




# Smokeless tobacco problems and Control measures in Myanmar

Dr. Nang Naing Naing Shein  
Deputy Director (NCDs)  
Ministry of Health and Sports  
Myanmar



# SLT Problem in Myanmar

- ▶ SLT use is highly prevalent in Myanmar among both men and women.
  - ▶ Culturally accepted product, making a big challenge to tobacco control.
  - ▶ Misconception that SLT use is less dangerous than tobacco smoking.
  - ▶ Can easily purchase at every where (Road side SLT vendor can be found in everywhere).
  - ▶ Low prices of SLT products
- 

# Prevalence of tobacco use among adults (25-64 yr.) (WHO STEPS Survey 2014)

## SMOKING



43.8%



Both Sex  
26.1%



8.4%



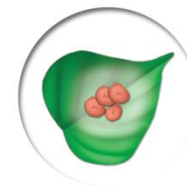
## SMOKELESS TOBACCO (Betel nut chewing)



62.2%



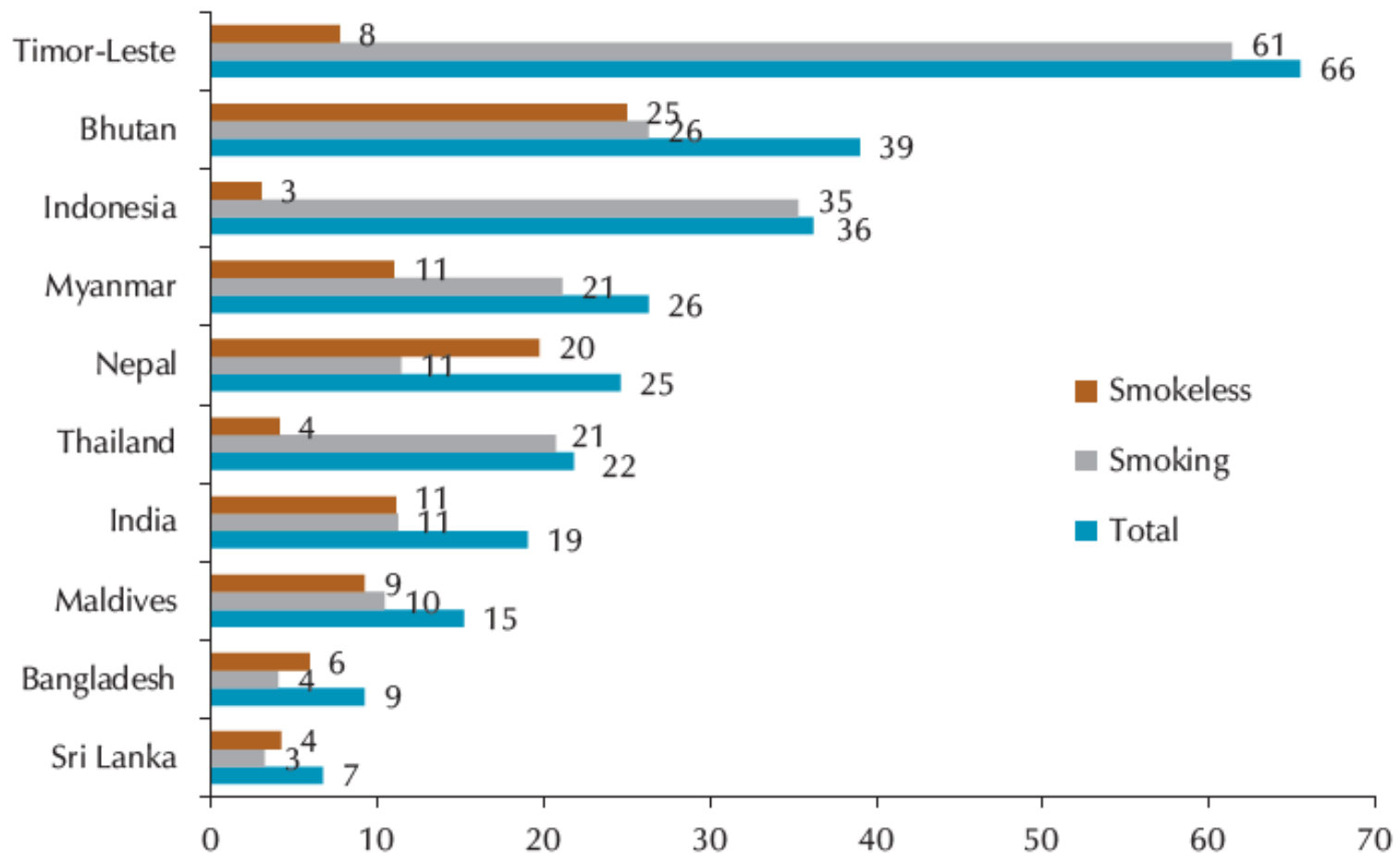
Both Sex  
43.2%



24.1%



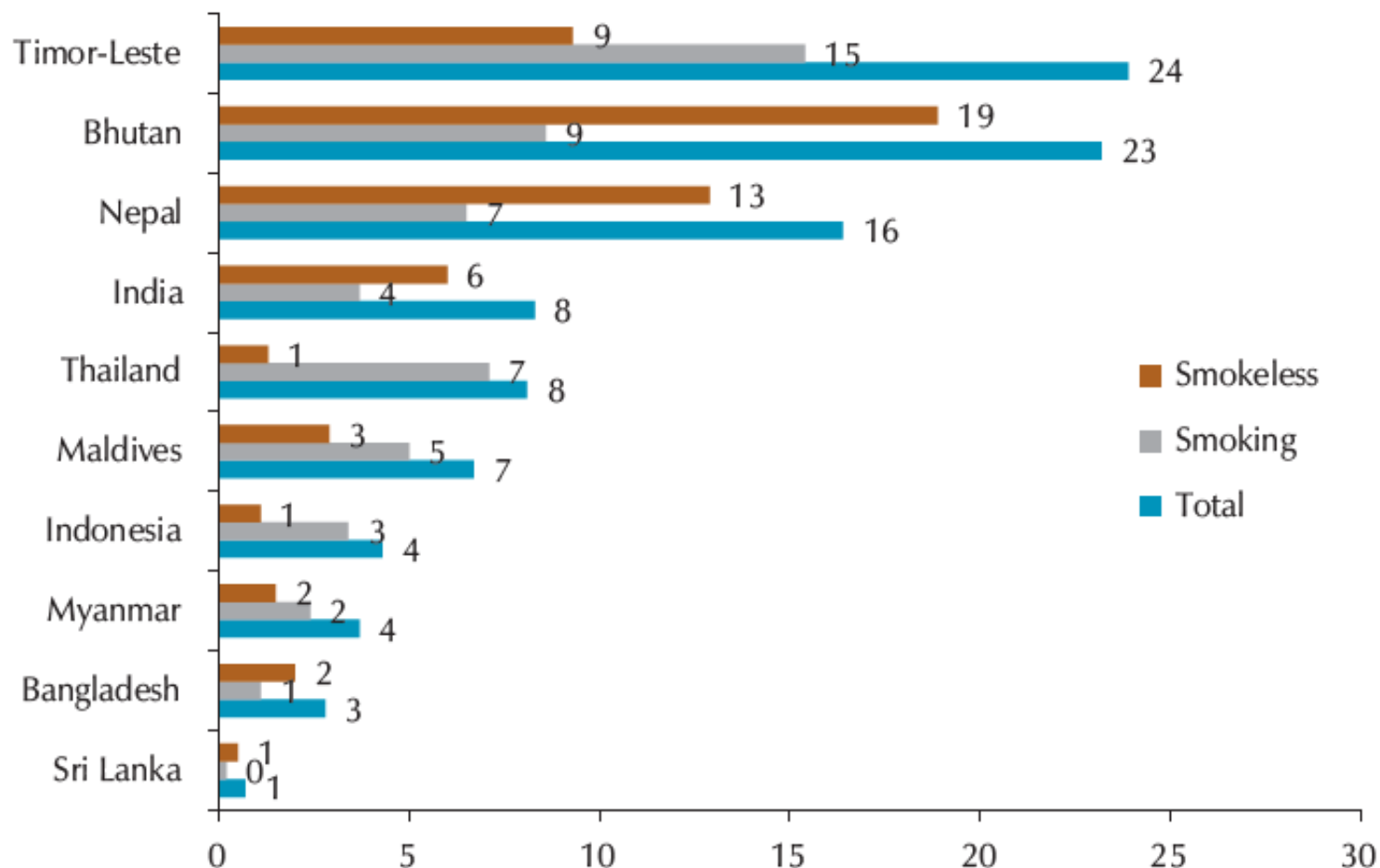
## Percentage of current tobacco users (smoking and smokeless) among youth (boys) in selected Member States of the South-East Asia Region



