

Hanoi, April 12th, 2002

**National Action Plan for Tobacco Control
for the 2002 - 2010 period**

Tobacco causes many dangerous diseases such as lung cancer, cardiac infraction, arteriosclerosis and respiratory diseases. In addition to harmful effects on health, smoking also causes big economic loss to individual households and well as the society as a whole.

According to a survey carried out in 1997, the smoking rate among adult men in Vietnam was 50% and the corresponding rate for women was 3.4%. It is estimated that 10% of the present population (about more than 7 million) alive now will die prematurely due to tobacco – related diseases, out of whom 3.7 million will die in their middle age. The World Health Organization (WHO) estimates that by 2020 the number of deaths caused by tobacco use will be higher than the total deaths due to HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis, road accidents and suicides combined.

Realizing the importance of tobacco control, in August 14th 2000 the Government of Vietnam has adopted the Resolution No 12 on “ National Tobacco Control Policy for the 2000 – 2010 period”.

In order to translate the policy into reality there need to be a national action plan for the period 2002-2010 which will be the basis for ministries, branches, mass organizations, and provincial people’s committees to develop and implement relevant tobacco control programs.

I. Objectives:

1. Overall objective

To reduce the demand for tobacco products so as to control and gradually reduce the supply of tobacco products in order to reduce the morbidity and mortality due to tobacco-related diseases.

2. Specific objectives

- Reduce the proportion of male smokers from 50% to 20%.
- Reduce the proportion of female smokers to a level below 2%.
- Reduce the proportion of young smokers (15 - 24 years of age) from 26% to 7%.
- Protect the rights of non-smokers to breathe clean, smoke-free air.
- Reduce tobacco-related losses for individuals, families and society as a whole.

II. National action plan for the 2002 – 2005 period.

1. Activities to reduce demand of tobacco products.

a) Promoting information, education and communication activities

+ To conduct regular Information Education and Communication (IEC) activities for tobacco control on mass media. Organize IEC campaigns on tobacco control on different mass media channels such as newspapers, radio, television and meetings, marches on public holidays and celebrations.

+ To organizing activities to celebrate the annual National No-Tobacco- Week from April 25 to May 31, with the focus on communicating the harms of tobacco use.

+ To carrying out tobacco control activities at community level that include.

- Writing articles and print materials on tobacco control issues

- Issuing school regulations, produce teaching materials, conduct lectures and organize other tobacco control activities in schools
 - Establishing a distance health education program focusing on tobacco control issues
 - Integrating tobacco control activities into health education activities at community level
 - Integrating tobacco control activities with the movement of “People toward nation-wide unification to build up cultural life”
 - Providing cessation counselling for patients and their relatives, educating them on the harms of tobacco use and advising them how to quit smoking
- + To organize in Vietnam national and international workshop on tobacco control

b) Strict supervise the implementation of advertising ban, and closely monitor any tobacco industry’s sales promotion and sponsorship activities

- To issue relevant regulations of fines on violations of tobacco advertising and promotion ban
- To closely monitor the compliance of tobacco companies with advertising and promotion bans
- To issue regulations making it compulsory that all tobacco retail stores has the warning “Selling cigarettes for the people under 18 years of age is prohibited”
- To disseminate Governmental regulations on selling tobacco products to and by the youth (minors).

c) Health warning on all packets of tobacco products

- To study and evaluate the effect of health warning on packets of tobacco products to consumers.
- To closely monitor the compliance with the regulation issued by the Ministry of Health on printing health warning on packets of tobacco products, and the printing of tar and nicotine level of cigarettes on the package.

d) Increasing taxes and prices of tobacco products

- To study the effect of the increase of taxes and prices of tobacco products on the demand of tobacco product in Vietnam.
- To increase tobacco tax so that it will account for 2/3 of the retailed price, as suggested by the World Health Organization.
- To issues regulations on floor-price of tobacco products, and anti-dumping measures.

e) Smoking cessation support:

- To carry out pilot test of those smoking cessation methods which are appropriate with the socio- economic condition in Vietnam.
- To organize training for health professionals and public health workers on smoking cessation methods.
- To disseminate smoking cessation support information through mass media.
- To provide cessation-counselling service at healthcare facilities and in the communities.

g) Smoke-free public areas:

- No-smoking signs are to be placed in public places. Create separate smoking rooms in places where it is necessary.
- To issue regulations of fine on violation of smoking ban in public places.
- To issue regulations on banning smoking at workplaces.

2) Policies to reduce supply of tobacco products

a) Strictly control over tobacco production:

- To issues detailed guideline on conditions and procedures that a tobacco production facility needs to satisfy to get the license to produce cigarettes.
- To closely monitor the implement of the government regulation that “no new cigarette manufacturing entity regardless of it being local or joint ventured is allowed to establish”.
- To propose a plan for appropriate restructuring of existing cigarette production facilities
- To issues regulations the importation of cigarette production equipment, as well as materials for cigarette production.

- To issue regulations on the quality (tar and nicotine level) of cigarettes produced and used in Vietnam.
- To strictly control the printing of cigarette packages; strengthening the fight against fake cigarettes, smuggling, and circulation of sub-standard cigarettes in Vietnam.
- To closely supervise the implementation of regulation on affixing stamps on cigarette packages.
- To prevent tobacco production facilities from causing pollution to the environment.

b) Control of cigarette trading:

To issue regulation on punitive measures to strengthening the fight against the following violations:

- Importation of foreign cigarettes to Vietnam
- Trading of faked and illegal tobacco products, sub-quality tobacco products, expired products, tobacco products without stamps.
- Selling tobacco products for people who under 18 years of age
- Selling tobacco products at schools, hospitals, cinema, theatres, and performance places
- Tobacco promotion activities, including the use of cigarette sales persons, brand stretching, print brand name and logos in newspapers and in vehicles.

c) Expanding international cooperation in tobacco control:

- To enhance cooperation with NGO and international organizations in the areas of research and implementation of community intervention programs.
- To participate in the development process of the FCTC

III. National action plan tobacco control for the 2006 – 2010 period

The National Tobacco Control Program will continue the implementation of tobacco control activities for 2006-2010 period based on the experiences and lessons learnt from tobacco control activities of the 2002-2005 period.

