

WHO urges Parliament to pass LI against smoking

By Yaw Kyei

THE World Health Organisation (WHO) has called on Parliament to pass the necessary legal instruments (LIs) to facilitate the operational implementation of the ban on public smoking.

While commending the House for its bold initiative to pass the bill into law, the organisation said it was imperative that the necessary LIs were passed to enforce the law.

The Country Representative of WHO, Dr. Idrissa Sow, who made the call at a press conference in Accra yesterday, said the organisation was ready to support the training of officials to

enforce the ban.

The press conference was organised by the Vision for Alternative Development (VALD), a civil society organisation on the passage of the Public Health Bill by Parliament on July 11.

Dr. Sow said WHO was ready to support government to explore areas to increase resources for tobacco control particularly a levy on all tobacco products, adding that "such levies would be used specifically for health promotion activities, including tobacco control.

"WHO is willing and ready to collaborate with development partners, non-governmental organisations and civil society, to support government to develop regulations as soon as possible, particularly in the prohibition of smoking in public places," he stressed.

The Chairman of the Parliamentary Select Committee on Health, Alhaji Mohammed Mubarak Muntaka, said although Parliament had done its work by passing the bill, what was left was for President John Evans Atta-Mills to append his signature to the bill to make it a legal document.

Even without the passage of the LIs to ensure implementation, he said it was possible to implement certain elements in the bill.

He said the bill had also had provisions for severe punitive measures against recalcitrants who tried to flout it, and called on the public to join the fight against smoking in order to ensure public health and safety.

The Executive Director of VALD, Issah Ali, suggested the introduction of tax regimes on the importation of tobacco products in the country in order to make it difficult for people to import such products in the country



Dr. Idrissa Sow, World Health Organisation Representative in Ghana, addressing the participants at the News Conference, in Accra yesterday.
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