

Removal of tobacco industry from interagency committee gets support

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By Charina Clarisse Echaluca

The calls for the removal of the tobacco industry from the Inter-Agency Committee on Tobacco (IAC-T) have been backed by the Southeast Asia Tobacco Control Alliance (SEATCA).



In a press briefing, SEATCA-*Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (FCTC)* program director Ulysses Dorotheo said they hope that the recent moves in the House of Representatives would not become futile.

“We hope that this will actually end up as an amendment, and remove that low score from the index in the Philippines,” Dorotheo expressed.

The official was referring to the Philippines’ low score in the *Tobacco Industry Interference Index Country Report 2017* in terms of the *Tobacco Industry Participation in Policy Development* aspect.

According to the report by *HealthJustice Philippines*, it is objectionable that the tobacco industry continues to have a seat at the IAC-T.

To note, some representatives of the *Philippine Tobacco Institute (PTI)* are members of the IAC-T. The *Republic Act 9211* or the *Tobacco Regulation Act of 2003* that names the *Philippine Tobacco Institute* as a member of the IAC-T; despite the *FCTC Article 5.3* providing that the tobacco industry must not be allowed to interfere in public health policy making.

“We reiterate our call to Congress to amend RA 9211 and remove the representative of the tobacco industry from the IAC-T, the government body tasked to lead the implementation of tobacco control laws,” HealthJustice president Mary Ann Fernandez-Mendoza said.

“There is a conflict of interest in such a situation because of the vested, commercial interests of the tobacco industry and the state’s mandate to protect public health,” she added.

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