



SEATCA

SOUTHEAST ASIA TOBACCO CONTROL ALLIANCE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

Halt Sponsorship of Music Events by Philip Morris in Indonesia

Bangkok: The Southeast Asia Tobacco Control Alliance (SEATCA) calls for an immediate halt to Philip Morris' sponsorship of music events in Indonesia. Philip Morris is currently sponsoring the Marlboro Rock in Orchestra, a 15 city concert series in Indonesia that features *Slank* and other Indonesian groups popular with young people. The next concert in the series is scheduled to take place in Semarang on 24 January 2009.

SEATCA is gravely concerned about Philip Morris behavior in Indonesia. According to Dr. Mary Assunta, SEATCA Senior Policy Advisor, "Promoting tobacco to a nation where half the population lives below \$2.00 a day is scandalous. It is outrageous for Philip Morris to continue trapping Indonesia's vulnerable youth by sponsoring music events in such an unabated manner. This must stop now."

SEATCA calls for a halt to the exploitation of the young and the poor of developing countries by Philip Morris International and to stop its sponsorship of the 24th January concert in Semarang, Indonesia. SEATCA has written an official protest letter to the Chairman and CEO of Philip Morris International.

Indonesia has among the highest smoking prevalence in the ASEAN region, where 63% of adult men and about 25% of boys, (13–15 years) smoke. Nearly half (46%) of all smokers in the ASEAN region are in Indonesia. Smoking among women is still low at 4.5% adult females and 2.3% among teenage girls (13-15 years). This however presents a huge market to an aggressively expanding industry, where smoking prevalence continues to grow.

Indonesia is lagging behind other ASEAN countries in tobacco control and is the only ASEAN country that has not ratified the global treaty, the Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (FCTC). This allows tobacco companies such as Philip Morris to practice double standards and conduct sponsorship activities that have been long outlawed elsewhere in the world.

It is estimated that 78% of current Indonesian smokers began before the age of 19 years. About 200,000 people die from smoking related diseases every year in Indonesia. Indonesia is the fifth largest tobacco market in the world.

Indonesia desperately needs the FCTC. SEATCA urges Indonesia to catch up with the rest of ASEAN and accede to the FCTC and protect its young and the poor from the tobacco pandemic. The FCTC Article 13 has guidelines on comprehensive ban on tobacco advertising, sponsorship and promotions which will assist Indonesia to protect its people from exploitative promotional activities of tobacco companies.



Philip Morris remains adamant about its advertising and sponsorship activities that target youth in Indonesia. Last year, it sponsored the Alicia Keys concert in Jakarta, and only stopped the advertising and promotional materials after international pressure and the singer herself intervened. It appears the public health community must keep watching, and if there is no protest, another concert, another promotion takes place. And now Philip Morris is at it again.

Philip Morris International has not changed in Southeast Asia. While it publicly claims to have changed its practices, sponsorship activities such as these in Indonesia indicate that it still practices double standards and needs the vulnerable masses of developing countries for its new markets. Last year in the Philippines, Philip Morris advertised its sponsorship of the *Eraserheads* reunion concert and only withdrew after warnings from the Department of Health and local tobacco control community were issued. ENDS.

SEATCA is a regional tobacco control organization that works to promote the implementation of effective evidence-based tobacco control measures in Southeast Asia. For further information, kindly contact: Ms. Joy Alampay at +6686 7229220 (mobile), +662 241 0082 (Bangkok landline), or email: joy@seatca.org

Thank you.