[Source: Global Youth Tobacco Survey (GYTS); Bangladesh (2013), Bhutan (2013), Maldives (2011), India (2009), Indonesia (2014), Nepal (2011), Myanmar (2016), Sri-Lanka (2015), Thailand (2015), Timor-Leste (2013)]

Available from: [http://www.searo.who.int/tobacco/documents/gyts\\_regional\\_brochure\\_2014\\_a4\\_size.pdf](http://www.searo.who.int/tobacco/documents/gyts_regional_brochure_2014_a4_size.pdf)

## Percentage of current tobacco users (smoking and smokeless) among youth (girls) in selected Member States of the South-East Asia Region



[Source: Global Youth Tobacco Survey (GYTS); Sri-Lanka (2015), Bangladesh (2013), Myanmar (2016), Indonesia (2014), Maldives (2011), Thailand (2015), India (2009), Nepal (2011), Bhutan (2013), Tomor-Leste (2013)]

Available from: [http://www.searo.who.int/tobacco/documents/gyts\\_regional\\_brochure\\_2014\\_a4\\_size.pdf](http://www.searo.who.int/tobacco/documents/gyts_regional_brochure_2014_a4_size.pdf)

# Road side SLT vendors can be seen in everywhere





# Main materials included in Myanmar Betel Quid (Kun Yar)



Betel leaf





# SLAKE-LIME



# Areca nut



# Dry Tobacco leaf



Brown

Yellow

# Modified tobacco (Hsay Hmwe)



# Tobacco modified with honey and alcohol



# Additional ingredients of Myanmar Betel Quid

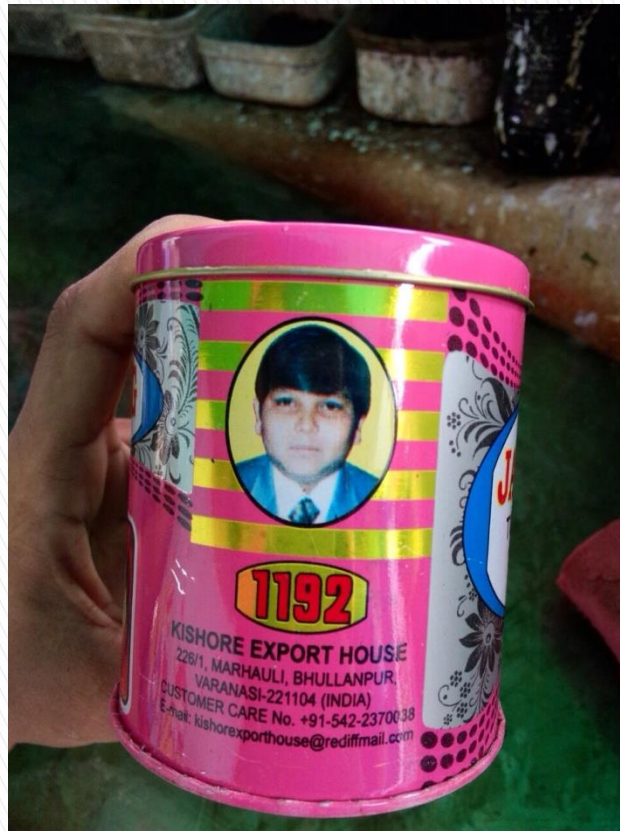


- ▶ Other ingredients are also added according to the customer preference
- ▶ Other sweetening and flavoring agents such as liquorice/sweet root (*Nwe-cho*), aniseed (*Samone-sapar*), cardamom (*Phalar*), clove (Lay Hnyin), pineapple flower (*Narnut-pwint*), black cumin (*Samone-net*), aniseed oil (*Samone-hsee*), cress (*Samone ni*), sesamon seed (*Hnan*), coconut shreds or pickled coconut shreds etc.

