

Tobacco Control Asia Pacific Monthly Bulletin

Issue 2 (April 2024)



Delegates of the 3rd Eastern Indonesia Mayor Meeting

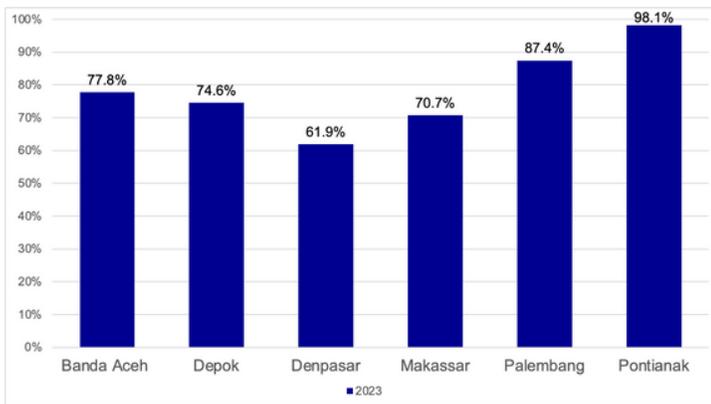
Highlights

The 3rd Eastern Indonesia Mayor Meeting

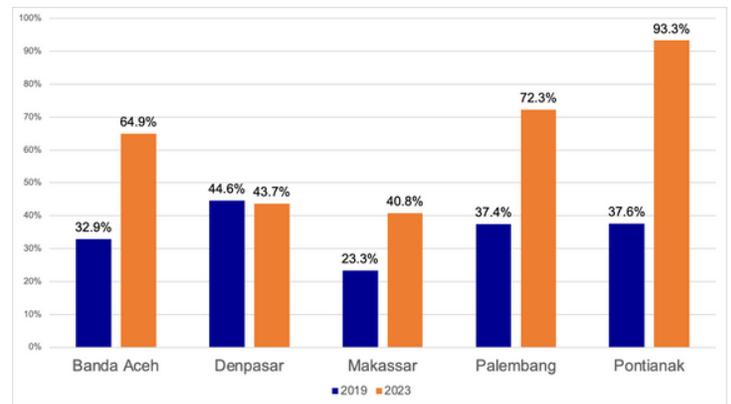
Indonesia: The Eastern Indonesia Mayor Meeting, convened in Makassar on April 23-24, saw subnational leaders from 14 cities and districts commit to strengthening tobacco control. The participants declared to protect children from tobacco exposure, outlining policies to prohibit advertising, enforce no-smoking areas, reject tobacco industry sponsorship and enhance tobacco control through regular monitoring and evaluation, in order to improve the health of public across Eastern Indonesia.

Government officials from the Ministry of Health, Ministry of Home Affairs, Ministry of Finance, and ADINKES served as keynote speakers. Notable attendees included APCAT Co-Chair Dr. Bima Arya Sugiarto from Bogor City, I Nyoman Suwirta representing Klungkung Bali, and the Mayor of Depok. Additionally, 66 representatives from various government agencies across 14 cities and districts were present.

Indonesia: An improved compliance rate was found in a smoke-free compliance survey conducted in six cities (Banda Aceh, Denpasar, Depok, Makassar, Palembang, Pontianak). A total of 4,188 venues were assessed, and the results were compared to those from the previous survey in 2019. All cities showed an increase in compliance in several provisions. Pontianak city showed the highest compliance for combined indicator assessing evidence of smoking (observed smoking behavior, ashtray, and cigarette butts) at 98.1%. However two thirds still fell short of 50% compliance when all indicators were considered, indicating that some progress has been made but there is still much left to do. A webinar was also held to disseminate the results to city governments and leaders on 22nd March.



Compliance with with combined indicator assessing “evidence of smoking” 2023



Compliance with “No Smoking” signage, 2019 vs 2023

Bangladesh: Mayor of Harinakundu Municipality, led an inspection of tobacco product vendors as part of an endline survey to evaluate tobacco control efforts. This was a collaborative effort between AID Foundation, Vital Strategies, and the municipality. During the inspection, the Mayor personally removed illegal cigarette advertisements and warned against license cancellation for such violations. He announced plans to transform Harinakundu into a tobacco-free city.



Harinakundu Mayor removing illegal cigarette advertising

Protecting people from tobacco smoke



Talkshow organized by PPPKMI

Indonesia: On March 9, the Indonesia Society for Health Promoters and Educators held a talk show with 311 participants from 39 Central Java universities, discussing the inadequate implementation of smoke-free policies despite Governor Regulation No.3 of 2019. The event concluded with participants jointly declaring support for smoke-free campuses, forming a coalition for tobacco control students, and increasing public awareness about the dangers of tobacco use.

