

Yearly
**Media
Watch**
on
**Tobacco Control
in Pakistan**

COALITION FOR TOBACCO CONTROL

2008



The aim of Coalition for Tobacco Control – Pakistan, a project of Society for Alternative Media and Research (SAMAR), is to bring the tobacco control statutes in Pakistan to conform to FCTC provisions through monitoring those already developed and promulgated, lobbying for those not in place and assisting Federal Ministry of Health (MoH) in drafting new legislations as in Pakistan international treaties need to be translated into national laws to be enforceable.

CTC, a national coalition of 32 organizations working at urban and rural communities in the areas of health and tobacco control, is in the process of monitoring the implementation status of tobacco control statutes in Pakistan under a project initiated by Bloomberg Global Initiative for Tobacco Reduction. Further more, acting as a technical resource for the MOH, it is advocating for demand in reforms within the existing tobacco control legislations so a holistic legislative environment can be created for tobacco control.

For further information, kindly visit the CTC website at this address: www.ctcpak.org

This document is a compilation of news items on tobacco control that have appeared in print media in Pakistan during the year 2008.

The trend shows that media in general are not aware on the issue of tobacco control and only a few newspapers, and radio and TV news channel carry the issues of health and tobacco control, not on regular basis, but when they are fed by such stories.

However, the role of media and its impact cannot and should not be denied. As it is quite evident, that whenever the need has arisen and media as a tool are effectively used, it has made a difference in influencing the policies of a government.

All these press items can be accessed on CTC website at this address:
<http://www.ctcpak.org/media>



11 January 2008 – **The NEWS, Islamabad**

By Shahina Maqbool

Rs34.9m tobacco control plan approved

Inspired by the need to reduce the rising morbidity and mortality associated with tobacco addiction, the Ministry of Health has approved a PC-1 of Rs34.934 million to support nationwide activities for tobacco control and to provide strategic guidelines to the provincial governments for implementation of the National Tobacco Control Programme, 'The News' learnt here on Thursday.

Spread over a period of two years (2008-2010), the programme is expected to enable Pakistan to inch closer to achieving the obligations stipulated in the Framework Convention for Tobacco Control (FCTC).

"The programme will require federal funds; however, some donor funding will also be available in the form of grants, programme support and technical assistance," Tobacco Control Cell (Director General (implementation) Shaheen Masud said. The World Health Organisation will be supporting the project through its JPRM where an amount of US \$40,000 has been allocated for tobacco control activities for two years.

The primary thrust of the programme will be directed towards demand reduction. The programme will also establish different models for implementation which can be replicated and adopted by the provinces according to need. The programme will strengthen the federal Tobacco Control Cell by improving its technical and managerial capacity. It will also encourage the establishment of model centres for smoking cessation at Islamabad, Karachi and Lahore and provide support to district and city governments to launch smoke-free cities.

Exposure to secondhand smoke has been identified as a major factor in tobacco related diseases; the programme will focus on reducing exposure by facilitating implementation of existing legislation and filling the gaps therein. The targets for reducing exposure will be the workplace, public transport, residences, and public places.

In addition, efforts will be made to promote smoke-free shopping areas. Environments for children will be specifically targeted and implementation modalities for smoke-free zones around schools and educational institutions will be finalized in collaboration with the education department and the law enforcement agencies.

Reducing the availability of tobacco products through price and tax measures in collaboration with the revenue department and non-price measures (control of counterfeits and smuggling) in collaboration with customs and excise departments will also be focused upon.

The programme will monitor tobacco-related sponsorships and advertisements to ensure that these are in accordance with the laws and regulations issued by the government and advocate for legislation according to the FCTC. It will also aim to protect vulnerable groups such as children and youth from tobacco use.

At the policy level, the programme will advocate for evidence-based policy making by commissioning relevant research. Development of effective partnerships with civil society organisations for achieving the FCTC objectives is also included in the objectives of the programme, as is the establishment of a tobacco and related disease surveillance system through periodic surveys and institutionalization of monitoring activities at all levels.

In the long term, the programme will aspire to decrease the existing burden on the health systems owing to tobacco-related diseases, while in the short term, it will have a poverty-alleviation effect as research has proved that the poor spend a proportionately higher share of their income on tobacco.

“The prospective savings from reduction on tobacco will free up resources to be spent on nutrition and health,” Shaheen Masud said. The programme has been designed to follow a cross-sectoral strategy, with health as a focal point for related activities. It will also assist in achievement of the MDGs through its effects on poverty reduction, mother and child health and general health status of the population.

Pakistan signed the FCTC on May 18, 2004 and ratified it on November 3 the same year. The treaty obligates Pakistan to establish a focal point and infrastructure with identified mechanisms for multi-sectoral coordination of tobacco control efforts. Even though the government has scaled up efforts to reduce tobacco use, improvement has been very slow. The National Tobacco Control Programme is expected to fill the existing gaps, strengthen inter-sectoral coordination and harmonise activities for tobacco reduction.

The harm that tobacco use does to health is irrefutable. Scientific research testifies that tobacco use (chewing or smoking) and inhaling secondhand or side-stream smoke from cigarettes raises the risk of many serious diseases. Moreover, tobacco use is one of the major preventable causes of disease and premature death.

Tobacco use in Pakistan is common and one of the highest in the Southeast Asian region. There are about 22 million smokers in the country and 55% of the households have at least one individual who smokes tobacco. As a result, the country accounts for a sizeable proportion of the cigarettes consumed in South Asia, with an estimated 100,000 people dying annually from diseases caused by tobacco use.

Tobacco consumption does not only occur in the form of cigarettes but also includes ‘beedis’ (hand rolled cigarettes), ‘huqqa’ (water pipe), ‘shisha’ and chewing tobacco.

According to the National Health Survey of Pakistan 1998, 54% men and 20% women used tobacco in one form or the other. WHO-EMRO (Eastern Mediterranean Regional Office) website, quoting the National Health Survey, states that 36% of adult men and 9 percent of adult women smoke in Pakistan. The Global Youth Tobacco Survey (GYTS) supported by WHO and conducted in Pakistan focused on adolescents aged 13-15 years. GYTS reported 1.7% of the students (2.5% boys and 0.5% girls) having smoked cigarettes in the month prior to the survey.

25 January 2008 – **Daily Times, Islamabad**

By Jamila Achakzai

Conference on smoking: It does not just end in smoke, it is an end per se

** Tobacco has about 4,000 poisonous chemicals and causes over 23 types of cancer in addition to heart diseases*

ISLAMABAD: About 22-25 million Pakistanis smoke and most of them are poor, Tobacco Control Initiative Implementation DG Shaheen Masud said on Thursday while speaking at the Ulema Feedback Conference.

Masud said 54 percent smokers were male and 20 percent female, adding that prevalence of smoking was 33 percent among male and 4.7 percent among female.

She said in addition to cigarette, tobacco was used in hookah, snuff, niswar, chewing tobacco and gutka. Sheesha smoking was fast emerging as a big threat, she said.

She said Pakistan's cigarette market was the 18th largest in the world and the country's annual tobacco yield was 2,402 kg.

She said two-thirds of the country's population lived in rural areas where tobacco consumption was mainly in non-cigarette forms.

She said 57 tobacco manufacturers operated in Pakistan currently but the sector was dominated by Pakistan Tobacco Company and Lakson Tobacco Company.

She said Lakson Tobacco Company (acquired by PMI in 2007) had 46.9 percent share of the tax-paying market and Pakistan Tobacco Company (owned by BAT) had 52 percent share of the same.

She said a boom in the tobacco business came over the last five years. "This shows an indirect evidence of the rising magnitude of tobacco consumption in Pakistan," she said. She said tobacco was grown over 32,551 hectares of land and total cigarette consumption was around 80 billion units in the country.

She said exports of tobacco and its related products increased from Rs 280.57 million in 2000 to Rs 673.61 million in 2005. She said revenue agencies generated Rs 30.5 billion sales and excise tax from tobacco products in 2005-06 and annual growth rate of the tax was 2.4. She said about 20 percent of the tobacco market did not pay tax and smoking was the second major killer in the world, devouring around five million people a year.

She said tobacco contained around 4,000 poisonous chemicals and was among ten “most risk factors”, identified by the World Health Organisation (WHO). Tobacco use led to over 23 types of cancer, she warned. She said tobacco users were vulnerable to cardio vascular, respiratory and other related diseases.

She said passive smoking could cause low birth weight, sudden infant death syndrome (SIDS) and pre-term delivery, in addition to acute lower respiratory tract infections and asthma, chronic respiratory symptoms in children, eye and nasal irritation in adults and middle-ear infections in children.

She said passive smoking also caused carcinogenic problems like lung cancer, nasal sinus cancer and breast cancer in premenopausal girls.

The conference was organised to seek feedback on disseminating anti-tobacco messages through prayer leaders and Friday sermons, which is part of the TCI five-year plan to effectively curtail smoking.

11 January 2008 – **Daily Times, Islamabad**

By Correspondent

HEC committed to leading anti-smoking initiatives

** Official says permanent cells to be set up at institutions to raise awareness*

ISLAMABAD: The Higher Education Commission (HEC) has assured the World Health Organisation (WHO) and the Health Ministry of its commitment to implementing the Prohibition of Smoking Ordinance, 2002, said HEC Executive Director Dr Sohail H Naqvi on Tuesday.

According to a press statement, he was addressing the one-day workshop on ‘Tobacco Control Initiative in Pakistan for Teachers, Students and University administration’ at the HEC auditorium.

The learning innovation division of the HEC, in collaboration with the WHO and the ministry, organised this workshop for the universities of Rawalpindi and Islamabad, while four more such workshops will be held in Karachi, Peshawar, Quetta and Lahore.

Permanent cells at institutions: “The participants will form a task force in their institutions thereby establishing permanent cells to raise awareness of the dangers of smoking”, said Dr Naqvi.

He urged the Asian countries to follow the Europe that had acknowledged that smoking was no longer fashionable. He said the HEC wanted to spearhead the anti-smoking programmes.

Tobacco Control Initiative Director General Shaheen Masood delivered a presentation on ‘Situational Analysis of Tobacco Use with particular reference to Pakistan’, Dr Anjum Khawar, head of the ENT department of Pakistan Institute of Medical Sciences, on ‘Impact of Tobacco on Health’ and Dr Nusrat Ara, head of the Medicine department of Rawalpindi Medical College, on ‘Effect of Smoking on Cardiovascular Diseases’.

WHO representative Shehzad Alam Khan briefed the participants about the preventive measures taken against smoking at global level. He emphasised on the publicity of anti-smoking drives.

Addressing the workshop, HEC Adviser (Quality Assurance) Dr Riaz Hussain Qureshi called upon the universities to ensure provision of healthy extracurricular activities for students and make more efforts to sensitise them towards the negative effects of smoking. Media should play its role to discourage smoking and not glamorise it, he said.

03 February 2008 – **The NEWS, Islamabad**

By Shahina Maqbool

ICT launches anti-tobacco campaign

Islamabad Capital Territory Administration (ICT) has launched a campaign to fully implement anti-tobacco laws at public places and transport.

Chief Commissioner Hamid Ali Khan said that ICT administration with the help of Islamabad Traffic Police and civil society organisations has also launched media campaign to educate people about dangers of smoking at public places.

He said that teachers, students and administrators of

private and public sector

universities would also be involved to make the campaign a success.

The chief commissioner said that the campaign aims to create awareness about the hazards of tobacco and to implement the “Prohibition of smoking and protection of non-smokers Health Ordinance 2002”, declaring all public spots and transport non-smoking zones.

He said that seminars and workshops were also being held at rural areas like Tarlai, Barakahu, Sihala on harmful effects of smoking.

He said that special educative lesson were being given to drivers not to smoke themselves but also discourage passengers smoking in public transport.

The current number of deaths from smoking in Pakistan is about 10,0,000 per year. The alarming impact of smoking had forced the government to issue the ordinance on “Prohibition of Smoking and Protection of Non Smokers Health Ordinance 2002” to arrest the menace in the country.

07 February 2008 - **CTC-Pak Release, Islamabad**

New WHO Report on Global Tobacco Epidemic Calls on Nations to Implement Life-Saving Tobacco Control Policies

ISLAMABAD, Pakistan —The World Health Organization (WHO) today released a landmark report that makes clear both the devastating scope of the global tobacco epidemic – it is the leading cause of preventable death in the world today – and the fact that it is entirely avoidable if nations implement proven solutions.

This report presents the first comprehensive picture of what the world's nations are doing to address this public health crisis, and it demonstrates starkly that most nations are not doing nearly enough. Only about five percent of the world's population is covered by any one of the key interventions recommended by the WHO.

There are about 22 million smokers in the country and 55% of the households have at least one individual who smokes tobacco. As a result Pakistan accounts for a sizeable proportion of the cigarettes consumed in South Asia. Observations were made at different public places; including restaurants, offices, banks, public transport vehicles, commercial areas, cigarette selling outlets and educational institutions in major cities of Pakistan. Compliance to the tobacco laws was found to be the highest in banks, followed by offices, while the most violations were observed in public service vehicles.

The *WHO Report on the Global Tobacco Epidemic, 2008*, finds that tobacco use already kills 5.4 million people a year and the epidemic is worsening, especially in the developing world where more than 80 percent of tobacco-caused deaths will occur in the coming decades. Unless urgent action is taken, one billion people will die worldwide from tobacco use this century.

“We have taken important steps forward in protecting the health of our citizens, but we know we must act now to do more,” said Khurram Hashmi, the coordinator of Coalition for Tobacco Control in Pakistan. “This important report gives us the roadmap we can use to reverse the tobacco epidemic and save lives.”

The Coalition for Tobacco Control - Pakistan (CTC-Pak) has been advocating for stronger measures for tobacco control by adaptation of FCTC provisions into national tobacco control laws and is currently working for the implementation of the tobacco control statutes in Pakistan encompassing mainly smoking at public places and underage selling while advocating for the development of those not addressed in the national tobacco control laws for example raise in taxation of tobacco products, pictorial warnings on tobacco packs and other supply side measures defined under FCTC.

The good news is that this epidemic is far from inevitable, and we know how to stop it. Based on science and experience, the WHO has identified six cost-effective solutions – called MPOWER in the report – that have been proven to reduce tobacco use:

- 1- Monitor tobacco use and assess the impact of tobacco prevention and cessation efforts;
- 2- Protect everyone from secondhand smoke with laws that require smoke-free workplaces and public places;
- 3- Offer help to every tobacco user to quit;
- 4- Warn and effectively educate every person about the dangers of tobacco use with strong, pictorial health warnings and hard-hitting, sustained media campaigns to educate the public;

- 5- Enact and enforce comprehensive bans on tobacco advertising, promotion and sponsorships and on the use of misleading terms such as “light” and “low-tar;” and
- 6- Raise the price of tobacco products by increasing tobacco taxes.

All of the report’s recommended measures are scientifically proven, highly cost-effective policies that are part of the Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (FCTC), the international tobacco control treaty that became international law in 2005. To date, 152 nations have ratified the treaty, but WHO finds that only five percent of the world’s population lives in a country that has adopted at least one of these anti-tobacco strategies. Pakistan has ratified the treaty.

“These are scientifically proven policies that can reverse the tobacco epidemic around the globe,” said Khurram Hashmi. “The tobacco epidemic is shifting to the developing world – due not only to population growth – but to the tobacco industry’s aggressively targeted marketing and promotion tactics.”

“The global tobacco epidemic does not just affect the health of millions of people in Pakistan – it is also an economic threat that costs local and national economies billions of dollars each year,” said Khurram Hashmi.

Tobacco use disproportionately hurts the poor and deepens poverty by siphoning money needed for basic necessities such as food, shelter and education and killing wage earners in the prime of their lives.

While there is much work to be done, support for global tobacco control policies is gaining momentum. Just this year, a growing number of countries have implemented strong smoke-free laws, including France, Turkey and Thailand. And several countries, including Brazil, Thailand, Belgium, Australia and Canada have increased public awareness of the dangers of smoking by enhancing pictorial warnings on the packaging of tobacco products to increase smokers’ awareness of their risk.

17 February 2008 – **Daily Times, Lahore**

By Adnan Lodhi

HEC to hold seminars against smoking

LAHORE: The Higher Education Commission (HEC) will launch a series of seminars in several universities across the city against smoking habits among students in March.

The purpose of the seminars is to educate students about the hazards of tobacco and to prepare the universities to implement the Prohibition of Smoking and Protection of Non Smokers Health Ordinance 2002, declaring all higher education institutes non-smoking zones.

Fida Hussain, HEC Learning Innovation Division Director said the HEC with the collaboration of the World Health Organisation (WHO) and the Health Ministry had decided to conduct the seminars across Pakistan. An HEC official said, “It is the matter of fact that tobacco is the second major cause of death in the world. The use of tobacco has become a serious health problem and there is a need to start a campaign in this regard. The number of deaths from smoking in Pakistan is about 100,000 per year.”

Ihsan, a Government College University student, said, “There is a ban on smoking on the campus, but to no avail. Smoking has become part of my life as I cannot concentrate without smoking.” Abrar, a PU student, said, “Smoking has become a curse, especially in the educational institutes.” A PU teacher said, “There is a need to launch a health programme regarding the hazards of smoking in the educational institutes across the country.” Ammara, a Lahore College for Women University student, said, “Not only male students, but the female students also smoke. Mostly students living in hostels are the victims of smoking.”

27 February 2008 – **Daily Times, Islamabad**

By Jamila Achakzai

Tobacco control programme gathering dust

** Rs 39.72m project was to take off in January*

** Planning Commission approval awaited*

ISLAMABAD: National Tobacco Control Programme (NTCP), designed by the Health Ministry at an estimated cost of Rs 39.72 million, could not take off as per schedule due to bureaucratic bottlenecks.

Daily Times learnt on Tuesday that the programme was set to start in January and end in December, 2009, but the Planning Commission of Pakistan (PCP) has not yet approved it finally.

Ultimately, the ministry had to submit PC-2 of the project with the PCP. Same is the fate of National Nutrition Programme and National Malaria Control Programme, as their project concepts (PCs) have been gathering dust at the PCP for many months. Health Ministry officials told Daily Times that PCP approval was mandatory for execution of these projects. They said the PCP had approved the NTCP only in principle.

Project proposal: Tobacco Control Cell (TCC) of the Health Ministry has designed the project. It aimed to support national and provincial departments in tobacco control activities.

Its PC-1 was forwarded to the PCP in December 2007. It has not been approved so far. “In case of more delay in approval, Pakistan could not meet tobacco control goals,” said a top ministry official.

Resources and allocations: The ministry will fund the project besides some donors, according to PC-1 while the federal government will give Rs 5 million for it.

Public Sector Development Programme (PSDP) has no allocation for the project.

Rs 10.5 million of Rs 39.713 million estimated cost will be spent on research, Rs 5.76 million on advocacy workshops, Rs 6 million on signboards and Rs 7 million on booklets and pamphlets.

Methodology: As described in the PC-1, the project will support provinces in launching tobacco control initiatives. By the end of the project, the provinces will have their own structures and mechanisms in place to continue the programme.

Expenditure of different ministries for tobacco control activities will be harmonized. The TCC will work for appointment of focal persons to coordinate between the ministries concerned.

Goals: The project plans to strengthen the TCC through improvement in its technical and managerial capacity. It also aims to cut demand for tobacco products through targeted communication strategies and establishment of “model centres for smoking cessation” in Islamabad, Karachi and Lahore.

It will encourage district and city governments to launch “Tobacco Smoke-Free Cities” drives and formulate rules to reduce tobacco use in the country.

Tax increase: The PC-1 proposes that excise, revenue and customs departments should reduce availability of tobacco products through increase in taxation and decrease in illegal tax-free imports.

The project will focus on reducing second-hand smoke exposure through implementation of existing laws. Children will specially be taken care of in terms of providing them with a cleaner environment.

02 March 2008 – **Daily Time, Islamabad**

By Correspondent

Smoking on increase among youth

RAWALPINDI: The tendency to use tobacco stuff, including cigarettes, snuff and betel, is gaining popularity gradually with youth of the twin cities of Rawalpindi and Islamabad, putting their health and future at stake.

The increasing popularity of taking pinch of snuff poses serious health threats to the youth. The government has not succeeded in implementing laws to discourage smoking and intake of tobacco stuff at public places.

The government has promulgated ‘Prohibition of Smoking at Public Places and Protection of Non-Smokers Health Ordinance, 2002’, aiming to restrict promotional campaigns of the tobacco industry.