# Various kinds of imported SLT, border trade and most are illicit trades



Queen



1192



JAGMAG 1192





Sagar



No 45



Harchal



Signal  
350



ZARDA  
162



# Modified SLT Products produced in Myanmar



Man Shwe Pyi  
Tobacco leave



U Ba Hla  
Tobacco compound



Thin Ma



Chin Thae

# *Tobacco liquid (Hsay Paun Yay)*



Nay Rizara

# Methods of SLT use

- ▶ People start chewing betel preparation without tobacco.
- ▶ But the majority adds tobacco in the preparation later and become addicted to tobacco.
- ▶ Adding different forms of tobacco, flavors, and contents in the betel preparation become popular.

# Tradition and culture on smokeless tobacco use

Traditionally, the visitors who come to a house are offered as hospitality with

- (i) cheroots/cigarettes for smoking
- (ii) a container (lacquer box called (*kun-it*) consisting fresh betel leaves, cut pieces of areca nuts (betel nuts), betel nut cutter, slake-lime (in silver boxes), catechu (*shar-si*), cured tobacco other condiments (clove, sweet root, cardamom) to be prepared as *Kun-yar* for mouth freshening



bananas, coc  
performances

- ▶ No ceremony or occasion considered complete without
- ▶ *Kun (betel leave)*,
- ▶ *Hsey (dry tobacco)* and
- ▶ *Lahpet (Pickled Tea leave)*

# Traditional ceremony and SLT

# Traditional culture and SLT

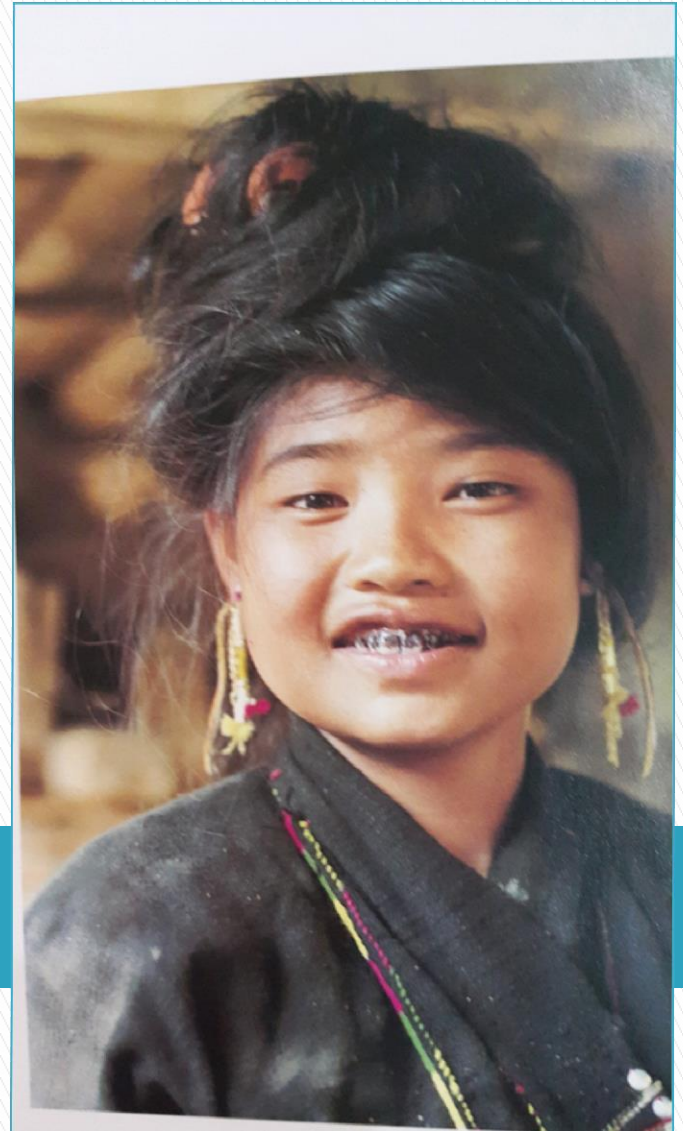
- ▶ considered impolite to refuse the above three offerings as a token of friendship and hospitality, particularly in the rural areas.
- ▶ Tobacco companies and their sales agents usually exploit this culture by free distribution as gifts or selling in subsidized prices.

