

GENERAL

Plain packaging on the cards for tobacco products

Manufacturers will be required to print only brand name in addition to health warnings

- Post Report, Kathmandu



May 9, 2017-

The government is planning to adopt plain packaging of tobacco products by 2018.

The plain packaging requires removal of all branding--colour, imagery, corporate logos and trademark--and manufacturers have to print only the brand name in the front and size as directed by the government. All other spaces will be used to display pictorial health warning and messages.

Once it comes into effect, tobacco manufacturers will be allowed to use the brand name in the front and size as directed by the government. All other spaces will be used to display pictorial health warning and messages.

Health Minister Gagan Kumar Thapa revealed the government plan while inaugurating a week-long conference titled "South Asia Tobacco Control Leadership Programme" on Monday.

"We believe that plain packaging is a big leap forward for the country that strives to be tobacco free," said Minister Thapa, inaugurating the conference. "We will continue to increase taxes and prices on tobacco products."

Experts believe that plain packaging and pictorial warning have been a crucial factor for people to quit smoking and consumption of any tobacco products. Tobacco products are considered a major risk factor for diseases including cancer and hypertension. According to the Ministry of Health, one third of the country's population has hypertension and 44 percent deaths are attributed to non-communicable diseases while around 10,000 people are diagnosed with cancer every year.

The government plan, however, looks ambitious as it struggles to implement directives that require 90 percent pictorial warning to be displayed in the cover of tobacco products.

Most of the tobacco companies in the country have been flouting the government directives as they have failed to devote at least 90 percent area on product covers to pictorial warnings depicting the hazards of tobacco consumption.

Amending its tobacco control directives two years ago, the Ministry of Health had mandated each tobacco company to use 90 percent space with pictures depicting cancer in human organs. The rest shall contain statutory warnings in Nepali. The amended directives also require other tobacco products--gutkha (a sweetened mixture of chewing tobacco, betel nut and palm nut), khaini (chewing tobacco) and surti (tobacco leaves)--to bear warning messages on 90 percent surface of the wrappers.

While the government had directed all the companies to comply with the decision by May 15, 2015, only one cigarette producing company has been abiding by the rule.

Cigarettes manufactured by Chaudhary Group have allotted the cover of its product with the picture of health hazards.

Interestingly, Perfect Blends (Nepal), a subsidiary company of CG, was the first company to move the apex court demanding a stay order against the government decision to increase the space for pictorial warnings to 90 percent. While the case is still sub judice, the company went ahead to implement the decision.

In terms of the legislation, Nepal tops many countries including Thailand and India that were deemed to have the biggest health warning, where such messages cover 85 percent area on packets. However, the country is struggling to implement the decision.

During the 2014 amendment, the Ministry of Health had also increased the number of graphics to be used in tobacco products. In case of cigarettes, three more pictures showing brain haemorrhage, a baby dying due to passive smoking, throat and mouth cancer have been prescribed. Also, the picture of lung cancer will now be used in gutkha, khaini and surti along with cigarettes.

Minister Thapa said the Ministry of Health is working closely with the Ministry of Industry to implement the 90 percent pictorial warning display on tobacco packages.

"The Industry Ministry had sought a few months to implement the decision because many companies had already taken production approval before the amendment of the directives. We are hopeful that all the companies will abide by the decision from coming fiscal year," said Minister Thapa.

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SAY NO TO TOBACCO

PROTECT HEALTH, REDUCE POVERTY AND PROMOTE DEVELOPMENT

World No Tobacco Day, 31 May 2017

Tobacco – a threat to development

Every year, on 31 May, WHO and partners mark World No Tobacco Day (WNTD), highlighting the health and additional risks associated with tobacco use, and advocating for effective policies to reduce tobacco consumption.

The theme for World No Tobacco Day 2017 is "Tobacco – a threat to development."

About the campaign

- It will demonstrate the threats that the tobacco industry poses to the sustainable development of all countries, including the health and economic well-being of their citizens.
- It will propose measures that governments and the public should take to promote health and development by confronting the global tobacco crisis.

