

FOOD AND DRUGS AUTHORITY LAUNCHES “WORLD NO TOBACCO DAY”

The Food and Drugs Authority (FDA) launched the 2019 “World No Tobacco Day” in Accra on Monday, 3rd of June 2019. The theme for this year’s celebration is “Tobacco and Lung Health” and it is focused on increasing awareness of the negative effects of tobacco use and exposure to tobacco smoke on the human lungs and tobacco related diseases. World Health Organization (WHO) report says eight million (8,000,000) people worldwide are killed annually by the tobacco epidemic of which more than one (1) million people die from breathing second-hand smoke.

In her welcome address, the Chief Executive Officer of the FDA, Mrs. Delese Darko said the WHO report indicates that tobacco products contain seven thousand (7,000) chemicals of which sixty nine (69) are cancer - causing chemicals including Benzene, Arsenic and Formaldehyde. She further pointed out that, in Ghana, more than 425,200 men, 69,200 women and 2,700 boys smoke cigarettes each day killing about 75 men weekly.

According to Mrs. Delese Darko, the Ghana Youth Tobacco Survey 2017 report showed that prevalence in shisha use is higher in girls than boys. She noted that, this may be due to the misconception that shisha is a safer alternative and hence to dispel this notion, the Authority has mounted an aggressive anti-shisha campaign in the various Regions.

A statement read by Mr. Hamidu Adakurugu, the Director General of Administration of the Ministry of Health on behalf of the sector Minister, estimated 165,000 children die before the age of 5 from lower respiratory infections caused by second-hand smoke. He further said 41 million people die of non-communicable diseases each year of which cardiovascular diseases account for most of the deaths. Commenting on measures put in place to curtail the menace, Mr. Hamidu Adakurugu said that, Ghana has adopted comprehensive smoke free policies notable among them are the Public Health Act 2012 (ACT 851) and the Tobacco Control Regulations, 2016(LI 224) and also, the introduction of the pictorial Health Warning on tobacco product packages which is aimed at effectively communicating the health hazards associated with tobacco use.

A message delivered by the World Health Organization country representative for Ghana, Dr. Owen Kaluwa, called for tobacco-control policies aimed at reducing the demand for tobacco and promoting tobacco cessation. He said this should encompass educational institutions, health care facilities, workplaces and sporting environments. There were solidarity messages from Civil Society Groups and the National Union of Ghana Students President.