The intake of snuff is injurious to health, but unfortunately now its sale and use is a common sight. The youngsters and students are falling prey to tobacco use, though many anti-tobacco campaigns are launched at different forums to make them aware of bacca’s impacts on health.

The medical experts have been urging the government to ban the sale and use of tobacco, cigarettes and betel. Around 85 per cent of lung, mouth, throat, kidney and bladder cancer in addition to chronic bronchitis and emphysema are caused by the tobacco.

The public and social circles have urged the government to raise excise duty on tobacco items to discourage its consumption. They said that all forms of tobacco advertisements should not be promoted, as they encouraged the youth to smoke.

26 March 2008 – **The News, Islamabad**

By Correspondent

“Fascinating” Schemes for Tobacco Promotions

Islamabad: Coalition For Tobacco Control – Pakistan (CTC-Pak) and other civil society organizations working for the prohibition of smoking and protection of non-smokers’ health have expressed their concern over blatant violation of rules by tobacco industry regarding ban on advertisements and unethical and unlawful promotion of different brands of cigarettes and urged upon the government to take immediate steps to check the new unlawful tactics of the industry.

While monitoring of the implementation of tobacco control statutes encompassed in **‘Prohibition of Smoking and Protection of Non-Smokers’ Health Ordinance 2002’** by conducting periodical surveys in major districts and cities of Pakistan, the CTC-Pak observed that there are different types of advertisements related to tobacco

promotion circulating in the market blatantly violating the law. These are in the form of large stickers pasted prominently either on the display counter of the shops or on the front wall / glass window of the shop or both. They are to promote the 'new blend', 'fresh scent' and of course, if one is lucky to find a certain colored cigarette in a pack, he or she is entitled for attractive rewards which can be 'two free cigarettes' or one of the 12 'Bumper Prizes' i.e. a brand new Tractor.

Various studies have established tobacco promotion as a cause of increased tobacco consumption. The tobacco industry continues to cater its unethical marketing tactics to promote and attract the potential smokers. The tobacco industry invests millions, if not billions of rupees, of their budget in capacity of advertisement campaigns as they know that this is precise tool to gain profits many fold.

With current smoking patterns, there are more than 20 million smokers in Pakistan only. The death toll of tobacco consumers, in one form or another, is on an alarming level and tobacco is already identified as one of the major health hazards in Pakistan. Such promotions not only encourage existing smokers to further indulge in smoking but also attract new, as well as young, smokers.

Unfortunately such promotions are being made in Pakistan at a time when in the developed countries the governments have drawn up proposals including a bar on displaying tobacco products and removal of vending machines from pubs.

The CTC-Pak and civil society organizations have urged upon the ministry of health and particularly Tobacco Control Cell of the ministry to take immediate steps to stop such types of promotions of killer products.

29 March 2008 – Regional Times, Jacobabad

By Correspondent

Saturday, March 29, 2008

REGIONAL TIMES

Violation of laws by tobacco companies creates panic

By Sikander Bakhtiyar Khoso

JACOBABAD: Coalition for Tobacco Control Pakistan (CTC) and Community Development Foundation Jacobabad have been working to aware people about the prohibition of smoking and protection of non-smokers health.

They have expressed their concern over violation of rules by tobacco industry regarding ban on advertisements and unethical and unlawful promotion of different brands of cigarettes and urged upon the government to take immediate steps to check the new unlawful tactics of the industry. While monitoring of the implementation of tobacco control statutes covered in 'Prohibition of Smoking and Protection of Non-Smokers' Health Ordinance 2002'

by conducting periodical surveys in major districts and cities of Pakistan, the CTC-Pak observed that there are different types of advertisements related to tobacco promotion circulating in the market and violating the law.

29 March 2008 – Pachar, Jacobabad

By Correspondent

اچو سورن واريون،
Cell: 0333-7337913
ڪريون سور پچار (شاهه)
Jacobabad, Sindh.

عوام جي سورن ۽ سڪن جي ترجمان

هفتيوار پچار

جيڪب آباد جيف ايڊيٽر: عبدالسميع سومرو

سال: 3 ڇنڇر 29 مارچ 2008ء ملهه: 5/- (شمارو: 34)

**سي ٽي سي پاڪستان ۽ سي ڊي ايف پاران تمباڪو نوشي تي سروي
انڊسٽريز تمباڪو نوشي جي فروغ لاءِ وڏي پيماني تي تشهير ڪن ٿيون
گهٽ عمر ۽ نوجوان تمباڪو نوشي ڪري رهيا آهن. ان کي روڪڻ جو مطالبو**

<p>جيڪب آباد (ا.ر) تماڪو نوشي جي استعمال جي خلاف ۽ تمباڪو نوشي نه ڪندڙ فردن جي صحت جي لاءِ ڪم ڪندڙ اداري پاڪستان ڪوليشن پرايمري تمباڪو ڪنٽرول ۽ ڪميونٽي ڊولپمينٽ فائونڊيشن جيڪب آباد جي طرفان تمباڪو نوشي جي تشهير ۽ تمباڪو ڪنٽرول جي قانونن جي خلاف ورزي تي افسوس جو اظهار ڪندي اهڙي انڊسٽريز ۽ فردن جي خلاف قانوني ڪارروائي جو مطالبو ڪيو آهي. ان موقعي تي تمباڪو نوشي جي منع ۽ تمباڪو نوشي کان گريز</p>	<p>ڪندڙ فردن جي صحت جي متعلق ملڪ جي اهم شهرن ۽ ضلعن ۾ سروي دوران ان ڳالهه کي محسوس ڪيو ويو ته تمباڪو نوشي جي تشهير جي لاءِ وڏي انڊسٽريز ملڪي قانونن جي خلاف ورزي ڪري رهيو آهي ۽ سگريٽ جي استعمال وڌائڻ جي لاءِ هي ادارا نه صرف قانون جي خلاف ورزي ڪندي تشهير ڪري رهيا آهن پر تمباڪو نوشي جي لاءِ راغب ڪرڻ جي لاءِ ماڻهن کي انعامن جون لالچون به ڏئي عادي بڻائي رهيا آهن. ٻڌايو ويو ته هن وقت پاڪستان ۾ 20 ملين</p>	<p>ماڻهو تمباڪو نوشي ڪري رهيا آهن ان ۾ گهٽ عمر ۽ نوجوان به وڏي تعداد ۾ شامل آهن. ان سلسلي ۾ سي ڊي ايف ۽ سي ٽي سي پاڪستان صحت کاتي ۽ خاص طور تي تمباڪو ڪنٽرول سيل کان مطالبو ڪيو آهي ته ان جان وندڙ شيءَ جي اهڙي طرح تشهير کي جلد روڪيو وڃي ۽ ان تي پابندي لڳائي قانون تي سختي سان عمل ڪرايو وڃي</p>
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30 March 2008 – Khabrain, Jacobabad
By Correspondent

CERTIFIED

جیت ایڈیٹر: ضیا شاہد

سکھر

Daily
KHABRAIN

روزنامہ

ایڈیٹر: امتنان شاہد

جلد 5

اتوار 21 ربیع الاول 1429ھ 30 مارچ 2008ء 17 چیت 2064 ب صفحات 36 قیمت 10 روپے

شمارہ 103

پاکستان میں 2 کروڑ افراد منشیات کے عادی ہیں، سماجی تنظیم

تہا کو بنانیوالی انڈسٹریز تشہیر کے ذریعے انعامات کا لالچ دیکر نوجوانوں کو نشے کا عادی بنادی ہے

سکریت کے استعمال کو بڑھانے والی کمپنیوں کیخلاف کارروائی کی جائے گی کیونکہ نئی ڈیپلٹ فائونڈیشن

جیکب آباد (اسٹریٹ رپورٹر) پاکستان کو لیکن بڑے

تہا کو کنٹرول اور کیونکہ ڈیپلٹ فائونڈیشن جیکب آباد کی

چاہے سے تہا کو کوئی تشہیر اور تہا کو کنٹرول کے قوانین

کی خلاف ورزی پر انصاف کا اظہار کرتے ہوئے ایسی انڈسٹریز

اور ڈیپلٹ فائونڈیشن کے خلاف قانونی کارروائی کا مطالبہ کیا ہے۔

اس موقع پر تہا کو کوئی کی ممانعت اور تہا کو کوئی سے کر رہ

کرنے والے افراد کی صحت کے حلقہ ملک کے اہم شہروں

اور امتداد میں ہونے کے دوران یہ بات سامنے آئی ہے کہ

تہا کو کوئی کی تشہیر کیلئے بڑی انڈسٹریز بھی قوانین کی خلاف

ورزی کر رہی ہیں اور سکریت کے استعمال کو بڑھانے کیلئے یہ

کوڑے نہ صرف قانون کی خلاف ورزی کرتے ہوئے تشہیر

کر رہے ہیں بلکہ تہا کو کوئی کیلئے رقبہ کرنے کیلئے لوگوں کو

انعامات کا لالچ دے کر عادی بنانا چاہ رہے۔ مقامی سماجی تنظیم

کی سرورس رپورٹ کے مطابق اس وقت پاکستان

میں 20 ملین افراد تہا کو کوئی کر رہے ہیں اس میں نو ملین اور

نو ملین بھی بڑی تعداد میں شامل ہیں۔ اس سلسلے میں کیونکہ

ڈیپلٹ فائونڈیشن اور سی ٹی وی پاکستان نے محکمہ صحت اور

خاص طور پر تہا کو کنٹرول سٹی سے مطالبہ کیا ہے کہ اس

جان لیو ایجنسی کی تشہیر کو فوری طور پر بند کیا جائے۔

30 March 2008 – Regional Times,, Jacobabad

By Correspondent

REGIONAL TIMES
THE HEARTLAND



Ordinance about ban on smoking at public places remains in documentations

By Sikander Bakhtiyar Khoso

JACOBABAD: Smoking was completely banned at all places, institutions and public service vehicles by an ordinance 2002 titled "Prohibition of Smoking at Public Places and Protection of Non-Smokers Health Ordinance 2002" but it had never been implemented in letter and spirit by the government agencies. In this connection during a survey conducted by RT it was learnt that people are using tobacco products/cigarettes at every place and health non-smokers were at stake. The ordinance prohibits sale of cigarettes to under eighteen and restricts the sale tobacco products within 50 meters of any educational institutions. It has been observed smoking has become habit among young boys wandering in the streets. According to WHO report five million people die every year from tobacco related diseases, of them 50 percents deaths occurred in developing countries. The NGOs activists and city circles have demanded that president's ordinance should be implemented forth with in the country to save the people cancer/death.

April 03, 2008, Weekly PULSE, Islamabad

Article on World TB Day - By Mazhar Arif

Fighting the disease

Islamabad - Last month, on March 24, World TB Day was commemorated all over the world including Pakistan to invite people to actively participate in the fight against the killer disease -- Tuberculosis. The force behind the commemoration of this annual occasion is, within the Stop TB Partnership, The International Union Against Tuberculosis and Lung Disease, known as The Union, an international organisation established in 1920. The union is the only international voluntary scientific organisation with partners in all regions providing a neutral platform to fight TB, TB-HIV, Asthma, tobacco and lung disease.

The Stop TB Partnership is a global campaign to fight TB launched in the year 2000 with the collaboration of over 500 organisations and the World Health Organisation (WHO). This global action was initiated because, despite a deep commitment, numerous actions and strong ongoing medical progress surrounding TB, the disease is still an alarming global public health problem. This year the campaign is dedicated not only to the men and women who have contributed in the fight against TB but also celebrates those who have been successfully treated for the disease.

For centuries, tuberculosis has been a major health issue with over a third of the world's population exposed to or suffering from the consequences of this disease. As a reminder, tuberculosis is still a common, communicable but potentially deadly infectious illness, caused by the tubercle bacillus discovered by Dr Robert Koch on March 24, 1882. Medicine has come a long way and cures have been found since then, but unfortunately, tuberculosis is still responsible for over a million and a half deaths and nine million new cases are declared each year worldwide.

According to the World Health Organisation (WHO) Global TB Report 2006, Pakistan ranks seventh among the 22 high-burden tuberculosis countries worldwide, every year, approximately 280,000 people in Pakistan (primarily adults in their productive years) develop TB. The emergence of multidrug-resistant TB and TB-HIV co-infection are growing concerns in the country.

The Ministry of Health began implementing Directly Observed Therapy Short (Dots) course in 1995, with Balochistan as a pilot province. Between the years 2000 and 2004, Dots coverage increased in Pakistan from 9 to 79 per cent. As the Dots programme expand, the quality of treatment must also improve. Treatment success was just 75 per cent in the 2003 cohort, but a high proportion of patients were not subject to follow-up. The steep rise in the number of TB cases reported each year since 2000 represents improved case registration under Dots.

Despite progress over the past five years, the case detection rate for Pakistan was estimated to be only 27 per cent in 2004, well below the target of 70 per cent.

In 2001, the government declared TB a national emergency, which led to a TB budget increase from \$1.65 million in 2001 to \$26 million in 2006. Despite improvements, the NTP still faces challenges. As TB planning shifts from the national to the district level, technical and managerial capacity at the provincial and district levels required to be strengthened.

Tuberculosis remains Pakistan's leading cause of death among infectious diseases. It carries a social stigma because of its link with poverty and overcrowded living conditions. TB, a bacterial infection that spreads through inhalation and primarily affects the lungs, if left untreated, eats away at bones and organs. Hobbled by poverty, shame or a lack of awareness, three-fourths of sufferers in Pakistan are never diagnosed by a doctor. Poverty and poor nutrition are major factors fuelling the spread of tuberculosis in the country, health experts say.

Smoking is another cause of the lung disease, which is spreading like an epidemic particularly among the youth. Pakistan has ratified the FCTC and promulgated the 'Prohibition of Smoking and Protection of Non-Smokers Health Ordinance 2002', which was enforced in July 2003, however its effective implementation is needed. Pakistan has also incorporated tobacco control in the National Action Plan for Non-Communicable Diseases Prevention. Efforts have also been made for public awareness by establishing Tobacco Control Cell in the Ministry of Health. Though the statutes ban smoking at public places and enclosed areas, the methods for implementation are not defined. No significant changes have been seen due to gaps in legislation and absence of implementation structures. No effort is currently visible for specific structural reforms required to undertake this work.

Coalition for Tobacco Control – Pakistan (CTC-Pak), an alliance of more than 20 organisations, has been advocating for stronger measures for tobacco control by the translation and adaptation of FCTC provisions into national tobacco control laws. Despite the introduction of some legislative measures, a comprehensive approach towards effective tobacco control is still lacking. These loopholes allow the tobacco industry to exploit an under regulated market. CTC-Pak feels that efforts are now required to initiate an advocacy campaign so that a holistic legislative environment can be created for tobacco control.

Last week, the Tobacco Control Cell, Ministry of Health, recognising the harmful effects of smoking on public health, formed the Technical Advisory Group (TAG) on Tobacco Control, which proposed a series of strategies including enhancement of taxation on cigarettes, introduction of pictorial warnings on cigarette packs, abolition of designated smoking areas and creation of 100 per cent smoke-free public places.

Meanwhile, 'The Bloomberg Initiative Forum-Pakistan' which is committed to the scaling up of tobacco control has endorsed all the proposals forwarded by the TAG at the close of a meeting held at the World Health Organisation (WHO) here last Friday to review the progress and strengthen coordination among the Bloomberg Initiative grants projects.

Bloomberg Initiative grants are for tobacco control, and its partners are the WHO, the Ministry of Health, Coalition for Tobacco Control-Pakistan, The Network for Consumer Protection, Society for Alternative Media and Research, John Hopkins and others. The 'Bloomberg initiative for Tobacco control' is playing an important leadership and coordination role in assisting for effective tobacco control interventions in line with best evidence and policies.

Mazhar Arif is a senior journalist, now working as the Executive Director of Society for Alternative Media And Research (SAMAR), a civil society organisation, based in Islamabad, Pakistan.

03 April 2008 – The NEWS, Peshawar

By Correspondent

Growers seek Pakistan Tobacco Board abolition

PESHAWAR: Anjuman-e-Kasht-karan-e-Tobacco NWFP President Ikramullah Khan while seeking immediate abolishment of the Pakistan Tobacco Board (PTB) Saturday urged the central and NWFP governments to redress the grievances of the tobacco growers.

"Tobacco growers have been suffering from the negligence of the previous governments for the last eight years," he told a news conference at the Peshawar Press Club.

Regarding Pakistan Tobacco Board (PTB), he said a new board be formed in consultation with the four registered associations of the farming community as it had been done previously. He also underlined the need for filling the post of chairman of the board by appointing a technocrat from the private sector. He regretted that traditionally a retired army general or a senior bureaucrat occupies the post, which is not a pragmatic approach.

A few years back, he said, the provincial government had taken a decision to ask the four registered associations of the farming community about their nominees to be notified as members of PTB. "But on the expiry of the existing members' term despite the fact that associations had sent recommendations to the provincial agriculture ministry, but the chief secretary completely ignored the same and replaced them with three persons of his choice," he said.

However, he added, in complete disregard for the directions of the NWFP governor, the PTB has again under the influence of multinational tobacco companies notified the fake grower representatives to the board through the ministry of commerce, two of whom are

neither genuine tobacco growers nor recommended by any registered association of farming community.

“While one of them, being a favourite of the tobacco companies has been continuously notified for the last 20 years, which is against the law,” he said. “The most astonishing part is that the Anjuman, which is solely looking after the legitimate rights of tobacco growers since 1975, is entitled to have its representatives in the board but, unfortunately, it has been completely ignored,” he lamented.

Ikramullah said the incumbent chairman of the board reportedly said that a board meeting formed some committees, “but, surprisingly, the most important issue of prices for the season 2008 had not formally been announced as yet and being kept secret.”

“Principally the PTB was duty-bound to declare the price of tobacco in October every year so that the farmers had the option whether to grow tobacco or any other crop. The crop is mainly grown by peasant proprietors of Swabi and tenants of districts Mardan, Charsadda, Malakand Agency, Buner, Mansehra and parts of Swat. The total worth of the crop annually is more than Rs45 billion, out of which over 78 per cent is received by the federal government in the shape of Central Excise Duty and Sales Tax, amounting to approximately Rs33 billion,” he said.

03 April 2008 – Pakistan Observer, Peshawar

By APP

Arbab contacts for release of tobacco share

Peshawar—NWFP Minister for Agriculture and Livestock, Arbab Muhammad Ayub Jan Saturday said that Federal Government will be contacted to release the due share of the NWFP in the tobacco as huge amount was being collected from growers as a central excise duty. This he said in a briefing given by the Secretary Agriculture, Abdul Samad Khan at his office. Arbab Ayub Jan regretted that being an agriculture country, we could not become self-sufficient even in the wheat and milk.

He stressed the officials of the department to make their research more effective to achieve the desired goal. He said that 48% necessity of the fruit is being fulfilled by the NWFP and it is a high time that the Agriculture Department should give due attention to the agricultural sector so that the fruit could be exported to the Middle East and other Asian countries. He also directed Secretary Agriculture to ask the Industry Department as why the sugar mills have started crushing season a month late which badly suffered the farmers, sugar crops on one hand and also caused a delay in the wheat crop.

Arbab Ayub Jan asked the concerned authorities to prepare a summary to restart the cooperative schemes for the poor growers. He also said that agriculture is the backbone of the Pakistan economy and the present government was determined to eliminate unemployment and poverty through agriculture sector and for the purpose more

incentives were needed to be provided to the farmers. He took serious notice of non payment to the sugarcane growers by the sugar industries and asked Secretary Agriculture to contact the Industries Department so as to take appropriate action against the mills owners.

He said that a meeting would be held with the federal government to reduce the rate of fertilizers so the input and output could be balanced. He said that the government should wave off the credit of the small growers and provide them diesel and electricity on subsidized rate.

11 May 2008 – The NEWS, Islamabad

By Correspondent

‘Sheesha’ smoking goes unchecked despite ban

Use of sheesha, a special sort of smoking pipe with flavoured juices, goes unchecked in some restaurants and food outlets in the capital city despite a ban due to its harmful effects on the human health.

Trend of using sheesha, actually a ‘delicious and fruity killer,’ gained ground among the people a couple of years back, but when various scientific researches conducted by reputed organization termed it injurious to health, the local administration imposed a ban on its use on November 15, 2006.

According to a study conducted by Dr Kenneth A. Krebs, President of the American Academy of Paediatrics, tobacco used for water pipe smoking contains two to four percent nicotine as against the one to three percent in cigarettes.

