



Health Action International Asia Pacific (HAIAP)
(in collaboration with USM TWN DMDC IIUM)



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HAIAP News Bulletin, 1 December 2023

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1. News from HAIAP

1.1 HAIAP Small group meeting

Key colleagues from HAIAP, IIUM, USM and TWN met by Zoom on November 29 to discuss future activities and plans. Further discussion will take place around plans for expanding university curriculum as described by Dzul - below - and later collaborative projects. We will keep you informed.

1.2. Tan Sri Dzul kifli Abdul Razak at The 13th Global Regional Centres of Excellence Conference in November 2023

<https://www.rcenetwork.org/portal/13th-global-rce-conference-highlights-whole-community-approach-esd>

In his keynote speech on the second day of the conference, Prof. Emeritus Tan Sri Dzul kifli Abdul Razak, key HAIAP colleague and Rector of IIUM and co-chair of RCE Greater Gombak, outlined seven practical steps under consideration at IIUM for the whole community approach in embedding the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

He noted that the whole process was an 'experimentation' that others could perhaps learn from.

The seven steps were:

- (1) breaking silos – encouraging working together transcending disciplines to achieve betterment for human life and civilisation;
- (2) creating a common platform through the SDGs flagships;
- (3) engaging the community – from the hand to the head to the heart in transforming the community;
- (4) introducing experiential learning – beyond the classroom and theories / Usrah in Action;
- (5) developing education programs which promote flexibility, empowerment, innovation and accountability;
- (6) humanising education to instil sympathy, empathy and compassion – bringing back the heart to education; and
- (7) creating a new learning ecosystem with emphasis on community engagement.

He stressed that co-learning, collaborating, co-creating and co-existing underlie the concept of Communiversity where the community and university come together to initiate transformation.

1.3 Malaysia and New Zealand Tobacco products control

Malaysian and New Zealand colleagues battle to control availability of life threatening 'vapes'

See full presentations <https://www.haiasiapacific.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/11/Perspektif-Perundangan-PerlembagaanReduced.pdf>

<https://www.haiasiapacific.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/11/BULLEN-SFG-NZ-Nov-2023Reduced.pdf>

'Vapes' are battery-operated electronic devices that are used to heat a liquid commonly containing nicotine, flavouring and a range of toxic products to produce a vapour, which is then inhaled – mimicking the act of smoking. The strength of nicotine varies greatly.

On November 27, Dr Haniki Mohamed and IIUM colleagues conducted a Zoom meeting to share the status of the situation regarding control of availability of nicotine vapes in Malaysia together with the tobacco control experience in New Zealand.

When 'vapes' were introduced, the Malaysian government removed them from control under the Poisons Act (that controlled other tobacco products) making them as freely available as junk food to people of all ages. As in many other countries they have become very popular, especially among school age children, and have caused near deaths in several cases.¹ See also HAIAP Bulletin 1 July 2023²

Associate Prof. Madya Dr Khairil Azmin Mokhtar, Ahmad Ibrahim Kulliyah Of Laws (AIKOL), IIUM explained the whole Malaysian scenario since the emergence of e-cigarettes and vapes; and the impact of the increasing use - particularly among young people.

¹ <https://nceph.anu.edu.au/files/E-cigarettes%20health%20outcomes%20review%20summary%20brief%202022.pdf>

² <https://www.haiasiapacific.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/07/HAIAP-News-Bulletin-1-July-2023.pdf>

On Jan 26 2022, during the administration of the previous government, the health minister had announced an ambitious plan for public health. (Ismail Sabri Administration)

- The plan, dubbed the Generational End Game (GEG), will ban the use, possession and sale of cigarettes and vape products for those born after 2007.
- In 2023 the current Minister of Health Zaliha Mustafa reiterated the commitment to table the Public Health Bill 2023, also known as the Generational Endgame (GEG), before the conclusion of this parliamentary meeting.
- In the same month it has been reported that the current Cabinet has decided to drop provisions on the tobacco and vape generational end game (GEG) ban from the Control of Smoking Products for Public Health Bill 2023.

What is meant by Generational End Game?

The End Game is a target set by global experts to achieve a smoking prevalence of less than 5% (<5%) and a set of implementations to prohibit certain activities related to smoking for generation born on 1st January 2007 onwards.

