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Smokefree Laws – Best Practice Compliance Assessment Guide Launched to Mark World No Tobacco Day, 2014

2 June 2014 – A guide published by the International Union Against Tuberculosis and Lung Disease (The Union) promoting best-practice in assessing compliance with smoke-free laws has been launched at events in seven countries to mark World No Tobacco Day (WNTD) 2014.

The guide, which is being translated into eight languages, offers “how to” advice on best practices for researchers, public health advocates and non-governmental organisations to ensure that smoke-free laws are implemented to the high degree needed to protect public health. The guide was launched at events in Argentina, Bangladesh, Chile, China, India, Indonesia and Pakistan on and around World No Tobacco Day (Saturday, 31 May 31). Copies of the guide may be downloaded for free at www.tobaccofreeunion.org.

Governments and civil society organisations played a prominent role at events marking the release of the guide. In Chile, it was presented to the Minister of Health by The Union’s Executive Director, José Luis Castro. In Bangladesh, a new documentary about tobacco control was created. Argentina released the guide at a press conference, hosted by the Ministry of Health. In Pakistan, it was launched at an event for media run in collaboration with the Tobacco Smoke-Free Capital City project. India’s Ministry of Health launched the guide in four states simultaneously. China also distributed the guide at multiple WNTD events. And in Indonesia, it was released at the country’s first Tobacco or Health conference.

While 102 countries have now passed some level of smoke-free legislation, implementing thorough assessment and achieving high levels of compliance, continue to be major challenges for many governments.

“The World Health Organization identifies smoke-free policies as a critical strategy to reversing the tobacco epidemic, as well as reducing the harm caused by second-hand smoke – but it is essential to be able to measure how effectively they are being implemented, and to keep developing the legislation and improving its enforcement,” said Dr Ehsan Latif, Director of The Union’s Department of Tobacco Control. “This step-by-step guide gives those responsible for assessing smoke-free compliance the latest and most practical insights we can draw from our work.”

The Union has been working with governments and civil society for the past 20 years, offering technical support and guidance for the introduction of tobacco control legislation and helping to strengthen implementation and enforcement. The guide incorporates experiences of smoke-free compliance studies carried out in 10 cities between 2012 and 2014 -- Bogor, Indonesia; Ahmedabad, Chennai, Delhi and Mizoram in India; Harbin and Tianjin in China; Makati City (Manila), the Philippines; Bangkok, Thailand; and Nairobi, Kenya. The full results from these studies will be released later in 2014 at www.tobaccofreeunion.org

“Well-designed compliance studies can help assess the effectiveness of comprehensive laws and highlight any potential need for improved implementation and enforcement,” said Heather Selin, who led the development of the second edition of the guide. “The best studies will be designed and conducted with those who are already knowledgeable about the jurisdiction and specific smoke-free law under review.”

The guide is currently available in English and Spanish and will soon be available in French, Bahasa Indonesian, Hindi, Mandarin, Russian and Urdu. The guide will be available at: www.tobaccofreeunion.org. It was published by the International Union Against Tuberculosis and Lung Disease, under the Bloomberg Initiative to Reduce Tobacco Use. It is an update of a document first published in 2011 by the Campaign for Tobacco Free Kids, The Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health and The Union.

About The International Union Against Tuberculosis and Lung Disease

The mission of The Union is to bring innovation, expertise, solutions and support to address health challenges in low- and middle-income populations. With nearly 15,000 members and subscribers from 150 countries, The Union has its headquarters in Paris and offices in the Africa, Asia Pacific, Europe, Latin America, North America and South-East Asia regions. Its scientific departments focus on tuberculosis and HIV, lung health and non-communicable diseases, tobacco control and research.

For more information about tobacco control at The Union go to: www.tobaccofreeunion.org

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