



Southeast Asia Tobacco Control Alliance

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Keep Asian Games Tobacco-Free, Regional and International NGOs Urge Olympic Council

Bangkok/21 August: International and regional tobacco control non-government organizations on 20 August 2014, urged the Olympic Council of Asia (OCA) to keep the 2018 Asian Games or the 18th ASIAD, free from tobacco sponsorships and promotions.

SEATCA Director, Ms. Bungon Rithiphakdee, in a letter co-signed by 8 other international organizations to the OCA president said, “The OCA should not allow their well-respected and globally recognized organization to be ‘used’ by the tobacco industry in their bid to promote their deadly products among the youth, by using a prestigious sporting event, such as the Asian Games. They must be consistent in maintaining the tobacco-free policy and ensuring that all sporting events continue to remain tobacco-free.”

Indonesia, in announcing its interest to host the 18th ASIAD in Jakarta, has said that a local Indonesian tobacco company is willing to sponsor the Games. The Olympic Committee has had a tobacco-free record in its events for many years. It should not allow the tobacco industry to creep into the Games now.

“If a tobacco company is allowed to sponsor the Games,” she added, “this will present cross-border tobacco advertising issues in countries, especially in Asia, where tobacco advertising, promotions and sponsorships have been banned.”

Since 1988, the International Olympic Committee (IOC) has had tobacco-free games; the SEA Games and Asian Games are all completely tobacco-free. The IOC has even signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the World Health Organization to promote healthy lifestyle choices, including physical activity, sports for all and tobacco-free Olympics. (See attached for more on International Standards for Tobacco-free Sports).

The group’s letter to OCA also stressed that sporting organizations globally recognize that there is an inherent contradiction between the healthy lifestyle of sports and the deadly use of tobacco and have taken action to protect players, spectators and young fans from the dangers of tobacco marketing and secondhand smoke.

The President of the Asia Pacific Heart Network (APHN), Ms. Mary Barry stressed that, “Governments and event organisers should be clear - tobacco and sport must never be mixed. Tobacco sponsorship sends the wrong message to young people – it should never be mixed with sporting events that should encourage and inspire healthy lifestyles.”

Matthew L. Myers, President of the U.S.-based Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids (CTFK) said, “Tobacco companies around the world need to recruit young people as replacement smokers for those who die from tobacco-related disease. The Olympic Council of Asia and participating countries must protect youth by banning tobacco industry sponsorship at the Asian Games to ensure that this prestigious sporting event does not serve as another means for the tobacco industry to market its deadly products to global youth.”



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As preparations for the 2018 Asian Games go underway, SEATCA, CTFK, International Union Against Tuberculosis and Lung Disease, Framework Convention Alliance, World Heart Federation, World Lung Foundation, Corporate Accountability International, Global Smoke-free Partnership and the APHN called on the OCA “to remain consistent in maintaining tobacco-free policies and continue to honor the commitment of the IOC for tobacco-free games. It is imperative that no exceptions are given to any country to allow tobacco sponsorship, direct or indirect.”

Globally, tobacco use kills nearly six million people annually and by the year 2030, 80 percent of tobacco-related deaths will occur in developing countries – including many Asian nations. In Indonesia, each day, an additional 10,800 children between the ages 10- 14 years start smoking, and every year 3.9 million new smokers are added to the country’s 65 million smokers. Half of all tobacco users will die prematurely from tobacco-related diseases. (ENDS)