- Indonesia Society for Health Promoters and Educators (PPPKMI), met with the Regent of Banjarnegara to foster commitments towards stronger enforcement of smoke-free initiatives, with plans to bolster local policies immediately after Eid.
- Hasanuddin University, 40 government officials were trained from 7 district education offices in eastern Indonesia, focusing on implementing smoke-free policies within educational institutions.
- Muhammadiyah Tobacco Control Centre at the University of Magelang, trained 29 government officials from Pemalang to establish smoke-free task forces. The 2- day workshop also involved youth volunteers who will support the enforcement of smoke-free policies and the ban on tobacco advertising, promotion, and sponsorship (TAPS).

Bangladesh - March 20, the newly appointed chairman of the Bangladesh Inland Water Transport Corporation (BIWTC) declared his stance as an anti-smoking advocate, pledging unwavering support for the enforcement of tobacco control laws within the shipping sector. This commitment extends to issuing notices to ban smoking in ferry canteens. His remarks were made during a panel discussion with key stakeholders from the shipping sector.



Panel discussion on implementing the Tobacco Control Act in shipping

Cambodia: The National Center for Health Promotion (NCHP) conducted a comprehensive assessment of smoke-free compliance across 25 diverse locations spanning multiple provinces. Violations were predominantly identified in restaurants, hotels, and guesthouses. Prompt interventions, including education initiatives and fines, were implemented. Notably, Kep province demonstrated remarkable compliance, with no reported violations observed.



Monitoring of smoke-free implementation



Deploying tobacco control banners across Bharatpur

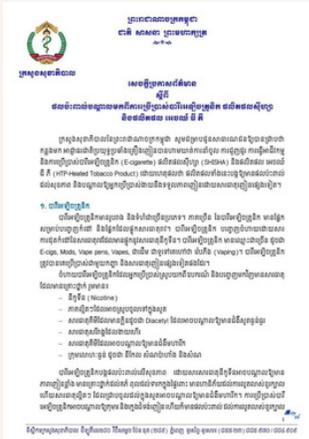
Nepal: Action Nepal and Bharatpur Metropolitan City have joined forces to strengthen the implementation of smoke-free Bharatpur. By deploying tobacco control banners across the city, their collaborative efforts have fueled the success of the "Smoke-Free Bharatpur" campaign. Through these banners and community engagement initiatives, the campaign strives to cultivate a tobacco-free lifestyle and enhance the health and wellness of Bharatpur's residents.

Philippines: On January 17, Smoke-Free Aklan organized the 1st Quarter Regional Tobacco Control Network Meeting in Kalibo, attended by 70 stakeholders, including the Department of Health and Local Government Units. In conjunction, they engaged 1,000 participants, including government agencies, healthcare institutions, and smoke-free advocacy organizations at the Kalibo holy festival called Sto. Niño Festival, by displaying placards and materials to raise awareness about smoking's harmful effects.



1st Quarter Regional Tobacco Control Network Meeting hosted by Smoke-Free Aklan

Warning about the dangers of tobacco



The press release issued by MoH Cambodia

Cambodia: Cambodia's Ministry of Health issued a warning about the serious health risks of e-cigarettes, shisha, and heated tobacco products, highlighting their high nicotine levels and association with lung diseases and cancer. Despite their ban since 2014, these products, often marketed as safer alternatives, are still popular and attracting youth. The troubling trend has prompted the Ministry of Health to issue more frequent reminders.

Timor-Leste: WHO recommends rotating and/or replacing the content of the health warnings in order to minimize wear-out effects. This recommendation assumes that, while specific warnings will lose effectiveness over time, replacing the warning content will counteract this effect.

Vital Strategies in collaboration with ANCT-TL and The Union supported the Ministry of Health to assess the effectiveness of eight proposed Pictorial Health Warnings (PHWs) on tobacco products. Engaging 375 participants through mixed-methods, including quantitative interviews and qualitative focus group discussions, the study found that Image H (lung cancer) and Image A (oral cancer) were most effective in motivating behavior change and raising awareness about tobacco dangers across diverse demographics. Recommendations include prioritizing these impactful images in PHW rotations and ensuring high-resolution visuals to maximize effectiveness.

<p>Image A</p> <p>Smoking causes Mouth Cancer.</p>	<p>Image B</p> <p>Smoking causes Emphysema.</p>	<p>Image C</p> <p>Smoking causes Gangrene.</p>	<p>Image D</p> <p>Smoking increases the risk of Tuberculosis.</p>
<p>Image E</p> <p>Tobacco smoke harms/kills your baby.</p>	<p>Image F</p> <p>Smoking causes Stroke.</p>	<p>Image G</p> <p>Smoking causes Throat Cancer.</p>	<p>Image H</p> <p>Smoking causes Lung Cancer.</p>

8 new Pictorial Health Warnings used in TL survey

Enforcing tobacco advertising, promotion & sponsorship bans

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Indonesia: Mayor of Balikpapan, accompanied by officials, removed approximately 20 billboards during advocacy visit to promote smoke-free initiatives.

Aceh Institute, conducted 3 Random Inspections in Banda Aceh, inspecting a total of 317 venues, and issuing 9 warning letters. Out of all the venues inspected, 198 were compliant (62.4%).



