

My Number NCD/01/2007
Office of the Director General of Health Services
Colombo 10
May 21, 2008

All:
Provincial Health Secretaries,
Provincial Directors of Health services,
Deputy Provincial Directors of Health Services,
Directors of Teaching Hospitals,
Medical Superintendents of Provincial Hospitals
Heads of Institutions,

**World No Tobacco Day 2008
TOBACCO-FREE YOUTH**

World No Tobacco Day (WNTD) falls on 31st May 2008. This special day reminds us what WHO is doing to fight the tobacco epidemic, and what people around the world can do to protect their right to health and healthy living for themselves and for future generations. The theme for this year's WNTD is "TOBACCO-FREE YOUTH". This year's WNTD emphasizes that one of the most cost effective ways by which countries can protect young people from experimenting and becoming regular tobacco users is to ban all forms of direct and indirect advertising, including promotion of tobacco products and sponsorship of any event or activities by the tobacco industry. The purpose of this event is to raise awareness about the importance of implementation of legislative provisions regarding all forms of advertising and to create 100% smoke-free environments ensuring greatest success in reducing tobacco use among youth.

Kindly make arrangements to emphasize the theme of WNTD with active participation of all relevant stakeholders. An information sheet is attached and more information can be obtained from the Non Communicable Disease Unit.

In summary;

1. Create awareness among all health staff about this year's WNTD theme.
2. Develop appropriate health messages, leaflets, flyers etc.
3. Organize programmes targeting the relevant groups/places; School health clubs, Youth clubs, Sports clubs, Health clinics etc.
4. At least one suitable activity should be conducted at the level of the Medical Officers of Health.
5. Health Education Officers are expected to forward a detailed report of the activities launched by your institution/area to mark the WNTD 2008 by 30th of June to the Director/Non Communicable Diseases in order to make a consolidated report on this year's WNTD celebrations.

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Dr. Ajith Mendis

Director General of Health Services

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World No Tobacco Day 2008

Theme: TOBACCO-FREE YOUTH

Tobacco is the leading preventable cause of death in the world. It is the only consumer product that kills when used as intended by its manufacturers. Tobacco kills up to 50% of its regular users.

Approximately 325 million young people live in the WHO South-East Asia Region today with 85% living in developing countries. Having survived the vulnerable childhood period, they are generally healthy. Nevertheless, tobacco use is contributing to the deadly mix that is changing the classic picture of healthy youth in the world.

Adolescent experimentation with this highly addictive product, aggressively pushed by the tobacco industry, can easily lead to a lifetime of tobacco dependence.

One of the most effective ways to protect young people from the harms of tobacco use is to ban advertising or promotion of tobacco products and the sponsorship of any events or activities by the tobacco industry.

This year's campaign will focus on 'Tobacco marketing' that hooks young people to a product, tobacco, that kills up to half of its users. Complete bans on all forms of direct and indirect advertising, including sponsorship, are highly effective in protecting youth from initiating tobacco use.

Exposure to pro-tobacco advertisements, promotion and sponsorship as well as accessibility, availability, favorable prices and social acceptance of tobacco products play a crucial role in experimentation and transition to regular consumption. Tobacco promotional activities are causally related to the onset of tobacco use in adolescents and exposure to tobacco products advertising is predictive of consumption among youth.

The tobacco industry spends tens of billions of dollars worldwide annually in marketing their deadly products. Their marketing activities are intended to bring new, young, and hopefully life-long tobacco users into the market in order to replace those who die.

Forms of direct tobacco promotion include: radio; television; magazines; banners, posters and hoardings; direct mail; coupons; sweepstake offers; brand loyalty programs; sponsorship of specialized entertainment events in popular youth locations such as bars and clubs; and controlled circulation magazines distributed to those on the tobacco industry's large mailing list.

A call for action

Call for implementation of the Tobacco control laws in Sri Lanka!

• Call to the public: Sri Lanka's law lays emphasize on prohibiting advertisements, prohibition of sponsorships and prohibition of free distribution of tobacco products. Encourage the public to give their fullest support towards implementation of tobacco control laws in order to protect future generations from the devastating consequences of tobacco use.