Malaysian health professionals are doing everything possible to convince the government that the products should be banned in order to protect the population - particularly young people. However cabinet discussion of the issue has been postponed again and again - now until August next year - and vapes remain freely available to all.

The 'end game' (GEG) policy is designed to protect future generations from harm caused by use of vaporised nicotine products but it has been alleged - by politicians, tobacco companies and others - that the GEG is 'discriminatory', therefore unconstitutional and must be discarded.

In September 2023 *Oxford Economics* released '*An assessment of Malaysia's Generational End Game Policy*'³.

The analysis dwells almost entirely on the economic benefits of maintaining the distribution and sale of tobacco and nicotine products. Health does not seem to be a major consideration.

Here are the summarised conclusions of their assessment

In our assessment, the Government has not presented publicly a sufficiently robust analysis of the potential risks and uncertainties surrounding policy enforcement, nor the complex trade-offs of costs and benefits from the policy's implementation—as required by international best practices for policy appraisal—to fully understand the potential policy outcomes, nor to give confidence that they will be net positive for society. Through this report we have identified several factors that the Malaysian authorities should consider in a thorough assessment of the GEG policy, prior to implementation. These are:

- The long-term welfare benefits of reduced incidence of smoking in the population, and how it is distributed across cohorts of society.
- The costs and complexities of enforcement, and the impact on public health goals under poor enforcement scenarios.
- The likelihood of GEG cohort consumers to switch to illicit tobacco products under a GEG policy environment, and the economic losses implied by consumer switching, via lost tax revenues, damage to industry revenues and knock-on effects to other industries.
- The wider socio-economic impacts from illicit trade in tobacco products, and the implications of the GEG policy if it leads to an increase in illicit consumption.
- The distributional impact of the GEG policy on prices and household purchasing power, and the implications of price effects for other unintended dynamics, such as consumer switching to illicit goods.

Professor Chris Bullen - the New Zealand setting

In New Zealand there has been major progress towards a nicotine free country but Professor Chris Bullen from Auckland University in New Zealand and others fear their achievements will 'go up in smoke' since the election of a new government.

Professor Bullen explained the history of their movement and the major contributions of the Maori First Nations people on the positive outcomes of their campaigns for a smoke-free generation.

