

# MONTHLY BULLETIN



Meeting with Prime Minister of Nepal

## HIGHLIGHT

### Meeting with Prime Minister of Nepal

In a high level meeting held in Kathmandu, Nepal, the Prime Minister of Nepal engaged with representatives from the International Union Against Tuberculosis and Lung Disease (The Union), Action Nepal, and Vital Strategies, emphasizing collaborative efforts to combat tuberculosis (TB) and tobacco use. The discussions, underscored by the urgency of addressing these dual public health challenges, focused on aligning policy frameworks and fostering strategic partnerships to implement evidence-based interventions. This meeting represents a significant step towards Nepal's efforts to prioritize public health and demonstrates the key stakeholders' commitment to work together towards achieving best outcomes in TB and tobacco control.

## Presidential Candidates Engage with Health Organizations to Address Tobacco and Other Health Issues

On January 9, 18 health organizations, including ADINKES, IAKMI, and IDI, discussed health issues with three presidential candidates' expert teams, focusing on concerns like the high prevalence of tobacco smoke in Indonesia, with the inputs considered for potential inclusion in the presidency workplans if elected. A subsequent event on January 16 at Bidakara Hotel saw President candidate number 1 (Anies Baswedan – Muhaimin Iskandar) in attendance, while President candidate number 2 (Prabowo – Gibran) did not participate, and President candidate number 3 (Ganjar – Mahfud) delegated his Health Team to a national health discussion. The panel from the health organizations emphasized crucial health issues during the dialogue, including the necessity for significant action on tobacco prevalences.



Promotional poster for dialogue with presidential candidates

## Legal Awareness on Tobacco Advertising Implications and Child Protection



Legal awareness seminar organized by Raya Indonesia

Raya Indonesia, in partnership with the Faculty of Law at Krisnadwipayana University in Jakarta, organized a seminar for 197 students to enhance their legal understanding of the internet ban's implications on tobacco advertising, with a particular focus on emphasizing the state's responsibility to shield children from the marketing influences of addictive substances.

### Enforcing Compliance: Depok City Initiates Smoke-Free Workshop for Venue Managers

A joint team comprising members from the Health Office and Civil Police conducted inspections at 59 venues in Depok city, identifying a significant issue of non-compliance with no-smoking signage regulations. To address this, a smoke-free workshop with venue managers is scheduled for January 31, 2024, with the goal of garnering support from the venues and emphasizing their responsibility in ensuring the proper placement of signage to adhere to smoke-free policies.



Monitoring for TAPS and smoke-free compliance across various venues

### Strategizing Smoke-Free Initiatives in Makassar



Meeting with the newly appointed Acting City Secretary of Makassar

On January 24, a meeting with the newly appointed Acting City Secretary of Makassar was conducted to share insights from a recent visit to Kuala Lumpur and strategize securing commitment for the implementation of a smoke-free initiative. Participants in the meeting include the Head of Civil Police, Head of Health Office, the smoke-free task force team, and our local partner Hasanuddin Contact. During the session, the Acting City Secretary urged all agencies to support the implementation by establishing internal smoke-free task forces, intensifying regular random inspections, and continuing to conduct no-smoking signage campaign

### PPPKMI Advocates for Stronger Tobacco Control Measures in Central Java

The Indonesia Society for Health Promotion and Education (PPPKMI) organized a workshop on "Tobacco Advertising, Promotion, and Sponsorship Control and Program Meeting of PPPKMI Central Java" on January 9, 2024. The workshop focused on the regulation and implementation of the Tobacco-Free Areas (KTR) policy in Central Java Province. It's worth noting that although almost all cities and regencies in Central Java Province have the policy, some areas apply it to only 4-5 locations, and some have no KTR regulation at all. Thus, the speakers emphasized the importance of local government commitment to implement KTR and to avoid being swayed by lucrative cigarette advertising, which contributes to the local government budget.



