

## Tobacco Kills 75 Men Weekly In Ghana - FDA Boss

By William Sarpong

**C**hief Executive Officer of Food and Drugs Authority (FDA), Mrs. Delese Mimi Darko, has stated that tobacco kills about 75 men every week in Ghana.

According to her, more than 425,200 men, 69,200 women and 2,700 boys smoke cigarettes each day.

The FDA Boss stated these at the launch of the 2019 World No Tobacco Day in Accra under the theme: "Tobacco and Lung Health; Gearing towards informing the public on the dangers of using tobacco."

World No Tobacco Day is intended to create awareness on the fundamental role lungs play for the health and well-being of people and to create awareness on the negative impact tobacco has on people's lung health, from cancer to chronic respiratory disease.

The celebration advocates for effective policies to reduce tobacco consumption and engaging stakeholders across multiple sectors in the fight for tobacco

control.

Mrs. Mimi Darko hinted that eight million people worldwide are killed by the tobacco epidemic out of which more than one million are people who themselves do not smoke but die from breathing cigarette smoke.

Tobacco products, according to her, are known to contain 7,000 chemicals; hundreds of which are known to be toxic and about 69 cancer-causing chemicals including Benzene, Arsenic, Cadmium, Carbon monoxide and Formaldehyde.

Tobacco smoking and exposure to secondhand smoke, she indicated, increase the risk of contracting many lung diseases.

"Smoking causes 90% of lung cancer deaths and approximately eight out of ten deaths from chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD), including emphysema and chronic bronchitis," she stated.

Minister of Health, Kwaku Agyeman-Manu, who also spoke at the launch, said the tobacco epidemic is still one of the biggest public health threats the world has ever faced, killing more than seven million people a year.

More than 6 million of those deaths, he said, are a result of direct tobacco use while around 890,000 are as a

result of non-smokers being exposed to the smoke.

Tobacco smoking, he said, is the primary cause for lung cancer, responsible for over two thirds of lung cancer deaths globally and other chronic respiratory diseases.

He said, "Infants exposed in the womb to tobacco smoke toxins, through maternal smoking or maternal exposure to second-hand smoke, frequently experience reduced lung growth and function." "Young children exposed to second hand smoke are at risk on the onset and exacerbation of asthma, pneumonia and bronchitis and frequent lower respiratory infections."

Tobacco smoking, he noted, also causes air pollution as the chemicals in it linger in the air for up to five hours, putting those exposed at risk of lung cancer, chronic respiratory diseases and reduced lung function. He said, "We all have a responsibility as individuals, government organizations, NGOs and stakeholders to make this country and the world at large a better place for this generation and generations yet unborn."