Dr Imdad Hussain of the Holy Family Hospital said sheesha could cause various diseases ranging from lung infection, coughing, respiratory illness, tuberculosis to cancer because when smoke passed through water it stayed for longer time in the lungs.

It is quite alarming that pick of the sheesha smokers are teenagers who just use it as a fashion or entertainment, ignoring the fact that if it becomes their habit then they can fall prey to various health diseases.

Sheesha is presented to the visitors in various food outlets with a ‘high protocol’ as it is a masterpiece of art or something extremely unique in terms of cultural heritage, which compels more and more people to go through this experience.

“A rich variety of fruity and delicious tastes have an appeal to the visitors who consider it just a piece of entertainment after having meals,” said a waiter at a restaurant near China Chowk whose entrance and interior decoration depicted rural culture of Punjab.

Experts say sheesha user inhales 10 times more smoke into lungs than a cigarette smoker that makes it more injurious to health. The fruity smoke in sheesha is a worst form of tobacco that apparently gives a soothing taste to the user. Tobacco is fermented with various fruits whose natural smell dominates that of the tobacco and nicotine that produces coolness in the body, making users feel that it is not harmful in nature. Youngsters also including girls are often seen at an open-air tea spot near the Maraghzar Zoo, smoking sheesha apparently to have some fun in the evening time. Though food outlets in the Blue Area do not place sheesha openly on the tables but if customers demand so it is immediately presented to them in some of the restaurants.

"Hukkah is widely used in interior parts of Punjab, but I think if something is fatal to health we should not promote it. It is quite a negative approach to use hukkah, giving it a new look in the form of sheesha, just to earn money from the customers," said Gulfraz Abbasi, a lecturer at the Government College Murree.

All the users, mostly in groups, smoke through a single pipe that may transfer germs of various diseases from one person to another. No chemical or other treatment can fully kill the germs attached with the smoke pipe.

Smoking has been banned in public places under the Prohibition of Smoking Ordinance 2002 that also makes it mandatory to place "no smoking zone" boards at every public or private entity.

18 May 2008 – The NEWS, Peshawar

By Syed Bukhar Shah

Tobacco growers warn of civil disobedience drive

PESHAWAR: The Sarhad Chamber of Agriculture, Swabi, has warned that more than a million tobacco growers in NWFP would launch civil disobedience movement if the government failed to fix the rate of their cash crop.

"We have been requesting the governments since long but nothing practical has been done for solution of our genuine problems," Chamber's President Mohammad Ali told 'The News'. "But now we are fed up and could not afford further exploitation of our people at the hands of multinational companies as well as the government," he added.

The tobacco growers have decided to convey their collective decision to NWFP Chief Minister Ameer Haider Hoti before the government committee could finalise rate for them without knowing their problems. "We are also planning to stage protest demonstration in front of the Parliament during the budget session," Chamber's General Secretary Liaquat Yousafzai said.

The tobacco growers have already rejected the government's rate -- Rs66 per kilogram -- saying the exploitation of the growers could be judged from the fact that committee has been purchasing the same tobacco for Rs80 per kilogram last year.

The federal government is collecting Rs38 billion as excise duty from tobacco but still it has pushed the helpless growers to commit suicide. "About 36,000 tobacco ovens are functioning and every oven employs at least 10 persons in every season," Mohammad Ali said. Thousands of persons would be rendered unemployed if their negotiations with the government failed, he added.

Comparing the prices of fertilizers, water taxes and others required labour on tobacco, the expenditures of farmers have multiplied on the crop but still they were being asked to provide it on the same rate -- Rs66 per kg. It, they said, was further deplorable to note that the farmers had to spend Rs90 per kilogram but the government was not ready to purchase it from them at Rs100 per kilogram and insisting on the previous rate of Rs66.

21 May 2008 – The NEWS, Islamabad

By Correspondent

Cigarette manufacturers ‘to face big tax burden’

A “sizably big” tax burden will be imposed on cigarette manufacturers in the forthcoming budget, a representative of the Federal Board of Revenue (FBR) told a multi-stakeholder gathering participating in a national consultation on tobacco control here on Tuesday. Moreover, the WHO chief has rejected the idea of having designated smoking areas and has called for replacement of text health warnings on cigarette packs with graphic representations of the ill-effects of smoking on human health.

Secretary Budget-FBR Asif Abbas asserted that the decision to increase taxes on cigarette manufacturers has already been taken, but the exact figure will remain confidential till announcement of the federal budget. “Right now, I can only say that the burden of taxes will be sizably big. It will be an extra burden running into billions of rupees,” he added. Asif said the minimum prices of cigarettes would be raised. Current revenue earned from the tobacco industry each year is the range of Rs30 billion.

Organised by the Tobacco Control Cell of the Ministry of Health, the two-day consultation, which will continue today (Wednesday), amply demonstrated that tobacco control is not a priority of the government. Not a single official from the Ministry of Health made it to the event, except for Technical Advisory Group on Tobacco Control Chairman Oriya Jan Maqbool, who made an entry at the tail end of the programme to propose an interaction with leading playwrights to sensitise them against indirect promotion of tobacco on dramas and plays.

The proceedings featured presentations by Director General-Implementation of the Framework Convention for Tobacco Control (FCTC) Shaheen Masud, WHO Representative Dr. Khalif Bile Mohamud, and chairperson of the recently-constituted Task Force for Tobacco Control at PIMS Dr. Anjum Khawar, who focused on the impact of tobacco on health. Her presentation included an interesting video clip portraying the unhygienic conditions in which ‘naswar’ is manufactured.

The availability of the perspective of FBR added novelty to the consultation. Asif told the gathering that FBR is “slowly but surely” working on several schemes including affixing of excise stamps and banderole on cigarette packs as currently practiced in Turkey,

Malaysia and Bangladesh; mandatory printing of nicotine and tar contents on cigarette packs; and installation of CCTV cameras inside cigarette manufacturing factories to ensure the sale of taxed cigarettes only.

“From such date as may be prescribed by FBR, no packet of cigarette shall be removed and sold by the manufacturer or any other person without affixing banderole and excise stamp in such style and manner as may be prescribed by the board,” Asif said, adding “all expenses to be incurred on printing, making and affixing excise stamps and banderoles will be borne by the manufacturers or concerned persons.”

It is learnt that both the leading multinational tobacco manufacturing giants in Pakistan are not prepared to bear the entire burden of expenditure on excise stamping and banderole. With the FBR in an action mode, the tobacco industry will not wait now before it flexes its muscles to get the upcoming decisions aborted.

Responding to a question, Asif said, “To the extent of legislation, FBR is totally in consonance with the FCTC; however, our strategy is to move bit by bit. The Ministry of Health should, on its part, keep pricking us for action,” he light-heartedly remarked before sharing regulations governing the manufacturing of cigarettes in Pakistan.

The FBR representative asserted that from such date as the board may specify, no cigarette shall be cleared from any factory unless it conforms to the health standards prescribed by the federal government and unless nicotine and tar contents are duly printed on each pack. He said, FBR is currently exploring various options on how to implement these plans without earning a bad name for the board.

Dr. Bile rejected the creation of designated smoking areas, terming them “an infringement of the rights of non-smokers.” He urged for a ban on sale of individual sticks and on advertisements of various tobacco brands, and appealed for switching over to pictorial health warnings on cigarette packs. “The warning should be legible to everyone — particularly to the poor and illiterate. It should not be in a language which a majority cannot comprehend,” he said, favouring graphic warnings.

Bile complimented the revenue authorities for initiating correct actions. “Taxation is one of the most important areas of action for tobacco control,” he said. The WHO chief clarified that increase in the price of tobacco products will not lead to a decline in revenues; on the contrary, such a measure will increase revenue and reduce tobacco consumption as the product will be rendered beyond the reach of children and the under-privileged, who are the focus of the tobacco industry as new converts. Over 70 per cent of the cigarette brands in Pakistan are available at very low prices, and hence are easily accessible to the poor.

“If the government decides on a five-fold increase in taxation, it will earn five times more profit because 80% of the people who smoke today and who may want to quit will not do so because you have a whole population tied to tobacco for decades, not to mention the addition of 1 million new smokers per year to the existing number for the next 40 years,” Bile explained.

Earlier, Shaheen Masud said the consultation has been organised to give an urgent call for action to all stakeholders on the eve of World No Tobacco Day. Even though the Tobacco Control Cell has formulated a 5-year strategic action plan for tobacco control, it cannot move ahead owing to a host of constraints, of which the most visible ones are lack of political commitment, delay in approval of the Rs34 million PC-1 for tobacco control, and paucity of human resource. Even though tobacco control fares nowhere on the government’s priority list, the Tobacco Control Cell has made a meaningful beginning in a non-compliant and permissive environment thriving on the wily ways of the tobacco industry.

23 May 2008 – The NEWS, Islamabad

By Correspondent

Stakeholders recommend printing of pictorial health warning on cigarette packs

Stakeholders attending a two-day national consultative workshop on tobacco control have drafted a series of recommendations for an accelerated response to the tobacco epidemic. The most significant recommendations include printing of pictorial health warnings on cigarette packs so that the ill-effects of tobacco use are thoroughly exposed; a ban on incidental tobacco promotion through dramas; and creation of a Health Journalists’ Forum for an intensive public health education campaign.

Organised by the Tobacco Control Cell of the Ministry of Health and the World Health Organisation (WHO), the meeting was attended by representatives of several ministries, provincial health departments, Federal Board of Revenue and NGOs.

Stakeholders attending the consultation reviewed the ongoing tobacco control programme against the backdrop of implementation of the Prohibition of Smoking and Protection of Non-Smokers Health Ordinance 2002 as well as the Framework Convention on Tobacco Control. While appreciating ongoing interventions for tobacco control, they stressed the need for new and innovative strategies to halt tobacco use.

“Pictorial health warnings may be printed on cigarette packs so that the country’s illiterate population in particular can understand the implications of tobacco use and save themselves from addiction,” reads a recommendation advocating graphic representation of health warnings.

“Scenes of smoking by glamorous actors in dramas must be stopped by holding meetings with PEMRA, writers and producers. Workshops may be organized for playwrights, producers and media health forums to motivate them to write and produce dramas, articles and news items on the health hazards of tobacco,” the stakeholders have proposed.

The recommendations also include the initiation of an intensive public health education campaign from all channels of communication to create awareness about the deleterious effects of smoking on human health, and to inform people about existing anti-smoking legislation. The stakeholders agreed that photographs of various types of visible cancers should be included in educational programmes to arouse fear. A Health Journalists Forum may soon be established to accelerate public education.

The meeting recommended education of youth so that they don't to fall into the trap of the tobacco industry's marketing forces. “Special media programmes should be arranged with the involvement of young people,” the stakeholders have recommended. They have also proposed an intensive campaign against use of ‘sheesha.’

Other recommendations include holding of seminars for the judiciary and the police force to educate them on various sections of the ordinance; award of punishment to violations in order to deter violations of the ordinance; use of new channels of communication such as internet to reach out to young people; and involvement of religious leaders and provision of educational material to them for use in sermons.

28 May 2008 – The NEWS, Islamabad

By Muhammad Qasim

Lack of political will a challenge in Pakistan

With the world gearing up to observe ‘World No Tobacco Day’ on May 31, 2008, Tobacco Control Cell of Ministry of Health remains constrained by challenges including lack of resources and staff and indeed absence of political will for prioritisation of tobacco control interventions in Pakistan, a high tobacco consumption country.

Head of Community Medicine at Islamabad Medical & Dental College, Colonel (r) Professor Dr Muhammad Ashraf Chaudhry expressed this while talking to ‘The News’ Tuesday in connection with ‘World No Tobacco Day’.

He said the tobacco-smoking epidemic is spreading rapidly in Pakistan, especially among youth and country's political leadership should take cognisance of the reality and inject the needed resources for an accelerated response to the challenge.

Dr Ashraf said the government has launched anti-smoking campaign for tobacco control but the campaign, at present, suffers conflicting government policy; on one hand it allows manufacturing of cigarettes and publicity of cigarettes and on the other hand, the public is being educated on the health hazards of smoking.

“Tobacco industry spends tens of billions of dollars on tobacco advertising and promotion, whereas the government allocates only Rs4 to Rs5 million per year on health education campaign against smoking,” he said while responding to a query.

He added that majority of restrictions on smoking and promotion of tobacco, enriched in Prohibition of Smoking and Protection of Non-Smokers Health Ordinance 2002 exist on paper only.

“No sincere attempts have been made to implement this ordinance instead, the tobacco companies have been given a free hand to promote the deadly and addictive substance to the youth of Pakistan,” he said, adding that 90% of the public in the country is unaware of any laws against tobacco smoking at public places.

30 May 2008 – **Daily Times, Islamabad**

By Jamila Achakzai

Volunteers launch anti-tobacco drive

ISLAMABAD: The Health Ministry in collaboration with the Youth Affairs Ministry on Thursday launched a nationwide volunteer movement for ‘No Tobacco Campaign’ ahead of World No-Tobacco Day to be marked on May 31.

The launch came during the Conference for Leaders of Youth Organisations, which was organised by the Health Ministry’s Tobacco Control Cell to engage officials of the two ministries, Voluntary Youth Movement and other youth organisations for a discussion on how to rein in rising tobacco use among youth.

The conference was also to build an alliance for the implementation of the Prohibition of Smoking and Protection of the Non-Smokers Health Ordinance, 2002, and Framework Convention on Tobacco Control with the stakeholders, especially the Youth Affairs Ministry.

Youth Affairs Secretary Ashfaq Mehmood, which presided over the conference, stressed the need for implementation of the ‘No Tobacco Campaign’ to make youth tobacco-free. Tobacco use among youth: He said that tobacco use among youngsters, who made 42 percent of the country’s total population, was likely to grow enormously in future.

He said every day, 1,200 young Pakistanis, aged between six and 15, began smoking, and they included girls. Mehmood said that around 36 percent men and nine percent women in the country used tobacco.

Corrective measures: He said better awareness among people, especially youth, the most vulnerable group, of hazards of smoking to make the campaign a success. "The campaign should be continues and sustainable. It should be taken as mission and not as a stand-alone activity on the yearly No Tobacco Day celebration," he said.

The secretary recommended that volunteers should visit each and every school of Islamabad/Rawalpindi to educate students on health risks of smoking. He also called for effective enforcement of Prohibition of Smoking and Protection of the Non-Smokers Health Ordinance, pooling in of human/intellectual resources to prevent both supply and demand of tobacco, and engagement of mosque committees for awareness creation and implementation of anti-smoking law.

He also recommended sensitisation of media personnel on adverse health consequences of smoking. He said traders and manufactures related to cigarette and naswar industries would be taken in confidence on anti-smoking initiatives and another alternatives would be provided to them.

Mehmood appreciated anti-tobacco activities of the Health Ministry. He said that the conference would be a harbinger for collaboration between the Health and Youth Affairs ministries.

Earlier, Senior Joint Secretary of Youth Affairs Ministry Talib Hussain Sial announced that 109 nationwide NGOs working on youth affairs had declared their offices tobacco free. He said the ministry had already prohibited smoking on its premises.

A number of useful recommendations came up from the participants in the interactive conference, which was largely attended by senior officials of the Health Ministry and Youth Affairs Ministry, university students and stakeholders.

30 May 2008 – **Daily Times, Islamabad**

By Fazal Sher

World No Tobacco Day tomorrow: ICT fails to set up No Smoking zones

ISLAMABAD: World No Tobacco Day is being observed around the globe including Pakistan tomorrow (Saturday) with the theme 'Tobacco-free youth'. The government spends huge amount of money every year on observing World No Tobacco Day, but the Islamabad Capital Territory (ICT) administration has failed to implement the Prohibition of Smoking and Protection of Non-smokers Ordinance in the federal capital where people openly violate the law.

“Despite passage of three years, the much-awaited plan to establish smoking zones in different parts of the city and bound the hotel owners to set up smoking zone still hangs in balance,” a senior official of the ICT administration requesting anonymity told Daily Times on Thursday.

He said taking advantage of the lack of interest being shown by the ICT administration people were openly violating the law, which had badly affected the non-smokers. He said the authorities concerned had not yet launched any effective campaign to check smoking in public transport vehicles. Even the administration could not succeed in establishing smoking zones in hotels, motels, and hospitals, he said.

According to the ordinance, the ICT official said, no person could smoke in public places including auditoriums, health institutions, amusement centres, restaurants, public offices, court buildings, cinema halls, conference or seminar halls, eating houses, hotel lounges, other waiting lounges, libraries, bus stations, sport stadiums, educational institutions and other places.

Dr Waseem Khawaja, a medical officer at Pakistan Institute of Medical Science (PIMS), said that exposure to smoking was a serious threat to the health of passive or non-smokers. “Passive or active smoking causes lungs cancer, heart disease and other health complications including gastric ulcers as well as pregnancy problems,” he added.

Khalid Mehmood, ICT spokesman, told Daily Times that a plan to construct smoking zones at public places would be materialised soon. After promulgation of the ordinance, he said, the ICT had imposed fine on around 900 people for violation of the law.

He said the ICT had also launched several campaigns in this regard bringing awareness among people about smoking. The ICT had also ticketed public transporters for allowing smoking in the vehicle, he said.

30 May 2008 – [The Nation, Islamabad](#)

By Fouzia Azam

Govt urged to implement ordinance on smoking

ISLAMABAD - The speakers at a one-day conference urged government to strictly implement Smoking and Prohibition of Smoking and Protection of Non-Smokers Health Ordinance - 2002 in Pakistan to protect youth from the disastrous impact of tobacco products.

The conference was arranged for young leaders by Ministry of Health and World Health Organisation ahead of the World No Tobacco Day here on Thursday. This year the World No Tobacco Day is being observed with a theme "The Tobacco Industry Catches You Young."

To discourage the increasing trend of using tobacco products a number of strong recommendations were given by the young participants in the conference. Speaking on the occasion, Secretary Youth Affairs Ashfaq Mehmood suggested revising the Prohibition of Smoking and Protection of Non-Smokers Health Ordinance - 2002 as it has given a very limited number of authorised persons who can be consulted to take action if somewhere the ordinance is being violated.

30 May 2008 – **The NEWS**, Islamabad

By Shahina Maqbool

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■ **TOBACCO CONTROL LAWS**

Public transporters the 'biggest violators'

Shahina Maqbool
Islamabad

Commuters, drivers and conductors were found smoking in 80 percent of the public vehicles plying on various roads across Pakistan. Only one-fourth drivers and conductors were aware of the ban on smoking in public service vehicles, making them the biggest violators of tobacco control laws introduced under the Prohibition of Smoking and Protection of Non-Smokers Health Ordinance 2002.

These data have been derived from a quarterly survey conducted by the Coalition for Tobacco Control-Pakistan (CTC-PAK) in 20 cities of the country to monitor implementation of the 2002 Ordinance. Released on the occasion of World No-Tobacco Day, the statistics indicate lack of interest on the part of authorities responsible for implementation of tobacco control laws and half-hearted efforts to raise awareness among general public about ban on smoking at public places and in public transport.

The CTC-PAK has been advocating for stronger measures for tobacco control and is currently

monitoring implementation of the tobacco control statutes in Pakistan with cooperation of Tobacco-Free Kids under Bloomberg Global Initiative. The purpose of quarterly surveys is to provide the concerned authorities with evidence-based updates regarding current status of the implementation of tobacco control laws.

The survey also shows educational institutions as being a prime target of cigarette companies as 26 percent of the educational institutions observed by the survey teams had cigarette sales outlet in close vicinity of their buildings in violation of a clause of the ordinance which prohibits sale of cigarettes in close vicinity of educational institutions. Astonishingly, two educational institutions out of 85 observed had cigarettes available in their canteens for sale. Cigarette advertising was seen near 39 percent of the educational institutions observed.

Sale of cigarettes to minors was taking place at 10 percent of the sale outlets. Cigarette packs without hazardous warning were also observed. Merchandise for children was being sold at more than 90 percent cigarette sales shops.

31 May 2008 – The NEWS, Islamabad

By Shahina Maqbool

Cigarette packs to have new warning every six months

WHO chief hopes warnings will be strong and accompanied by graphics

Shahina Maqbool
Islamabad

All health warnings on tobacco products will have to be rotated on a six-monthly basis with effect from January 1, 2009. The order will come into force by virtue of an amendment in the national ordinance governing the printing of health warnings on tobacco products, 'The News' learnt here on Thursday.

Minister for Health Sherry Rehman is expected to make an official announcement to this effect at a uniquely-organised World No Tobacco Day event today (Friday).

