



The 10th APACT Conference

Ending the Tobacco Epidemic — Protecting and Keeping Healthy Lives —
18-21 August 2013 Chiba, Japan

Proposed Press Release (APACT/ Trade)

Asia Pacific health groups: No Tobacco in TPP

Chiba, Japan: 20 August

Members of a regional conference representing over 40 countries in Asia Pacific agree that tobacco should be taken out of the Trans Pacific Partnership Agreement (TPP). The TPP is a free trade agreement involving twelve countries of the Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC): Australia, Brunei, Canada, Chile, Japan, Malaysia, Mexico, New Zealand, Peru, Singapore, USA, and Vietnam.

The Asia Pacific Conference on Tobacco or Health (APACT) convened over 700 academics, health professionals, and public health advocates in Chiba, Japan from August 19-22 while the TPP will be negotiated in Brunei from August 23-31. The tobacco control advocates represented expressed fears that the trade pact will allow tobacco companies to sue countries in expensive arbitration proceedings for alleged lost profits, and oblige the governments to expand the protection of tobacco companies' trademarks contrary to life saving measures such as banning tobacco advertising, banning misleading descriptors, and placing graphic health warnings on cigarette packs.

According to Dr Mary Assunta, Senior Policy Adviser of Southeast Asia Tobacco Control Alliance (SEATCA), "The TPP includes provisions that could restrict the policy space of health officials, in both national and subnational levels, to impose tobacco control measures. For instance, the TPP is likely to require the government to consult with the tobacco industry before issuing a tobacco-related regulation through a regulatory impact assessment process which is projected to be embodied in the trade treaty."

Referring to cases where Philip Morris, British American Tobacco (BAT) and Japan Tobacco International (JTI) sued the Thai government for adopting a policy to increase of graphic health warnings on cigarette packs from 55% to 85% last month, Dr. Prakrit Vathesatogkit, a tobacco control expert from Thailand, said, "Right now, the tobacco industry has filed 5 cases against us in local courts because of our policy to increase pack warning sizes to 85%. If Thailand joins the TPP, the multinational tobacco companies could use more arguments and could file even more cases."

Secretariat of the APACT 2013, Dr. Kiyochi Miyazaki, recalled that the APACT was formed in the late 80s to forge an alliance that would challenge the US efforts to promote free trade of its tobacco products to Republic of Korea, Japan, Thailand and Taiwan by threatening to impose trade sanctions.

Secretariat

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The US later on adopted measures, the Doggett Amendment and Executive Order 13193, that disallowed the use of government funds to promote the export tobacco and to reduce tobacco restrictions in foreign countries.

One of the APACT founders, Dr. Judith Mackay added, “The TPP could present a potentially more damaging version of the situation in the 1980s. Then, Thailand faced one foreign power, the US, but with the TPP, many foreign powers as well as the multinational tobacco companies could use the trade pact to further challenge government efforts to save millions of lives through a broad range of tobacco control measures. It is only apt that the APACT would come together again to ensure that tobacco control does not suffer from the wide ramifications of this free trade and investment treaty.”

Other Asia Pacific countries such as Republic of Korea, Thailand and Philippines, all members of Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) have been encouraged to join the TPP negotiations.

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