



SEATCA

SOUTHEAST ASIA TOBACCO CONTROL ALLIANCE

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'A breath of fresh air': SEA health advocates commend Bali Governor for rejecting tobacco trade fair

Bangkok: 27 January 2014-Tobacco control advocates from around Southeast Asia are commending the governor of Bali for standing up to the tobacco industry and taking a stand for the well-being of his constituents.

The Southeast Asia Tobacco Control Alliance (SEATCA) on Monday, congratulated Bali Governor, Made Mangku Pastika, after he rejected the holding of the Inter-Tabac Asia from 27-28 February 2014, in the famed island resort of Indonesia. Inter-Tabac Asia is among the largest trade fairs by the global tobacco industry seeking to sell more tobacco in Asia.

"The Bali governor put his people first, ahead of all other interests," SEATCA Director Bungon Ritthiphakdee said. "His stance is a genuine service to humanity. It stands as an example that all world leaders should emulate. Bali, true to its fame and image, gives the whole world a breath of fresh air."

International tobacco control advocate, Dr. Mary Assunta said, "We should commend the Governor on his bold and courageous move to put public health before profits."

"The entire Indonesian nation should respect Governor Pastika's decision and ensure that the event is not shifted to another venue in Indonesia", Assunta added. "What is rejected by Bali should not be dumped into another city." Surabaya or Jakarta are reportedly being eyed by organizers as alternative venues.

In past years, the ProTobEx Asia and Inter-Tabac Asia had been organized in Manila, the Philippines in 2012 and 2013, and World Tobacco Asia in Jakarta in 2010/2011 and the 1st Indonesian Tobacco and Cigarette Expo in 2012, all of which were met with angry protests by local and international public health advocates.

Asia - particularly Southeast Asia - is a key market for the global tobacco industry. As tobacco control becomes stricter all over the world, Big Tobacco is banking on exploiting youth and women in the fast-growing populations and markets of Asia.

SEATCA, earlier this month, sent an open letter addressed to Mayor of Dortmund, Ullrich Sierau, strongly urging him to halt the Inter-Tabac fairs in Indonesia and Asia, and dissociate themselves from the tobacco industry. The City of Dortmund is the sole shareholder of Westfalenhallen Dortmund GmbH, organizers of Inter-Tabac Asia.

The poorest Indonesian families spend about 10 percent of their household income on cigarettes. Massive advertising campaigns have led to an increase in smoking prevalence



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amongst boys aged 13-15 to more than 40%. Incidence of smoking among children in Indonesia has increased dramatically. In 1995 around 71,000 children aged 10 to 14 years old were smokers, while in 2010 it had increased to 426,000. Additionally, tobacco is grown using child labour in Indonesia and other major tobacco producing countries.

(ENDS.)