The government will comprehensively revise the Cigarette (Printing of Warning) Amendment Ordinance, as well as the Prohibition of Smoking and Protection of Non-Smokers Health Ordinance 2002, to bring these laws in conformity with the requirements of the Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (FCTC), of which Pakistan is a signatory.

Even though it has still desisted from introducing graphic health warnings, the Ministry of Health can be said to have taken a small step in the right direction. The amendment will necessitate mandatory replacement of the text of an old health warning with a



new one after every six months. The idea is to make users aware of the health hazards of tobacco use.

Research has proved that if the health warning on a cigarette pack is not rotated, tobacco users become so accustomed to it that they start perceiving it as part of the overall design of the packet. It is encouraging to learn that the introduction of rotating health warnings is just one of the numerous amendments being considered by the government. Sources shared the government's intention to pursue a thorough review of the 2002 Ordinance to remove some of the key gaps that continue to stand in way of effective implementation of the law. Some of the proposed amendments to be introduced in the Ordinance pertain to introduction of mechanisms for efficient and effective implementation of existing re-

strictions on smoking in public places and a strict ban on 'sheesha' smoking. Simultaneously with that, the Ministry is also in the process of formulating guidelines on designated smoking areas. In this context, it is hoped that it will institute a bolder step and not fall short of meeting the World Health Organization's expectations of securing 100% smoke-free environments.

So while countries such as India, Jordan, Hong Kong, Australia and New Zealand are reaping health dividends through the introduction of pictorial health warnings, which have a demonstrable impact on influencing smokers to quit the addictive habit, Pakistan has stopped short of taking the decision by opting for rotational warnings.

Talking to 'The News,' WHO Representative Dr. Khalif Bile said, "Every warning should be a strong one; should be based on evidence; and should be accompanied by a pictorial representation. If these three elements are combined, it will be a very positive development."

When his attention was drawn to the expected revision of the existing anti-tobacco laws, Dr. Bile stressed that Pakistan should progress towards creating 100% smoke-free public places. Furthermore, the WHO chief said, "If the government is really serious, it

should eliminate all designated smoking areas; ban all forms of tobacco advertising and promotion; and announce significant enhancement of taxation system."

Commenting on the proposed introduction of rotational warnings, the founding president of Heartfile, Dr. Sania Nishtar was also of the view that "Any change in statutes or new interventions should be based on evidence and should be introduced after a careful formative evaluation of the potential to impact and be effective." She expressed that interventions such as these should have a rational basis and should be firmly grounded in evidence.

The same view is reflected in the National Action Plan for Prevention and Control of Non-Communicable Diseases and Health Promotion in Pakistan, of which Dr. Sania is the principal author. The document states that innovations in warning styles should be based on feedback received from pilot studies conducted in local settings. Based on evidence thus generated, conscious and culturally-relevant efforts need to be initiated to make warnings more effective. The study goes on to recommend that "given the high illiteracy rate in Pakistan, this may require pictorial representation of the warning."

31 May 2008 – Daily Times, Lahore

By Correspondent

World No Tobacco Day today: City to mark day with seminars informing youth of perils of tobacco

LAHORE: World No Tobacco Day is being celebrated across the globe today (Saturday) with this year's theme, 'Tobacco-Free Youth'.

The Pakistan Medical Society (PMS) will hold seminars, meeting and sessions with the youth today to educate them about the adverse effects of tobacco and methods of getting rid of it.

PMS Chairman Dr Masood Akhtar Sheikh told Daily Times that tobacco use was rising globally, and the epidemic of tobacco-related diseases and deaths had yet to reach its peak. He said that tobacco was the leading preventable cause of death in the world. “A total of 1.8 billion youths between 10 and 24 years of age are at risk of getting cancer and other diseases from it,” he said, adding that there was strong evidence that smoking doubled the risk of developing renal cell carcinoma, which researchers said was a major contributing factor to cancer.

Dr Sheikh said that youths were at risk due to the ‘careful’ planning in advertising by tobacco companies, and called for more planning by the government to clear out the menace from society.

“Contrary to industry boasts that smoking is an ‘adult’ activity, nearly 90 percent of all the new smokers are teenagers,” he said, adding that youngsters were aggressively targeted by tobacco companies, which spent billions of dollars each year to market their products. “To protect the world’s youth from experimenting with tobacco and becoming regular users, this year’s World No Tobacco Day campaign calls for a ban on all forms of tobacco advertising, promotion and sponsorship,” he said.

The PMS chairman said that nicotine was a highly-addictive substance and childhood and adolescence experimentation could easily lead to a lifetime of tobacco dependence.

He said that it was rare that an average teenager would go an entire day without being subjected to an invitation to smoke, chew or dip nicotine; a chemical that most addiction experts considered more captivating than illegal drugs.

He said that studies had revealed that youth were substantially more likely to become smokers if their parents, adult role models or friends smoked. He said that the World Health Organisation (WHO) released new data showing that while progress had been made, not a single country fully implemented all key tobacco control measures.

31 May 2008 – The NEWS, Islamabad

By Correspondent

Walk participants want raise in taxes on tobacco products

Our correspondent

Islamabad

The government must raise taxes on cigarettes and other tobacco products in the forthcoming budget. Raising taxes is one of the most effective ways to bring about a decline in tobacco use. The

government must also impose a complete ban on unauthorized sale and promotion of tobacco products to restrict their marketplace within the country.

Sentiments to this effect were voiced by speakers participating in a walk organized on the eve of World No Tobacco Day. The initiative was spearheaded by TheNetwork for Consumer Protection with the assistance of the Tobacco Control Initiative of the Ministry of Health, World Health Organization (WHO), Coalition for Tobacco Control in Pakistan (CTC-Pak), Islamabad Medical and Dental College (IMDC) and Rawalpindi Bar Council. The walk started from Jinnah Avenue in front of the Parliament House. The objective was to make people aware of the hazardous health effects of tobacco use.

At the end of the walk, representatives of different organizations expressed their views on tobacco use. Dr. Talib Lashari, executive coordinator of TheNetwork, appealed to the media to play its role in promoting awareness about the hazards of tobacco use. Parents must also influence their children to become ambassadors of awareness, rather than of smoking. He requested parents to cautiously take up their responsibility and apprise their children of the life-threatening hazards of tobacco.

Dr. Lashari said that it is the primary function of government to protect the health of its citizens. He urged the government to strictly implement the Prohibition of Smoking and Protection of Non-Smokers Health Ordinance 2002 to protect youth from getting addicted to this menace. He also demanded an increase in taxes on cigarettes and other tobacco products in the upcoming budget.

Shahzad Alam from WHO said, raising taxes is one of the most effective ways to reduce tobacco use. "A complete ban should also be imposed on unauthorized sale and promotion of tobacco products to restrict their marketplace," he proposed.

Abdul Sattar Chaudhry from the Ministry of Health said the Ministry is committed to controlling tobacco under various international commitments.

Khuram Hashmi from CTC-Pak emphasized the need to mobilize civil society to create awareness among people, specially youth.

Colonel (r) Dr. Ashraf Chaudhry recommended that colleges and schools should follow tobacco control initiatives to save the young

generation from smoking.

Influenced by the dedication of the participants at the walk, a student of Islamabad Medical and Dental College announced to quit smoking. The student, who had been smoking for the last six years, also pledged to motivate his college fellows to quit smoking and to make their college environment smoke-free.

Meanwhile, in a statement issued on the occasion, TheNetwork has stressed the need to counter the marketing strategies of the multi-national tobacco industry, which spends millions of rupees to attract youngsters, believing them to be the most vulnerable segment of society.

01 June 2008 – The DAWN, Islamabad

By Correspondent



08 June 2008 – Associated Press of Pakistan (APP), Islamabad

By Correspondent

Health warning regulations on tobacco products to be amended

ISLAMABAD, The Ministry of Health has planned to amend the national regulations regarding printing of health warnings on tobacco products to meet all the requirements of Framework Convention for Tobacco Control (FCTC).

According to official sources, with effect from January 1, 2009 the health warning on tobacco products will be required to be rotated on a 6-monthly basis.

This will mean that after six months the health warning on the tobacco packets will change. In addition to that, the new health warnings will also be printed on cigarette outers used in retail sale of the product, a provision that does not exist in national laws at present.

The ministry will ask various ministries and departments to further take measures to implement the national regulations that have been framed for Tobacco Control Sources said one of the major focuses of the FCTC is on ensuring that the tobacco products carry proper health warnings to warn intending consumers about the hazards of smoking. They added Pakistan will fulfill its commitments regarding new tobacco packaging regulations.

Sources said to make commitments more focused and to extend scope the ministry is also determined to allocate more funds for tobacco control. The ministry is already working with global fora to speed up on-going work for tobacco control, sources added.

According to them, to coordinate all the activities of the government a dedicated Cell has been set up in the Ministry.

The Cell will devise ways and means to ensure further measures to implement ministry's policies all over the country. Pakistan has already signed the provisions of the Framework Convention for Tobacco Control in 2004 along with 168 other countries of the world.

"Since 2004 we have taken numerous steps to ensure that the national laws are brought in conformity with our international obligations," said an official of the ministry.

He said measures taken by the ministry included restrictions on electronic advertisements and in the print media, restrictions on advertisements through bill-boards and through shop fascias / on-store boards.

He said the ministry is all aware that tobacco is the cause of numerous hazards to human health, adding, the government will follow the national and international obligations in this regard.

13 June 2008 – **The NEWS, Lahore**

By Nauman Tasleem

Cigarette prices increase by 11-20%

Lahore, Pakistan — The prices of cigarettes showed around 11 to 20 percent increase on Thursday, the first day after presentation of the federal budget 2008-09.

Major impact in terms of percentage has been witnessed on B-grade brands while the prices of A-grade brands rose but in terms of percentage it was less. The prices of B-class brands showed an increase of around 17 to 20 percent while A-class brands showed an increase of 11 to 13 percent.

In a number of areas, shopkeepers stopped sales of cigarettes saying that supply in the market is short and the companies are not supplying the stocks. The government on Wednesday raised central excise duty on cigarettes but the prices of cigarettes have been rising since the start of June, as shopkeepers and the companies were expecting raise in prices in the budget.

An artificial shortage was also seen in the market a couple of days before the budget was announced. Though the companies have not raised the prices of cigarettes but even then the people have no other option but to buy expensive cigarettes, said a shopkeeper Sabir Hussain of Gulberg. The market forces created a shortage earlier and then cashed the issue in their favour, he added. The customers said that it shows weak management of the government, as it should keep a vigilant eye on the hoarders. "The budgetary steps and duties levied would be implemented from July 1 but even then the prices have started rising," said a customer Rana Asif while buying cigarettes from a shop.

A salesman Tariq Mehmood of a local company said that the companies have not stopped or reduced supplies of cigarettes and it is the market players who have exploited the situation.

18 June 2008 – The NEWS, Peshawar

By Correspondent

Flat water rates to hit tobacco growers hard

Peshawar, Pakistan — The farmer community, particularly tobacco growers, of the province will have to suffer from what the NWFP government claimed to benefit the agriculture sector through tax reforms announced in the annual budget for 2008-09.

In its budget proposals, the Awami National Party and Pakistan People's Party coalition government has fixed water rates (abiana) for various crops being cultivated in the Frontier province. A flat rate on edible crops including wheat, sugarcane, vegetables, rice, pulses and barley, etc has been proposed Rs150 per acre while non-foodable crops including tobacco, plantation, shaftal etc will have Rs200 per acre as water rate in its respective seasons.

Wheat, tobacco, sugarcane, barley, shaftal and vegetables are the main crops of the Frontier province wherein only the sugarcane growers would benefit from the proposed rates in the next budget while the tobacco growers, who were earlier paying Rs32.60 water rate, would now pay Rs200 as fixed rate per acre according to the new taxes.

The existing rate for foodable crops in 'kharif' season including sugarcane as Rs624, vegetables Rs405, sunflower, peanut Rs232, bajra Rs178 and gram and fodder crops Rs137 would be now turned into flat rate of Rs150 per acre.

The existing rates of the non-foodable crops for kharif season for following crops are: tobacco Rs32.60, plantation Rs99.20 and uncultivated area which has got one irrigation (Wahn) Rs60.20 would now be increased to Rs200 per acre as fixed rate.

Similarly, the existing rates of edible items of rabi crops including wheat, barley, pulses, rice and vegetable like peas, turnips were Rs185.60, Rs178.40, Rs290 and Rs405 respectively would now be received as Rs150 fixed rate of abiana according to new budget proposals.

The wheat crop, cultivated on thousands of acres of land, will get only Rs35 benefit during the new fiscal year. The non-foodable crops of rabi season including shaftal Rs137.60, village and district board plantation Rs99.20 and uncultivated lands Rs60.20 would now be raised to Rs200 per acre land as fixed rates. An allocation of Rs715.42 million has been made for 55 projects including 25 ongoing and 30 new projects in the agriculture sector in the next financial year.

30 June 2008 – Daily Times, Lahore

By Shahruxh Ayub

‘Smokers and passive: smokers equally at risk’

LAHORE- Smokers and passive smokers have an equal chance of contracting fatal diseases caused by smoking, claimed Pakistan Medical Society (PMS) President Dr Masood Sheikh. He told Daily Times on Sunday that, “There is no difference between smoking and passive smoking. A smoker is at risk. However, a non-smoker who inhales the smoke exhaled by a smoker is at equal risk. This poses a serious issue.”

He said, “The danger lies in the fact that a cigarette is lined with 4,000 chemicals out of which 50 can cause lung and mouth cancers. It is natural for a smoker to be at risk. However, the same chemicals affect non-smokers.” He said that passive smoking was a major cause of asthma and lung cancer.

He said that putting up no smoking signs in enclosed spaces was useless, as smoke diffused through the air and spread all over. “Being in a no smoking area in a restaurant is not enough. The entire restaurant should be a no smoking area,” he added.

He said that the World Health Organisation had come up with a Smoke Free Environment strategy. “This strategy basically entails eradicating smoking completely. It means that an entire city should be smoke free.”

He said that WHO had implemented this strategy by about 10 percent. “90 percent is still left, as authorities concerned are unaware of it. However, till we do not change the people’s attitudes, we cannot actually eradicate smoking,” he added.

He said that people were unaware of the health issues caused by smoking. “Our stop smoking or do not start smoking campaign should engage people. Brochures, banners, awareness walks, talk shows etc should be used to let people know the harmful effects of smoke and second hand smoke.”

He also said that the lifespan of a smoker or even a passive smoker was five to 10 years less than that of a non-smoker or person who did not smoke passively. He said that passive smoke was also very dangerous for children and that Islam had forbidden smoking. Dr Fiazur Rehman, a cardiologist at Ittefaq Hospital, told Daily Times that second hand smoke was as dangerous as first hand smoke.

“In fact, asthma mostly occurs amongst passive smokers. A moderate and occasional exposure to second hand smoke presents a small, but measurable risk of cancer to non-smokers. The overall risk depends on the effective dose received over time. The risk is more significant if non-smokers spend many hours in an environment where cigarette smoke is prevalent, such as an office where employees or patrons smoke throughout the day.”

30 June 2008 – Daily Times, Peshawar

By Fawad Ali Shah

It was just one cigarette and...

Peshawar, Pakistan — Iqbal Khan was pushed to the dark and desolate valleys of drug addiction on a moonlit night by a friend at his college hostel and the night proved the starting point of an unendurable journey for his family.

“Just one night with my friend at his Peshawar college hostel proved night-mare for my future,” Khan, 40, narrated his woeful story to the Daily Times with tears tracing their paths down his cheeks.

A resident of Gunbad, Mardan district, Khan is one of hundreds of drug addicts being treated at the rehabilitation centers of Dost Foundation. “I was a routine smoker, but that night the cigarette offered to me was not a routine one,” said Khan who has been undergoing rehabilitation exercises at the treatment center for the last two months.

“After taking a puff, I felt it had far sweeter flavour and demanded another one. And then there was no going back – I became a junkie lost in the world of addiction,” he said

“My wife, Jamila, was unaware of my addiction. We’re a happy family of four and she really loved me. At times, I got rude to her but she never complained and always welcomed me with a smile,” Khan said bunching up his forehead. Two months past and his home sweet home turned into a hell. “I did my master’s from the University of Peshawar. We had lands in the village and as the addiction got intense, I started selling my lands to continue my addiction. I was offered jobs in several government departments but I refused because of low morale,” Khan said.

He said he was really proud of his wife who stood on his side while he was lost in the world of drug addiction for five long years. However, studies of his children got affected.

He said one day one of his friends took him to a drug rehabilitation center where he was motivated to abandon drugs. He said after completion of one-month course, the patients were assigned different tasks like security and cooking to prepare them for a practical life.

Dost Foundation is a non-governmental organisation working for the rehabilitation of drug addicts and welfare of poor women and children across Pakistan.

The foundation’s project director, Muhammad Ayub, said that their mission was to kill the drug culture. “We have established dropping centers in all districts of NWFP from where addicts are brought to the rehabilitation center,” he said, adding that presently they were ministering to 10,000 registered patients, excluding women.

28 July 2008 – The NEWS, Islamabad

By Shahina Maqbool

Tobacco use among women on the rise

ISLAMABAD, Pakistan — More and more girls and women in Pakistan are turning to tobacco use, this being a clear sign of the closing gender gap as smoking among girls is constantly increasing as a result of changing social norms and the tobacco industry's targeting of young women.

There are an estimated 25 million smokers in Pakistan, with the male to female ratio being 4:1. This means that 36% of the adult males and 9% of the adult females in Pakistan are tobacco users. However, the Global Youth Tobacco Survey conducted by the World Health Organization (WHO) has found that the boy to girl tobacco use ratio has shrunk to 2:1. This evidence of the closing gender gap in terms of tobacco use is true for both rural as well as urban women.

Lately, the WHO has drawn attention to the need for a gendered response to tobacco use and is calling for specific programmes and policies to curb smoking, in all its forms, among young girls and women.

“Both the history of the tobacco epidemic and the shape of its current progression across low- and middle-income countries have a gender perspective. Despite the influence of gender, there has been little development or examination of programmes and policies to address differences between and among women and men throughout the four stages of the tobacco epidemic,” the WHO states in a press release.

The rationale for formulating women-specific programmes is clear. “The tobacco industry itself has exploited gendered imagery and issues across cultures for decades. It is crucial to prepare more effectively for different patterns of tobacco use in the 21st century among girls, boys, women and men by constructing gendered responses,” the WHO states.

The water-pipe, commonly known as ‘sheesha’ or ‘hukka’ is becoming increasingly popular among young women in urban areas, while it is already an acceptable norm in rural areas. There is a need to raise awareness that the water pipe is also a dangerous form of tobacco use. One of the myths related to ‘sheesha’ smoking is that it is less dangerous than cigarette smoking because the nicotine content is lower and the tobacco toxins get filtered out by the water in the pipe. The reality is that even after it has passed through water, the smoke produced by a ‘sheesha’ contains high levels of toxins, including carbon monoxide, heavy metals and carcinogens. A ‘sheesha’ session lasts for 20-80 minutes, during which the smoker may take anywhere between 50 to 200 puffs. The ‘sheesha’ smoker may, therefore, inhale as much smoke during one session as a cigarette smoker would while consuming 100 or more cigarettes.

Young people believe that the fruit flavours added to tobacco make 'sheesha' a health choice. On the contrary, flavoured tobacco is smoked over coal, and the fumes from these fuels add new toxins to the already dangerous smoke, which contains large quantities of chemicals that cause heart disease, cancer and addiction.

A survey done on youngsters of school-going age in Karachi recently showed that almost 70% had tried 'sheesha' in the past six months, and this included children as young as seven. Many of the commercially available packets used for 'sheesha' smoking have misleading labels such as 0.5 per cent nicotine and zero tar. Moreover, the sharing of 'sheesha' poses an additional risk of tuberculosis and hepatitis transmission.

In addition, other forms of tobacco use such as 'paan' (betel leaf with tobacco and areca nut), 'naswar' (snuff), chewing tobacco and 'ghutka' (a combination of ingredients including betel-nut and tobacco) are a growing problem, and are particularly prevalent amongst women.

Equally alarming is the exposure of women to second hand smoke in public transportation, in the workplace and at home. Data shows that 55% of households have at least one smoker. Smoking is particularly injurious for pregnant women. Cigarette smoking reduces oxygen delivery to the foetus and causes hypoxia, thus adversely affecting the developing foetus. The effects manifest in the form of lower birth weight, increased rates of spontaneous abortion, stillbirth and early postpartum death. Moreover, breast-fed babies are at risk of harmful effects of nicotine if the parents are smokers.

