all Indonesian people.” – **Prof. Dr. Muhajir Effendy**, Minister, Coordinating Ministry for Human Development and Cultural Affairs, Indonesia.

Expert's Panel

A lot of progress has been made in tobacco control but we still have a long way to go.



“In the last 10 years much, progress has been made in tobacco control policies in the region, in particular many countries have been able to adopt large pictorial health warning on tobacco packages. Progress has also been made in banning Tobacco advertising for example in the subnational in Indonesia. In comparison, little progress has been made in raising tax and price of tobacco products. Smoking doubled the risk of COVID-19 disease progression. It also increases transmission due to the hand-to-mouth action and sharing of waterpipes and spitting. There is also emerging evidence on vaping. The tobacco Industry has also jumped at the opportunity to polish its image by conducting many cooperate social responsibility (CSR) activities such as donation of PPE and other essential items and not forgetting their involvement in vaccine development.” – **Gan Quan**, Director of Tobacco Control, The Union

Indonesia will continue to carry out the priority health programmes without disruption though COVID-19 in order to end TB by 2050.



The government of Indonesia aims to reduce TB cases by 90% and end TB by 2050. Multisectoral efforts, evaluating of existing strategies and building accountability are vital methods to achieving our targets. Despite the COVID-19 pandemic

the president of Indonesia has stated that Indonesia will continue to carry out the priority health programmes without disruption. One of the most vital strategies we are using is to strengthen the capacity of city leaders to respond to TB and other health policies. Through this, we hope to ensure that we optimise the distribution of medication, access to TB services, screening, diagnosis and others. When we are discussing about lung health, we cannot separate it from tobacco control. TB and tobacco use are closely linked. Alarmingly, 9.1% between the ages of 10-18 are smoking in Indonesia. We hope that subnational

leaders are able to aid to implement and enforce Smokefree areas thereby protecting health for all. – **Dr. M. Subuh**, Advisor to the Minister of Health, Indonesia & Head, Indonesia Health Office Association.

Mayor's Panel

Klungkung Regency adopts collaborative government and community actions to maintain a healthy city



“Klungkung regency has succeeded to decrease smoking prevalence down to 13.5% and held the record as the lowest smoking prevalence in Bali Provinces. Klungkung has also banned tobacco outdoor and point of sale advertisements. The success story of Klungkung is due to the commitment and participation from city government and strong participation from the public in protecting people from harmful substances.” – **I Nyoman Suwirta**, Regent, Klungkung

Nay Pyi Taw harnesses the increased attention to health by accelerating public education to build support for smokefree



“Nay Pyi Taw Development Committee (NPTC) is committed to secure the health and wellbeing of our citizens by creating a smoke-free environment and integrating tobacco control activities in all aspects. Meetings, with local authority and other stakeholders, were found to be crucial and effective in strengthening tobacco control measures and increasing compliance. NPTDC has plan to strengthen tobacco control activities by creating more smokefree public places and work places, posing appropriate license fees for tobacco wholesale distributors and shops, imposing fines for any type of violations and initiating another round of compliance survey.” - **Dr. Myo Aung**, Mayor of Nay Pyi Taw, Myanmar.

Kampong Cham plans to take the lead to share strategies across all regions in Cambodia.



“Kampong Cham Province plans to seek more partners to work on NCDs, Tobacco use and NCDs, develop more innovative programs for health promotion and design tools for M&E to identify the whole spectrum of health issues, including tobacco use and lungs disease. Kampong also plans to develop an experience exchange manual that connects tobacco use, lungs disease and COVID-19, which can be shared with other regions across Cambodia as we believe that together, we will be able to get out of this daunting time of COVID-19.” – **Han Kosal**, Vice Governor, Kampong Cham Province, Cambodia

In Yogyakarta city, integration of COVID-19 and smoking advisories is the key.



“Yogyakarta city is committed to implementing a smokefree areas with strict enforcement. Even during the COVID-19 pandemic, the city launched Malioboro street, (one of the main tourist sites in Yogyakarta) as a completely non-smoking area. The city also integrated tobacco control policy with COVID-19 response by conducting a campaign called “4M + 1TM” which refers to: Wear A Mask Properly, Wash Hands with Soap, Avoid Crowds, and No Smoking.” – **Haryadi Suyuti**, Mayor, Yogyakarta City, Indonesia

Increased Public Education is vital to prevent COVID-19 transmission in Ermera Municipality.



