

### The 'World No - Tobacco Day' Celebrations in Lesotho .

**THEME :** *'Second – Hand Smoke Kills' - Smoking affects many lives, because the smoke is not confined to those who smoke, but it also affects the non-smokers.*

**NO**

Speaking at the World Tobacco Day Celebrations, Maseru, Thursday May 31, the Prime Minister, the Right Honourable Pakalitha Mosisili said, it is evident that tobacco smoke is a major pollutant in the household where one or more members of the family smoke.

The Prime Minister said he supports the vision of the Ministry of Health and Social Welfare (MOHSW), which has identified the youth as the target to beat this poor health habit; adding that, it is among the youth where this habit starts:

" It begins jokingly and for that matter, to impress fellow peers. It finally becomes an addictive behaviour and it is for this reason that we should stop the wildfire before it gets into our houses; by informing our youth well enough to make them a healthy future of the nation".

The statement further noted that, the MOHSW cannot do it alone without involvement of other Ministries, Non-Governmental Organisations (NGO's) and individuals of good will. On the same, the Prime Minister said:

"It is not surprising that the Ministry of Education has made a visible contribution in the fight against tobacco smoking and the motto of 'smoke – free – schools' has a lot to tell; I commend the collaboration between the two Ministries".

The Prime Minister advocates for, and makes directive for policy to prohibit smoking in all Government premises:

*"Ke phatlalatsa hore koae, e e'a phephetheloa liofising tsa 'Muso". Ehlile, ke etsa taelo hore liofising tsohle, koae e phephetheloe".*

The Prime Minister thanked the World Health Organisation (W.H.O.) for supporting the activities financially.

At the same occasion, the Resident Representative of W.H.O., Dr. Ruth Tshabalala said, second - hand smoking sets forth profound challenges and health problems that affect people at an individual, family and societal level.

Dr. Tshabalala further said, smoking is a real significant threat to public health leading to a range of life threatening health effects, which include lung cancer and heart diseases. Also, second – hand smoking causes various respiratory diseases such as bronchitis, pneumonia and asthma among children.

The MOHSW in collaboration with W.H.O. are spreading a smoke – free development policy in the country; a consultant has already been identified to make this important endeavour a reality and therefore. It is therefore envisaged that creation of the said policy will go a long way in promoting a health of the nation at large, noted Dr. Tshabalala.

The Resident Representative thanked the Ministry of Education for having allowed schools to participate in the tobacco initiative, also in the ceremony at the wake of mid – year schools examinations.

Delivering his address, the Minister for Health and Social Welfare, Honourable Tefo Mabote said, it is encouraging and pleasing to realise that the Lesotho Schools Tobacco Free Initiative pivoted by Lesotho network on anti-smoking has achieved a lot through the settings approach.

Referring to the schools competition finals on the anti-smoke song to mark the day, the Minister said, Government is aware that more teacher - student groups are getting involved in the campaigns for the purpose of the day, May 31.

The Minister further mentioned that, (a) the issue of student health empowerment, (b) Involvement of teachers, other school workers, communities around the schools as well as the business sector; both characterise the concept of schools to promoting health.

In Lesotho, the schools Initiative, which the Minister believes could serve as an entry point to the introduction of the promotion of health, seems to be practical; this is so, because most anti-smoking clubs have found it proper to focus not only on tobacco control and consumption, but also to address the problem of alcoholism and drug abuse.

The statement concluded that, the scope of work is wide; recommending that, more health topics could be added until broader and comprehensive health education programmes that will help schools attain the health promoting status is developed.

The Minister for Industry, Trade and Marketing, Honourable Mpho Malie stated that, it is a true fact that, his Ministry pass acts and laws permitting trade, in which tobacco is inclusive. Nevertheless, they in the Ministry are aware that there is need to conscientise the nation on the danger as regards smoking; adding, the Ministry is aware also of the necessity that, everyone lives in accordance with the global/United Nations campaign to the prohibition of tobacco.