³ Oxford-Economics-AN-ASSESSMENT-OF-MALAYSIAS-'GENERATIONAL-ENDGAME'-POLICY.pdf

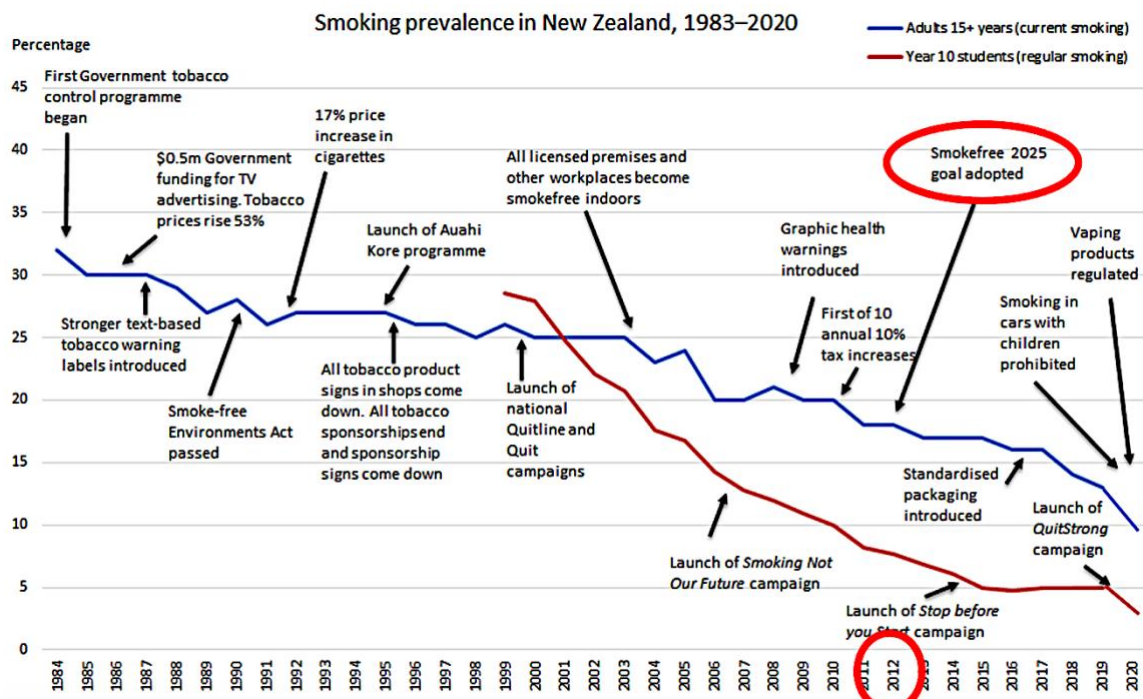
The Smokefree Generation

- NZ is almost at SFG level now
- Passed a law to prohibit forever the sale of tobacco to anyone born after 1 January 2009 from 1st January 2027 - but effective now.
- Long-term strategy to “turn off the tap”.
- A proportionate response to a dangerous product. “No safe age to start smoking”
- “coming-of-age” / “rite of passage” with age cut-offs (e.g. T21)
- Ban? The retailer is banned from selling; buyer is not penalised.

There was an election in New Zealand in October and a new coalition government was formed on Friday 24th November (Black Friday)

Buried in the small print of the coalition deal was this clause:

There will be repeal amendments to the Smoke-free Environments and Regulated Products Act 1990 and regulations before March 2024, removing requirements for de-nicotinisation, removing the reduction in retail outlets and the generation ban, while also amending vaping product requirements and taxing smoked products only; and reform the regulation of vaping, smokeless tobacco and oral nicotine products while banning disposable vaping products and increasing penalties for illegal sales to those under 19.



Tan Sri

The future?

- All is not lost!
- The tobacco control community will fight this ‘deal’ with all our might
- Why?
 - Thousands of lives are at stake
 - It threatens to undo decades of hard work
 - It runs counter to evidence
 - It is driven by political ideology and speculation, not evidence.
 - We believe the tobacco industry has been influencing our political leaders and will only serve to strengthen the industry’s power and influence in our society.

Dzulkifli Abdul Razak summed up the situation and outlined strategies for the way ahead in the struggle to protect our populations from the hazards of freely available nicotine products.

'Thank you Dr Khairil and Chris. Chris - I know there is a down turn on your side but there are still avenues where we in Malaysia can fight and there are still loopholes we can use. For us it is still a rosy picture in the sense that there are many things you have tried that we have not.

'What is quite similar is that your minister and our minister are both health professionals. Your Minister is committed, ours is not. She is probably the cause of all this by bulldozing some of our laws that have been there for a long time. We have a lot to learn from you but we don't have the tradition of the Maori people with their traditional understanding of what life is all about, but this is something we can build on.

'Our government response is clearly not evidence based but more political based, I am beginning to suspect, on our politicians being funded by the tobacco industry. That has happened before - it is not new, there is evidence.

'People like Haniki will give as the kind of optimism we need to continue our work together and I hope we can work with New Zealand to build new arguments that are very scientific and very rational and very appealing to the people who are involved.

'I do understand that there are many parents and many of the younger generation who are not at all happy that the government is not paying attention to health. Their interest is very much industry based rather than people based - despite this word *madani* (civilised) that is bandied around. I am not convinced that this *madani* will work with tobacco and vapes flourishing around us.

'I would like to conclude by thanking both of you and Haniki and hopefully now we can craft a new strategy because the government has decided to decouple the GEG and the tobacco control. Now everything will be available because there is no law in place.

'We were promised the government would reconsider the law in May, then June, then October and there was false hope. We cannot rely on them any more. We need to take the law into our own hands the right way and use whatever methods we can. The minister has already been sued by three prominent NGOs to be accountable. Maybe that has to be the last straw so if that has to be the way - that has to be the way!

'Thank you for your presentations. I am still learning every day. I was a tobacco control advocate as a student and now at 70 I am still doing the same things. We have not changed much in 50 years. Thank you.'

