

Government Not Serious in Cigarette Control

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The number of smokers in Indonesia keeps rising by year. Meanwhile, the effort to control tobacco as a way to limit cigarette consumption has not gone well. It is already known that cigarette consumption clearly gives bad impact for community's health.

"The cigarette consumption in Indonesia keep rising with 36,3% of active smokers are teenage boys. Not only that, 73,3 % of male above 15 years old also tend to smoke," Dr. Nathalia C Tjandra said, Monday, when giving a public lecture at the Faculty of Medicine UGM.

The marketing lecturer of The Business School of Edinburgh Napier University London also said that cigarette control in Indonesia is a tough one compared to other countries. Australia, for instance, has been successfully implementing plain cigarette package as a way to control cigarette consumption. Australia government succeeded in forcing cigarette companies to remove all important parts of a tobacco product such as brand, colour, and other identities.

While in Indonesia, she said, Indonesian Government has not yet been capable of implementing similar policy. Until now, Indonesia has not even signed the Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (FCTC). Indonesia is the only country in Asia which has not joined FCTC membership.

The fact that cigarette industry is still the biggest source of nation's income becomes a matter of consideration to limit cigarette industry. Besides, this industry could employ millions of workers from production to marketing processes.

"We can't limit tobacco since there has not been an alternative," she said.

Even though government's campaign has delivered some knowledges regarding the danger of smoking, but it has not given any significant impact. It is seen by the rising number of smokers. The strong marketing, promotion, and sponsorship done by cigarette companies are considered as factors contributing to this phenomenon.

"Cigarette ads nowadays are targeting the young age. The ads give positive information related to smoking," she said.

Cigarette is depicted as masculine thing, adventurous, togetherness, and other interesting things. While its side effects are not delivered as clearly. This leads to positive image of cigarette companies among society, not something hazardous to health and the young generation.

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