“We have deployed teams in the borders and throughout the city to inform travellers and the community about COVID-19 and how to avoid transmission. Similarly, campaigns against tobacco use and alcohol have been sustained. Ermera collaborates all relevant stakeholders and Ministries for a multisectoral approach. Throughout these several years of our efforts, the rate of tobacco use has reduced in Ermera. For NCDs, we have built

outdoor gyms to encourage physical activity.” – **Jose Martinho Dos Santos Soares**, Mayor, Ermera Municipality, Timor-Leste

After a difficult start, Bengaluru is fighting back against COVID-19



“Bengaluru has had quite a large outbreak of COVID-19. Thankfully in the last few months, the number of cases and fatalities has greatly reduced. This was made possible by the increased capacity for testing, public education and contact tracing. We have also increased testing in certain groups such as those with NCDs and other known co-morbidities which has greatly impacted their rate of survival. Increased number of beds have also been made available for COVID-19 patients. To support the efforts, sale of chewing tobacco (to prevent spitting) and public smoking has been banned.” - **Mr Manjunath Prasad**, IAS Commissioner; Bruhat Bengaluru; Karnataka, India

Manikganj continues to be committed to NCD prevention and Tobacco Control through the COVID-19 Pandemic.



“Manikganj City has been working intensely for the last four years to prioritise Tobacco control and NCD prevention. Sellers of tobacco products are now needed to apply a special license. This controls unwarranted shops and allows for better regulations. Sale has also been banned within 100 yards of hospitals and schools. Penalties are also issued to those who break the laws. All government offices in the municipal area has been declared as Smokefree areas. Use of Tobacco products are banned in public places and public transports. We also have implemented compulsory masks wearing at all times. To implement and enforce all these measures, the government works with all relevant stakeholders and also engages civil societies for a whole community approach.” – **Gazi Kamrul Huda Selim**, Mayor, Manikganj City, Bangladesh

Dili aims to be a healthy model city for Timor-Leste



“ When the first COVID-19 case was confirmed in Dili, a COVID-19 prevention commission was established. The commission increased awareness on the prevention of the transmission of COVID-19. The commission is

also in charge of infrastructure such as building of more handwashing stations, prevention of imported cases, conducting surveillance and contact tracing. Dili has 3 main activities, which will be implemented in 2021, 1) declare a village as a free tobacco village, 2) Make several areas in the Municipality Smokefree and 3) Launch a tobacco free Generation – **Gaspar Soares**, Mayor, Dili, Timor-Leste

Depok City is Committed to Implementation of Smokefree



“Depok city adopted its Smokefree regulation 8 years ago and implementation is getting better each year. During COVID-19, Smokefree enforcement was adapted with the health protocols in mind. We continue to conduct random inspections and remove

violations several times a month. Implementing Smokefree Area is not Easy, but it is possible to make it happen.” – **Dr. K. H. Mohammad Idris**, Mayor, Depok, Indonesia

Key Recommendations

This webinar raised the spotlight on the critical role of local leaders, which becomes even more important during the pandemics. NCDs and COVID-19 pandemics have one common risk factor – tobacco use-- which is entirely preventable.

This year’s declaration included 6 points to accelerate progress towards eventually ending tobacco, as well as preventing the avoidable burden of COVID-19, NCDs,

and communicable diseases and thereby averting untimely deaths. The declaration, was presented by Mayor **Francis A. Garcia** of Balanga City Philippines and co-chair of APCAT.

APCAT commits to accelerate progress towards eventually ending tobacco, as well as preventing the avoidable burden of COVID-19, NCDs and CDs and thereby avert untimely deaths, by:

1. Sustaining effective implementation of tobacco control programs that include smokefree environments; complete ban of tobacco advertising, promotion and sponsorship; promotion of larger graphic health warning on tobacco packs and smoking cessation programs; and ban electronic cigarettes, heated tobacco products, shisha and similar products,
2. Ensuring NCDs prevention and treatment services are sustained with inclusion of NCDs in COVID-19 responses as part of health security, acknowledging the links between COVID-19 complications and underlying chronic conditions,
3. Continuing delivery of routine care, supplies of essential medicines and technologies, screening and diagnosis, access to resources, and supportive services for ongoing management of tuberculosis and other lung diseases,
4. Rejecting funding, logistics, donations or grants from, and partnerships with, any entity related to any unhealthy commodity industries (*such as tobacco, alcohol, sugary and sweetened beverages*) and pseudo-science funded by these industries and their front groups,
5. Working with national government and policy makers to raise taxes and prices on unhealthy commodities, tobacco products, alcohol, sugary and sweetened beverages,
6. Adhering to public health and scientific expertise for prevention and management of COVID-19 effectively, and by rebuilding our cities in a way that improves public health system.

Secretariat roles

Role of The Union Asia Pacific, The Permanent Secretariat of APCAT



At the closing of the 5th APCAT summit, **Dr Tara Singh Bam**, Deputy Regional Director of the Union Asia Pacific, highlighted the roles of The Union Asia Pacific (UAP), permanent Secretariat of APCAT. The UAP supports the sharing of best practices by organising webinars, media conference and producing publications. UAP also

provides technical assistance in designing and providing evidence for tobacco control, NCDs prevention, TB control and COVID-19 response programs. Furthermore, the role of the secretariat is to measure the impact of APCAT by assessing program interventions, identifying local solutions and development of action plans with resources. Last but not least, UAP believes that fostering partnerships between parliament, government, media, national organisations, international organisations and civil society is the key to achieving all the goals of APCAT.