Research shows that 30 per cent of females dying of bladder cancer are smokers. Non-smoking women married to smokers are more than twice as likely as spouses of non-smokers to develop lung cancer.

The cessation of smoking offers a lot of hope. After three months of quitting, former smokers report it is easier to breathe. After one year, the risk of heart disease is reduced by half. After five years, the risk of cancer is reduced by half. After 12 years, the risk of dying from lung cancer is 70 per cent lower; and after 15 years, the chances of dying are equal to that of a non-smoker.

Pakistan is committed under the Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (FCTC), which it ratified in 2004, to undertake gender-specific policy measures that address tobacco use among women. In 2002, Pakistan passed tobacco control legislation that includes measures to ban both underage sales and smoking in indoor public places and workplaces. At present, there is a lack of enforcement of this legislation.

The WHO believes that the Lady Health Workers who provide primary health care to women in their homes, along with the staff of basic health units, can play a crucial role in targeted tobacco control interventions with women.

“The involvement of women in tobacco control will support changing social norms towards tobacco use in community settings and in public places. Their involvement will also fasten the implementation of the Prohibition of Smoking and Protection of Non-Smokers Health Ordinance 2002,” the WHO believes.

11, 16 & 26 August 2008 – **Express, Islamabad**

Tobacco promotion advertisements appeared attracting consumer to participate in lucky draws by submitting tobacco pack and win valuable prizes worth Rs. 1,000,000+ (approx \$12,987+) including free cigarettes, motor bike and cell phone with prepaid balance etc.



20 August 2008 – **The NEWS, Islamabad**

By Correspondent

Smoking banned in all Punjab prisons

ISLAMABAD, Pakistan — The Punjab government has announced a ban smoking in all the prisons of the province.

Punjab Prisons Minister Chaudhry Abdul Ghafoor, while addressing the inaugural session of workshop on “Tobacco Smoking-A Preventable Epidemic” at the University of Health Sciences (UHS) on Tuesday, said the level of awareness about the hazards of smoking, second hand smoking, responsibilities and authorities under the law and the initiatives taken by the government for tobacco control was extremely low among the masses. He further said there was a dire need to evolve an effective strategy for the implementation of the existing laws. On this occasion, the minister announced an immediate ban on smoking in all the prisons of the province.

The workshop was organized by the UHS Centre for Health Environment Studies in collaboration with World Health Organization (WHO), Tobacco Control Cell, Ministry of Health, Punjab Health Department and Green Future.

UHS Vice Chancellor Prof Malik Hussain Mubbashar said smoking was a behaviour related disorder and there was a need to establish a multi-sectoral task force to evolve strategies for tackling this menace. He said three factors were involved in this problem which included personality, environment and availability of substance. He was of the view that so-called western pseudo-cults had changed our age old traditions and values which created a vacuum in the personality of our children. To fill this vacuum, they resort to smoking and other forms of substance abuse. The VC said 38 per cent of population was affected by smoking, especially young people. He added 42 per cent of global disease burden was related to behavioural disorders.

He further said a meaningful programme, involving various departments of government including health, environment, law, information and education, be launched to deal with the problem of smoking at the same time taking care of all four aspects of health, that is preventive, promotive, protective and curative.

Shahzad Alam Khan of World Health Organization said that according to statistics, nearly 38 per cent of the total population of Punjab smoked cigarettes or used tobacco in other forms, tobacco smoke reaching more than 95 per cent of the population. He further said estimated 60,000 people died because of smoking in Pakistan every year. He said smoking caused 5.4 million deaths every year in the world. "Approximately 1.8 billion young people (aged 10-24) live in our world today with more than 85 per cent found in developing countries". He disclosed that smoking was decreasing in the developed world but increasing in the developing countries, adding that 76 billion cigarettes were used in Pakistan every year.

He maintained that one of the most effective ways to protect young people from experimenting and becoming regular users was to ban all forms of direct and indirect tobacco advertising including promotion of tobacco products and sponsorship by the tobacco industry. He also said tobacco companies should disclose tobacco contents and print pictorial health warning on cigarettes packs.

Dr Agha Mahboob of Tobacco Control Cell, Ministry of Health Islamabad, said more than 80 per cent of the world's smokers lived in low and middle income countries. He added that smoking was among 10 major risk factors as identified by WHO, leading to more than 23 types of cancers including that of mouth, nose, lungs and voice box. He also said research had shown that men who smoked had a significantly higher risk of developing impotence. Dr Agha further said an estimated 1200 young Pakistanis between the age of 6 and 15 years started smoking every year whereas use of shisha among the youth and adolescents was an emerging health risk. He said the Tobacco Control Cell of the Ministry of Health had chalked out a 5-year strategic plan of action (2007-12) under which awareness programmes on tobacco control would be launched.

Advocate Jawad Hassan said the federal government promulgated an ordinance in 2002 for the prohibition of smoking. Similarly, the provincial government had passed an act in 2003 prohibiting juvenile smoking and the sale of tobacco to juveniles within the province. However, he said this legislation needed to be enforced. “There is a need to evolve an effective strategy for the implementation of the ordinance and also to strengthen the legal framework regarding the monitoring and implementation of the law”, he added.

Director General Health Services Punjab Muhammad Aslam Chaudhry said it was our moral duty to prohibit smoking at all public places, especially hospitals and universities. Prof Dr Sajjad Naseer of Lahore School of Economics, Prof Dr Muhammad Saeed from Gulab Devi Hospital Lahore and Dr Shagufta Feroze also spoke. A number of health professionals, students and representatives of transport associations attended the workshop.

23 August 2008 – The NEWS, Islamabad

By Correspondent

Countrywide advocacy for introduction of pictorial health warnings on the cards

ISLAMABAD, Pakistan —Out to introduce packaging reforms through amendments in the existing tobacco control legislation, TheNetwork for Consumer Protection has embarked on a countrywide advocacy and awareness campaign for introduction of rotating pictorial warnings on 50 per cent of the cigarette pack; a statement on the pack about product constituents and emissions; and prohibition of sale of smaller packs and in loose packing.

Announcing the decision at a press conference here Friday, TheNetwork said a series of countrywide activities will be organised in a bid to influence policy makers in the Ministry of Health to amend the Prohibition of Smoking and Protection of Non-Smokers’ Health Ordinance 2002 and The Cigarettes (Printing of Warning) (Amendment) Ordinance 2002 in line with Article 11 and paragraph 2 of Article 16 of the Framework Convention of Tobacco Control (FCTC) to pave the way for inclusion of pictorial warnings.

A comprehensive report on the issue would be launched at a national policy seminar where the World Health Organisation would bring in international experience of pictorial warnings as per the Framework Convention on Tobacco Control. Sample pictorial warnings will also be prepared and shared with policy makers. TheNetwork will closely work with Tobacco Control Initiative of the Ministry of Health to prepare draft amendments. Elected representatives, specifically the Standing Committees on Health in National Assembly and the Senate, will also be engaged. The media was informed that Heartfile would arrange meetings with elected representatives while Pakistan Medical Association would be requested to provide clinical evidence in support of the reforms.

TheNetwork appealed to all its members to actively participate in the campaign for the next two years and transform it into a social movement. It also urged the media to join hands in introducing pictorial warnings on cigarette packs through necessary changes in the law.

In Pakistan, round about 50 per cent of the population is illiterate and the smoking is more prevalent among the poor. As a result, written warnings have very little impact in influencing the decision to smoke or refrain. "In this context, the pictorial warnings advised in FCTC are very relevant. By now 17 countries of the world have introduced pictorial warnings on cigarette packs in their countries. These are Australia, Belgium, Brazil, Chile, Canada, Hong Kong, India, Jordan, New Zealand, Panama, Romania, Singapore, Switzerland, Thailand, United Kingdom, Uruguay, and Venezuela. The European Union has given each of its 25 member countries the option to require one of 42 picture-based cigarette warnings. Pictorial warnings give a clear message to smokers as well as non-smokers about the grave consequences of cigarette smoking.

Smoking in all forms including cigarettes is cause of major non-communicable diseases. According to a recent WHO research report, tobacco use is a risk factor for six of the eight leading causes of death in the world.

In poor families in developing countries purchase of tobacco can easily represent up to 10 per cent of total household expenditure. A recent survey by the ministry of health indicated that 33% of men and 4.7% of the women are cigarette smokers.

A survey conducted by TheNetwork in 2006 revealed that the 28% of the urban adolescent aged 15-18 years currently smoke, and is more prevalent among the poor and the illiterate. About more than 25 million Pakistanis smoke, and 1,200 youth start smoking each day in Pakistan. An estimated more than 100,000 die annually from tobacco-related illnesses. In Pakistan, more than 55.3 billion cigarettes are produced.

Due to legislation against smoking in USA and Europe, the tobacco companies have diverted their marketing campaign towards developing countries including Pakistan. The result is that tobacco use is declining at the rate of 1.5% in the West but at the same time it is increasing at the rate of more than 1.7% in the developing countries. Some 57 tobacco manufacturers are currently operating in Pakistan.

WHO estimates that in case the FCTC is not fully implemented, the number of deaths due to smoking would reach 10 million per year by 2020.

The campaign being launched by TheNetwork and its six partners (Tobacco Control Initiative, Ministry of Health; WHO; Heartfile; Society for Alternative Media and Research through its Coalition for Tobacco Control; Johns Hopkins Centre for Communication Programme and Pakistan Medical Association) has been made possible

due to the availability of a grant amounting \$2,80,000 (for a period of two years) for “Policy Advocacy and Stakeholder Awareness Building for Packaging Reforms to Reduce Demand for Cigarettes in Pakistan” from the Bloomberg Grant Initiative (BGI), New York. The BGI is a global programme to reduce tobacco use in low- and middle-income countries.

29 August 2008 – **Associated Press of Pakistan (APP), Karachi**

By **CTC-Pak Partner Press Release**

Tobacco consumption deepens poverty in the third world.

KARACHI, Aug 29 (APP): Tobacco use hurts dis-proportionately the poor and deepens poverty in the third world by siphoning money needed for basic necessities such as food, shelter and education, said senior pulmonologist, Dr. Javaid A Khan.

The head of Pulmonology Department, Aga Khan University, in his presentation warned tobacco consumption, mainly smoking, was particularly killing wage earners in prime of their lives.

He said the tobacco epidemic is shifting to the developing world not due to population growth but because of aggressive marketing tactics of the tobacco industry.

“The global tobacco epidemic does not just affect the health of millions of people in Pakistan but is also an economic threat that costs local and national economies billions of dollars each year,” warned the pulmonologist.

He said situation is largely controllable and referred to MPOWER, comprising six cost effective solutions, identified by WHO as:

Monitor tobacco use and assess the impact of tobacco prevention and cessation efforts;

Protect everyone from secondhand smoke with laws that require smoke-free work-places and public places;

Offer help to every tobacco user to quit;

Warn and effectively educate every person about the dangers of tobacco use with strong, pictorial health warnings and hard-hitting, sustained media campaigns to educate the public;

Enact and enforce comprehensive bans on tobacco advertising, promotion and sponsorships and on the use of misleading terms such as “light” and “low-tar” and Raise the price of tobacco products by increasing tobacco taxes.

“These are scientifically proven policies that can reverse the tobacco epidemic around the globe”, said the senior pulmonologist.

He urged the policy makers to implement Tobacco Control measures in the right earnest to prevent wide range of tobacco associated diseases, spreading fast in Pakistan.

Dr. Javaid A Khan regretted unwarranted delay in the implementation of Prohibition of Tobacco Use and Smoking Ordinance 2002.

Referring to estimates that 100,000 people might be losing lives, in the country due to tobacco and cigarette related ailments or passive smoking, he said No Tobacco Ordinance 2002 needed to be extended a permanent legal status.

We must get it strictly implemented to protect health and lives of people including non smokers.

He referred to recent research by **Coalition for Tobacco Control-Pakistan** showing that very few public offices were implementing smoking free policy.

30 August 2008 – **The NEWS**, Islamabad

By Shahina Maqbool

Tobacco industry preaching ‘responsibility’

In an interesting development that took place this week in a nice and cozy hotel located in the famous tourist resort of Nathiagali, a leading tobacco industry spent hundreds of thousands of rupees to organise a one-day workshop on ‘Responsible Journalism.’

Around 20 journalists were taken to Nathiagali on the expenses of the tobacco industry to learn the A, B, C of ‘responsible’ journalism and the impact that irresponsible reporting can have on people reading or watching their scripts.

Taking note of the development, Khurram Hashmi, coordinator of the Society for Alternate Media and Research (Samar) as well as Coalition for Tobacco Control, told ‘The News’ that his organisation will register its regret to the Ministry of Health and the World Health Organisation (WHO) against the tobacco industry openly engaging with mediapersons. “We are planning to reach out to the Ministry of Health and WHO to stop the tobacco industry from directly or indirectly engaging with the press and media,” Khurram said.

The tobacco industry also distributed attractively designed booklets about how hard it is trying to save the crippling economy of the country by contributing millions and millions of dollars as taxes. Interestingly, none of the booklets contains any mention of the millions and millions of dollars the government requires to provide treatment to patients suffering from diseases induced by tobacco use.

This new move by the ever-intelligent managers of the tobacco industry has come almost a month after the Ministry of Health and WHO facilitated the establishment of the Journalists’ Health Forum, which has the office of the Tobacco Free Initiative of the Ministry of Health as its secretariat. A senior health reporter was appointed convener of the forum, which has all leading health journalists from the print and electronic media on its roll. Ironically, some members of this forum were also lured by the tobacco industry to spend quality time in Nathiagali.

In another development, ‘The News’ has learnt that some of the tobacco industries operating in NWFP and parts of Kashmir have openly started violating the anti-tobacco law by issuing banned advertisements to various media outfits. The Committee of the Tobacco Advertisement Guidelines had clearly banned all print tobacco advertisements by restricting their size to no larger than 1 square cms. The Ministry of Health, however, is silent on yet another open violation. “We will also register our protest on reappearance of advertisements of tobacco products in various sections of the press,” Khurram asserted.

According to an insider working for another anti-tobacco NGO, the tobacco industry has always made fun of these rules and regulations. He said “The inauguration of two cozy smoking lounges in the Parliament by none other than a renowned member of the National Assembly last year, coupled with the existence of smoking lounges at all major airports, speaks for itself about how the tobacco industry made fun of last year’s World No-Tobacco Day theme, ‘100% Smoke-free Inside.’ Similarly, the implementation of the official theme of 2006 ‘Tobacco dangerous in any form or disguise’ is yet to materialise as the increase in the number of the people using tobacco products sends a loud and clear message to the effect that the tobacco industry is far smarter than those entrusted with its regulation.

03 September 2008 – The NEWS, Islamabad

By Shahina Maqbool

More delay in health warnings on cigarette packs

Islamabad - The Ministry of Health has finally approved a new set of health warnings for cigarette packs, but these will be introduced with a delay of seven months as the previous timeline of January 1, 2009, has now been extended to July 1, 2009, sources privy to the ministry revealed to 'The News' here on Tuesday.

The new health warnings, which will be in place on a six-monthly rotational basis with effect from July 1, are 'Smoking causes throat and mouth cancers,' 'Protect children: do not let them breathe your smoke,' 'Quit smoking, live longer,' and 'Smoking severely harms you and others around you.' Minister for Health Sherry Rehman is reported to have approved the text warnings only a couple of days ago; approval of the same by the Ministry of Law is still awaited.

A source working for an anti-tobacco NGO regretted Ministry of Health's strategy to force further delay in the introduction of graphical health warnings. "Now, the Ministry of Health will have nothing but the new set of text-based health warnings to announce on World No-Tobacco Day (WNTD) 2009, which is observed on May 31 each year. This will cause further delay in introduction of graphical health warnings on cigarette packs," he commented.

'The News' has also learnt that the Global Tobacco Free Initiative at the World Health Organisation's headquarters in Geneva is also contemplating the selection of a theme related to enforcement of pictorial health warnings on cigarette packs for next year's WNTD. Each year, the Ministry of Health comes under tremendous pressure ahead of WNTD because each year, the country is exactly on the opposite track of the WNTD theme. Upholding past traditions, it will once again have nothing to offer on WNTD 2009 but these four health warnings.

Requesting anonymity, sources confided that "certain elements" were trying their level best to influence the health regulators to get 'Smoking Kills' as the new health warning in Urdu on the front and in English on the back of the 20% flip top area of cigarette packs. "There is a big question mark on the impact that text-based health warnings, and specially the warning 'smoking kills,' has on consumers. In a country like Pakistan, which has a dismal literacy rate, the likelihood of the target population understanding text health warnings is quite remote. The only way we can hope for a decline in the number of smokers is through introduction of graphical health warnings," they said.

05 September 2008 – **The NEWS, Islamabad**

By Shahina Maqbool

Tobacco industry's audacity questioned

The Coalition of Tobacco Control in Pakistan (CTC-Pak) has taken strict notice of the tobacco industry's growing audacity in terms of violation of tobacco control laws on the one hand, and engagement with the media on the other.

In a letter written to the Ministry of Health and World Health Organisation, CTC-Pak has drawn attention to how the tobacco industry continues to violate tobacco control laws by finding loopholes in the existing tobacco control ordinance and taking advantage of lack of proper implementation. "The industry keeps on challenging the government's drive for effective tobacco control in the country by occupying more space in media and resorting to other tactics," CTC-Pak points out in a press release issued here on Thursday.

CTC has urged the implementation cell of the Ministry of Health to take appropriate measures to check the violations of the law by the tobacco industry. "The industry is persistently practicing its unethical marketing tactics to promote its products and attract the society, especially youth, to secure its multi billion investments. Such violations need to be monitored and redressed," said Khurram Hashmi, coordinator of CTC-Pakistan.

Advertisements of tobacco products have started to re-appear in the print media in a size which is larger than what has been specified by the government. The industry is also promoting the re-launching of a popular brand by incorporating terms like 'new blend' or 'fresh scent' while also promising handsome rewards by offering attractive benefits to consumers, CTC-Pak has pointed out.

"Similarly, promotional stalls can be found at various shopping areas of the capital, promoting a popular brand in a new exclusive package with gifts at no additional cost. This not only gains attention of old smokers but also attracts new ones, mostly youth, who find it irresistibly glamorous. These stalls are normally found near a populated restaurant or, interestingly, a famous pharmacy outlet," Khurram said.

Recently, the tobacco industry approached a group of media journalists and took them to a mountain resort for a one-day workshop on the theme of 'Responsible Journalism.' "Apparently, the industry feels its obligation towards the people and the society only to the extent of sensitising journalists about the impact of irresponsible reporting in various media," CTC-Pak has stated in the press release.

05 September 2008 – **The News, Islamabad**

By Shaeena Maqbool

Tobacco industry's violation of tobacco control laws

Islamabad - Tobacco industry continues to violate tobacco control laws by finding loopholes in the existing tobacco control ordinance and taking advantage of lack of proper implementation. The industry keeps on challenging the government's drive for effective tobacco control in the country by occupying more space in media and resorting to other tactics with the passage of time.

In a letter written to Ministry of Health and World Health Organization, Coalition of Tobacco Control in Pakistan (CTC-Pak) urged upon the Implementation Cell of Ministry of Health to take appropriate measures to check the violations of the law by tobacco industry. "The industry is persistent to cater its unethical marketing tactics promoting its products and attract the society, especially youth, to secure its multi billion investments. Such violations need to be monitored and redressed." said Khurram Hashmi, Coordinator of Coalition For Tobacco Control – Pakistan.

Tobacco products advertisements have started to re-appear in print media in larger size than the one specified by the government promoting a re-launching of a popular brands with 'new blend' or 'fresh scent' while also promising handsome rewards by offering attractive benefits to the consumers.

Similarly, promotional stalls can be found at various shopping areas of the capital promoting a popular brand in a new exclusive package with gifts at no additional cost. This only gains attention of old smokers but also attracts new ones, mostly youth, who find it irresistibly glamorous. These stalls are normally found near a populated restaurant or, interestingly, a famous pharmacy outlet.

Recently, the tobacco industry also approached a group of media journalists and took them to a mountain resort for a one day workshop organized on a theme of responsible journalism. Apparently, the industry feels its obligation towards the people and the society enough to sensitize the journalists about the impact or irresponsible reporting in various mediums of the media.

The Coalition For Tobacco Control ensured its support to Implementation Cell in effective implementation of the tobacco control ordinance.

