The Union or the Bloomberg Philanthropies. That this legislation is needed is not in question. According to the WHO, each year more than 8 million deaths worldwide are the result of direct tobacco use and another 1.2 million deaths from non-smokers being exposed to second-hand smoke.

Here in Jamaica, those efforts have included the implementation of smoke-free legislations, graphic health warnings and taxation policies. We are looking towards to take these efforts a step further, with the impending Tobacco Control Act (2020).

This legislation is needed in no question. According to the WHO, each year more than 8 million deaths worldwide are the result of direct tobacco use and another 1.2 million deaths from non-smokers being exposed to second-hand smoke. These are statistics which we can’t turn a blind eye and certainly not when we consider the vulnerability of our youth. The Global Youth Tobacco Survey tells us that for Jamaica in 2017:

- 15.6% of students (15.5% of boys, and 15.6% of girls) used tobacco products;
- 14.4% of students (14.5% of boys, and 13.9% of girls) used e-cigarettes;
- 11.2% of students (11.1% of boys, and 10.9% of girls) were reported to smoke cigarettes; and
- 2.6% of students (2.6% of boys, and 2.5% of girls) used smokable tobacco.

Jamaica has also become a popular among young people because of the perception that it is safer when the reality is that it is far from harmless. People who smoke and non-smokers, especially young people, are being misled in recent years that e-cigarettes are a safer alternative to smoking combustible cigarettes. This is evident from the 2017 Global Youth Tobacco Survey which suggest that e-cigarettes have become popular among young people with 11.7% of students aged 13-15 years old using e-cigarettes compared to 11.2% who smoke cigarettes. Despite common beliefs, e-cigarettes contain much of the chemicals found in conventional cigarettes. It is linked to increased risk of cardiovascular disease, behavioral changes and mood disorders, gut inflammation and throat irritation.

The impending Tobacco Control Act (2020) is a response to these realities and provides for a tool, among other things, to lift the ban on e-cigarettes as possible. In recognition of World No Tobacco Day 2022, all smokers, in the spirit of the celebration, are encouraged to put down the cigarettes. Non-smokers and loved ones of smokers are also encouraged to support those who are struggling to quit. A decided help and smoking, you may contact the National Council on Drug Abuse at 876-564-HELP.

The year marks twenty years since the formation of the Jamaica Coalition for Tobacco Control (JCTC) and its journey to advocate for the protection of the public from the harms of tobacco use. Over the years, the efforts of the member organizations have resulted in the implementation of the Public Health (Tobacco (Prohibition) Regulations, 2013 which saw to the enforcement of 100% tobacco free environments and graphic health warnings on cigarette packages. In addition to this, the Jamaica Coalition for Tobacco Control continues to support tobacco cessation programs and government measures to control tobacco distribution and consumption within the country. This includes the Tobacco Control Act (2020) which is currently under review by the Joint Select Committee on tobacco control. This bill is expected to minimize the direct and indirect risks associated with tobacco consumption in the country.

The Union grant managed by the International Union for Tobacco Control provides the grant funds by Bloomberg Philanthropies.

The Union is proud to celebrate World No Tobacco Day 2022.

Pap American Health Organization/ World Health Organization Representative to Jamaica, Bermuda & the Cayman Islands

Mr. Ian Stein

Tobacco has an extremely harmful impact on the body and the environment.

The statistic often shared is that tobacco kills over 8 million people each year. However, tobacco products also cause wide-scale pollution, and a lesser-known fact is that 800 million trees are chopped down to make 6 trillion cigarette papers every year, decreasing the clean air we breathe. Cigarette filters are full of toxins that can leach into the ground and waterways damaging ecosystems. Smoke from cigarettes come into contact with them. Cigarette butts are the most abundant form of plastic waste in the world and account for up to 40% of litter at beach and urban cleanups globally.

This year, World No Tobacco Day is being commemorated under the theme, Poisoning Our Planet. A key message is that plastic waste is another victim of the tobacco epidemic due to pollution caused by the tobacco industry – another piddling reason to quit.

The World Health Organization (WHO) and Pap American Health Organization (PAHO) are calling for governments and policymakers to implement and strengthen existing schemes to make tobacco also inadmissible for the environmental and economic costs of tobacco product waste.

We at PAHO/WHO Country Office in Jamaica commend the Government of Jamaica for the work underway for the passage of the proposed Tobacco Control legislation. The legislation presents our best opportunity to reduce the harmful impact of tobacco and tobacco-related products on our children, young people, society, and the environment.

If you or someone you know would like to quit tobacco, I encourage you to meet Florence, the WHO’s first virtual health worker designed to help users quit. Users can rely on Florence as a trusted source of information to achieve their quit goals. You can connect with her via video or text.

Link to meet Florence: https://who-nl.digitalhero.cloud/session/00001591.htm

World No Tobacco Day was launched to encourage all smokers worldwide to quit smoking for 24hrs by highlighting the health risks of smoking 2. All Jamaicans are encouraged to recognize this important day and make a serious commitment to ‘No Butts About It’. According to the WHO Global Report: Mortality Attributable to Tobacco, tobacco-related death rates for adults 30yrs and older constitute to 77% of deaths from lung cancer, 25% of deaths from Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease and 5% of deaths from Cardiovascular Disease 3. Jamaica is a signatory to the WHO’s historic Framework Convention on Tobacco Control Treaty, much progress has been made in Caribbean to advance this goal.

To address the systemic health effects caused by tobacco:• 11.2% of students (11.1% of boys, and 10.9% of girls) were reported to smoke cigarettes; and• 11.7% of students aged 13-15 years old using e-cigarettes compared to 11.2% who smoke cigarettes.

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