

## GEG bombshell: When lawmakers are dictated by 'merchants of death' – MyWatch

Malaysian Women's Action for Tobacco Control and Health wants welfare of youngsters placed ahead of interest of tobacco or vape companies.

Updated 1 day ago · Published on 16 Mar 2024 5:20PM

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On March 14, Deputy Health Minister Datuk Lukanisman Awang Sauni had revealed to the Dewan Rakyat that lobbyists from the tobacco and vape industries had met MPs in Parliament ahead of the debate on the revised Control of Smoking Products for Public Health 2023 bill. Subsequently, the Generational Endgame (GEG) component, which aimed to prohibit Malaysians born after 2005 from buying or using cigarette products, including e-cigarettes, was removed from the anti-smoking bill. The Vibes pic, March 16, 2024.

IT HAS been almost 20 years since Malaysia became a party to the Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (FCTC) in 2005, yet regrettably the government still does not seem to understand what exactly it has committed to.

It is clearly stated in FCTC Article 5.3 and the Guidelines that parties are obliged to protect their public health policies from commercial and other vested interests of the tobacco industry.

The recent exposé by the deputy health minister (Datuk Lukanisman Awang Sauni) at the Parliament is in absolute violation of the convention that has brought about shame to Malaysia.

This confession also challenged the fundamental principles of the Madani government whose slogan is good governance, sustainable development and racial harmony.

Where is good governance when lawmakers are dictated by the very entity they are supposed to regulate?

Tobacco and vape industries are in constant conflict with sustainable development, both in terms of human livelihood, as well as support for the environment.

The economic costs and magnitude of health burden from tobacco and vape in the long term could lead to chaos in society.

It is indeed puzzling how the preying hands of notorious merchants of death are allowed to engage with the authorities and take advantage to suit their desire.

Where is accountability, dignity and effectiveness when the government submits to pressures by industries that are only concerned about making profits with little regard for human life?

The Malaysian government is fully responsible for safeguarding the health of its citizen, especially that of future generations.

The welfare of our youths and children should always be placed ahead of any interest of the tobacco or vape companies.

Smart leaders are expected to be diligent and smart when ill-advised.

The Malaysian Women's Action for Tobacco Control and Health (MyWatch) would like to call on the Kebawah Duli Majlis Raja-Raja (Conference of Malay Rulers) to consider a request for a royal commission of inquiry (RCI) on health, especially the issues regarding the impact on:

> Delisting of Nicotine from the Poisons Act 1952

> Tobacco & related industries Interference on the Control of Smoking Products for Public Health (CSPPH) Bill 2023

> Elimination of the Generational Endgame (GEG) from the Control of Smoking Products for Public Health Bill 2023.

Other health issues for consideration requested to be included are:

> Waste crisis and plastics treaty – the need to prioritise people over polluters and prevent the worst impacts of climate change. (In line with COP28, what will the impact be with disposable vape pods?)

> Health crises in Malaysian hospitals with lack of facilities, medical experts, healthcare providers

> The missed opportunity on children's right to health (Article 24 CRC) and the general norm that children's best interest (Article 3, Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), exposure to Second Hand Smoke (SHS). – The Vibes, March 16, 2024

*The Malaysian Women's Action for Tobacco Control and Health (MyWatch) is an NGO that has pioneered various initiatives in its advocacies in accordance with the World Health Organisation's Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (FCTC). MyWatch has initiated and championed various projects, including the World No Tobacco Day (WNTD), Smoke Free Cities (MBAR, KLBAR, SELBAR), KOTAK (Kesihatan Oral Tanpa Asap Rokok), WHO Revolution Smoke Free (RSF), the Tobacco Free Generation (TFG) and the Generational Endgame (GEG).*

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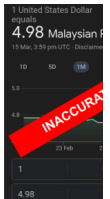
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