08 September 2008 – Daily Times, Karachi

By Fauzia Ilyas

KARACHI: ‘Shisha as harmful as cigarette smoking’

KARACHI, Unaware of the fact that shisha, or water-pipe smoking, is just as harmful as cigarette smoking, the city’s youth, particularly university-level students, are getting hooked to these hookahs and that too with parental approval, reveals a study.

The study, titled ‘Knowledge, attitudes and practice of university students regarding water-pipe smoking in Pakistan,’ was jointly carried out by the Aga Khan University Hospital’s department of pulmonary and critical care medicine and the Dow University of Health Sciences (DUHS).

The findings of the study have also been printed in this month’s issue of The International Journal of Tuberculosis and Lung Disease.

As many as 450 students – 268 male and 182 female – from the AKU, DUHS, Institute of Business Management and the National University of Computer and Emerging Sciences took part in the research.

The study says that for decades, water-pipe smoking was restricted only to rural areas. But the last few years have seen a rapid growth in the number of shisha smoking venues in major cities of Pakistan increasingly attracting the youth.

A country that already has a high prevalence of tobacco use is now witnessing a surge in water-pipe smoking in both urban young men and women with greater parental approval for the addiction as compared with cigarette smoking.

The study found that of the total 450 students, 64.2 per cent of the male and 37.9 per cent of the female participants had smoked shisha at least once in their lifetime, with 77.3 per cent of the males who had smoked shisha continuing with the habit. The same is the case with 33.3 per cent of the women participants.

Regarding the characteristics of water-pipe smoking, it was observed that 56.4 per cent of the participants smoked shisha less than once per month, 30.2 per cent did so at least once a month, 10 per cent at least once per week and only 3.4 per cent were found to be regular smokers of shisha. The majority smoked for more than 30 minutes at each sitting and also shared their water-pipes with others.

According to the research findings, the flavour is the most likeable attribute of water-pipes and about a third of the current water-pipe smokers consider themselves addicted to shisha, but only about a fifth are willing to quit it.

When asked about parental attitudes towards shisha smoking, 78.5 per cent of the participants claimed that their parents had no problem with this practice. By contrast only 21.1 per cent of the parents approved of cigarette smoking.

Another aim of the study was to ascertain how well aware the youth are about the health hazards posed by smoking. It was noticed that around 17.6 per cent of the participants were unable to identify even a single harmful effect of water-pipe smoking.

The study also revealed that most of the participants considered cigarette smoking more hazardous than shisha smoking.

The study identified curiosity, pleasure-seeking, peer pressure, boredom and stress and a lack of entertainment as the key factors behind the initiation of water-pipe smoking.

A widespread myth about water-pipe smoking, the study points out, is that the passage of smoke through the steaming water in water-pipes ‘purifies’ the smoke of all harmful elements.

It has now been established, however, that exposure to carbon monoxide and nicotine after water-pipe smoking is at almost the same levels as those associated with cigarette smoking.

“It has also been proven that long-term habitual use of water-pipes, as with regular cigarette smoking, is associated with lung, gastrointestinal and bladder problems as well as pulmonary, cardiovascular and haematological disease. Other dangers include infections such as tuberculosis, hepatitis C, pulmonary aspergillosis and Helicobacter pylori infection, which have been assumed to spread from pipe sharing,” the study says.

The study recommends that water-pipe tobacco should be subjected to the same regulations as cigarette and other tobacco products. Besides creating awareness about the health hazards of pipe smoking, Pakistan needs to broaden the scope of the Tobacco Control Programme to encompass water-pipe smoking as well.

27 September 2008 – **Daily Times, Karachi**

By Irfan Ali

Religious scholars urged to play their role to curb smoking

KARACHI: Smoking in 2002 caused around five million deaths and if action is not taken, this menace will claim another 10 million lives by 2025. Smoking was also the first of the top 10 killers in 2007, beating Ischaemic Heart Disease (IHD) with 3.7 million deaths, CVA with 9.5 million, pneumonia with 6.4 million, HIV/AIDS with 4.2 million, Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (COPD) with 4.2 million, Diarrhea with 4.1 million, prenatal conditions with 4.0 million, Tuberculosis (TB) with 2.8 million, lung cancer with 2.3 million and road traffic accidents with 2 million.

Aga Khan University Hospital (AKUH) Pulmonary and Critical Care Medicine Head Dr Javaid Khan stated this while addressing a seminar on 'Tobacco Control and Role of Religious Scholars' held at AKUH on Thursday. "It is estimated that 90 percent of lung cancers, 90 percent of COPD, 40 percent of all other types of cancers and 20 other fatal diseases can be avoided by refraining from smoking and use of tobacco," said Dr Khan, adding that tobacco increased the major risk of aneurysms and formation of blood clots. Dr Khan said that 38.3 percent of tumor formation in males of Karachi was due to tobacco use and that lung cancer was the most common type encountered in males followed by cancer of the oral cavity. In females, breast and oral cavity cancer accounted for 40 percent of cancers.

He said that the treatment of lung cancer was extremely difficult and that patients should not rely only on chest X-rays for diagnosis of lung cancer, as these may not reveal cancer formation until an advanced stage. "There is no evidence that quitting smoking led to an increase in anxiety and, on the contrary, there was a significant decrease in anxiety after the week of abstinence," revealed Dr Khan.

The results weaken the view that increased anxiety is a central element of nicotine withdrawal. He said that 40 percent of the male population of Pakistan and 8 percent of females are regular smokers. "Twenty samples of different brands of suparis were sent to a foreign laboratory and the reports showed that all samples contained opium or other narcotics," he said.

He said that each cigarette reduces a person's lifetime by 11 minutes and that smoking second-hand smoke of one cigarette equals spending two hours in an enclosed smoky space, two hours in a non smoking section of a restaurant and 24 hours living with a pack-a-day smoker. According to the Pakistan Smoking Prohibition Ordinance 2002, public smoking is banned and public transport, hospitals and government offices have been declared no-smoking zones. The ordinance also restricts the sale of tobacco to people less than 18 years of age and tobacco-related advertisements.

"Shisha is the latest menace in our society and there are restaurants and special closed rooms for shishas. Smoking shisha is very popular amongst university students and a study shows that most university students have smoked shisha once in their lifetime," said Dr Khan. It is estimated that around 43 percent male students and 11 percent female students are habitual shisha smokers. "There is a very strong link between people who smoke cigarettes and shisha. Around 15 percent of parents accept their child smoking, while around 70 percent are fine with their children smoking shisha," he said, adding that forty percent believe that shisha does not contain a significant amount of tobacco, while 49 percent believe that due to an efficient filtration mechanism, shisha does not harm the lungs.

According to a report by the World Health Organization, tobacco is one of the most addictive substances available in the world and the life spans of tobacco users can be cut down by 15 to 20 years. The report places the number of deaths caused by smoking last year at 5.4 million. Dr Khan urged religious scholars, especially Imams of area mosques, to educate people for the elimination of this menace, as Islam teaches people to avoid causing harm to others but that is exactly what smokers do.

AKUH Head and Neck Surgeon Dr Shehzad Ghaffar said that gutka and pan masala are widely consumed in Pakistan, resulting in a rise in cancers of the head, neck and mouth and Pakistan currently tops the list of incidence of oral cancer. He said that it has proven that blood of slaughtered animals, along with opium, is used in gutkas and pan masalas to boost addiction. Talking to Daily Times he said that proper counselling for the youth will go a long way in eliminating the menace smoking. Naveed Ahmed, a religious scholar of the Karachi Quran Academy, quoted verses from the Holy Quran and some Hadiths that label self-destruction and causing harm to others as an offence in Islamic Shariat.

He said that cigarettes contain poisonous substances, therefore, smoking is equivalent to committing suicide, which Islam thoroughly condemns. Ahmed also quoted a saying of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) which goes, ‘Whosoever drinks poison, thereby killing himself, will sip this poison forever in the hell-fire.’ AKUH Consultant Pulmonologist Dr Muhammad Irfan said that many smokers suffer from the misconception that quitting smoking is a painful process. “Determination is the key in overcoming any habit and with sufficient will power, smokers can easily kick this habit,” said Dr Irfan. He said that keeping yourself engaged, especially in prayers, helps a lot, as the craving for tobacco lasts for, at the most, six minutes.

“Nicotine withdrawal only lasts for a couple of weeks and, moreover, there is medication available to ease the process,” he added.

Health Ministry Implementation and Tobacco Control Cell Director General Shaheen Masood told Daily Times that due to the actions of the tobacco industry, around 1,200 people are taking up the habit each year. “Although, anti-smoking laws exist, the problem is their proper implementation. The government is determined to eradicate this problem and has initiated many positive steps but the goal can only be achieved when the entire society plays its part,” said Masood.

He said that he, himself, had called a meeting of police officials in Islamabad and directed them to control smoking in public places and public transport. “However, they put forward a realistic suggestion that the movement could only be successful if the police officials are empowered to punish violators on the spot,” he said.

Masood agreed that religious scholars could help the health ministry and law enforcers in ensuring a better tomorrow.

27 September 2008 – JANG, Rawalpindi



تمباکو نوشی۔۔ سالانہ ایک لاکھ افراد موت کے منہ میں جانے لگے

عوامی مقامات پر سگریٹ پینا اور کم عمر بچوں کو فروخت ممنوع قرار دینا بجائے مباحثے سے مقررین کا خطاب

استنبال کے خاتمے اور کم عمر بچوں میں فروخت کو ممنوع قرار دینے کے ساتھ ساتھ اس کی سب سے بڑی پابندی لگائی جائے۔ تمباکو نوشی کے خلاف کام کرنے والی غیر سرکاری تنظیموں کے نمائندوں نے گزشتہ روز راولپنڈی کے مقامی ہاؤس میں منعقدہ مباحثے سے خطاب کرتے ہوئے کہا کہ تمباکو نوشی کے خلاف قانون تو حکومت نے پاس کر رکھا ہے لیکن اس پر عملدرآمد نہیں ہو رہا۔ چیئر مین امداد عالم نواز نے کہا کہ عید کے بعد ملک بھر میں تمباکو نوشی کے خلاف موٹر مہم چلائی جائے گی جس میں عوام کو اس کے مضرات کے بارے میں آگاہ کیا جائے اس کے علاوہ قانون نافذ کرنے والے اداروں کو اس قانون پر عملدرآمد کرانے میں بھی مدد فراہم کی جائے گی۔ پاکستان میں کولیشن فار نو نیکو کنٹرول کے کوآرڈینیٹر خرم باجی نے کہا کہ تمباکو نوشی کے خلاف قانون پر چھوٹے شہروں اور دیہی علاقوں میں بالکل عملدرآمد نہیں ہو رہا۔ پابندی کے باعث مختلف کمپنیوں نے اپنی پراڈکٹس کی قیمتیں بڑھانے کے ذریعے اختیار کر لئے ہیں۔ جس پر قابو پانے کی ضرورت ہے۔ انہوں نے کہا کہ ایک اندازے کے مطابق ملک میں اس وقت 25 ملین افراد تمباکو نوشی کا شکار ہیں۔ جن میں سے 28 فیصد نوجوان طبقہ ہے۔ سگریٹ نوشی کے باعث پاکستان میں سالانہ ایک لاکھ افراد موت کا شکار ہوتے ہیں جبکہ 1200 نئے افراد روزانہ تمباکو نوشی کی لعنت میں گرفتار ہو رہے ہیں۔ اس موقع پر چیئر پرسن امن فاؤنڈیشن محمد طفیل، چیئر مین فرائض فاؤنڈیشن عطاء الرحمن اور جنرل سیکرٹری جمہوریات ریاض بھی موجود تھے۔

راولپنڈی (خبرنگار) تمباکو نوشی کے خلاف قانون پر موثر نفاذ کے لئے پروگرام غیر سیاسی تنظیموں نے حکومت سے مطالبہ کیا ہے کہ بین الاقوامی سطح پر رائج طریقوں کے مطابق تمباکو نوشی کے خلاف قانون پر ملک میں سختی سے عملدرآمد کروایا جائے اور عوامی مقامات، بس سٹاپ اور پبلک ٹرانسپورٹ میں اس کے

08 September 2008 – **Frontier Post, Multan**

By Correspondent

75000 die every year due to tobacco in Pakistan

MULTAN (APP): As many as 75000 people, using tobacco in one form or the other, die every year in Pakistan. "These deaths can be avoided by just giving up the use of tobacco", said Dr Abrar Javed, Head of the cancer department, Nishtar Hospital. Talking to APP here on Monday, he said that smoking, use of beera, hubble bubble (Hukkah), naswar (sniffing of tobacco powder), beeri and betel nut consumed in paan as well as passive smoking, are all very dangerous practices.

But he regretted that observing such days has become more of a social ritual and the message is seldom taken seriously by organisations and departments concerned. "Hardly any sincere effort is witnessed to rid the society of this deadly menace." Dr Abrar said it is appalling that in Third World countries like Pakistan smoking is on the rise while in the western world it is decreasing as people become more aware of its dreadful consequences. He said due to widescale ignorance as well as media promotion through attractive advertisements of tobacco by the manufacturers many innocent people, especially the young get hooked to this deadly habit.

The cancer specialist said a study, carried out in three medical colleges of the country on medical students in northern and southern parts of the country showed that 6.4% of these medical students were longtime users of naswar or paan containing tobacco. Dr Abrar said once again it is emphasized that fight against tobacco is a fight against cancer. But also in this fight there are obstacles. Major obstacles are those responsible from cultivators, promoters and users of tobacco.

He suggested that cultivation and promotion of tobacco be banned gradually with compensation to the cultivators by alternate crops. It is obligatory upon the government to have strong legislation covering all these aspects to curtail the tobacco use for saving precious human lives, he stressed.

The benefits of giving up tobacco use are many: The risk of dying from heart attacks disappears steadily and equals to that of a non-smoker in 3-5 years. One feels well after initial withdrawal symptoms. No single factor has as much impact on rising toll of heart attack deaths as giving up smoking. Non-smokers get protection from heart disease, stroke, lung cancer and their life expectancy increases.

Calling for complete ban on smoking at public places and in the offices, he said attractive ads on TV channels ought to be prohibited because life is far more precious than a few hundred million rupees earned by government in terms of taxes.

10 October 2008 – The NEWS, Islamabad

By Shahina Maqbool

Health ministry provides legal cover to smoking lounges

In a shocking development, which is being interpreted by health experts and activists as “yet another triumph of the tobacco industry,” the Ministry of Health has provided legal cover to the long-disputed smoking lounges across the country by issuing guidelines for the establishment of Designated Smoking Areas (DSAs), ‘The News’ learnt through well-placed sources here on Thursday.

Sharing details, sources working for the ministry confirmed that under Section 5 of the Prohibition of Smoking and Protection of Non Smokers Health Ordinance, 2002 (LXXIV of 2002), the Ministry of Health has, on September 6, 2008, notified a statutory regulatory order containing guidelines that permit the creation of DSAs “in premises or places where adequate arrangements are made to protect the health of non-smokers.”

‘The News’ contacted the Director General Implementation of the Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (FCTC), Shaheen Masud, to find out why the Ministry of Health has issued guidelines in contravention of the World Health Organisation’s (WHO’s) policy of 100 percent smoke-free environments.

“Article 8 of the FCTC only talks about protection from exposure to secondhand smoke. However, the WHO guidelines issued in 2007 state that separately ventilated areas and non-smoking areas are not recommended. Now, while the FCTC, which contains no mention of 100 percent smoke-free environments, is binding on all member countries, the WHO guidelines are not,” Shaheen responded.

The DG-FCTC then cited examples of developed countries like Portugal, Netherlands, Spain and Finland; and Asian countries including Malaysia, Indonesia and Singapore, where DSAs have been established in bars, restaurants, cafes and clubs after the WHO had issued its 2007 guidelines. “Is this an achievement to be emulated,” Shaheen was interrupted. “You are right, it is not, but we were bound by a lacuna in the Non-Smoking Ordinance 2002, which stipulates that guidelines for DSAs should be issued,” she said, adding, “We had been defaulting on the law until these guidelines were issued.”

Interestingly, the ordinance does not make it mandatory for the Ministry of Health to issue guidelines on DSAs. It merely states “No person shall smoke or use tobacco in any form, in any place of public work or use. The federal government may, however, issue guidelines for permitting designated smoking areas in premises or places where adequate arrangements are made to protect the health of non-smokers.” The use of the term ‘may,’ rather than ‘must’ clearly shows that the government was under no obligation to legitimise DSAs.

Shaheen was asked why efforts have not been made to amend the law, if it is so faulty. “We did make efforts. Only recently, under the Bloomberg grant, we have almost decided to hire a consultant to review the law,” she responded, leaving one wondering why the services of a high-paid consultant should be required for the job.

“How can you justify giving legal cover to smoking lounges when your mandate is to protect people from the deleterious effects of tobacco use,” Shaheen was asked. She defended the guidelines by pointing out that the smoking lounges would have to separate through a boundary wall; would have to have adequate ventilation system; and not exceed one-third of the premise or hall where the smoking area is designated.

“Establishments such as hospitals, dispensaries and other healthcare facilities, schools, domestic flights, buses, and wagons, will continue to remain 100 percent smoke-free,” Shaheen went on to say in a bid to justify the act.

“It seems that the tobacco industry has, once again, prevailed over the Ministry of Health,” The News commented to instigate a response. “The influence of the tobacco industry is definitely there,” Shaheen conceded. However, at the same time, she maintained that when the guidelines were being framed, the then secretary health and additional secretary health, were inclined towards adopting a piecemeal approach in the area of tobacco control. “We believe that we should first make smokers feel ostracized. Let them go play havoc with themselves and their fellow smokers. After a maximum period of two years, there will be a total review and we will move to 100 percent smoke-free environments,” Shaheen said.

Shaheen also assured that the new DSAs “would not be lovely places.” She said, “These will be located either close to bathrooms or areas where the smokers would themselves not want to go.” Ironically, this is stated nowhere in the guidelines.

Interestingly, the tobacco industry opened two cozy smoking lounges within the Parliament House building in 2006. Even a casual glance through the clauses of the notification shows that the guidelines have been tailored to conform to the complexion of the smoking lounges that are currently operational, inclusive of those located within the Parliament House. “It seems that the engineer who designed the smoking lounges in the Parliament House, and the lawyer who drafted the guidelines are one and the same person,” an anti-tobacco activist laughed off.

‘The News’ has learnt that negotiations are also in final stages with PIA and the Civil Aviation Authority to grant permission for the establishment of one smoking lounge at every airport of the country. Now that the guidelines have been issued, whatever little glitch that remained in the way of opening DSAs has been removed. “Isn’t it illogical? Why spend money on creating areas which the government intends to abolish after two years anyways,” a health analyst wondered.

Commenting on the legal state of the smoking lounges that were operational before the issuance of the guidelines, an official in the Ministry of Health said, "You only provide legal cover to illegal things." An official working for an anti-tobacco NGO dubbed the notification as "yet another victory for the tobacco industry." He said, "It is hard to believe that the tobacco industry has yet again succeeded in proving its muscle."

An internationally acclaimed health expert said, "The release of guidelines on DSAs lends further credence to the fact that retired bureaucrats working for the tobacco industry are far more powerful and effective than serving bureaucrats within the Ministry of Health."

18 October 2008 – The NEWS, Islamabad

By Shahina Maqbool

■ TOBACCO CONTROL

CTC-Pak supports journalists' initiatives

Shahina Maqbool
Islamabad

The Coalition for Tobacco Control in Pakistan (CTC-Pak) has strongly supported the initiatives taken by the Journalist Health Forum (JHM) regarding tobacco control in Pakistan.

In a statement issued here on Friday, the national coordinator of CTC-Pak, Khurram Hashmi, has welcomed the suggestions made by JHM, as the recent SRO regarding permission of Designated Smoking Areas (DSAs) would greatly affect the drive for effective tobacco control in Pakistan.

"People are now conscious about their right for health and the right for a clean environment to breathe in. These guidelines would roll back all the efforts for which the Ministry of Health and its partners such as civil society organisations have reached so far for creating mass-level awareness," Khurram has argued.

The CTC coordinator has urged the Ministry of Health to accelerate its efforts for better implementation of tobacco control in Pakistan, rather than providing space for the tobacco industry to flourish further. "The actions of the tobacco industry should be discouraged, rather than allowing them to sit back and get their tasks done by us," Khurram has stated.

"The Coalition and its partners were disappointed with the invisible role, which the Ministry of Health has been playing during the last few months, but the reason for that might be the lack of resources and manpower facing the Tobacco Control Cell (TCC).

