

INTERNATIONAL THE NEWS

Online tobacco control resource launched in Islamabad

Our correspondent
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Islamabad

Pakistan's first-ever searchable data resource on tobacco control was launched at a press briefing here on Monday.

An initiative of TheNetwork for Consumer Protection, the database (www.tobaccocontrol.org.pk) is expected to serve as a resource for researchers, academia, medical and health community, and more specifically tobacco control advocates. It is an intellectual resource that provides a snapshot of the history of tobacco control in Pakistan.

“We expect the initiative to facilitate researchers, lawyers and tobacco advocates in Pakistan and around the world to access all tobacco-related information with a single mouse click in an effort to circumvent the tobacco industry's tactics for tobacco promotion,” the executive director of TheNetwork, Nadeem Iqbal, stated.

The tobacco industry only shares limited information about its marketing and social activities. In view of the foregoing, TheNetwork is gathering and uploading true and unbiased information about the tobacco industry which is taken from its own documents.

The tobacco control database not only provides basic facts about the hazards of tobacco, policy and legislation, tobacco control groups, publications and reports, and economics of tobacco but also provides case laws from around the world. These case laws will help tobacco control groups to further explore forums to register complaints against the tobacco industry for violations of tobacco control laws.

The database features national as well as international data from top 15 countries where tobacco consumption is higher than the rest of the world. The tobacco control database has been developed with the help of data taken from Campaign for Tobacco Free Kids and World Health Organisation.

Tobacco use is the most preventable cause of illness and death. It kills more than 100,000 people in Pakistan per year. Tobacco use is a risk factor for the major non-communicable diseases such as heart attacks, strokes, cancers, diabetes and asthma and other chronic diseases.

Tobacco use is more than a health problem in Pakistan. It's a development problem too. Tobacco multiplies poverty and kills people in their most productive years. It consumes family and health-care budgets.

The database will urge opinion and policy-makers to devise effective policies to control the tobacco epidemic in Pakistan.

Responding to a query about the Smoke-free Islamabad Campaign, the organisers assured that TheNetwork will identify and highlight ongoing violations of tobacco control law through its active database in a bid to strengthen the district authorities of the Islamabad to take action.