Full recording here: <https://www.facebook.com/share/v/NrRLHYHnQJz23wD7/?mibextid=WC7FNe>

2. Information sharing

2.1 Solidarity with Palestine

2.1.1 Gaza Update organised by Peoples Health Movement, South East Asia Pacific Region - an extremely moving and inspiring experience.

WEBINAR: November 25

GAZA UPDATE

**The current situation, the destruction of health services,
the challenges looming and the pathways for action.**

Speakers:

Mustafa Barghouti,

Physician, Activist, Member Palestinian legislative Council

Dr Aed Yaghi,

Director Palestine Medical Relief Society in Gaza

Mike Khizam,

Executive Officer of the Australian Friends of Palestine Association in South Australia

Chair: Paul Laris

Mustafa Barghouti was pre-recorded and can be seen and heard here:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EFZxhMX50E>

Dr Aed Yaghi spoke from Gaza, describing the worsening health and medical situation that is their daily experience.

Mike Khizam provided clear and sharp insights into the milieu and environment in which we find ourselves, together with inspiring suggestions for changing the judgements of our leaders and moving towards a global voice of support for Palestine. We hope to transcribe his presentation and make it widely available.

2.1.2 Ten books to help you understand Israel and Palestine, recommended by experts

Published: November 22, 2023 *The Conversation*

tiny.cc/3dhfvz

Recommending authors

1. Dennis Altman VC Fellow, La Trobe University
2. Daniel Heller Kronhill Senior Lecturer in East European Jewish History, Monash University
3. Ghassan Hage Professor of Anthropology and Social Theory, The University of Melbourne
4. Ian Parmeter Research Scholar, Centre for Arab and Islamic Studies, Australian National University
5. Jan Lanicek Associate Professor in Modern European History and Jewish History, UNSW Sydney
6. Jumana Bayeh Senior Lecturer, Macquarie School of Social Sciences, Macquarie University
7. Micaela Sahhar Lecturer, History of Ideas, Trinity College, The University of Melbourne
8. Ned Curthoys Senior Lecturer in English and Literary Studies, The University of Western Australia
9. Ran Porat Affiliate Researcher, The Australian Centre for Jewish Civilisation, Monash University

Apeirogon/The Age of Coexistence

Recommended by Ghassan Hage, Professor of Anthropology and Social Theory, University of Melbourne

I recommend two much-needed books in the present time. Despite the Gaza massacres seemingly planting the seeds of endless future hatred, the future of Palestine/Israel can only be a future of togetherness.

These two very different books provide elements for thinking about such togetherness. The first is *Apeirogon* by **Colum McCann**. It is about a Palestinian and an Israeli whose daughters have been killed by the enemy other, who struggle to find a way towards peace. One can easily trivialise such an endeavour if one forgets the colonial history and the power relations that locate each father differently within Palestine/Israel. This book doesn't.

The second book is *The Age of Coexistence* by **Ussama Makdisi**. This book reminds us that before the modern advent of the ethnonationalist fantasy, Palestine was the home of an indigenous form of religious coexistence, which Makdisi calls the 'ecumenical frame'. This offers us an important, realistic resource for thinking about future togetherness.

Rethinking the Holocaust

Recommended by Jan Lanicek, associate professor in Modern European History and Jewish History, UNSW

One of the most intriguing historical questions about the origins of the conflict – oft-debated and oft-misunderstood, is the relation between the Holocaust and the creation of the State of Israel.

In his book, *Rethinking the Holocaust*, the eminent Holocaust historian **Yehuda Bauer** offers a balanced perspective on the 1947 vote in the United Nations that approved the partition of British Mandate Palestine and creation of separate Jewish and Arab states.

Bauer's contribution will be of interest to those who want to learn about the international climate that surrounded the key moments in the origins of the conflict. On the eve of the Cold War (in the turbulent environment after the second world war), an unlikely alliance between the United States and the emerging socialist bloc under Stalin's Soviet Union helped to secure the necessary majority in the United Nations, setting the international stage of the conflict for decades to come.

Did the world feel guilty about the Jewish tragedy? Bauer says no. Both sides followed geopolitical considerations. The United States wanted to solve the problem of Holocaust survivors scattered over displaced persons camps in occupied Germany, and Stalin hoped Israel would become a communist state. The considerations to support the aspiration of Jewish people were purely political.