Although our people like the white teeth and they prefer ...





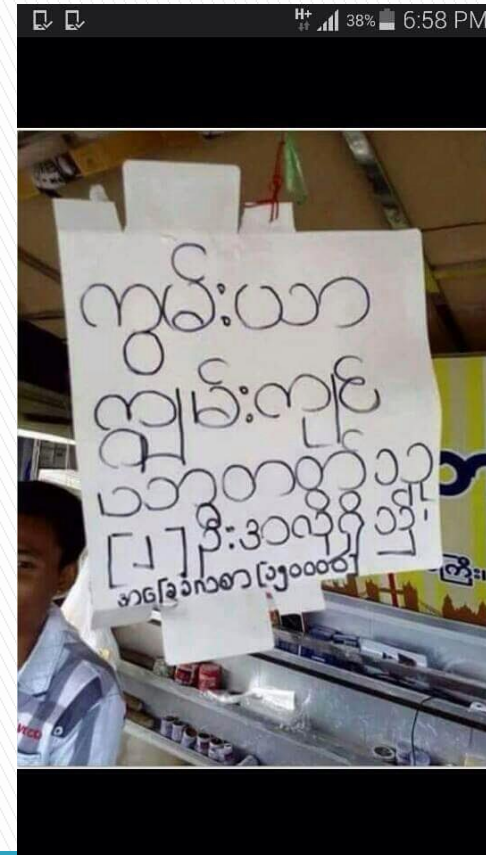
Some of tribes think black teeth stained by  
betel nut look beautiful  
(Wa tribe in Northern Shan State)



