



## PRESS RELEASE



### Meghalaya's State Tobacco Control Cell Receives Prestigious WHO Award for Exemplary Efforts in Tobacco Control

**Shillong, May 26, 2023:** The State Tobacco Control Cell (STCC) of Meghalaya has been recognised by the **World Health Organization (WHO)** for its outstanding tobacco control efforts. Each year, the WHO recognises exceptional individuals and organisations from each of the six WHO regions for their significant contributions to the fight against the dangers of tobacco use. This year the prestigious **WHO Director-South-East General's Asia Region Award** was bestowed upon the State Tobacco Control Cell.



World No Tobacco Day 2023 awards - the winners

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South-East Asia Region awardees

- State Tobacco Control Cell (STCC), Government of Meghalaya, India
- Centre for Multi-Disciplinary Development Research Dharwad, India
- Indonesian Multiculture Farmers Forum (FPMI), Indonesia
- National Statistical Office, Thailand

The anti-tobacco campaign has reached remarkable milestones, including the active participation of approximately **7,975 schools** across the state. **4,9 lakh students** have enthusiastically supported the campaign, demonstrating their unwavering dedication to the cause. With a reach of more than **3,500 villages**, the campaign has successfully increased widespread awareness and participation. In addition, a total of **7,388 rallies** have been held, mobilizing communities, and generating considerable momentum in the fight against tobacco. The impressive signature campaign conducted over the past several months is further evidence of the campaign's success, representing the widespread support and commitment to a tobacco-free society.

**Hon'ble Chief Minister of Meghalaya, Shri Conrad K Sangma**, stated, *“We are immensely proud of Meghalaya's State Tobacco Control Cell for their exceptional efforts in tobacco control, which has now been recognized by the WHO Award. This accolade is a testament to the unwavering commitment of our dedicated team as well as the importance of sustained efforts in promoting public health and preventing the harmful effects of tobacco use. This recognition inspires us to continue our endeavours and create a brighter, healthier future for Meghalaya.”*

Lauding the dedicated efforts of all the stakeholders involved in the tobacco control initiative, **Dr. Mazel Ampareen Lyngdoh, Minister of Health & Family Welfare Department** stated, *“Our state stands tall today, adorned with the prestigious award from WHO, a testament to our unwavering commitment to tobacco control. With collective efforts and unwavering determination, the Departments of Health, Education, Home (Police) and our community have triumphed over the tobacco epidemic. Let us extend heartfelt congratulations to every school and its students that embraced the call to action, organising rallies and spearheading signature campaigns. Your invaluable contributions have paved the way for this remarkable achievement. As we revel in this victory, let us not rest on our laurels. Together, let's forge ahead, united in our mission to foster a healthier, tobacco-free environment for our communities. May this award inspire us to reach greater heights and continue making strides towards a brighter, cancer-free future.”*

The State Tobacco Control Cell, in collaboration with the Education Department and the Police Department, has implemented a comprehensive **Tobacco Control Program** that has earned this esteemed recognition from the WHO. This program has demonstrated remarkable success in creating awareness, inspiring action, and fostering community engagement in the fight against tobacco.

**Shri. Sampath Kumar, Principal Secretary & Development Commissioner, Department of Health & Family Welfare, Government of Meghalaya**, mentioned *“Transformational development outcomes can be achieved if various departments and all the stakeholders work in a collaborative way. Thanks to our state leadership led by Chief Minister of Meghalaya, Shri Conrad Sangma for providing such a steady foundation and fostering camaraderie and between the departments to collaborate and work together with a sense of urgency and purpose.”*

**Shri. Ram Kumar S, IAS, Secretary of Health & Family Welfare Department, Government of Meghalaya**, congratulated all the schools across the state, *“I am elated to witness the impact of the proactive measures taken by the participating schools to educate, inspire, and engage with the communities in this tobacco control campaign, by organizing rallies and signature campaigns in public places. These schools, through the partnership of **Sambandh Health Foundation** have effectively shared the message far and wide, reaching every corner of the society. Their efforts have fostered a sense of collective responsibility to safeguard ourselves and future generations from the devastating effects of tobacco. Together, we can create a healthier and tobacco-free Meghalaya.”*

**Dr. Lana Lyngdoh, Nodal officer of the STCC**, emphasized the significance of the campaign and stated, *“This campaign serves as a powerful symbol of our rejection of a harmful product and our unwavering commitment to preserving and cherishing life. Each signature collected represents a voice raised against tobacco, igniting a determination to build a tobacco-free world for present and future generations.”*



These outstanding results exemplify the **State Tobacco Control Cell's (STCC)** unwavering commitment to making a significant impact in tobacco control. The Government of Meghalaya recognizes the hard work and dedication put forth by the STCC, schools, students, and all those involved in the campaign.