The Hundred Years' War on Palestine: A History of Settler Colonial Conquest & Resistance, 1917–2017

Recommended by Jumana Bayeh, Associate Professor in the Faculty of Arts at Macquarie University

Across his academic career, historian **Rashid Khalidi** has brought to his readers the wilfully suppressed Palestinian and Arab view – ignored not just by US policy makers, but much of the West in general. His work reaches audiences beyond the academic world and fills a gap in our knowledge.

This is the case in his recent book, *The Hundred Years' War on Palestine: A History of Settler Colonial Conquest & Resistance, 1917–2017*. This particular text is different: it tackles the issue of Israel's control of the narrative of its own establishment by silencing, even erasing, the Palestinian narrative.

This book will be compelling for those largely unfamiliar with the history of Palestine, due to Khalidi's use of reflections and anecdotes from his own storied Palestinian family. These reflections underpin the text's core claim, which most Israelis reject – that their state was established through colonial conquest and is today an ongoing project of settler colonial violence.

Year Zero of the Arab-Israeli Conflict 1929

Recommended by Ran Porat, affiliate researcher, The Australian Centre for Jewish Civilisation, Monash University

Despite his Jewish religious background, as a teenager Israeli historian **Hillel Cohen** taught himself Arabic while wandering around Palestinian villages near Jerusalem. He is unique in highlighting forgotten and overlooked aspects of the conflict, writing about Arabs who cooperated with the Zionists ('Army of Shadows') and about the military rule over Arabs in Israel (1948-66) ('Good Arabs').

Year Zero of the Arab-Israeli Conflict 1929 investigates the 1929 violent riots during which Arabs killed 133 Jews in mandatory Palestine. Almost a century later, Cohen sifted through never-accessed documents and uniquely uncovered a trove of insights interviewing elderly Israelis and Palestinians, descendants of those who were alive at that time.

The book explains why, after 1929, Jews realised Arabs will forever reject the Zionist dream to have their own state – the root cause of the conflict, which continues today. Cohen also explains the rationale for this Palestinian view of Zionism.

The Crisis of Zionism

Recommended by Dennis Altman, Vice Chancellor's Fellow, Latrobe University

Mainstream Australian Jewish organisations appear unanimous in their support of the current Israeli government. The *Crisis of Zionism* speaks for the many Jews who believe only fundamental shifts in Israel's policies can bring peace. Given the brutality of Hamas and the upsurge of antisemitism, Jews today feel particularly vulnerable. But **Peter Beinart** recognises that it is Palestinians who are the victims, trapped between Israeli occupation and groups like Hamas and Hezbollah.

Beinart is an American Jew with close connections to both Israelis and Palestinians. He has become increasingly sceptical of the call for a two-state solution, which was the basis of the 1993 Oslo Accords. Yet as Beinart makes clear, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has consistently worked against any realistic two-state solution.

Beinart wrote this book during the Obama Presidency; there is very useful background to the pressures now facing President Biden.

The Israeli-Palestinian Conflict: What Everyone Needs to Know

Recommended by Daniel Heller, Kronhill senior lecturer in East European Jewish History, Monash University

I would recommend **Dov Waxman**, *The Israeli-Palestinian Conflict: What Everyone Needs to Know*. This is a highly readable, engaging and accessible account of the origins of the conflict and the reasons it has proven so difficult to solve.

The book explains key events, examines core issues, and presents competing claims and narratives of both sides. Waxman also offers a range of Israeli and Palestinian perspectives, showing readers that there is no one Israeli or Palestinian view of the conflict, and that this very diversity of views is one of the reasons this conflict has proven so intractable.

The Arabs

Recommended by Ian Parmeter, Research Scholar, Centre for Arab and Islamic Studies, Australian National University

I read *The Arabs*, by **Anthony Nutting**, during my first year living in the Middle East – in Cairo – in 1977 and I return to it regularly. A one-time Conservative MP, he was also Minister of State for Foreign Affairs and a confirmed 'Arabist'. Like a number of others of his ilk, he resigned from the Foreign Office in protest over Britain's inglorious role in the 1956 Suez crisis. *The Arabs* was published in 1964, so it does not cover developments in the past 50 years, but it provides the context of these events.

