

World No Tobacco Day Press Release.



For immediate release

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Quitting tobacco use and protecting workers from tobacco exposure provide excellent health dividends during COVID-19 and promote achievement of SDGs

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Humanity particularly tobacco users face a much higher risk of being severely affected and higher likelihood of death when they contract COVID-19. It is therefore extremely important that smokers and users of all other tobacco products quit tobacco use so as to improve their health especially during this time of the COVID-19 pandemic. It is also crucial that workers in all workplaces are strictly protected from exposure to tobacco hazards.

Dr Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, WHO Director-General says “Smokers have up to a 50% higher risk of developing severe disease and death from COVID-19, so quitting is best thing smokers can do to lower their risk from this coronavirus, as well as the risk of developing cancers, heart disease and respiratory illnesses.” In light of this, millions of tobacco users (nearly 60% of globally) have showed interest to quit.

As the world commemorates the International Labour Day, and the World No Tobacco Day, focus should be put on helping workers and all other people to stop using tobacco products. Encouraging the non-smokers not to start should also be prioritised. Quitting smoking is indeed critical for improved productivity of workers as they are healthier and important to the COVID-19 response in line with the day's theme.

In commemoration of the World No Tobacco Day, with the theme "Commit to Quit", global partners in the tobacco control aim to support 100 million people to quit tobacco use. This thus calls for joint robust efforts to support people interested in quitting, supporting strong tobacco cessation policies and increase awareness about tactics used by tobacco industry to hook its product users especially the young people. Workers and workplaces must have special focus in this effort.

Over years, the tobacco industry and tobacco use continue to undermine achievements of key Sustainable Development Goals of; good health and wellbeing (SDG3), zero hunger (SDG 2), no poverty (SDG1), Quality Education (SDG4) as well as partnerships for the goals (SDG17). This was worsened by effects of the covid19 pandemic as it debilitated health systems, increased household hunger and poverty especially in developing countries.

To better fight COVID19 and increase success rates of cessation, we recommend increased update of well-balanced nutritious diet. Eating a variety of fresh fruits and vegetables, keeping highly hydrated through drinking plenty of water and fresh juice, limiting salt and sugar intake among others. This will enable one obtain the needed proteins, vitamins, minerals, and dietary fiber for boosting the body immune system against COVID19 and likely effects of tobacco use.

The Uganda Health Communication Alliance, the United Nations Association of Uganda and the Civil Society Alliance for Nutrition Uganda call for on all stakeholders to invest in supporting tobacco users to quit. Governments, employers, civil society organisations and private businesses should avail cessation services and policies to help those willing to quit.

About the Partnering Organizations

Uganda Health Communication Alliance (UHCA) is legally registered non-profit organization with national and regional activities that brings together journalists and other communication professionals from non-government organizations, government and academia.

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United Nations Association of Uganda (UNAU) a nonprofit, Non-Government Organization, duly registered in Uganda working to youth empowerment through social capital development. The Association is affiliated to the World Federation of United Nations Associations (WFUNA) www.wfuna.org and works to promote the aims, objectives, principles, and ideals of the UN in Uganda as enshrined in the UN Charter.

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Civil Society Alliance for Nutrition Uganda (CISANU) a professional organization registered as a non-profit organization with national and regional focus as an alliance of organizations working with government to create and strengthen the coordination of a civil society platform to champion nutrition advocacy.

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