



## Southeast Asia Tobacco Control Alliance

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### **Tobacco Control Advocates Gather in Balanga City, Philippines to keep ASEAN Smoke-Free**

**26 August 2014/Balanga, Bataan, Philippines:** The City of Balanga, one of the smoke-free cities in the country, will host the Second Smoke-Free Cities ASEAN Regional Workshop to be participated in by public health officers, local government officials and other stakeholders from 7 ASEAN countries.

Ms. Bungon Rithiphakdee, Director of the Bangkok-based Southeast Asia Tobacco Control Alliance (SEATCA) said: “As more and more cities in the ASEAN are going smoke-free, efforts need to be focused on intensifying and sustaining enforcement of the smoke-free laws. Thus we are pleased to gather champions and inspirations from the region in a two-day workshop in Balanga, one of the recognized smoke-free cities in the Philippines.”

Balanga Mayor Jose Enrique Garcia III said the city is honored “to share our successes with other cities who share the same vision of a Smoke-Free ASEAN. Here in the Philippines, we have proven that local governments can protect its citizens from tobacco smoke by providing comprehensive protection to all. As the FCTC Article 8 expresses that there is no safe level of exposure to second-hand smoke, only a 100-percent Smoke-Free Environment can truly protect people from tobacco’s harmful effects.”

The first regional workshop on Smoke-Free ASEAN Cities was held in 2013 in the model smoke-free city of Davao. There, the Smoke-Free Cities ASEAN Network (SCAN) was established.

The success of Davao’s anti-smoking campaign has pushed and inspired other cities to establish their own smoke-free programs, and has been hailed as a model and pioneer in terms of implementation and enforcement of its anti-smoking ordinance. As a result, many cities in the Philippines, such as Balanga City have already been elevated to the hall of fame of the Red Orchid Awards, which is handed out by the Department of Health to cities who are able to follow FCTC Article 8, excelling and meeting the highest standards in smoke-free policies.

In ASEAN, other cities have also followed suit, and have have been declared smoke-free: Krabi, Thailand; Yangon, Myanmar; Phnom Penh, Cambodia; Luang Prabang, Lao PDR; Pekalongan, Indonesia; Amlan City, Negros Oriental, Philippines and Penang, Malaysia.

To build the capacity of smoke-free coordinators, leaders, and other stakeholders of countries and cities, in moving towards a Smoke-free ASEAN. In Balanga, this week’s workshop will focus on “Best Practice Benchmarking of Smoke-free Policies and Strengthening Mechanisms of Enforcement”



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While in Balanga, the workshop participants will:

- Assess and evaluate the compliance of ASEAN governments with the WHO- FCTC Article 8 Guidelines;
- Share and learn from the Best Practices of each country on what makes for strong smoke-free settings;
- Prepare country-specific smoke-free indicators and mechanism of enforcement; including ways forward and actions points for smoke-free environments;
- Learn from Smoke-free Balanga through a study visit to the city's different smoke-free venues.

The WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (FCTC) says that, in order to comply with FCTC Article 8 (Protection from Exposure to Tobacco Smoke), Parties to the FCTC are under legal obligation to enact smoke-free laws that effectively protect all persons from second-hand smoke.

The Article 8 guidelines, based on decades of scientific evidence, clearly state that only 100 percent smoke-free environments provide adequate protection from exposure to second-hand smoke. Partial smoking bans, designated smoking rooms, or protection of only certain populations (e.g. women and children), are ineffective (ENDS).

For more information, visit the Smoke-Free ASEAN website: [www.smokefreeasean.seatca.org](http://www.smokefreeasean.seatca.org)

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