Random Inspections conducted by Aceh Institute



Cigarette billboard taken down by smokefree task force in Balikpapan

Bangladesh: Manhordi and Singra Municipalities have issued public notices requiring vendors of tobacco products to obtain individual licenses and banning the sale of tobacco within 100 meters of educational institutions and health care centers, with technical support from AID Foundation.

Philippines: Metro Manila Development Authority (MMDA) inspected 176 schools and 29 terminals, reporting 1,523 violations related to tobacco/vapor product sales, advertising, and signage, including 118 stores displaying tobacco advertisements near the schools.

Protecting Tobacco Control policies from Tobacco Industry interference

Cambodia: The Ministry of Health (MoH) has taken legal action against four tobacco companies, including British American Tobacco Co., Ltd (BAT), for violating tobacco advertising policies. BAT was fined 50,000,000 riels (approximately \$12,500) by the Phnom Penh court, however, BAT appealed the decision and lost; but continues to appeal to the high court. Thus, MoH has appointed lawyers and sent a letter to the President of the High Court, intending to continue the case.

Bangladesh: Dhaka International University, a leading private university in Bangladesh, made a significant decision to adopt a policy of non-cooperation with tobacco companies, which impacts over 12,000 students. This decision was announced during a collaborative program organized by the Bangladesh Anti-Tobacco Alliance, Tobacco Control and Research Cell (TCRC), and Work for a Better Bangladesh (WBB) Trust.



Adoption of Code of conduct on FCTC Article 5.3



An article published on Medical Patra

Nepal: Action Nepal discovered the tobacco industry giant, Surya Nepal, apparently sponsoring a Literature Festival, raising concerns about potential violations of tobacco control laws. In response, Action Nepal convened a meeting to strategize blocking the program and protecting public health initiatives from tobacco industry influence. Furthermore, this news has been published in several media to alert governmental authorities and the community.

Protecting the environment



Cigarette butts collected by a volunteer

Indonesia: Lentra Anak is making efforts to raise awareness about tobacco's harm to the environment. A meeting was held with the Ministry of Health, and the Director of Environmental Health and National Development Planning Agency (BAPENAS) in hopes to foster multisectoral collaboration on this issue.

Lentra Anak also conducted a campaign highlighting the dangers of cigarette butts during National Waste Commemoration Day. Online efforts included 16 social media posts and collaboration with 17 Instagram accounts, resulting in 45,179 engagements. Additionally, 120 youth volunteers collected cigarette butt waste during a beach clean up as part of community education initiatives.

Indonesia

- The Ministries of Health, Human Development and Cultural Affairs, National Planning, and Social Affairs participated in two policy dialogues, centered on the World Health Organization's Framework Convention for Tobacco Control. These dialogues were organized by the Indonesia Institute of Social Development, engaging 17 civil society organizations and produced 21 news articles that raised public awareness about the urgency of prioritizing tobacco policies in Indonesia.

Bangladesh

- Representatives from the Bangladesh Anti-Tobacco Alliance held meetings with Dhaka North City Corporation (DNCC) and Dhaka South City Corporation (DSCC) officials to implement tobacco control guidelines. DNCC's CEO & CHO directed proposal submissions, while DSCC received 16 proposals and plans further steps pending discussion with the mayor.
- During meeting with the Bangladesh Anti-Tobacco Alliance, the Minister Muhammad Farooq Khan MP assured proactive steps, including potential directives for a smoke-free hospitality sector, advocating for legislative amendments, and tax increases in parliament.
- AID Foundation and Mr. Golam Kabir, Mayor of Dhamrai Municipality and General Secretary of the Mayors Alliance for Healthy Cities (MAHC), discussed plans to increase municipal engagement in Local Government Institutions (LGIs) guideline implementation and proposed allocating a separate budget for tobacco control activities to at least 100 municipalities in the next fiscal year. Additionally, the Alliance's coordinator reported increased membership from 31 to 60 and sensitization of 100 municipalities to implement guidelines.
- Association for the Prevention of Drug Abuse (MANAS) held a meeting with the Minister of Health & Family Welfare, Dr. Shamanta Lal Sen, and the Minister of Law, Mr. Anisul Haque, at the Bangladesh Secretariat to discuss amending the Tobacco Control Act, with both ministers assuring continued cooperation.

Philippines

- Representatives from Vital Strategies attended the first quarterly meeting of the National Technical Working Group on Tobacco Prevention and Control in Quezon City, Philippines, on February 16, 2023. They contributed to a joint CSO position paper and discussed initiatives like the 2024 Anti-Tobacco Campaign and the National Tobacco Prevention and Control Strategy 2030 implementation.
- The 'Calapan City Smoking Ordinance Implementation Training for Enforcers', was conducted to strengthen the city's commitment to public health and regulatory adherence. It also equipped local law enforcement officers with practical skills for enforcing the smoking ordinance effectively.