PPPKMI TAPS workshop conducted in Central Java



Focus Group Discussion on strengthening smoke-free policies

## Fostering Collaboration for Smoke-Free Policies in Pidie Jaya

The Aceh Institute, in collaboration with the Government of Pidie Jaya, organized a Focus Group Discussion (FGD) titled "Reconsideration of Local Law for Smoke-Free in Pidie Jaya" on January 12. The objectives were to strengthen and monitor the drafting process of smoke-free regulations in Pidie Jaya. The initiative will persist in monitoring the ongoing development of smoke-free policies in the region. The FGD had a participation of 15 individuals.

## Coordination for implementation of Enforcement Program 2024 in Denpasar

On January 15, the Udayana Central team and Denpasar Health Office held a meeting to discuss the potential reimplementing of the Denpasar Enforcement Program in 2024, covering program details, agreements, commitments, and the finalization of regional regulation revisions, with follow-up coordination for plans and strategies.



Coordination meeting at the Denpasar Health Office



One example of removing illegal tobacco billboard

## Youth Advocacy Workshop for TAPS Ban in Magelang

The Muhammadiyah Tobacco Control Centre at the University of Magelang organized a workshop for 40 youth participants, aiming to enhance their capacity to advocate for a Total Advertising, Promotion, and Sponsorship (TAPS) ban in their city, which currently only applies to smoke-free areas. The workshop incorporated a field activity where the youth actively participated in removing illegal outdoor tobacco advertising.

## Empowering Millennial Farmers for a Sustainable Future

The Muhammadiyah Independent Farmer School conducted a training, under the theme of "Realizing food security through the role of millennial farmers", with the aim to improve welfare of tobacco farmers by motivating 38 millennial tobacco farmers from 6 sub-districts of Magelang District to shift to agriculture and livestock. With support from various experts, the program facilitated a transition to sheep farming, providing capital and digital marketing assistance. Follow-up actions include the establishment of a WhatsApp group for sharing experiences and holding meetings to discuss capitalization and product marketing strategies.



Alternative livelihood training for tobacco farmers to shift to sheep farming

## 10 mayors of Greater Sylhet Division commit to make their cities tobacco-free



Joint Initiative for Tobacco Control in Greater Sylhet Division

Moulvibazar Municipality, along with the Mayors Alliance for Healthy Cities and AID Foundation, organized a meeting to discuss the implementation of "Guidelines for Implementation of Tobacco Control Activities of Local Government Institutions". It was chaired by Mayor Fazlur Rahman and Mayor Haji Abdul Ghani and Mayor Golam Kabir were presented as key figures. Alliance Coordinator Abu Naser Anik, moderated the meeting and participated by 10 municipal mayors, 10 councilors, and executive officers from Greater Sylhet Division. The mayors expressed commitment to work together and implement the LGI Guidelines on tobacco control to create healthier and tobacco-free cities for future generations and to be in line with the Prime Minister's vision.

## Mayors Alliance for Healthy Cities Hosts 'Experience Sharing Meeting in Greater Rajshahi

"Experience Sharing Meeting in Greater Rajshahi", organized by Mayors Alliance for Healthy Cities (MAHC), Singra Municipality, and AID Foundation, featured discussions led by Singra Mayor Jannatul Ferdous. The meeting involved 10 mayors, 10 municipal councilors, and executive officers. Discussions focused on allocating funds in the municipal budget for tobacco control, uploading LGI guidelines online, initiating licensing processes, and prohibiting tobacco product sale within 100 meters of education and health care centers to create a healthier city.



