

Focus on illegal cigarette trade than prohibitive policies

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THE Malaysian International Chamber of Commerce and Industry (MICCI) said the government should focus on addressing the illegal cigarette trade rather than introducing prohibitive policies to curb the smoking problem

MICCI said currently more than 50% of smokers are smoking cheap and unregulated products, and Malaysia has a real issue at hand where the illegal cigarette trade is not only impacting legitimate businesses but also the government's agenda to reduce smoking.

"The government needs to take more drastic measures to address this issue instead of coming up with prohibitive policies that will have no effect to bring down the incidence of illegal cigarettes," MICCI said in a statement today.

MICCI stated that not only that introducing such prohibitive policies on legitimate businesses will create complexities for the businesses at retail, it will also send the wrong message to the business and investment communities that the unlawful gets away with it while overzealous prohibitive attention is focused on the regulated industry.

"While the government has stated its intent to ban smoking and possession of tobacco products, including vapes to anyone born after 2005, no details have been shared on the mode of implementation which will require retail to check and ensure each purchaser's year of birth before any transaction can occur," it added.

MICCI further added that trying to have more prohibitive policies pressed upon the lawful trade in an attempt to reduce smoking prevalence does not work as it will lead to smokers jumping to illegal unregulated products.

"Instead, focus on the illicit unregulated products first by plugging the bolt hole as this will be more effective. The government should instead take a harm reduction alternative approach instead of just putting in more restrictions," MICCI further added.

Source: <https://themalaysianreserve.com/2022/07/04/focus-on-illegal-cigarette-trade-than-prohibitive-policies/>