

GRA CALLS FOR INCREASE IN TOBACCO TAXES

Although tobacco intake is harmful to the human body, it has the potential of increasing revenue for national development, the Commissioner-General of the Ghana Revenue Authority (GRA), Mr Kofi Nti, has noted.

Mr Nti, who was speaking at a High Level Round Table Conference on Tobacco Control in Accra, yesterday, therefore, called on government to increase taxes on tobacco to 70 per cent to help generate more revenue for national development.

He said Ghana's tax on tobacco was less than 20 per cent and that most cigarettes had their volumes understated, making it difficult to place the appointment tax on it.

Madam Joanna Ansong, Focal Person, Health Promotion, World Health Organization (WHO) in an address, said tobacco control was one of the most effective means to achieve the Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) target 3.4 of reducing pre-mature deaths from communicable diseases by one-third by the year 2030

There was, therefore, an urgent need, Madam Ansong said, for government and the Ministry of Health to include tobacco control in their national policies, plans and the SDG implementation frameworks, and to fully implement the (WHO) Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (FCTC) and raise tobacco taxes to reduce demand for tobacco.

In a presentation, Mr Labram Musah, Programs Director, Vision for Alternative Development (VALD), said tobacco could be controlled if more taxes were placed on it, adding that tobacco had the high tendency to increase revenue.

“If government and all stakeholders involved come together to increase tax on tobacco, it could aid in controlling its intake to break the cycle of poverty, contribute to ending hunger and promote sustainable agriculture and economic growth,” Mr Musah said.

Source: ISD (Chantal Aidoo & Faith Edison)

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