Goals of the World No Tobacco Day 2017 campaign

- Highlight the links between the use of tobacco products, tobacco control and sustainable development.
- Encourage countries to include tobacco control in their national responses to 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda.
- Support Member States and civil society to combat tobacco industry interference in political processes, in turn leading to stronger national tobacco control action.
- Encourage broader public and partner participation in national, regional and global efforts to develop and implement development strategies and plans and achieve goals that prioritize action on tobacco control.
- Demonstrate how individuals can contribute to making a sustainable, tobacco-free world, either by committing to never taking up tobacco products, or by quitting the habit.

Tobacco control supports health and development

WHO is calling on countries to prioritize and accelerate tobacco control efforts as part of their responses to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

All countries benefit from successfully controlling the tobacco epidemic, above all by protecting their citizens from the harms of tobacco use and reducing its economic toll on national economies. The aim of the Sustainable Development Agenda, and its 17 global goals, is to ensure that "no one is left behind."

Tobacco control has been enshrined in the Sustainable Development Agenda. It is seen as one of the most effective means to help achieve SDG target 3.4 of a one-third reduction globally, by 2030, of premature deaths from noncommunicable diseases (NCDs), including cardiovascular disease, cancers and chronic obstructed pulmonary disease. Strengthening implementation of the WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco in all countries is an additional target to be met by governments developing national sustainable development responses.

Controlling tobacco helps achieve other global goals

In addition to saving lives and reducing health inequalities, comprehensive tobacco control contains the adverse environmental impact of tobacco growing, manufacturing, trade and consumption.

Tobacco control can break the cycle of poverty, contribute to ending hunger, promote sustainable agriculture and economic growth, and combat climate change. Increasing taxes on tobacco products can also be used to finance universal health coverage and other development programs of the government.

It is not only governments who can step up tobacco control efforts: people can contribute on an individual level to making a sustainable, tobacco-free world. People can commit to never take up tobacco products. Those who do use tobacco can quit the habit, or seek help in doing so, which will in turn protect their health as well as people exposed to second-hand smoke, including children, other family members and friends. Money not spent on tobacco can be, in turn, used for other essential uses, including the purchase of healthy food, healthcare and education.

Facts about tobacco, tobacco control and the development goals

- About 6 million people die from tobacco use every year, a figure that is predicted to grow to more than 8 million a year by 2030 without intensified action. Tobacco use is a threat to any person, regardless of gender, age, race, cultural or educational background. It brings suffering, disease, and death, impoverishing families and national economies.
- Tobacco use costs national economies enormously through increased health-care costs and decreased productivity. It worsens health inequalities and exacerbates poverty, as the poorest people spend less on essentials such as food, education and health care. Some 80% of premature deaths from tobacco occur in low- or middle-income countries, which face increased challenges to achieving their development goals.
- Tobacco growing requires large amounts of pesticides and fertilizers, which can be toxic and pollute water supplies. Each year, tobacco growing uses 4.3 million hectares of land, resulting in global deforestation between 2% and 4%. Tobacco manufacturing also produces over 2 million tonnes of solid waste.
- The WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (WHO FCTC) guides the global fight against the tobacco epidemic. The WHO FCTC is an international treaty with 180 Parties (179 countries and the European Union). Today, more than half the world's countries, representing nearly 40% of the world's population (2.8 billion people), have implemented at least one of the WHO FCTC's most cost-effective measures to the highest level. An increasing number of countries are creating firewalls to ward off interference from the tobacco industry in government tobacco control policy.
- Through increasing cigarette taxes worldwide by US\$1, an extra US\$190 billion could be raised for development. High tobacco taxes contribute to revenue generation for governments, reduce demand for tobacco, and offer an important revenue stream to finance development activities.

– [Tobacco Free Initiative](#)

Countdown to World No Tobacco Day 31 May 2017

18 Days 1 Hour 8 Minutes 27 Seconds

TOBACCO THREATENS US ALL



Poster: Tobacco threatens us all
World No Tobacco Day, 31 May 2017

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