# Salary for betel quit makers



Betel quit preparation

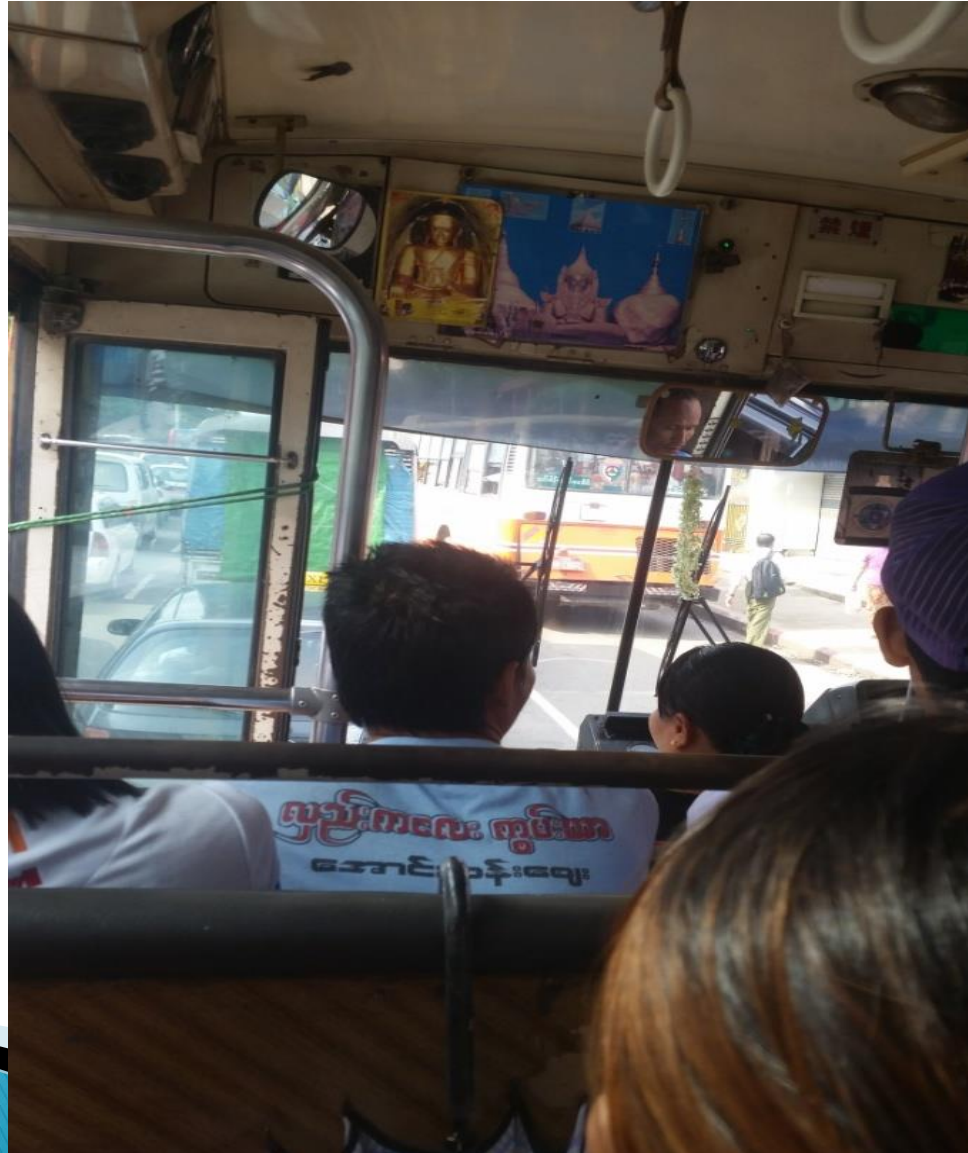


Advertisement for job vacancy

# Betel quid selling by car



# Betal quid promotion in T-Shirt



# Shops selling different kinds of smokeless tobacco products

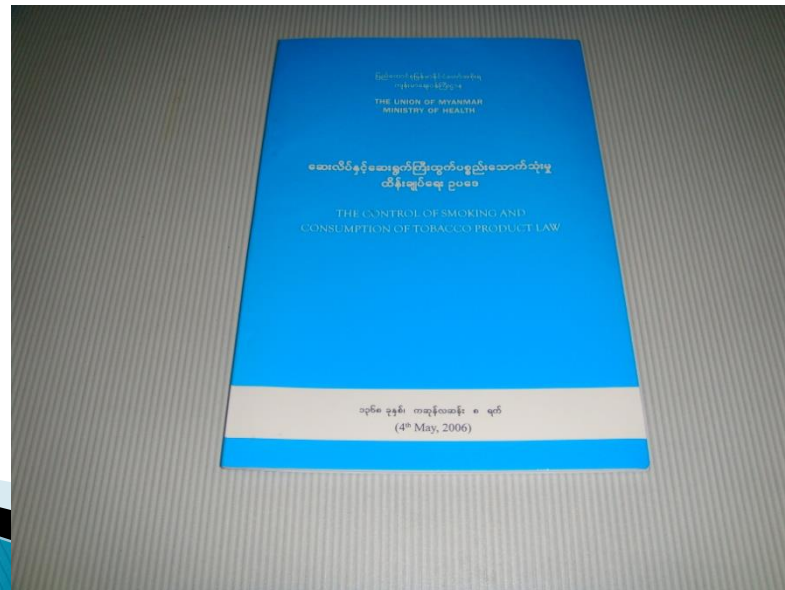


# Social aspects of SLT use

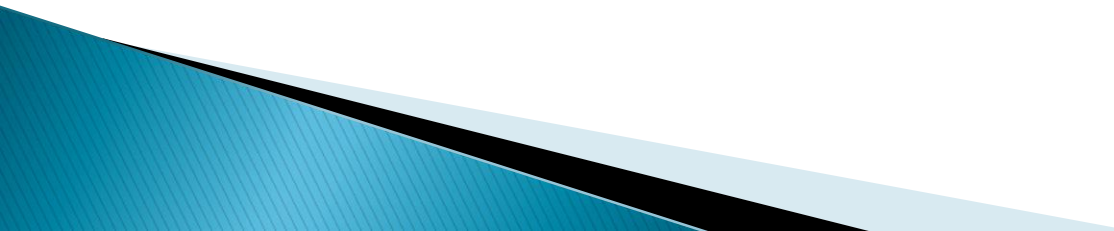
- ✓ SLT use has not been seriously taken as a dangerous behaviour among Myanmar people.
- ✓ Parents do not strictly prohibit their children as smoking.
- ✓ Long standing cultural use of SLT for social and religious occasions hinders efforts to control SLT use.
- ✓ Making and selling betel quid become a kind of job opportunity for girls and women, and can be seen in almost every corner of streets both in rural and urban areas in Myanmar.
- ✓ Given the high demand, SLT selling become one of the high income business for women.

