

MW/MTIII2025/PR(Eng)

MyWATCH PRESS RELEASE**Statement 2:****On Vape & E-Cigarette (English)**

Press Statement by MyWATCH President

“Time to End the Vape Epidemic – Malaysia Must Ban Electronic Cigarettes”

The Malaysian Women's Action on Tobacco Control and Health (MyWATCH) expresses its grave concern over the continued sale and rampant use of vape and electronic cigarettes in our country. Despite mounting evidence of harm, Malaysia still lacks a comprehensive national policy to address this growing epidemic, leaving millions—particularly our youth—exposed and vulnerable.

Electronic cigarettes are far from harmless. They have created a serious public health burden, contributing to nicotine addiction among teenagers, lung and heart disease, respiratory problems, poisoning cases, and even device explosions. Health professionals are now reporting increasing numbers of patients with vaping-related complications, adding to the strain on our already overburdened healthcare system.

Alarmingly, vape products have also been exploited by criminal syndicates to deliver narcotics such as cannabis and methamphetamines, using the discreet designs and flavored liquids to mask illegal drug use. This dual threat—to both health and safety—demands urgent government action.

While some Malaysian states have attempted to regulate or ban these harmful products, the absence of a strong and uniform national framework undermines their efforts. In contrast, our neighbours have acted decisively: Singapore, Thailand, and Brunei have enforced strict bans on the import, sale, and possession of electronic cigarettes, sending a clear signal that public health comes before industry interests. Malaysia cannot afford to be the weak link in the region.

MyWATCH calls on the Ministry of Health (MOH), as the custodian of national health, to immediately implement a comprehensive nationwide ban on vape and electronic cigarettes. Half measures, delays, or partial regulations only prolong the damage and provide room for the industry to continue exploiting loopholes.

The Government of Malaysia must demonstrate the same courage and leadership that once made us a global pioneer in tobacco control. Political lobbying and commercial interests must not dictate our nation's health policies. Our children, families, and future generations deserve nothing less than full protection from products that addict, harm, and endanger lives.

MyWATCH stands ready to support MOH and state governments in taking strong, effective, and enforceable action. It is time for Malaysia to show resolve and decisiveness—by ending the vape epidemic once and for all.

Statement 3:

On Tobacco Tax (English)

Press Statement by MyWATCH President

“MyWATCH Urges Impactful Tobacco Tax Increase in Upcoming Budget”

The Malaysian Women’s Action for Tobacco Control & Health (MyWATCH) strongly supports the Government’s plan to raise tobacco taxes in the upcoming Budget. However, this increase is expected to have a significant impact on reducing cigarette consumption and generate maximum tax revenue for the Government. Therefore, the proposed increase in excise tax is 0.75 cents per stick of cigarettes, to safeguard health, generate revenue, and honour Malaysia’s international obligations.

Malaysia has not increased tobacco excise duty since 2015, despite being a Party to the WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (FCTC) since 2005. Article 6 of the FCTC makes clear that regular tax increases are the most effective tool to cut tobacco consumption and reduce affordability, especially for youth.

Meanwhile, the tobacco industry has continued to profit through its own price adjustments, while public health and the economy bear the heavy costs of tobacco-related disease. This imbalance must end.

MyWATCH calls on the Government to:

Implement an increase in the excise tax rate to 0.75 cents per stick of cigarettes.

Adjust the excise tax rate on cigarettes periodically to keep pace with inflation and rising real incomes.

Dedicate part of the revenue to tobacco control measures such as smoking cessation and prevention programmes.

Tobacco taxation is a win-win: it reduces consumption, saves lives, and boosts national coffers. The upcoming Budget is the Government’s opportunity to take decisive action for health and equity.

Statement 4:

On Cigarette Filters and the Plastic Treaty (English)

PRESS RELEASE

“MyWATCH Urges Ban on Cigarette Filters: A False Safety Net and Environmental Hazard”

The Malaysian Women’s Action for Tobacco Control and Health (MyWATCH) calls for a **ban on all cigarette filters, echoing proposals in the ongoing global Plastics Treaty negotiations.**

Filters are a deadly farce. They give smokers a false sense of safety but do not reduce toxins or protect against cancer, heart disease, or other tobacco harms. Instead, they keep people addicted.

Beyond health, cigarette butts are the world's most littered plastic waste, poisoning the environment and waterways with toxic chemicals.

MyWATCH urges the Malaysian Government to:

Support a total ban on cigarette filters, not only plastic ones.

Expose filters as an industry gimmick with no health benefit.

Strengthen tobacco control through higher taxes and public awareness.

Eliminating filters is a bold step to protect both health and the environment.

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