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## Call to discourage rising tobacco use

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ISLAMABAD (APP) - Health experts on Tuesday urged to take sincere steps to ensure 100% smoke-free environment to protect the health of non-smokers and reducing use of tobacco in the country.

They expressed these views while addressing the opening session of a three-day training workshop on "100% smoke-free environment" jointly organized by World Health Organization (WHO) and Tobacco Control Cell Ministry of Health.

Dr. Luminita Sanda from WHO Geneva said that there is a need to enhance capacity of national and sub national policy makers to protect people from exposure to second-hand tobacco smoke.

She asked to develop specific strategic action plan to improve ability of concerned stakeholders of tobacco control programmes to respond to opposition through skilled debate.

She said it is high time to enhance collaboration between the individuals and organizations to form plans and policies to control smoking besides effective implementation and enforcement of such policies. She apprised the participants about the effects of second hand smoking on human health and economic costs of medical complications caused due to tobacco use.

Director General Health Dr. Rashid Jooma said promulgation of prohibition of smoking and protection of non-smokers health ordinance 2002 and ratification of the WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (FCTC) are real milestones.

He said no one has right to harm the health of others by using tobacco in open places, adding, steps are being taken in this regard to control this.

Country Representative WHO Dr. Khalif Bile Mohamad said the epidemic of tobacco has been one of the major causes of the non-communicable diseases including cancers and cardiovascular diseases in Pakistan.

He said 90% deaths from lungs disease and 25% from cardiovascular disease attributed to tobacco and added such diseases are affecting all groups of people particularly the youth.

He said use of sheesha smoking is on rise in Pakistan and young boys and girls are using it as fashion in open places and urged to take steps to control it.

He said sincere efforts are needed to protect public from the enchanting offers of tobacco industry causing harm to the health of country people.

He said Pakistan has made significant achievements towards tobacco control however, a lot more needs to be accomplished particularly the implementation of Ordinance and the FCTC, he added.

He expressed the hope that workshop will give skill and knowledge to making 100% smoke free environment and will help the participants to prepare effective advocacy plans.

DG Tobacco Control Cell, Ministry of Health, Shaheen Masud said the objective of the training workshop was to make an orientation of the participants on the concept of smoke-free environments.

She said during training the participants will explore ways and means for effective implementation of plans to provide 100% smoke-free environment to the people within enclosed places and public transport in the country.

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