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REPUBLIC OF GHANA

31st May, 2021

For immediate release:

2021 WORLD NO TOBACCO DAY-GHANA COMMITS TO HELP TOBACCO USERS QUIT

As the world commemorates the No Tobacco Day, today-31st May, 2021, the Ministry of Health, Ghana Health Service and the Food and Drugs Authority (FDA) together with other civil society organisations join in the global call to urge users of tobacco and tobacco products in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic to **“Commit to Quit”** as the theme of this year’s celebrations.

Globally, tobacco kills more than 8 million people annually. More than 7 million of these deaths are from direct tobacco use and around 1.2 million are due to non-smokers being exposed to second-hand smoke. Statistics available in Ghana indicate that over 807,600 people in Ghana smoke cigarettes, shisha and other tobacco products, with about 75 deaths (mainly men) recorded every week from smoking related illnesses making this a serious public health threat.

Indeed, the use of nicotine and other toxic chemicals increases the risk of cancer, cardiovascular and pulmonary diseases. Considering these severe health effects and its impacts on the world’s population, the World Health Organization (WHO) and other global partners continue to raise awareness on the harmful effects of tobacco use, second-hand smoke exposure and discourage the use of tobacco in all forms.

Pursuant to part six (6) of the Public Health Act, 2012, Act 851, the nation continues to advocate for strong tobacco cessation policies. Despite the fact that quitting smoking can be challenging, studies have demonstrated significant benefits. For instance, after just 20minutes of quitting smoking, elevated heart rate of smokers drops, within 12 hours, carbon monoxide levels in the blood equally adjust to normal. There has also been evidence of improvement in blood circulation and lung function within 12 weeks. In addition, major complications of smoking including risks of stroke and lung cancer decrease to that of a non-smoker.

People who want to quit smoking can access help in the various health facilities across the country

To this end, the Ministry of Health and all its partners pledge support to all tobacco users as they commit to quit smoking.

THE MINISTER FOR HEALTH