# National Legislation

- Based on the provisions of the WHO FCTC, “**The Control of Smoking and Consumption of Tobacco Products Law**” was enacted in May, 2006, and it came into effect in May, 2007.

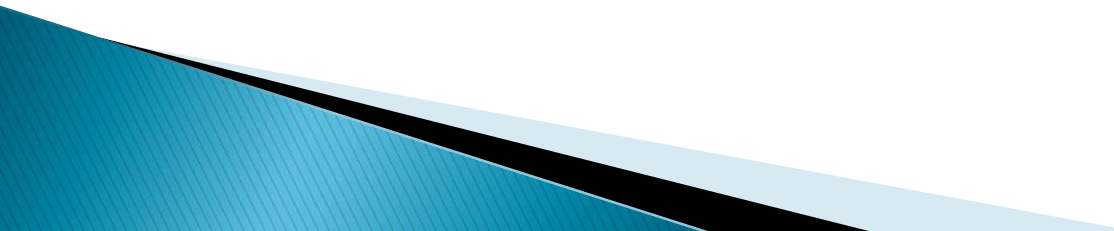


# Main Points of National Tobacco Control Law

- ▶ The law prohibits smoking at public places, public transport, health facilities and educational institutions.
  - ▶ Total ban of tobacco advertising, promotion and sponsorship.
  - ▶ Restriction of access to tobacco products by legal minors.
- 



# Multisectoral Central Tobacco Control Committee

- ▶ According to the law, “**Central Tobacco Control Committee**” was formed by the Government in 2011.
  - ▶ Chaired by Union Minister for Health.
  - ▶ The members include the Deputy Ministers and Senior officials from Ministry of Health and other related Ministries.
- 