Experience Sharing Meeting hosted by MAHC

## Bilateral Meeting at Local Government Division

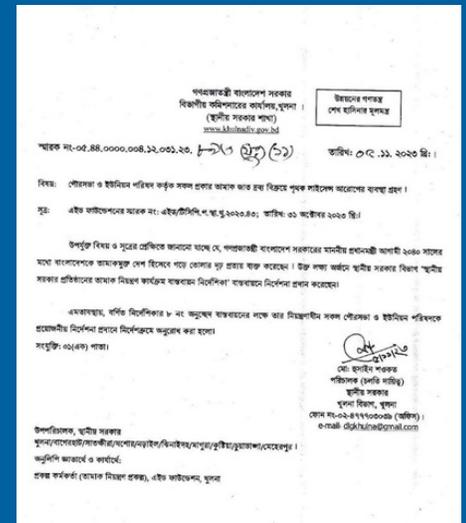


Meeting at the office of Additional Secretary of LGD

A bilateral meeting was held at the office of Dr. Maloy Roy Chowdhury, Additional Secretary of the Local Government Division (LGD), to discuss implementing tobacco control guidelines. Attendees included Vital Strategies Consultant Mr. Fahimul Islam, LGD's Joint Secretary Mr. Numeri Zaman, and representatives from the AID Foundation. The Additional Secretary expressed support for adding a monitoring report format to the online system and affirmed the division's commitment to realizing the Prime Minister's goal of a tobacco-free Bangladesh.

## Directive Issued for Tobacco Vendor Licensing in Khulna Division

Following effective advocacy by the AID Foundation, the Khulna Divisional Commissioner's Office, under the Local Government Division, has issued a directive instructing all municipalities and union parishads within the division to implement Section 8 (Licensing System for tobacco vendors) of the LGI Guidelines, addressed to all Deputy Directors at the Local Government Division.



Directive issued by Khulna Divisional Commissioner

## DNCC Chief Health Officer Commits to Implement Tobacco Control Laws



Meeting with Chief Health Officer of Dhaka North City Corporation

The Chief Health Officer of Dhaka North City Corporation (DNCC), Brigadier General Imrul Kayes Chowdhury, affirmed his commitment to implementing tobacco control laws during a meeting with Samiul Hasan from WBB Trust and Farhana Zaman from the Tobacco Control and Research Cell (TCRC) on behalf of the Bangladesh Anti-Tobacco Alliance. He also mentioned plans to adhere to LGI guidelines for tobacco control activities.

## Strategic Alliance for Tobacco Control



Meeting with Assistant Secretary of DILG

Senior Technical Advisor of Vital Strategies, Dr. Madeleine Valera, discussed a potential partnership between Vital Strategies and the Department of the Interior and Local Government (DILG) with Assistant Secretary Lilian De Leon. The aim is to ensure full enforcement of the Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (FCTC) among local government units (LGUs). Assistant Secretary De Leon also highlighted the need for FCTC training for DILG's regional staff and proposed DILG's participation in the Regional Tobacco Control Network.

## Collaborative Strategies for Tobacco Cessation in the Philippines

The Department of Health, in collaboration with Vital Strategies and the Ateneo School of Government, hosted a preparatory meeting at Seda Vertis North, Quezon City. Attended by key stakeholders from various health organizations working on tobacco prevention and control, the session focused on planning for the 2024 tobacco cessation services workshop. Discussions included identifying gaps, assessing the current status of tobacco cessation services in the Philippines, and formulating policy recommendations aligned with the National Tobacco Prevention and Control Strategy 2023.



Preparatory meeting for 2024 tobacco cessation services

## Enforcement actions in Metro Manila and Baguio

- **Metro Manila:** MMDA inspected 227 schools and 43 terminals, reporting 2,919 violations related to tobacco/vapor products and No Smoking signage.
- **Baguio:** On December 22, 2023, an inspection team in the central business district cracked down on two vape shops, issuing them multiple violations under Ordinance Number 34 s. 2017.

## Smoke-Free Aklan's Impactful Tobacco Control Initiatives

In December 2023, Smoke-Free Aklan conducted multiple events across Aklan and Capiz municipalities, such as enforcer training sessions in Batan and Banga, which focused on smoking/vaping ordinances, and launching a comprehensive Smoke-Free Compliance Ordinance in Balete Municipality. Additionally, Project Coordinator of Smoke-Free Aklan spoke at an Anti-Smoking Task Force Orientation in Cuartero, Capiz, emphasizing enforcement protocols and MPOWER strategies.