Nutting describes in highly readable detail the rich history of the Arab world and how it was upended by centuries of colonialism – first Ottoman, then British and French – and the appalling mistakes made by all three.

His book analyses in depth the growth of Zionism in the late 19th century and the key role the movement has played in the region since. It analyses the Sykes-Picot agreement of 1916, by which Britain and France secretly carved up the Middle East in anticipation of the Ottoman demise. And it analyses the influence of the pro-Zionist Rothschild family on the Balfour Declaration of 1917. It's often forgotten that the declaration promised that in addition to a homeland for the

Jewish people, 'nothing shall be done which may prejudice the civil and religious rights of the existing non-Jewish communities in Palestine'.

Nutting's account of the UN partition of Palestine in 1947 and the subsequent foundation of Israel through the 1948 war is detailed and masterful. Though his natural sympathies are with the Arabs and Palestinians in particular, he is unsparing in his account of their mistakes through hubris or elementary miscalculations. A gifted writer, he brings the events he describes into vivid focus.

The Ethnic Cleansing of Palestine

Recommended by Ned Curthoys, senior lecturer in English and Literary Studies, The University of Western Australia

Excavating a crime 'utterly forgotten' by the West that the Palestinians mourn as the Nakba, in *The Ethnic Cleansing of Palestine* Israeli historian **Ilan Pappé** seeks to revise our understanding of the 1948 Israeli 'war of independence'.

Rather than a David versus Goliath battle between a brave Jewish army and a hostile, rejectionist Arab world, he demonstrates that the exodus of the Palestinians was the result of Israel's first prime minister Ben Gurion's Plan Dalet. This was a plan to expel Palestinians from their villages and urban centres to realise the long-held Zionist dream of creating an exclusivist majority Jewish state by 'transferring' the Palestinians to surrounding Arab nations.

Military tactics varied from massacres of entire villages to summary executions, sonic warfare, heavy shelling, dynamiting houses to prevent their occupants' return, and the torching of fields. This was followed in later years by continuing land appropriation, military occupation and the 'memoricide' of Palestinian communities. Pappé reminds us in a chilling epilogue that the 'ideology that enabled the depopulation of half of Palestine's native people in 1948 is still alive' and it drives the 'cleansing of those Palestinians who live there today'

Tolerance is a Wasteland: Palestine and the Culture of Denial

Recommended by Micaela Sahhar, Lecturer, History of Ideas, Trinity College, The University of Melbourne

Saree Makdisi's *Tolerance is a Wasteland: Palestine and the Culture of Denial* will appeal to those attending Palestine-liberation rallies alongside tens of thousands in Australian capitals, to find little coverage of their scale and orderliness in the media.

Makdisi outlines, in four comprehensive chapters, how context has been stripped from public understanding of Palestine over decades – obscured by projects that superficially espouse values celebrated in liberal democracies.

In one apposite image, he explains Israel's state project of afforestation as a cover-up, obscuring vast ruins of Palestinian villages destroyed after Palestinian inhabitants were ethnically cleansed in the 1948 Nakba (the mass displacement and dispossession of Palestinians during the 1948 Arab-Israeli war). Yet, recent bushfires have revealed traces of the indigenous Palestinian landscape, and with it, 'the naked truth'.

Makdisi says, 'October 7 is like the forest planted over the ruins; what's happened since is the ruins themselves'. By which he means, with little institutional outrage, much less intervention, this is how a second Nakba unfolds in plain sight.

2.1.3 Lancet: The moral clarity of WHO's Director-General WHO DG

www.thelancet.com Vol 402 November 25, 2023 1953

<https://www.thelancet.com/action/showPdf?pii=S0140-6736%2823%2902627-2>

Amid the claims and counterclaims about war crimes in Gaza and Israel, one voice has stood out as a beacon of moral clarity—that of WHO's Director-General Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus. The day after the Oct 7, 2023 terror attacks on Israel, recognising that the Israeli Government would strike back, he presciently called on X, formerly Twitter, 'for urgent steps to: protect and safeguard civilians, health workers and health facilities'. By Oct 10, as Israel escalated attacks against Hamas, with widespread killing of civilians, he demanded 'access to health and humanitarian assistance' and 'an end to the hostilities that are causing untold suffering'.

