



Persatuan Pengguna Pulau Pinang  
Consumers Association of Penang  
檳城消費人協會 பினாங்கு பயனீட்டாளர் சங்கம்

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**Press Statement**

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**We need food, not nicotine addiction**

This year's theme for World No Tobacco Day, 'We need food, not tobacco', is relevant to Malaysia although the tobacco farmers began switching over to kenaf cultivation about a decade ago.

The tobacco industry is now focused on pushing the highly addictive nicotine as a substitute.

Whether people smoke conventional cigarettes or electronic nicotine delivery system (ENDS), or Heated Tobacco Products (HTPs), they are all addictive and harmful.

Consumers should be wary of being hooked to a life-long addiction and subsequently risk chronic non-communicable diseases associated with the habit.

Smoker must quit smoking and stop inhaling the 7,000 chemicals, many of them are highly toxic or carcinogenic.

In Malaysia, double number (14%) of teenagers (13-17 years) are vaping compared to smoking (6.2%).

There are 17,000 flavours of e-cigarettes available online targeting children.

Children need to eat more fresh fruits, not vape fruity flavoured ENDS.

In view of this, we urge the government to speed up the tabling of the Generational End Game (GEG) soonest possible. Our children need more food.

Smokers must seize the opportunity to stop the smoking or vaping in view of the current economic situation where every ringgit counts to put food on the table.

With uncertainties in the economy, consumers must exercise prudence with their family budget, prioritising food over harmful tobacco products.

A pack of 20 cigarettes costs a minimum of RM17, and smoking two packs of cigarettes can buy a 10kg of rice, or a 5kg bottle of cooking oil, or 2kg of chicken thighs.

A whole 2-kg chicken costs about RM20. Food purchases will benefit the entire family by improving their nutrition and health.

If smokers quit their habit, it will benefit a large segment of those in the Bottom 40 (B40) because about 40 per cent of them smoke as compared to 31 per cent from the Middle 40 (M40) and 5 per cent from the Top 20 (T20).

The children of B40 families are more likely to suffer from malnutrition and stunted growth because their families are financially disadvantaged and smoking aggravates the situation.

Cigarettes are still comparatively cheaper than the escalating cost of food post-Covid situation.

There has been no tax increase on tobacco since 2017.

About 10 billion cigarette butts made of non-biodegradable plastic (cellulose acetate) containing tar and a cocktail of toxic chemicals are simply discarded and end up in landfills or as an environmental pollutants.

Although it was thought that the low fertility of bris soil of Kelantan is a limiting factor for the cultivation of food crops, research shows it is possible to have yields of one to three tonnes of dried maize, while another study showed chilli can also be grown.

In other words, Kelantan and Terengganu, can grow some lucrative food crops besides kenaf.

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