



SEATCA

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New Marlboro Advertising Targets Teens

Governments urged to protect children with comprehensive ban on tobacco advertising, promotions

Manila – Philip Morris International (PMI) has launched an aggressive new marketing campaign revitalizing its Marlboro brand in more than 50 countries despite the findings of a German court that the campaign targets youth and similar complaints in other countries, according to a report issued today by six international public health organizations. To target the young, the cowboy on the horse is replaced with youth on a mountain bike and snowboard.

The global marketing campaign, launched in Germany in 2011, associates smoking Marlboro with a youth-friendly lifestyle of risk-taking, exploration and freedom and delivers the message “Don’t Be a Maybe. Be Marlboro.” It features images of attractive young people engaging in adventure sports such as snowboarding, mountain biking, partying, falling in love, and playing music. The campaign tells young audiences that “Maybe never fell in love” or “A maybe is not invited” and they should define themselves by choosing to “Be Marlboro.”

In October 2013, a German court banned the “Be Marlboro” campaign, finding that it encouraged children as young as 14 to smoke in violation of Germany’s tobacco advertising law and that “the advertising specifically targets risk-taking, rebellious youths” (PMI has indicated it will challenge the ruling, but the court’s ban remains in place). Complaints that the campaign targets youth and violates advertising regulations have also been filed in Brazil, Colombia and Switzerland.

The new report, titled “You’re the Target,” by the Alliance for the Control of Tobacco Use, Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids, Tobacco Control Alliance, Corporate Accountability International, Framework Convention Alliance, InterAmerican Heart Foundation and Southeast Asia Tobacco Control Alliance exposes PMI’s tactics in recruiting young smokers.

The report calls on PMI to immediately end the “Be Marlboro” campaign. It also calls on governments to enact comprehensive bans on all forms of tobacco advertising, promotion and sponsorship in accordance with the international tobacco control treaty, the WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control. Currently, 177 countries are parties to the treaty.

Despite the findings of the German court, PMI continues to aggressively roll-out the “Be Marlboro” campaign globally, including in the Philippines and Indonesia where smoking prevalence remains high. There are 17 million smokers in the Philippines and 65 million smokers in Indonesia. “Both the Philippines and Indonesia are cash cows for PMI and other tobacco companies,” said Dr. Mary Assunta, the Senior Policy Advisor of SEATCA. “The fact that PMI continues with the Marlboro campaign in Asia despite being found guilty in Germany only goes

to show they want Asia's children no matter what. We have to stop them and protect our children using stringent laws.”

The ASEAN region as a whole has about 127 million smokers and more children are starting to smoke. A survey conducted by the Indonesian Health Ministry last year, for instance, found that 37.3% of Indonesian boys aged between 15 and 19 years, and 3.1% of girls in that age group, were active smokers. More than 30% of Indonesian children smoke a cigarette before the age of 10 years. It is unfortunate that despite these dire statistics, Indonesia still has not banned tobacco advertising.

In the Philippines, The 2007 Global Youth Tobacco Survey (GYTS) says 22.7% of 13-15 year olds use tobacco; 12% of girls in the same age group were found to smoke cigarettes, and smoking prevalence in girls is higher than among adult women (ages 15-44 years). 40.2% of men started smoking daily by age 15-17, and despite a legal age for tobacco purchase (18 yrs.), over half of men started before the age of 18. Among women, 33.7% started smoking at the age of 15-17, which clearly indicates the emerging trend of smoking among girls.

Every cigarette retail outlet is an opportunity to advertise tobacco. This means in the Philippines there are about 695,000 opportunities for tobacco advertising in retail outlets which also reaches minors. “Tobacco companies have to stop lying that they do not advertise to children,” said Atty. Irene Patricia Reyes, the Managing director of HealthJustice. “Children are exposed to tobacco advertising at retail outlets, and advertisements such as the “Be Marlboro” ads are designed just to do that. The advertisement make it appear that smoking makes them look cool by associating positive qualities, such as decisiveness or being adventurous, with smoking cigarettes.”

Tobacco companies spend billions of dollars annually to promote their deadly tobacco products and have targeted low- and middle-income countries where 80 percent of the world's smokers live. Philip Morris International alone spent US \$7 billion on marketing in 2012.

A comprehensive ban on tobacco advertising, promotion and sponsorship includes the following:

- All direct and indirect advertising, promotion and sponsorship without exemption;
- Traditional media (print, television and radio) and all media platforms, including internet, mobile telephones and other new technologies as well as films.
- Advertising and promotions or tobacco brand names and all corporate promotions;

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION: View the full report: tfk.org/yourethetarget

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