"Now, we are quite confident that, with the media on our side, our efforts would be doubled and the message for 100 per cent smoke-free Pakistan will reach the people much quickly with more outreach nationally," Khurram said.

CTC-Pak has further suggested that the Ministry of Finance should also look in the possibilities of supporting TCC and providing financial resources to counter the shenanigans of the tobacco industry.

15 October 2008 – The NEWS, Islamabad

By Shahina Maqbool

Where is the Anti-Tobacco Cell going wrong?

Pakistan's slack attitude towards introduction of pictorial health warnings on cigarette packs; its provision of legal cover to designated smoking areas; its inability to impose a complete ban on all forms of tobacco promotion and advertising; and its failure to affect a substantial raise in taxes to render the product outside the purchasing power of the young and the poor are all contributing to the burden of non-communicable diseases, of which tobacco use is the single largest risk factor.

Pakistan does not have anything to show for itself in any of the four key areas outlined above. Let's take the example of pictorial health warnings. Pictorial health warnings are proven to have a favourable impact on cessation of tobacco use among smokers, and abstinence among non-smokers. Text-based warnings on cigarette packs in India, Jordan, Egypt, Hong Kong, Australia and New Zealand, among other several countries, are accompanied by a graphic image depicting the debilitating effects of tobacco on the human body. These photographs persuasively deter both smokers as well as non-smokers.

Coming to Pakistan, only in March 2008, the government announced that the health warning on tobacco products would be rotated on a six-monthly basis with effect from January 1, 2009 through an amendment in the national ordinance governing the printing of health warnings on tobacco products. Subsequently, it extended the deadline to July 2009. Any mention of the need to introduce pictorial warnings is resisted by the Ministry of Health in the strongest possible terms.

Regarding the opening of designated smoking areas (DSAs), Pakistan will become a laughing stock if it does not withdraw the contradictory statutory regulatory order issued on September 6 to provide legal cover to establishment of DSAs. According to the 2004 IARC Monograph 83: 'Tobacco Smoke and Involuntary Smoking,' the 2005 'California Environmental Protection Agency Environmental Health Hazard Assessment of Environmental Tobacco Smoke,' and the 2006 'US Surgeon General's Report on The Health Consequences of Involuntary Exposure to Tobacco Smoke,' there is no safe level of human exposure to second-hand tobacco smoke. The creation of DSAs is seen as nothing short of an infringement of the rights of non-smokers.

According to these reports, neither ventilation nor filtration, alone or in combination, can reduce exposure levels of tobacco smoke indoors to levels that are considered acceptable, even in terms of odour, much less health effects. The WHO, therefore, demands an immediate, decisive response, to protect the health of all people across the world through creation of smoke-free environments (SFEs).

Such environments provide the many smokers who want to quit, with a strong incentive to cut down or stop smoking altogether. SFEs also help prevent people - especially the young — from starting to smoke. However, this simple logic holds little appeal for the Ministry of Health, which is hell bent on moving inch by inch only.

The implementation of a complete ban on tobacco promotion and advertising is the third essential strategy for tobacco control. Here too, Pakistan has a poor progress report. A majority of the restrictions on advertising and promotion of tobacco, as enshrined in the Prohibition of Smoking and Protection of Non-Smokers Health Ordinance 2002, exist on paper only. Zero implementation of laws offers a fertile ground for the tobacco industry to expand its influence across all tiers of the society, particularly among youth.

Increase in taxation, one of the most important action areas for tobacco control, also leaves much to be desired. Introducing an increase in the prices of tobacco products will not lead to a decline in revenues, as is commonly believed. On the contrary, such a measure will increase revenue and reduce tobacco consumption as the product will be rendered beyond the reach of youth and the under-privileged, who are the focus of the tobacco industry as new converts. Over 70 percent of the cigarette brands in Pakistan are available at very low prices, and hence are easily accessible to the poor.

According to the WHO Report on the Global Tobacco Epidemic 2008, tobacco tax revenues are more than 4000 times greater than spending on tobacco control in middle-income countries and more than 9000 times greater in lower-income countries. High-income countries collect about 340 times more money in tobacco taxes than they spend on tobacco control.

It finds that tobacco taxes could be significantly increased in nearly all countries, providing a source of sustainable funding to implement and enforce MPOWER — a package of policies and interventions targeting the reversal of the tobacco epidemic. This approach involves the use of six strategies namely, Monitor tobacco use and prevention policies; Protect people from tobacco smoke; Offer help to quit tobacco use; Warn about the dangers of tobacco; Enforce bans on tobacco advertising, promotion and sponsorship; and raise taxes on tobacco.

25 October 2008 – Nawa E Waqt, Multan

DAILY NAWA-I-WAQT MULTAN روزنامہ نوازِ وقت

بانی و مدیر: مولانا محمد رفیع الرحمن
ایڈیٹر: مولانا محمد رفیع الرحمن

ملتان، کراچی، راولپنڈی، اسلام آباد اور لاہور سے بیک وقت شائع ہوتا ہے

ہفتہ 25 شوال 1429ھ 25 اکتوبر 2008ء 10 کا تک 2065 ب

اڑھائی کروڑ پاکستانی سگریٹ نوشی کے عالمی ہیں

سگریٹ نوشی ٹینشن کا حل نہیں کیمنر کا باعث ہوتی ہے

ایک لاکھ سے زیادہ افراد تمباکو نوشی سے پیدا ہونے والی بیماریوں کی وجہ سے سالانہ ہلاک ہو جاتے ہیں۔

ہر روز 1200 نئے پاکستانی سگریٹ نوشی اختیار کرتے ہیں: خرم ہاشمی

راجن پور (نیوز رپورٹر) مول سوسائٹی ڈاکٹر لوہروں کو لوگوں میں تمباکو نوشی کے منہر اثرات سے آگاہی دینا ہو گا۔ سگریٹ نوشی ٹینشن کا حل نہیں بلکہ گلے، منہ اور پیپروں کے کیمنر کا باعث ہوتی ہے۔ پاکستان میں دو کروڑ 50 لاکھ افراد تمباکو نوشی کی لٹ میں مبتلا ہیں ہر روز پاکستان میں بارہ سو نئے افراد تمباکو نوشی شروع کرتے ہیں۔ ہر سال ایک لاکھ سے زیادہ افراد تمباکو نوشی سے پیدا ہونے والی بیماریوں کی وجہ سے ہلاک ہو جاتے ہیں۔ ان خیالات کا اظہار کٹری ڈائریکٹر سی ٹی

سی خرم ہاشمی نے تمباکو نوشی کے خلاف منعقدہ سیمینار میں شرکت کرتے ہوئے کیا۔ جس میں میڈیا ویجہ ڈی جی آرگنائزیشن کے صدر محمد حنیف خان دریٹنگ تعارف کرانے کے بعد قانون نافذ کرنے والے لوگوں کو سگریٹ نوشی کے خاتمہ کے لئے بنائے گئے قوانین پر عملدرآمد کرنا ہو گا۔ سیمینار میں عبدالحمید شاکر، جعفر مندی، سیف اللہ جیکانی، عبدالستار دریٹنگ، عاشق حیدری، انجینئر دریٹنگ ڈی لوسوشل ویلیئر غلام قصیر نے بھی تجویزیں دیں۔

25 October 2008 – Pakistan Observer, Islamabad

Letters to editor

Of smoking, ordinance and designated areas

It is useless to say that the government has miserably failed to impose the 'Prohibition of Smoking and Protection of Non-Smokers Health Ordinance 2002' in letter and spirit because there is nothing new about it. We still find people smoking openly in public transport, in offices, the educational institutions and even in the hospitals!

The blanket ban on smoking at public places through the 2002 Anti-Smoking Ordinance went up in the smoke as it was hardly implemented except in the airliners!

The government, through 'law enforcing agencies' for the obvious, haphazardly launches half-hearted campaigns and some times we come across small news items regarding some individuals caught violating the law and fined. Then it fades out.

It would be unfair to put all the blame on the 'law enforcement agencies' for not implementing the law because we, for ourselves, saw many a time VVIPs and VIPs shredding this particular ordinance in important official meetings. Well, just to clarify a bit and avoid confusion we should make it clear that these incidents that we are referring to occurred during the last government.

However, there are always some people in the system who never loose faith and keep trying to find new ways and means to achieve the objective(s). So, this particular situation, we believe, has inspired somebody in the Ministry of Health to tow the guidelines being followed in the developed world countries where on one hand efforts are being made to project smoking as an 'evil habit', the tobacco being a killer and a social crime against those who do not smoke while on the other hand for those who have not paid much attention to all those threats and warnings and continue to smoke, special arrangements have been made to ostracize them from the rest of the society.

For the purpose they have created 'designated spots' where these smokers can go and smoke, harm their own health and not affect the others around them. If one has travelled abroad and has spent some time at any international airport in one of the airports in the developed or even developing countries one can easily judge the treatment meted out to the smokers out there.

The 'smoking areas' are small cubicles, mostly glass walled, where these smokers rush before catching a flight or immediately after hitting the ground after a long flight, to smoke a cigarette or two before proceeding any further.

And the conditions one finds in those 'smoking areas' could simply be described not only as suffocating, oppressing and miserable but utterly humiliating too. So, we believe that the gentleman who may appear to be sympathetic towards smokers by offering them 'designated areas for smoking' here in our society in fact may not be so very kindly at all.

We know that the need for 'smoking rooms' was felt very strongly soon after the anti-smoking ordinance was passed as a result of which a cigarette manufacturing company provided 'smoking areas' at the airports and even created one inside the Parliament House, which particularly caught the attention of the media because it was formally inaugurated by the then speaker of the National Assembly, Chaudhry Amir Hussain.

We believe that this proposal to set up ‘designated areas’ for smoking would help implement the anti-smoking ordinance more forcefully because then the smokers would have little to offer in excuse for violating the law if there are some ‘designated areas’ in existence in close proximity of where he/she might be found smoking.

However, we hope that those responsible for implementing this law would be careful not to allow such ‘designated areas’ inside the health and educational institutions if the government decided to go ahead with the move.

25 October 2008 – The News, Islamabad

By Shaheena Maqbool

Withdrawal of order on designated smoking areas urged

Anti-tobacco activists attending a review meeting on tobacco packaging reforms in Pakistan here on Friday appealed to the president, the prime minister and the minister for health to consider withdrawing the recent statutory regulatory order allowing the establishment of designated smoking areas in the country, and to advance a step further by giving a green signal for printing of pictorial health warnings on cigarette packs.

The appeal was articulated at a consultative meeting organised by TheNetwork for Consumer Protection, which has recently received a grant of US \$280,000 from the Bloomberg Grant Initiative, New York, to implement a project on ‘Policy Advocacy and Stakeholder Awareness Building for Packaging Reforms to Reduce Demand for Cigarettes in Pakistan’.

Dr. Talib Lashari, the executive coordinator of TheNetwork, informed that the project aims to introduce packaging reforms through amendments in the Prohibition of Smoking and Protection of Non-Smokers’ Health Ordinance, 2002 and The Cigarettes (Printing of Warning) (Amendment) Ordinance, 2002, in line with Article 11 and paragraph 2 of Article 16 of the Framework Convention of Tobacco Control (FCTC). “We shall work for rotating pictorial warnings on 50 percent of the area of the cigarette pack; statement on pack about the product constituents and emissions; and prohibition of sale of smaller packs and in loose packing,” he said.

Dr. Lashari announced that during the next quarter, draft pictorial warnings would be designed; draft amendments would be prepared to facilitate the Ministry; political leadership would be contacted for tobacco control; social mobilization would be focused; and an advocacy plan and policy paper would be developed.

Dr. Lashari made a detailed presentation on the current state of health indicators and tobacco control with a specific focus on tobacco packaging reforms. Presenting a comparative analysis of communicable and non-communicable diseases (NCDs), he said that the burden of NCDs has increased over the years.

“Data show that tobacco consumption has increased during the last five years; crude death rates have shown a slight increase; and life expectancy has decreased in 2006 as compared to 2001. This shows that overall decrease in productivity would lead to economic loss,” he said.

Dr. Agha Mehmood, deputy director general of the Tobacco Control Initiative (TCI), Ministry of Health, highlighted government’s efforts to curb tobacco in Pakistan. He presented an account of activities under the Bloomberg Grant Initiative. He said that the Ministry of Health is committed to implementing the Tobacco Control Ordinance and introducing the required changes to bring it into conformity with the FCTC. He defended the creation of designated places as being in accordance with the FCTC.

Abdus Sattar Chaudhary from WHO highlighted the role of WHO in bringing international tobacco legislation and technical facilitation to local NGOs. He traced the history of tobacco control in Pakistan since 1979. Dr. Arshad Rana, president of the Pakistan Medical Association, spoke on the need to protect the health of people by withdrawing the order for establishment of designated smoking areas.

Anchor Anwar-ul-Hasan highlighted the media’s role in controlling tobacco. Syed Hassan Raza Shah, DSP Islamabad Traffic Police (ITP), highlighted the role of the traffic police and the challenges faced in this regard. He said, 87 ‘qalandras’ on breaching tobacco ordinance has been put forward to the courts, but no concrete action has so far been taken against violators of tobacco ordinance in public transport.

Azhar and Dr. Saba from Heartfile and Dr. M B Abbasi from the National Blindness Control Programme also spoke on the occasion. Abdul Hafeez presented the vote of thanks.

26 October 2008 – Pakistan Observer, Islamabad

Editorial

Pictorial health warnings on cigarette packs

It is about a decade now that an awareness campaign coupled with a legal framework was initiated in a bid to discourage smoking especially in public places and offices but there are no indications of any improvement in the situation. Instead, recent surveys and studies by some civil society organizations reveal an increase in the number of smokers in the country.

As a part of the measures designed to curb smoking, a warning is printed on cigarette packs on behalf of the Health Ministry that smoking is injurious to health but even this doesn’t dissuade smokers from indulging in or continuing the habit that costs both health and wealth-wise. In this backdrop, the demand of the speakers of the consultative meeting on “Tobacco Packaging Reforms in Pakistan” deserves serious consideration that

pictorial health warnings on cigarette packs should be made to save thousands of precious lives in the country. This seems to be quite convincing as symbols and pictures are more effective and communicative than written warnings especially for the illiterate section of the society that is more prone to the habit of smoking. It is because of the individual and collective colossal damage caused by the smoking that there have been demands for blanket ban on smoking. But it is also a fact that the mere ban would not produce the desired results until and unless there is general awareness about health hazards of this social evil. Around 3 million people die around the world every year because of pulmonary or smoking related diseases and about 17,000 of them are from Pakistan. Smoking is not a personal matter as it also risks the health of people around a smoker. There is, therefore, need to create necessary awareness through all available means so as to convince the people especially the young ones to discard smoking. Apart from awareness campaign, the authorities too need to implement the ban on smoking in public places, public transport and offices, as there are widespread reports of the ban being violated with immunity.

27 October 2008 – Khabrain, Multan



27 October 2008 – Ausaf, Multan

4815806, 4815801 (قاریاں) | پاکستان اسلام آباد لاہور سکریٹنگ سروسز سے ایک وقت شائع ہونے والی ہفت روزہ ملتان

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اعلیٰ صحافتی اوصاف کا علمبردار

اوصاف ملتان

ایڈیٹر: محسن بلال خان | ایف ایچ ایڈیٹر: مہتاب خان

سوموار 27 اکتوبر 2008ء

سگریٹ نوشی کی روک تھام کیلئے قانون پر سختی سے عمل کر لیا جائے، خرم ہاشمی

دنیا میں سالانہ 50 لاکھ افراد سگریٹ پینے کے باعث موت کے منہ میں چلے جاتے ہیں، جمہور مہدی

ڈیرہ غازی خان (نیورہ پینٹ) سگریٹ نوشی کی روک تھام کیلئے ضروری ہے کہ قانون پر سختی سے عمل کر لیا جائے دنیا میں سالانہ پچاس افراد سگریٹ نوشی کا شکار ہو کر موت کے منہ میں چلے جاتے ہیں یہ بات پینٹل کواردی میٹر کو لیجن فار ٹوبیکو کنٹرول خرم ہاشمی اور سوسائٹی فار الٹرنیٹ میڈیا اینڈ ریسرچ کواردی میٹر جمہوری مہدی نے ڈیرہ غازی خان کی پینٹل میٹنگ میں خطاب کرتے ہوئے کہا جس میں مختلف شعبہ ہائے زندگی سے تعلق رکھنے والے افراد اور سول سوسائٹی کی نمائندہ تنظیموں کے ممبرانوں نے شرکت کی خرم ہاشمی نے بتایا کہ پاکستان میں تباہ کن نوشی کی

ممانعت کے قوانین کو آرڈیننس 2002ء کے تحت نافذ العمل کیا گیا جس میں 27 مختلف دفعات کے تحت اس جرم پر ایک لاکھ روپے تک جرمانہ یا تین ماہ قید بھی دی جاسکتی ہے مہدی نے کہا کہ تباہ کن نوشی کی شرح میں اضافہ کی اصل وجہ معاشی مسائل اور لا شعوری ہے آصف نقوی نے کہا کہ دنیا بھر میں سگریٹ نوشی کی وجہ سے متاثر ہونے والے افراد کی تعداد میں 60 لاکھ ایسے سگریٹ نوش ہیں جن کی عمریں 25 سال سے بھی کم ہیں بینک سے فاروقی احمد، جانی محمد حسین، ماسٹر محمد اقبال، سید افتخار حسین رور نظام مصطفیٰ نے بھی اپنے خیالات کا اظہار کیا۔

32 MARK

**DAILY
NAWA-I-WAQT
MULTAN**

روزنامہ
بانی و نصابی مخرج
ایڈیٹر و نصابی مخرج
ملتان

ملتان کو روٹی و لپٹنی اسلام آباد لاہور سے ایک وقت شائع ہوتا ہے

★
★

MONDAY - OCTOBER 27, 2008

جلد	پیر 27 شوال 1429ھ	27 اکتوبر 2008ء	12 کاغذ 2065 پ	صفحہ 16	بروز و نمبر ایک	شمارہ
31	فون نمبر: 222-007-11-74 UAN	4545571-74	قیمت 9 روپے	16	96	128

☆

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ایڈیٹر نازی خان: دوپہر کنٹرول کوٹیشن کے اجلاس سے غرم باغی اور طارق احمد خطاب کر رہے ہیں۔

دنیا میں ہر سال 50 لاکھ افراد لو سگریٹ نوشی سے موت کا شکار ہو جاتے ہیں

سگریٹ نوشی کا تھان دو جہانوں میں نیا دھبہ جس کے لئے ہم جاننے کی ضرورت ہے: مقررین

ایڈیٹر نازی خان (ایڈیٹر اور بانی) سگریٹ نوشی کی روک تھام کے لئے کوشاں ہیں۔ ان کا کہنا ہے کہ سگریٹ نوشی سے ہر سال 50 لاکھ افراد موت کا شکار ہو جاتے ہیں۔ ان کا کہنا ہے کہ سگریٹ نوشی سے ہر سال 50 لاکھ افراد موت کا شکار ہو جاتے ہیں۔ ان کا کہنا ہے کہ سگریٹ نوشی سے ہر سال 50 لاکھ افراد موت کا شکار ہو جاتے ہیں۔

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28 October 2008 – The NEWS, Islamabad
By Shahina Maqbool

National Alliance for Tobacco Control constituted

Says 'no' to smoking areas,
'yes' to pictorial warnings and

National Quit Smoking Day on 1st Ramazan

Shahina Maqbool

Islamabad

Supported by the World Health Organisation (WHO), the National Alliance for Tobacco Control (NATC) was launched here with a mandate to reinforce and consolidate current efforts for the creation of 100% smoke-free environments in Pakistan.

The need for a national alliance was recently voiced at an international forum where the World Health Organisation (WHO) expressed concern over Pakistan "going a step backward" by legitimising the establishment of designated smoking areas (DSAs).

The meeting was convened under the chairmanship of Dr. Javaid Khan, head of the section of pulmonology and critical care medicine at Aga Khan University. Leading tobacco control activists — some of them recognised as pioneers in the said domain — were also present, as were representatives of NGOs and the media including members of the Journalist Health Forum on Tobacco Control.

NPO Tobacco Control Shahzad Alam Khan shared the objectives of NATC. These include lobbying for a total ban on tobacco advertising, promotion and sponsorship; supporting a

transition from text-based warnings to pictorial health warnings on cigarette packs; advocating a complete ban on tobacco use in public places; influencing an increase in taxation on tobacco and its products; and supporting the implementation of the Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (FCTC) and the global MPOWER package for reversal of the tobacco epidemic.