Tobacco control activities in this period will focus on activities that help reduce tobacco demand with special attention to IEC campaigns on tobacco harms, integrate tobacco control into the curriculum of schools, colleges, and universities. Strengthen the implementation and enforcement of current regulations on tobacco control. Cooperate with Ministries and branches to issue necessary new regulations more suitable to the 2006-2010 period. Encourage the socialization of tobacco control activities.

IV. Organization of implementation

1. The Steering Board of the Program:

The steering Board of the National Tobacco Control Program was established pursuant to Decision No 467/QĐ-TTg 17/4/2001, and has standing office located at the Ministry of Health. The Board is in charge of supervising tobacco control activities in the whole country, and implementing the tobacco control action plan for the 2002-2010 period.

The Steering Board of the Program oversees the research on effect of intervention programs; build capacity for tobacco control officers through training courses, conferences and seminars, and other activities; it is also responsible for coordination of activities, and for cooperation with international tobacco control organizations.

2) Ministry of Health:

Ministry of Health is the standing body of Tobacco Control Program, in charge of organizing, directing and coordinating inter-ministerial tobacco control projects in the whole country. The standing office is to assist the steering Board of the Program to implement the national action plan on tobacco control.

Ministry of Health is in charge of leading research on smoking cessation methods and organizing cessation services; Ministry of Health is to collaborate with the Ministry of Education and Training in developing tobacco control teaching materials for integrating into the curriculum of schools, and medical and pharmaceutical universities. Ministry of Health is to coordinate with the Ministry of Science and Technology in establishing quality standard for cigarettes, and is in charge of closely monitoring the compliance with the regulation.

3) Ministry of Culture and information is in charge of:

- Leading a nation-wide comprehensive IEC activities on the harms of tobacco products, and on the government tobacco control regulations and policy through all kind of mass media and cultural/art performances.
- Strictly monitoring the compliance with, and the enforcement of the regulations on advertising bans, and on printing health warning on cigarettes packages.
- Helping to build a non-smoking healthy lifestyle, eliminating the harmful customs of offering cigarettes.
- Integrating tobacco control IEC activities with other social-economic programs.

4) Ministry of trade is:

- To direct the following activities: exporting, trading, circulating, labeling of tobacco products
- Take prime responsibility for, and coordinate with relevant agencies in organizing an effective control of smuggling and of the manufacturing/circulation of faked tobacco products. Strictly supervise the importation of equipments, materials for cigarettes production.

5) Ministry of Education and Training:

- To provide instructions to schools on integrating tobacco control contents into the curriculum. To take prim responsibility for strengthening tobacco control activities targeting pupils and teachers; and in establishing smoke-free schools.

6) Ministry of Industry:

- To direct the activities of tobacco industry including planning for tobacco growing, manufacturing, labor force, and related matters so as to improve quality of cigarettes to reduce harmful health effects, and to protect the environment, and improve safety for workers.
- To take prim responsibility for, and to coordinate with relevant agencies in restructuring tobacco factories, and to closely supervise the import of equipment and materials for tobacco manufacturing.

7) Ministry of Finance:

- To direct the development of a framework for tobacco tax rate and tobacco price in order to reduce the smoker rate
- To take prim responsibility for and to coordinate with relevant agencies in implementation of regulation of affixing stamps on cigarette packs.
- To ensure the provision of adequate funds for tobacco control, as proposed by the National Tobacco Control Program, from the Governmental budget.
- To closely monitor and supervise the use of budget according to current financial regulations.

8) Ministry of Planning and Investment:

- To take prim responsibility for, and to coordinate with relevant agencies in workng out an investment plan for the Vietnamese tobacco industry.
- To coordinate with Ministry of Finance in arranging budget for the National Tobacco Control Program

9) Vietnamese Committee for Child Care and Protection:

To strengthen tobacco related education for youths, and to actively prevent tobacco use, as well as selling tobacco to and by the youth.

10) The social political organizations and mass organizations

The Vietnam Fatherland Front, Vietnam Labor Union, Peasants Association, Women Union, Youth Union, Veterans Association are requested to encourage the members of their organizations to actively participate in tobacco control activities. Each organization is to issues guidelines and regulations to help reduce tobacco use in their organizations. The above organizations will work with Ministry of Health to develop such tobacco control materials that are suitable to different target groups. These organizations will collaborate with Ministry of Culture and Information, and with mass media to strengthen tobacco control communication to the public. Collaborate with the healthcare and education sectors in making schools and hospitals smoke-free. Coordinate with people's committees at different levels in promoting no-smoking policy in communities, in festivals, weddings and funerals, and other social and cultural events.

11) Provincial People's Committees:

In charge of directing the implementation of tobacco control activities in the respective provinces or cities.

V. Budget for program:

- National budget (Central and local budget)
- Volunteer contribution from organizations and individuals
- Donor's fund from governments, UN, and non-government organizations
- Others resource (if available)

The Steering Board of the Program shall submit annual reports on progress and results of the Tobacco Control Program to the Government.