2.2 World AIDS Day December 1 2023

UNAIDS: Let Communities Lead - World Aids Day 2023

<https://www.unaids.org/en/2023-world-aids-day>

The world can end AIDS, with communities leading the way. Organisations of communities living with, at risk of, or affected by HIV are the frontline of progress in the HIV response. Communities connect people with person-centred public health services, build trust, innovate, monitor implementation of policies and services, and hold providers accountable.

But communities are being held back in their leadership. Funding shortages, policy and regulatory hurdles, capacity constraints, and crackdowns on civil society and on the human rights of marginalised communities, are obstructing the progress of HIV prevention and treatment services. If these obstacles are removed, community-led organisations can add even greater impetus to the global HIV response, advancing progress towards the end of AIDS.

This World AIDS Day is more than a celebration of the achievements of communities; it is a call to action to enable and support communities in their leadership roles. World AIDS Day 2023 highlights that to unleash the full potential of community leadership to enable the end of AIDS:

- Communities' leadership roles need to be made core in all HIV plans and programmes and in their formulation, budgeting, implementation, monitoring and evaluation. 'Nothing about us without us.'
- Communities' leadership roles need to be fully and reliably funded to enable the required scale up, and be properly supported and remunerated. 'Not ending AIDS is more expensive than ending it.'
- Barriers to communities' leadership roles need to be removed. An enabling regulatory environment is needed which facilitates communities' role in provision of HIV services, ensures civil society space, and protects the human rights of all, including of marginalised communities, to advance the global HIV response. 'Remove laws that harm, create laws that empower.'

2.3 WHO is an essential forum for debates on intellectual property and public health

Ellen 't Hoen

<https://medicineslawandpolicy.org/2023/11/who-is-an-essential-forum-for-debates-on-intellectual-property-and-public-health/>
November 20, 2023

Recently, Health Policy Watch [reported](#) that some European countries at the World Health Organization (WHO) Pandemic Agreement negotiations maintain that intellectual property negotiations belong at the World Trade Organization (WTO) rather than the WHO.

If they mean to say that new WTO laws cannot be established at the WHO, they have a point. But if their objective is to silence IP debates at the WHO in the midst of the current WTO deadlock on whether to extend the Ministerial Decision on the TRIPS Agreement (which only applies to vaccines) to therapeutics and diagnostics, this stratagem is quite cynical.

This resistance to discussing IP at the WHO, often equated with 'undermining IP,' is not new. Similar objections arose in 1998 during the formulation of a new WHO medicines strategy. The European Union (EU) echoed concerns raised by the pharmaceutical industry regarding a draft resolution on the WHO's medicines strategy, arguing that '[no priority should be given to health over intellectual property considerations.](#)' The United States (US) took a similar approach, voicing concerns that work on the draft WHO medicines strategy could undermine IP and set out a strategy to obstruct its adoption.

The question of whether the WTO needs new rules to address access to medical products is up for debate. The existing TRIPS Agreement provides ample scope for the protection of public health, including [special crisis measures](#) to ensure access to health technologies to respond to a pandemic.

Moreover, the 2001 WTO Doha Declaration on TRIPS and Public Health explicitly states that the TRIPS Agreement 'does not and should not prevent members from taking measures to protect public health'. The Declaration also affirms that TRIPS 'can and should be interpreted and implemented in a manner supportive of WTO members' right to protect public health and, in particular, to promote access to medicines for all'.

The Pandemic Agreement currently being negotiated at the WHO can and must play a key role in operationalising these flexibilities.

2.4 Australian PM apologises for thalidomide

Apology in full - youtube <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rxpLollnaTI>

Actual speech in parliament on 29 November 2023 - 60th anniversary of Australia's withdrawal of thalidomide.

<https://www.pm.gov.au/media/national-apology-all-australians-impacted-thalidomide-tragedy>

See also

<https://theconversation.com/thalidomide-survivors-are-receiving-an-apology-for-the-pharmaceutical-disaster-that-changed-pregnancy-medicine-218691>

and

<https://www.abc.net.au/news/2023-11-25/canberra-prime-minister-saying-sorry-to-thalidomide-survivors/103110008>