



Asian Games: Maintain Tobacco-Free Sports

Introduction

The 17th Asian Games involving 45 member countries/committees will begin in 19 Sep – 4 Oct in Incheon, S Korea. The Asian Games, also known as the ASIAD, is the biggest multi-sport games after the Olympic Games, and the most prestigious event organised by the Olympic Council of Asia (OCA).¹ During these Games in Incheon, the hosts of the 18th ASIAD will be announced. With the withdrawal of the original host, Vietnam, Indonesia as first runner-up in the bid for the 2018 Games, is now poised and willing to host the Games.²

To determine Indonesia's readiness, the President of the OCA, Sheikh Ahmad Al-Fahad Al-Sabah held a meeting with the Olympic Council of Indonesia (KOI) and sports officials on 25 July in Kuwait. This was soon followed-up with another meeting in Jakarta early August between OCA officials and relevant Indonesian government officials. In citing Indonesia's preparedness to host the ASIAD, the Chair of Indonesia's KOI, Rita Subowo, indicated the readiness of Indonesian tobacco company, PT Djarum, as one of the sponsors of the Games.³ The host for the 2018 Games is expected to be officially announced in Incheon in September 2014.

Indonesia Stands Alone in Allowing Tobacco Sponsorship of Sports

With the exception of Indonesia, all countries participating in the Games are parties to the WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (FCTC). These countries and jurisdictions have enacted legislation banning tobacco advertising, promotions and sponsorship of sports. Indonesia remains the only country in Asia to still allow tobacco advertising and sponsorship of major sports events. This will be problematic to all countries participating in the ASIAD as they will face cross-border advertising on television – telecasting of tobacco sponsored events from Indonesia into countries would result in tobacco advertising splashed across their TC screens. Although there are restrictions on tobacco advertising, the tobacco companies are circumventing the restrictions by advertising through foundations.

The visibility of tobacco brand in sponsored event and/or its telecast on television are ubiquitous – inside and outside stadiums, main roads lined with tobacco billboards and flags, frequent television adverts, novelty cigarette packs for the event, mobile kiosks – these are in-your-face aggressive promotions. Some recent examples are the sponsorship of telecast of the *FIFA World Cup (Gudang Garam)*, *Thomas Cup (Djarum)* and *Indonesia Badminton Open* tournament renamed *Djarum Indonesia Open Super Series (Djarum)*.



Major sports events in Indonesia are sponsored by tobacco companies



International Standards in Tobacco-free Sports

WHO FCTC Article 13 Guidelines⁴ calls upon countries to enact a comprehensive ban, direct and indirect on all forms of tobacco advertising, promotions and sponsorship. Most countries have tobacco sponsorship bans in place. This comprehensive ban should cover:

- Persons or entities such as media and events organizers, sportspeople, celebrities, film stars and other artists should be banned from engaging in tobacco advertising, promotion and sponsorship.
- advertising and promotion of tobacco brand names and all corporate promotion;

Tobacco-free Olympic Games – since 1988

The Olympics Games have been smoke-free since 1988 starting with the Winter Olympics and since then there have been several renewal of the commitment through various memos, such as the 2002 WHO-FIFA collaboration for a tobacco-free World Cup in Japan and Republic of Korea.⁵ More recently in 2010 - WHO and the IOC signed an MOU⁶ to promote healthy lifestyle choices, including physical activity, sports for all and Tobacco Free Olympic Games. As outlined in a memorandum of understanding signed in Lausanne, the WHO and IOC will work at both the international and country level to promote activities and policy choices to help people reduce their risk of non-communicable diseases such as cardiovascular disease, cancers, and diabetes.

Tobacco-free Southeast Asian (SEA) Games

Since 2003, the SEA Games have been smoke-free: Vietnam (2003), Philippines (2005) Thailand (2007) Lao PDR (2009), Indonesia (2011) and Myanmar (2013). The Indonesian Olympic Committee hosted tobacco-free SEA Games in 2011.

World No Tobacco Day

The *World No Tobacco Day* theme for 2002 was Tobacco Free *Sports*--Play it Clean! In response to the global appeal for action, WHO and its partners launched a campaign to clean sports of all forms of tobacco — tobacco consumption, and exposure to second-hand smoke, tobacco advertising, promotion and marketing.

Recommendations

1. OCA must be consistent in maintaining the tobacco-free policy and ensure that all Asian Games remain tobacco-free.
2. No exceptions to any country to allow direct or indirect tobacco sponsorship. Sponsorship through foundations by tobacco companies have the same effect as direct sponsorship and should not be allowed to sponsor sports events.

¹ The 17th Games are scheduled to be held in Incheon, S Korea 19 Sep – 4 Oct, 2014, estimates 23,000 participants, from 45 countries OCA countries. It will feature 36 sports and 439 events.

² KOI assessing West Java's bid to co-host 2018 Asian Games. Arya Dipa, Jakarta Post, 9 Aug 2014, <http://www.thejakartapost.com/news/2014/08/09/koi-assessing-west-java-s-bid-co-host-2018-asian-games.html>

³ Jakarta to host 2019 Asian Games (Translated). 27 Jul 2014, <http://www.tribunnews.com/sport/2014/07/27/jakarta-tuan-rumah-asian-games-2018>

⁴ Guidelines for the implementation of Article 13 of the WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control; http://www.who.int/fctc/guidelines/article_13.pdf?ua=1

⁵ Agenda item 7: World No Tobacco Day 2002, WHO collaboration with FIFA and IOC; Pg. 13 <http://www.who.int/tobacco/media/en/UNTaskForce4thSession.pdf>

⁶ World Health Organization and the International Olympic Committee sign agreement to improve health lifestyles. http://www.who.int/mediacentre/news/releases/2010/ioc_20100721/en/