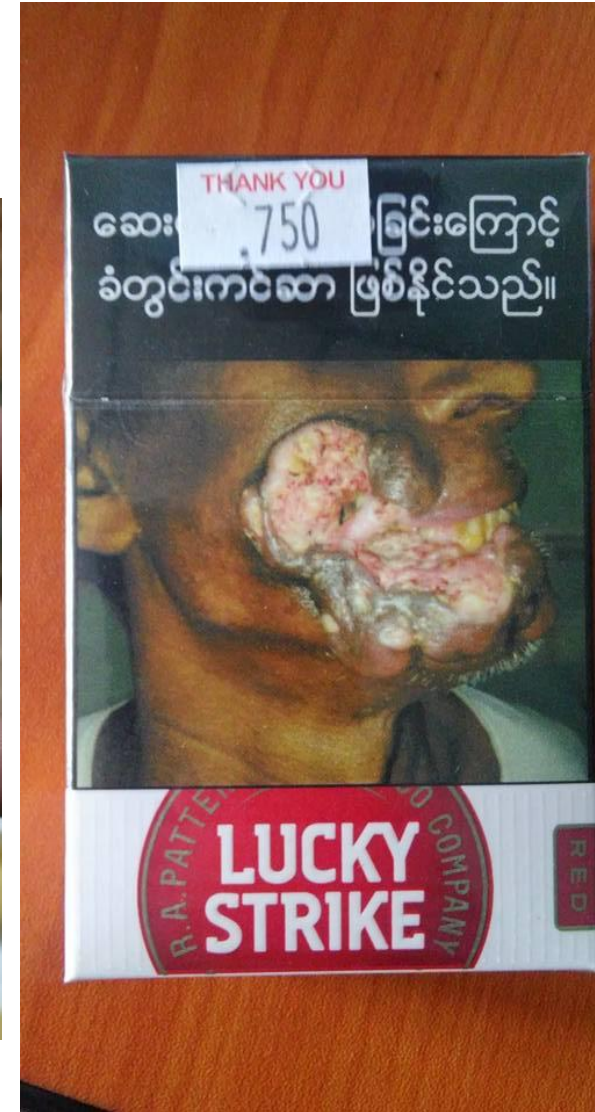
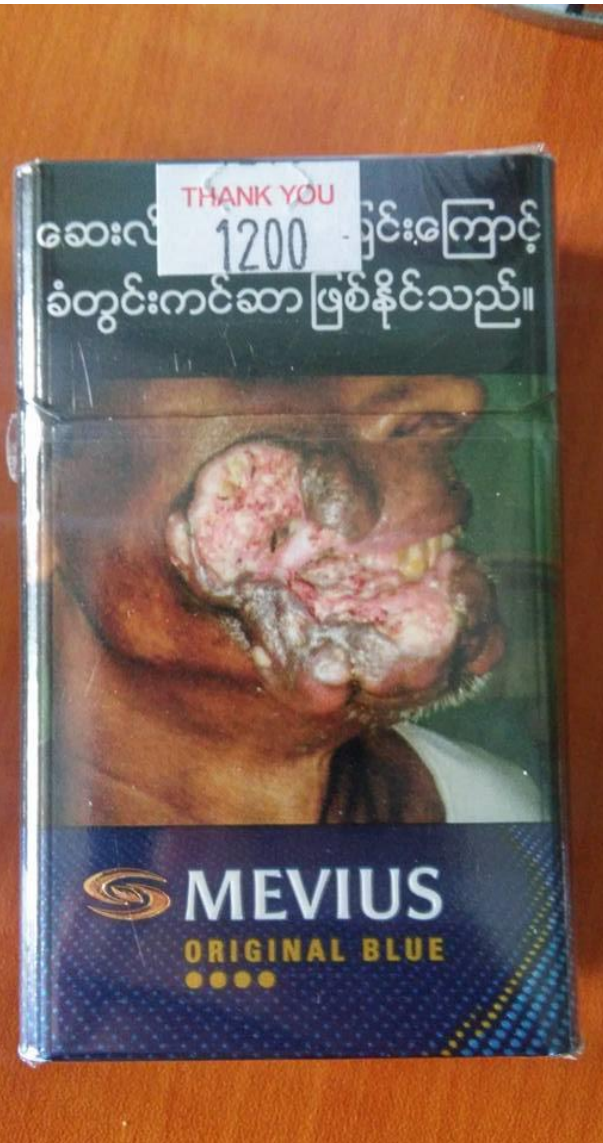
# Control measures

- ▶ Government has issued circulations prohibiting sale and use of SLT in government compounds in 2011 and 2016,
- ▶ Prohibited spitting chewed tobacco in public places,
- ▶ but still have low public compliance and weak enforcement.
- ▶ National Tobacco Control Program of MOHS has conducted educational campaigns on hazards of chewing betel quid with areca nut and tobacco (through posters, pamphlets, newspapers, television).
- ▶ Basic health staffs are trained for short advice for tobacco cessation and encouraged to implement at primary care level, but not covered nationwide yet.

# Control measures

- ▶ Regular monitoring and reporting mechanism for banning TAPS (including SLT) was established in 2014, but sustainable effort and taking appropriate actions are still challenging issues.
- ▶ Notifications released by MoHS with approval of cabinet in February 2016 on PHW also included provision for SLT products (75% PHW).
- ▶ Efforts for raising tax on tobacco products also considered for SLT (current tax rate – 60%).
- ▶ Illicit tobacco products including SLT are seized at border areas by multisectoral control teams.

# Health Warnings in Myanmar after 1<sup>st</sup> September, 2016



# Fighting Smoking and SLT.....



**THANK YOU FOR YOUR KIND  
ATTENTION.**