Honourable Malie said, youth should be 'free-of' unhealthy influences to their lives, such as smoking. To the non – smokers, yet affected by smoking because of sharing the surroundings, it is their absolute right to demand that the smoking be stopped for, *Second - Hand Smoke Kills*, further stated Honourable Malie'.

become thieves because they have to steal money from their parents to buy cigarettes. *Morena Mohale*, in the same manner with the members who initiated the motion, commended the Ministry of Health and Social Welfare for declaring their premises 'non – smoking'.

Speaking on the motion, Senator *Refiloe Masemene* said, smoking makes a person addicted to it, and stopping it is difficult. Senator *Masemene* noted some of the diseases smoking causes - cancer, tuberculosis and other body infections.

There is need to ensure that youths are sensitised on dangers of smoking. This can be by embarking on anti-smoking campaigns so as to protect them as future generations, further said Senator *Masemene*;

continuing with a recommendation that, all public areas be declared, 'non – smoking' zones.

[1] The MOH has declared all health institutions and their immediate surroundings 'non – smoking'. To ensure that the campaign is successful, other measures imposed are that, the sale of tobacco products within the health premises, also in the vehicles of the Ministry has been prohibited. The action aims to create a smoke-free environment for health workers, patients as well as visitors to all health institutions, note the Ministry. The Ministry has a national public health obligation of leading the citizens of to a smoke-free world therefore, mandated to lead by example.

Health workers are aware of the consequences of smoking to the smoker as well as to the non-smoker. It is therefore, responsibility of the workers to play a pivotal role to ensure that the environment is smoke-free.

The Ministry informs the public that, education material on tobacco control are available for national focal points, at the Health Education Division in Maseru , to facilitate the exercise of a smoke-free world.

The smoke-free campaign has been initiated by the MOHSW since 1998. Main focus at the time was youths, particularly, those in High Schools. The Ministry feel that the campaign is going on successfully; attributing its success to the assistance offered by the anti – smoking network which comprise the NGOs and various Government Ministries.

Source: The Ministry of Health - (December 19, 2000).

Source : 1.THE DEPARTMENT OF INFORMATION  
2.THE PARLIAMENT SITTING

The Maseru City Council (MCC), through the Town Clerk also delivered a speech on the role of the Council in the anti – smoke initiative that; they being member of the Lesotho network on anti-smoking, are participating fully by educating people about the danger with smoking. The message further noted that, because smoking is a wasteful and 'uncalled-for' habit, it is important to take whatever advantage there may be, (as with this day), to warn the youth about the danger smoking embodies.

Since the previous month, (April), the MCC declared all their premises 'no – smoking place'; also, they want to urge other organisations to follow in this pioneer example, pointed out the MCC statement. The banning of smoking in the premises by the MCC follows in the steps of the Ministry of Health (MOH). The MOH initiated the banning January 01, 2001, as a welcome gesture to the New Year, the new millennium and the new century.[1] One other principle the MCC intend introducing to combat smoking, is to discourage billboards, which advertise about tobacco.

The teachers, in their virtue, being one cadre of leaders in a nation, deserved and so, were scheduled to deliver a message for the day. The representative said, being role models in their institutions, pupils copy on them, hence need that they stop smoking soonest. It is urgent therefore that, the teachers portray a good example for the image of the schools, by conveying the message of this year May 31, the statement continued.

A spokesperson for the pupils noted that, they as youth against smoking are ready to assist with educating the other youth as well as the community on how to quit the practice. To achieve this objective, the pupils appeal to the MOHSW to provide them with material to aid in executing the education exercise on the danger of smoking. They appeal also to church leaders not to forget the street children who are addicted in smoking; saying, they have to join hands and help those children whose lives are prone to danger because of smoking.

About 16 schools from different parts of the country participated in the anti-smoke song competition finals.

Meanwhile, in the Senate House, this June 11, a motion on anti-smoking, initiated by the Principal Chief of Phamong, *Morena* (Chief) Bereng Bereng; seconded by the Principal Chief of Thaba – Bosiu, *Morena* khoabane Theko was deliberated upon.

The Principal Chief of Tajane, *Morena* Tlali Mohale said smoking is dangerous not only to adults, but also to the youth; adding that, it contributes also to changing the behaviour of the youth, who