

RI falls further behind on tobacco control, activists say

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In the midst of efforts to reduce cigarette consumption among the young, the government of Dortmund City, Germany, is set to hold an international cigarette trade exhibition called Inter-Tabac Asia 2014 in Bali. Several Indonesian and Germany organizations have deplored the event, which is set to take place from Feb.27 until Feb.28.

Among activists who have voiced criticism toward cigarette exhibition are Yosef Rabindanata Nugraha from Jakarta, Indonesia, and Max Vollmer from Dortmund, Germany. They have launched an online petition at change.org/StopDortmund, which has thus far earned support from almost 11,000 netizens, both from Indonesia and overseas.

The petition, which was posted on Dec.1, 2013, is aimed at encouraging Westfalahallen Dortmund GmbH to not organize the Inter-Tabac Asia exhibition again. The petition is also directed at Dortmund Mayor Ullrich Sierau and the head of Westfalahallen Dortmund GmbH council, Friedhelm Sohn, who is also head of the children, adolescent and family commission at the Dortmund City Council.

Yosef, who is also the founder of the Indonesia Free from Cigarettes movement, hoped that the cigarette exhibition in Bali could be cancelled.

“Inter-Tabac Asia will not only open more opportunities for the domestic and foreign cigarette industry but will also make Indonesia a prime marketing target of the hazardous product as marketing windows for tobacco products in more than 90 percent countries have started to close,” said Yosef in a statement made available to The Jakarta Post on Wednesday.

He said the government should have been able to reject the Inter-Tabac Asia exhibition as it had once rejected the organizing of the 2014 World Tobacco Asia, which was initially to be held in Bali.

“Letting cigarette exhibitions, such as Inter-Tabac Asia, take place in this country will show that Indonesia is falling further behind in protecting its younger generations from the negative impact of tobacco,” said Yosef. (ebf)