# Bridging Borders: Bangladesh Health Delegation Learns from Mandaluyong's Smoke-Free Success



Snapshot from Mandaluyong exchange visit

During November 2023, a delegation of eight members from the Bangladesh Ministry of Health and Family Welfare visited Metropolitan Manila to study strategies for creating a smoke-free environment. Assisted by the Metropolitan Manila Development Authority (MMDA), the delegation, including representatives from the National Institute of Local Government, University of Dhaka, Dhaka International University, and Vital Strategies, focused on observing Mandaluyong City's exemplary implementation strategies in fostering a smoke-free environment.

## Malabon City and Atok Reinforce Smoke-Free Commitment with No Smoking Signage Initiative

- **Malabon:** The installation of No Smoking signs in diverse public facilities across Malabon City, such as health centers, basketball courts, barangay halls, and other public spaces, took place during November and December 2023. This activity aimed to promote awareness among Malabon City residents regarding the local government's commitment to a smoke-free policy.
- **Atok:** Smoke-Free Task Force conducted Information, Education, and Communication (IEC) activities and installed No Smoking signages in eight barangays - Abiang, Caliking, Cattubo, Naguey, Paoay, Pasdong, Poblacion, and Topdac- during December 2023.



Installation of No smoking signages in Malabon city

## Tobacco Control Leadership Training in Aklan



Participants of Tobacco Control Leadership Training in Aklan

Tobacco Control Leadership Training on the MPOWER strategy, was conducted in Aklan. Tailored for five local government units – Kalibo, New Washington, Altavas, Lezo, and Buruanga – the training was joined by participants such as Municipal Health Officers, Tobacco Control Coordinators, members of the Sangguniang Bayan on Health, Presidents of the Association of Barangay Captains, and representatives from diverse Civil Society Organizations.

## Smoking Cessation Training in La Trinidad



Smoking cessation training hosted by the Municipal Health Office of La Trinidad

In November 2023, the Municipal Health Office of La Trinidad hosted a one-day training centered on Smoke Cessation/Brief Tobacco Intervention Skills. The event, held in La Trinidad, Benguet, drew the participation of 40 health workers, including medical officers, nurses, and midwives. The objective of the session was to provide these professionals with the essential skills and knowledge required to actively contribute to smoke cessation efforts within the community.

## Year End Review and 2024 Strategic Planning to advance tobacco control efforts

The Ateneo School of Government, in collaboration with Vital Strategies, organized a three-day event titled the "2023 Year-End Review and 2024 Strategic Planning," at Mount Purro Nature Reserve, Antipolo, from December 13 to 15, 2023. This event aimed to amplify tobacco control efforts in the Philippines. Participants engaged in reviewing previous initiatives, addressing challenges, and strategizing for 2024, with a focus on fortifying tobacco and vape control measures at both national and subnational levels.



2023 Year-End Review and 2024 Strategic Planning event



## Public Hearing on Smoke-Free Ordinance in Benguet



Public hearing for smoke-free ordinance in Benguet

A public hearing was conducted at the Municipal Covered Court in Ampusongan, Bakun, Benguet, to deliberate on three proposed ordinances, including a comprehensive Smoke-Free Ordinance seeking to prohibit the use, sale, distribution, and advertisement of various tobacco products. Vital Strategies's grantee Transcend's staffs participated and provided technical advice on the draft ordinance.

## Combating TB & Tobacco: 'END TB, END TOBACCO' Workshop Ignites Public Health Initiatives

To tackle dual epidemics of tuberculosis (TB) and tobacco use in Nepal, The Union, Action Nepal, Health Journalists Forum Nepal, Vital Strategies, and the Asia Pacific Cities Alliance for Health and Development (APCAT) hosted the "END TB, END TOBACCO" workshop at Hotel Radisson on January 26, 2024. The objective of this workshop was to raise awareness of policy imperatives and strategize effective measures to address these urgent public health issues.

The workshop brought together diverse stakeholders including the Joint Secretary of the Ministry of Health and Population, the President of the Union, the

Director of the National Tuberculosis Center, the Regional Director of Vital Strategies, as well as representatives from various sectors including healthcare, journalism, and public policy. Acknowledging the interconnectedness of these problems that disproportionately affect communities throughout Nepal, they came together to share knowledge and develop cooperative strategies to address tobacco use and tuberculosis.