Evaluation and Feedback

There was a total of 64 respondents for the post summit evaluation survey. Responses were measured from a scale of 1 to 5. With 4 and 5 being positive, 3 neutral and 2 and 1 being a negative response. There were 10 questions in total (scale based and open ended). In general, the webinar and its content were well received with the following details:

- **98%** of respondents felt that the session was clearly presented and organized
- **98%** of respondents felt that Mayors and subnational leaders play a vital role in a city fight against COVID-19, NCDs, Lung Health and Tobacco Use
- **95%** of respondents felt that they now understood how a proactive response by mayors can drive policy change and effective implementation of NCDs and tobacco control programmes while dealing with COVID-19
- **96%** of respondents felt that they learned that Tobacco Control and NCDs programs must be included in COVID-19 response plan
- **98%** of respondents felt that governments should make health and health systems a priority
- **100%** of respondents felt that Governments should be held accountable for managing and mobilizing resources to respond to COVID-19, Tobacco Use and NCDs.
- **98%** of respondents were satisfied with the session
- **100%** of respondents would attend future webinars by APCAT

When asked how to improve for future webinar participants felt that a smaller number of speakers would enable more time for in depth discussion. Some

would like to see more interactive discussions between speakers and participants.

Next Steps

1. Parliamentary Forum – January 2021
2. APCAT media – January 2021
3. Health officials national and subnational – February 2021

Media Generated

17th December; [Face it all together: threat of pandemics and responsibility to deliver on health for all](#); Citizen News Service. Also Published in the following:

- 19th Dec; [Central Chronicle](#); India
- 24th Dec; [The Kashmir Times](#); India
- 17th Dec; [The Maravi Post](#); Malawi
- 18th Dec; [Weekly Blitz](#); Bangladesh
- 17th Dec; [Modern Ghana](#); Ghana
- 17th Dec; [Mangalorean](#); India
- 17th Dec; [Op-Ed News](#)
- 17th Dec; [Pakistan Christian Post](#); Pakistan
- 17th Dec; [15 Minute News](#)
- 17th Dec; [Ghana Nation](#)
- 17th Dec; [Bihar and Jharkhand News Service](#)
- 17th Dec; [Ground News](#)
- 17th Dec; [The World News](#)
- 17th Dec; [Hastakshep News](#); India
- 20th Dec; [The ISMA Times](#), Dehli, India
- 17th Dec; [Grandhealthcares](#)
- 17th Dec; [Media For Freedom](#)

18th Dec; [5th Asia Pacific Summit of Mayors organized virtually](#); The Global New Light of Myanmar, Myanmar

18th Dec; [5th Asia Pacific Summit of Mayors organized virtually](#); Ministry of Information; Myanmar

18th Dec; [Idris at the 5th APCAT Summit 2020 Explained the Application of KTR Rules during the Pandemic](#); Siaran Depok; Indonesia

18th Dec; [APCAT Forum Mayor Suwirta Shares Successes in Tobacco Control](#); Kabarnusa; Indonesia

2nd Jan; [Fifth APCAT conference concluded by virtual method](#); Nepali Health; Nepal

18th Dec; [Fifth AP-CAT conference concluded by virtual method, calls for a complete ban on tobacco use](#); NepalRafter; Nepal

2nd Jan; [The 5th AP CAT conference ended with a "virtual" method, calling for a complete ban on tobacco use](#); Sauraha Online; Nepal

2nd Jan; [Fifth APCAT conference concluded by virtual method](#); A2z samachar.com; Nepal

2nd Jan; [5th APCAT summit concluded successfully](#); Janatasamachar.com; Nepal

2nd Jan; [Fifth APCAT conference concluded by virtual method](#); Khabar prabaha; Nepal

2nd Jan; [Whether it's epidemic control or tobacco, local leadership needs to be strong](#); Healthtv Online; Nepal

2nd Jan; [Fifth APCAT conference concluded by virtual method](#); Chitwan Khabar; Nepal

2nd Jan; [Fifth APCAT conference concluded by virtual method](#); News Prabaha; Nepal

Total 31 news articles published.

*APCAT was established in 2016 by the International Union Against Tuberculosis and Lung Disease (The Union) Asia Pacific Office in Singapore as a network and forum for subnational leaders working to advance tobacco control and prevent NCDs in the region. Members include **77 cities in 12 countries**. The APCAT is supported by Ministry of Health, Member of Parliament, professional organizations, civil societies, media from Indonesia, Cambodia, Myanmar, Lao PDR, Nepal, Philippines, Singapore, India, Bangladesh, Vietnam, Malaysia and Timor-Leste. The Union Asia Pacific is the permanent Secretariat of APCAT.*
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