The meeting led to formulation of numerous recommendations. The Alliance demanded immediate withdrawal of the statutory regulator order (SRO) on the creation of DSAs. Terming the SRO as "extremely painful," Shahzad said the WHO has already communicated its reservations to the Ministry of Health. Members of the Alliance unanimously agreed that all indoor public places should be 100% smoke-free and that there can be no room for smoking areas.

Referring to the need to incorporate pictorial health warnings on cigarette packs, Dr. Javaid informed that he has already created a pool of photographs portraying the deleterious impact of tobacco on human health, and is willing to share the same with the Tobacco Control Cell. "Excuses such as having discussions on the

photographs and choosing culturally-sensitive images are nothing but delaying tactics," he pointed out. It was decided that pictorial warnings will henceforth be incorporated in all banners and dissemination material on tobacco. Dr. Javaid shared the pictorial warning being incorporated on cigarette packs in India, beginning next month.

The NATC agreed to observe the 1st of Ramadan each year as 'National Quit Smoking Day,' and to capitalise all annual observations such as World Environment Day and World TB Day, etc., by highlighting how tobacco use is inextricably linked to a variety of health-related and environmental problems.

Through a show of hands, members of NATC took oath, neither to reap any kind of financial, recreational, or other benefit from the tobacco industry, nor to engage with it. "We will name and shame those who



engage with or reap any benefit from the tobacco industry," Dr. Javaid stressed, with all members agreeing.

The Alliance recommended a complete ban, rather than partial restrictions, on tobacco advertising, promotion and sponsorship in order to thwart the industry's innovative marketing of its products through direct and indirect channels. Dr. Javaid informed that several television artistes are being paid by the tobacco industry to smoke cigarettes in dramas. Of late, some tobacco giants have established mobile air-conditioned cinema halls, entry to which is free upon purchase of cigarettes worth Rs10. He exhorted the Tobacco Control Cell to write letters to editors of newspapers publishing tobacco advertisements, and to make it known to them that this is a contravention of the law. Dr. Javaid also showed photographs of rickshaws being used to advertise various tobacco brands.

Prohibition of smoking in hospitals,

universities, banks, and other public places was also discussed. It was agreed that the country's poor implementation mechanisms make it necessary for powers to be delegated to executive directors, vice chancellors and bank managers. To begin with, a joint letter from the Ministry of Health, the WHO, and NATC may be sent to administrators of teaching hospitals, seeking their support for implementation of the ban on smoking and sale of cigarettes. The Alliance also regretted the government's inability to monitor under-age sale of cigarettes.

The Alliance agreed on reviewing the Prohibition of Smoking and Protection of Non-Smokers Health Ordinance 2002, and sharing its proposed amendments with the Ministry of Health which, Shahzad Alam informed, is already in the process of identifying gaps in the legislation in order to bring it in conformity to the FCTC.

The need to engage the district and local administrations, line departments, the armed forces, ulema, family physicians, human rights organisations, professional societies, celebrities, and associations of teachers, lawyers and women in tobacco control initiatives was also emphasised.

Some members advised the Journalists Health Forum to work on creation of smoke-free press clubs. "Non-smokers must pluck the courage to walk up to any high-profile government servant who resorts to smoking in public gatherings, and tell him/her not to infringe on their right to clean air," Dr. Javaid said.

On the issue of taxation, Dr. Javaid informed that optimum results can be achieved by raising taxes on tobacco, followed by enforcement of clean air policies. He said, the revenue thus generated should be utilised on public awareness about the harmful effects of tobacco use. He said, in Karachi, a 'roti' sells for Rs6, while a pack of 10 cigarettes is available for Rs7.24 only. The Alliance also decided to advise the PMDC and the Pakistan Nursing Council to incorporate tobacco control as a subject in the medical and nursing curricula.

In his concluding remarks, Professor Saeed-ul-Majeed from the College of Family Medicine urged all NGOs, coalitions, networks, and alliances working on tobacco control to combine their energies to reverse the tobacco epidemic, which is predicted to kill over 175 million people worldwide between 2008 and 2030.

03 November 2008 – The NEWS, Islamabad

By Shahina Maqbool

INTERNATIONAL
THE NEWS
Monday
November 3, 2008

New mindset in ministry may soon take on the tobacco lobby

Shahina Maqbool
Islamabad

The federal health secretary, Sulaiman Ghani, is planning to make history by setting an example in the domain of tobacco control.

For the first time, international regulators and agencies are hopeful that the statutory regulatory order (SRO) on Designated Smoking Areas (DSAs) may be withdrawn in the days to come. And the credit for the current flexibility in the stance of the Ministry of Health, which has thus far religiously been adhering to a 'go-slow' policy in the realm of tobacco control, goes to its secretary.

"One can always re-think and reconsider matters. The World Health Organisation (WHO) has strongly criticised the way we are proceeding; the same is true of the civil society and other stakeholders," Ghani said while talking to 'The News' here on Sunday. The health secretary said that the Ministry of Health is getting inputs from various quarters and is reviewing its decision regarding the establishment of DSAs. "A decision will be taken soon," he added.



Pakistan shocked the anti-tobacco lobby of the world and the WHO last month, when the Ministry of Health decided to provide legal cover to the long-disputed smoking lounges by issuing guidelines governing their establishment — a step that has placed the country globally in a negative limelight.

Unlike previous health secretaries, Ghani is all set to take on the powerful bureaucracy of the tobacco industry. He is reported to have expressed reservations over the recent SRO that provides legal cover to smoking lounges. Sources in the Ministry of Law said, the Ministry of Health has sought advice on the possible withdrawal of the SRO, a claim denied by Ghani. "An SRO is a special dispensation that can be withdrawn any time. We don't need to seek anyone's advice for its withdrawal. The Ministry of Health can withdraw it any time," he said.

The issue of smoking lounges came to the fore when, despite the 2006 World No Tobacco Day theme that spoke openly about the hazards of smoking lounges and why they must be discouraged, an Islamabad-based tobacco industry inaugurated two cozy smoking lounges inside the Parliament House. The official theme of World No Tobacco Day 2006 was '100% smoke free insides.'

Asked why such an irrational SRO was issued in the first place, Ghani said, "I will not call it irrational, as the SRO was issued after due deliberations within the Ministry of Health." He then went on to elaborate the ministry's standpoint with reference to tobacco control. "The SRO on smoking areas was issued in view of poor compliance with tobacco laws. We thought it may help to curb tobacco use. The government will take every possible step to reduce the incidence of tobacco use; to encourage people to quit smoking; and to ensure prohibition of smoking in enclosed places," Ghani added.

On the other end of the spectrum, the crafty minds of the tobacco industry are planning to come up with a new media-management strategy to control the firing of negative news items on DSAs in the press. "Now that Islamabad-based health reporters have vowed to disconnect all ties with them, the tobacco industry is trying to identify smokers within the media to launch a massive 'education' drive amongst journalists about smoking as a human right and the importance of smoking lounges," a source working for a local tobacco company conceded. According to the source, negotiations were also in the final stages with the Civil Aviation Authority and the Pakistan International Airlines to establish state-of-the-art smoking lounges at all major airports of the country.

Apparently, following its success in manoeuvring legal cover for exclusive smoking areas, the tobacco industry may find it difficult to swallow the pill of a bureaucrat who thinks out of the box, particularly at a juncture when the industry is busy finalising its 100 year-plan for the creation of DSAs. If the government were to reverse the SRO in view of national and international pressure, the triumph of the industry would soon be reduced to ashes and smoke.

03 November 2008 – **Express, Islamabad**
TV Drama promo advertisement showing an actor smoking.



05 November 2008 – The NEWS, Islamabad
CTC Public Appeal



Appeal Prime Minister of Pakistan
Mr. Syed Yousaf Raza Gilani
Federal Minister for Health Ms. Sherry Rehman
Federal Health Secretary Mr. Sulaiman Ghani

Health is protected under the Constitution of Pakistan, 1973. The Government is responsible for the protection of health of the citizens of Pakistan.

Please, save our children and families from tobacco epidemic and make Pakistan a smoke free country.

Repeal the SRO issued recently allowing Designated Smoking Areas (DSAs) in the country.

CTC
Coalition for Tobacco Control - Pakistan on behalf of 24 member organizations

06 November 2008 – The NEWS, Islamabad
By Shahina Maqbool

INTERNATIONAL
THE NEWS
Thursday
November 6, 2008

DESIGNATED SMOKING AREAS

CTC for repeal of order

Shahina Maqbool
Islamabad

In a public service appeal made through the print media on Wednesday, the Coalition for Tobacco Control, Pakistan, on behalf of its 24 member organizations, has urged the government to repeal the Statutory Regulatory Order (SRO) allowing Designated Smoking Areas (DSAs) in the country.

"Please save our children and families from the tobacco epidemic and make Pakistan a smoke-free country," the CTC has written in an appeal addressed to Prime Minister Yousuf Raza Gillani and the minister and secretary of the Ministry of Health. The appeal also reminds

the government of its constitutional responsibility to protect the health of the citizens of Pakistan.

It may be mentioned that under Section 5 of the Prohibition of Smoking and Protection of Non Smokers Health Ordinance, 2002 (LXXIV of 2002), the Ministry of Health, on September 6, 2008, notified a SRO containing guidelines that permit the creation of DSAs. The step is being strongly criticised by the anti-tobacco lobby as well as the World Health Organisation, which is a staunch supporter of 100 percent smoke-free environments.

The Ministry of Health has, of late, been gathering inputs on the SRO and is likely to finalise its decision soon.

07 November 2008 – **The NEWS, Islamabad**

By Shahina Maqbool

UN terms smoke-free air the norm worldwide

While Pakistan is yet to take a decision on reversal of the widely criticised statutory regulatory order (SRO) containing guidelines for the establishment of designated smoking areas (DSA), the United Nations General Assembly set a shining example on November 3 by making the United Nations Headquarters in New York City completely smoke-free.

“The UN’s leadership sends an important message to all its member countries that smoke-free air is now the norm worldwide,” Shoba John, co-chair of the Global Smoke-free Partnership, which supported the resolution, is reported to have said. More than 180 nongovernmental organizations from around the world signed onto a statement of support for a smoke-free UN created by the Global Smoke-free Partnership.

This decision brings United Nations General Assembly rules into line with the Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (FCTC), the global tobacco control treaty that 160 countries have ratified. The FCTC requires member countries to enact effective smoke-free air laws in all indoor workplaces and public places. The decision also brings United Nations rules into line with the strong smoke-free air laws in force throughout New York City and New York State.

Specialized agencies within the United Nations System establish their own smoking policies independently of the General Assembly. Several agencies, such as the World Health Organisation and the United Nations Children’s Fund (Unicef) have had complete smoking bans in place for many years. The General Assembly resolution presents a unique opportunity and political mandate for all UN agencies to bring their policies in line with Headquarters.

The United Nations is following the lead of a growing list of countries that require smoke-free air in public places and workplaces, including restaurants, bars and pubs. The list includes Ireland, Italy, Bermuda, Uruguay, Scotland, England, Northern Ireland, Norway, Sweden, France, South Africa and Thailand.

07 November 2008 – **Business Recorder, Online**

By Correspondent

Ulema's conference on tobacco control being held today

ISLAMABAD (November 27 2008): The Ministry of Health will arrange a day long Ulema's conference on tobacco control here on Thursday to build alliance with religious leaders. The objectives of the conference included making strategies to accelerate tobacco control through mosques and to raise the awareness of the Ulema on issues of tobacco use.

The conference will also review the progress since the last Ulema's conference and develop future implementation strategy. Tobacco is global epidemic infiltrating the poorest nations and is the second major cause of death in the world, killing 5 million people every year. Countless epidemiological studies establish that tobacco is the agent for death.

There are about 22 million smokers in the country and 100,000 deaths occur due to tobacco related diseases making it a serious public health issue. Tobacco use in Pakistan is common and one of the highest in South East Asian Region. The Ministry of Health has established a Tobacco Control Cell in 2007 in order to address the deleterious impact of tobacco epidemic.

The cornerstone of the new strategy of the Ministry of Health is based on highlighting the Islamic perspective to ensure that people are clearly aware of the harmful effects of tobacco. The first conference to sensitise the Ulema was held in 2007 with the support of Auqaf Department in which Khatibs and Ulema participated in large number.

06 December 2008 – The NEWS, Islamabad

By Shahina Maqbool

Tobacco industry 'saving lives' - Anti-tobacco activists criticise move

Islamabad - In a fascinating development, a leading Karachi-based tobacco industry joined hands with the Pakistan Red Crescent Society (PRCS) to commemorate the International Volunteers Day here on Friday.

The tobacco industry and the Pakistan Red Crescent Society (PRCS) established a blood donation camp, from morning to noon, in the parking lot of Saudi-Pak Tower. According to an official press release issued by Lakson Tobacco Company, employees of various companies working within Saudi-Pak Tower and the tobacco industry were motivated to donate blood under their joint blood donation awareness campaign themed 'Roll up your sleeves and save a life.'

The press release further reports Dr. Ghulam Murtaza Qureshi, Assistant Director, Blood Donor Center, PRCS, as stating how "very encouraging" it is "to see Lakson Tobacco Company employees stepping forward in remembering the International Volunteer Day. We hope that other corporate sector organizations would follow their example."

Reacting to the news, the Coordinator of the Coalition for Tobacco Control, Pakistan, Khurram Hashmi strongly condemned the tactics of the tobacco industry and urged the Ministry of Health to take strict notice of desperate activities through which the industry is trying to revive its lost image. "This is totally unacceptable. We will formally lodge a protest with the World Health Organisation (WHO) and the Ministry of Health," Khurram said.

The CTC chief asked: "Isn't it ironic for a tobacco industry being so worried about the health and lives of the common man?" He said the theme of the blood donation camp should have been 'Smoke a cigarette and die,' rather than 'Roll up your sleeves and save a life.' He also proposed that the tobacco industry should come up with another initiative through which it can help the government pay off the hospital bills of patients who die due to the use of their products.

A member of the National Alliance for Tobacco Control (NATC) stressed that tobacco is the most powerful addictive substance currently available in the world. "Unfortunately, the tobacco industry in Pakistan has been given a free hand to promote its deadly products. Holding of medical camps and blood donation drives are just another way of promoting their products and must be discouraged. Such kind of promotion by the tobacco industry is completely banned in many countries of the world," he stated.

Lately, NWFP Minister for Social Welfare and Women Development Sitara Ayaz visited a one-day free medical camp arranged by Pakistan Tobacco Company in a Basic Health Unit in District Swabi, where she praised PTC for “serving humanity.” “The honourable minister needs to visit hospitals and see the victims of tobacco,” Dr. Javaid Khan, chairperson of NATC states in a letter to the editor published in a newspaper. “On the one hand, they are busy increasing the incidence of lung cancers, strokes, and heart attacks in the country, and on the other, are trying to fool the innocent public by providing so-called free treatment to patients,” Dr. Javaid points out.

Reacting to the comments of the PRCS director, an official working for the World Health Organisation (WHO) expressed concern over the highly reputed organization shaking hands with the tobacco industry. “It is unbelievable. We, in the UN system, cannot even think about such a joint venture,” he added.

Another anti-tobacco activist shed light on the last part of the press release where the said tobacco company has portrayed itself as a socially responsible entity. “Corporate Social Responsibility is nothing but a new gimmick being used by the tobacco industry to pressurize the Ministry of Health and other health regulators,” he said.

The activist said, the tobacco industry is trying to gain the support of the common man by applying new tactics such as CSR to pressurize the regulators. They are trying to create an impression that if the tobacco industry is asked to close its business, hundreds and thousands of people will lose their jobs; a similar number will suffer due to closure of health setups; and people will suffocate to death as the tobacco industry is planting millions of trees,” he went on to add.

Friday’s blood donation awareness campaign is being projected as “the latest initiative undertaken by LTC under its LTC Employee Volunteer Programme (EVP).” “Earlier this year, LTC EVP activities included donation to SOS village in Ramazan where the employees donated from their own pockets and the company matched the proceeds rupee to rupee. Another project was the LTC Computer Literacy Programme where the employees voluntarily participated in sharing computer knowledge with the children of the factory workers,” the press release further informs.

This bold step by a tobacco company is yet another direct blow in the face of the Ministry of Health and the regulators, who always beat the drum of their success in the field of tobacco control.

07 December 2008 – Daily Time, Peshawar

By Correspondent

Tobacco price system not pro-growers: Senate body

Staff Report

PESHAWAR: Sub-committee of the Senate Standing Committee on Food, Agriculture and Livestock departments, constituted to probe into the affairs of Pakistan Tobacco Board (PTB), on Saturday put on the record that the present system for fixing prices of tobacco is not pro-growers and favours only the purchasers and manufacturers of PTB.

An official release issued here, said that the committee held its meeting here with convener Senator Shujaul Mulk in chair.

Members of the committee Senator Raza Muhammad Raza, Senator Sahibzada Khalid Jan, Senator Dr Abdul Malik, PTB chairman and Ministry of Food and Agriculture representatives attended the meeting.

The committee evaluated the prevailing system for fixing prices of tobacco after hearing the views of PTB and Ministry of Food and Agriculture representatives. The

sub-committee put it on the record that the present system is not pro-growers and favours only purchasers and manufacturers of PTB.

Therefore, the committee decided to probe further into the matter by listening to the viewpoint of all stakeholders including the growers, tobacco companies and international buyers of tobacco.

In this perspective, the sub-committee considered open auction system extremely necessary for protection of interests of growers because all the tobacco-growing countries have introduced this system except Pakistan despite the fact that Pakistan is seventh biggest growers of tobacco in the world.

The committee observed that probably it is the main reason that the manufacturers of cigarette are getting Rs 2,900 from one kilogram tobacco while the growers are paid only Rs 28 per kg. The committee also recommended to increase the representation of NWFP in PTB as the province was producing 98 % of tobacco.

12 December 2008 – The NEWS, Islamabad

By Shahina Maqbool

PICTORIAL MESSAGES ON CIGARETTE PACKS

Malaysia, India better off than Pakistan

Our correspondent

Islamabad

TheNetwork for Consumer Protection has applauded the announcements made by the Malaysian and Indian governments regarding the introduction of pictorial messages on cigarette packs from January 1 and February 1, respectively, and has urged the Government of Pakistan to move fast in this direction.

Pictorial messages show the devastating effects of tobacco smoking on the human body in graphic form and have more persuasive power than small printed messages on the side of cigarette packs. Graphic pictorial messages on cigarette packs are a requirement of the World Health Organization's (WHO) Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (FCTC). Many countries around the world including the United Kingdom, Australia, Belgium, Brazil and Canada have introduced large pictorial health warnings on cigarette packs.

Pakistan is a signatory to

FCTC. While many of the FCTC requirements are being fulfilled by the government, the much-needed intervention of pictorial health messages is yet to be introduced. TheNetwork hopes that the government of Pakistan will not lag far behind its neighbours in introducing this measure to protect the health of our people from the many hazards of smoking.

With a literacy rate of hardly 50%, Pakistan needs to introduce pictorial health messages to effectively warn against smoking. According to a survey carried out by TheNetwork in 2006, 28% of the urban adolescent male population between the ages of 15-18 years smoke and an estimated 1,200 young people start smoking each day. A majority of these smokers are labourers and day wagers.

Pakistan's cigarette manufacturing industry is large, prosperous and influential, producing about a billion cigarettes daily. Putting pictorial health warnings on cigarette packs is a social obligation of the industry.

13 December 2008 – The News, Islamabad

By Correspondent

PTA fixes tobacco prices before season

By our correspondent

MANSEHRA: Pakistan Tobacco Board (PTB) member Rustam Khan on Tuesday said the board had fixed the prices of tobacco crop for next year before the start of the sowing season.

He said this would give an open option to the growers for deciding either to cultivate tobacco or other crops and added that government received huge revenue from tobacco, but did not give any incentives to tobacco growers. He demanded of the government to give subsidy to tobacco growers in fertilisers to enable them to continue growing the crop.

He said during 2006-07 government received Rs34 billion in the form of CED from tobacco. Rustam said the tobacco growers must be provided tractors on less cost to minimise the cost of inputs and achieve higher outputs and warned of a downfall in revenues in coming years if government failed to solve problems of the growers, as they would not be able to afford the cost of production.



Society for Alternative Media and Research (SAMAR)
204, 2nd Floor, Kiran Plaza,
F-8 Markaz, Islamabad,
Pakistan
Tel: +92 51 285 5011 & 22
Web: www.ctcpak.org