Participants of "END TB, END TOBACCO" workshop



Professor Guy Marks, President of The Union

future in Nepal. By advocating evidence-based policies and fostering collaboration, this workshop demonstrated a shared commitment to improving public health in Nepal.

A key focus of the workshop was the urgent need to establish a robust tobacco control program as an integral component of TB eradication efforts. By acknowledging the correlation between tobacco use and TB incidence, stakeholders emphasized the importance of implementing evidence-based policies to reduce tobacco consumption and the burden of TB in the country.

With a strong emphasis on fostering partnerships and mobilizing political support, the collaborative efforts showcased at the "END TB, END Tobacco" workshop represent a significant step towards creating a tobacco-free

## Nepalgunj Mayor's Commitment to Combat Tobacco Consumption



Meeting with mayor Prashant Bista of Nepalgunj

Action Nepal team, led by Ananda Bahadur Chand, held a meeting with the Mayor and officials of Nepalgunj Sub Metropolitan City to discuss effective tobacco control implementation. The meeting was attended by 23 individuals, including media personnel. The focus included commitments by the mayor to enforce a ban on tobacco sales and consumption starting April 13, 2024, raise awareness on tobacco dangers, install no-smoking signs in 23 ward offices and government buildings, and gather data on tobacco manufacturers and vendors. Mayor Prashant Bista expressed a strong commitment to combat tobacco consumption, emphasizing public health and announcing comprehensive measures.

## Navigating Tobacco Control: Dhangadhi's Commitment to a Smoke-Free Future

Our grantee Action Nepal team conducted a high-level meeting with the mayor of Dhangadhi Sub Metropolitan City to address the establishment of essential points for city's tobacco licensing procedure and the mandate for licenses to sell tobacco products and create smoke-free public places. Mayor Gopal Hamal emphasized displaying prominent no-smoking signage in public areas, and Chief of Health Department Yogesh Awasthi assured support for awareness programs. The meeting concluded with a commitment to develop a comprehensive licensing procedure aligned with Dhangadhi's goal of promoting public health and smoke-free environments. The eight participants, including the mayor, a health division member of the sub-metropolitan city and a health media journalist, attended the meeting.



Meeting with mayor Gopal Hamal of Dhangadhi



Meeting with Social Development Minister of Far Western Province

## Strategizing Tobacco Control and NCDs in Far Western Province

A meeting was held with the Minister of Social Development of the Far Western Province to discuss and strategize key issues concerning tobacco control, assess existing policies, and explore potential enhancements related to non-communicable diseases (NCDs). The meeting offered a comprehensive overview of the challenges and opportunities in tackling tobacco control and addressing non-communicable diseases within the province.

## Kalika Municipality's efforts towards Tobacco Control and awareness initiatives

A one-to-one meeting took place with Mayor Binod Regmi of Kalika Municipality to emphasize the importance of enforcing tobacco control laws in the city and to consider partnering with civil societies for awareness campaigns. The mayor expressed his interest for these initiatives, committing to implementing tobacco control laws and collaborating with civil societies and NGOs. He also acknowledged the significance of promoting awareness.



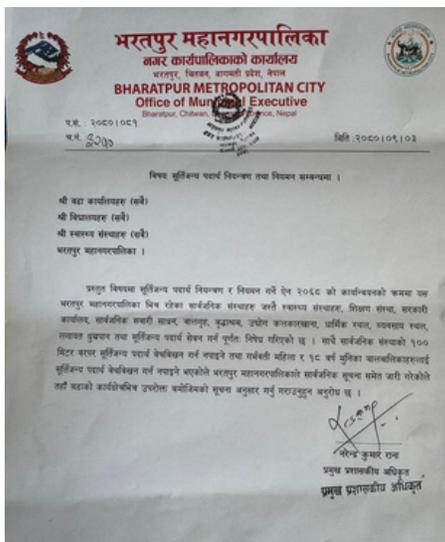
Meeting with mayor Binod Regmi

## Mayor's Action for Preventive Measures Against Tobacco Addiction in Madi Municipality

A meeting with Madi municipality mayor Tara Kumara Kaji Mahato addressed the growing tobacco addiction issue in the city, proposing collaboration on effective preventive measures. The focus was on the recent ban on tobacco product sales within 100 meters of educational facilities. The mayor emphasized the increasing tobacco addiction in recent years, prompting the need for stricter tobacco control regulations and preventive measures.



