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## Press Statement

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### **CAP: Fully supports the ban on cigarette sale and smoking in eaterie**

More than one million of the smokers in Malaysia are under the age of 10, and they emit about 4,000 noxious and cancerous chemicals present in tobacco.

Most of the 4.7 million smokers in the country start smoking before the age of 18, according to the Health Ministry.

Over 60 chemicals present in cigarette smoke can cause cancer (e.g. formaldehyde) and six others interfere with normal cell development (e.g. nicotine and carbon monoxide).

It is unfortunate, 80% of Malaysians who do not smoke are exposed through these free floating chemicals exhaled into the environment.

The Consumers Association Penang president S.M. Mohd Idris disclosed this while welcoming the Government's ban on all forms of smoking in public places like restaurants.

"More than 80% of the Malaysians who do not smoke have a right to not be exposed to tobacco smoke. They must be protected against being exposed to cancerous smoke in the air.

"It's ironic that taxpayers pay billions for a clean environment, it's unfair for tobacco companies to make billions at the expense of the smokers," he added.

CAP, he said: "Fully supports the ban on cigarette sale and smoking in eateries."

However, CAP is disappointed with Chinese, Indian, and Indian Muslim restaurants from all over the country upset with Putrajaya's decision to enforce a blanket ban on smoking in their outlets.

CAP would like to point out that the objective to patronise an eatery is to eat, not to smoke. "Non-smokers do not have to tolerate the 4,000 noxious chemicals found in tobacco smoke."

Courtesy of Choice should never been introduced because passive smokers include elderly, women, children and infants are equally exposed to smoke-related diseases as smokers themselves.

Smoke does not respect physical boundaries because if it does, smoke from Indonesian forest fires would not have bothered Malaysia as the smoke will be contained within the Indonesian's borders.

This campaign by restaurant and coffee shop owners in empowering smokers tramples on the rights of non-smokers (passive smokers), Idris added.

Consumers should be aware of who you are patronising with your hard-earned money, only to be profited by eateries, over your health and safety.

The Malaysia-Singapore Coffee Shop Proprietors' General Association president Datuk Ho Su Mong said that the government should fight smoking habit through other means.

“He has conveniently forgotten that the ‘other means’ of fighting smoking habit is to ban smoking at eateries and the government is doing just that.

“There is no doubt that restaurant owners had worked hard to build their business through their blood and sweat. Are they implying that the humble traders and hawkers are not working hard? Does working hard give them a license to do what they want to do?”

Based on the fact that nicotine found in tobacco is highly addictive (comparative to cocaine and heroin) and is classified under Group C poison, it does not make any sense for eateries to sell cigarettes at all.

Mohd Idris said there is a ruling that smokers have to smoke 10 feet away from an eatery. “It is the responsibility of the eatery owner to abide by the regulation. The eatery owners argued that it is going to endanger their customers’ lives as they may have to stand in the street to smoke.”

Before the Chinese New Year of 2018, a cigarette company approached retailers (including coffee shop owners) to ask them to promote a particular brand through “Sell More, Win More” campaign.

This is not an isolated case and retailers benefitted from lucky draws and gifts given to them by certain tobacco companies. If this is the case retailers can no longer claim that they want to profit from the sale of cigarettes (in the normal sense) as they have a bigger agenda in the whole issue.

Eatery owners had in the past argued that tight control on cigarettes will cause a spike in the sale of illegal cigarettes. It is an argument that does not make sense.

They are merely parroting the tobacco industry. CAP wonders why eateries are more concerned about cigarette smuggling than their food quality and prices.

Authorities should step up raids to get rid of the menace of illegal cigarettes. CAP proposed those caught selling smuggled products should have their assets and properties confiscated besides given mandatory jail sentence.

CAP reaffirms its stand that all forms of smoking and vaping should be banned eateries. Eateries should not be allowed to sell cigarettes because it contains a Class C poison (nicotine).

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