Meeting with Mayor Tara Kumara Kaji Mahat



Notice issued by Bharatpur Metropolitan city

## Tobacco Control Initiatives in Bharatpur Metropolitan City

During ward visits to all 29 wards, ward chairpersons acknowledged the effectiveness of no-smoking signage in creating awareness and promoting compliance, despite having concerns about implementation costs. Following up on the recent prohibition notice, a meeting was held to discuss tobacco control measures with the Public Health Officer (PHO) of Bharatpur Metropolitan City. The PHO expressed support for the initiative, endorsing the use of no-smoking signage as a vital tool for public health. He also emphasized the importance of stakeholder participation and the initiative's worth in reducing tobacco use.

## Insights from Studies on Tobacco Control in Cambodia

In 2023, comprehensive studies conducted across six Cambodian provinces—Battambang, Kampong Cham, Kandal, Phnom Penh, Siem Reap, and Sihanouk Ville—revealed critical insights into public health challenges. Led by the National Center for Health Promotion (NCHP), these investigations focused on three key areas: compliance with the Tobacco Advertising, Promotion, and Sponsorship (TAPS) ban, enforcement of smoke-free regulations, and the implementation of pictorial health warnings (PHW) on cigarette packaging.



**Smokefree awareness activity at the community level**

The first study, conducted by the NCHP, inspected the pervasive influence of the TAPS ban across various commercial outlets. Among 563 surveyed stores, 73.53% displayed tobacco ads outside, with 69.80% featuring logos or brand displays inside. Nearly all stores (98.58%) displayed multiple cigarette packs. While over half offered free gifts with purchase (52.42%), none provided multi-pack discounts or special promotional prices. The study found varying levels of TAPS ban violations, with the majority of stores (17.76%) having six violations. It underscores the need for stronger enforcement to reduce tobacco advertising and promotion, especially in stores along streets and those with multiple violations.

In a parallel effort, another examination focused on the implementation and compliance of smoke-free regulations within the surveyed provinces. A total of 393 observations were made, with 195 inside and outside the buildings and 198 inside only. Most places, including hotels, restaurants, and government agencies, enforced smoking bans. Compliance sub-degrees varied, with high adherence to no smoking signs and rules but some areas allowing smoking near entrances. Opinions on smoke-free policies were generally positive, with compliance levels peaking at Level 5, indicative of robust adherence across various sectors. Overall, the report highlights relatively good compliance with smoke-free regulations, though improvements are needed near building entrances and in consistent communication of rules.

Another study focused on the compliance to PHW and cigarette availability was also conducted in those six provinces. The survey, comprising 34 observations, found that most cigarette products were displayed in packs (42.30%). The survey monitored a total of 20,168 cigarette packs, and observed varying levels of compliance to the 55% PHW requirement. 8 brands achieved 100% compliance, while others fell below, with Esse and Hero having the lowest compliance rates at 7.10% and 1.20% respectively. Moreover, most of the shops displayed around 5 to 6 cigarette brands and some displayed even up to 11 brands. The report also provided insights into cigarette tax compliance (88.32% with tax and 11.68% without tax) and the price difference between taxed and untaxed cigarettes for various brands.



**Monitoring of PHW on cigarette packs**

In summary, the above studies revealed concerning levels of tobacco advertising and promotion, despite relatively satisfactory compliance with smoke-free regulations. However, there are still areas needing improvement, notably near building entrances. The examination of pictorial health warnings highlighted disparities among brands, emphasizing the necessity for robust regulatory measures to safeguard public health in Cambodia.