

PHILIP MORRIS INTERNATIONAL SURVEY

'Malaysia has unique opportunity to reduce smoking prevalence'

KUALA LUMPUR: An international survey by Philip Morris International reveals that citizens worldwide are frustrated by divisive and exclusionary approaches to policymaking.

More than eight in 10 adults (82 per cent) surveyed worldwide believed that the best solutions to critical global challenges could be found not at the extremes but in the middle ground, it said.

In the survey conducted by independent research firm Povadodo for Philip Morris, more than 44,000 respondents in 22 countries, including Malaysia, showed strong agreement (88 per cent) that when making decisions that affected the lives of a significant

portion of the population, leaders must listen to and advocate for the people they represented.

Looking closely at market-specific results, Malaysian respondents believed that a consequence of increasingly divided discourse was the growing prevalence of misinformation, in some cases, intended to mislead public opinion.

"The results from this survey show the importance to the public of decisions being made based on science and facts as well as the importance of access to information on smoke-free alternatives.

"Agreement for providing access to, and information about, smoke-free alternative products

is strong even among non-consumers, which shows broad societal support for this policy approach. Yet, despite this, there is an appetite from the public for stakeholders to come together and find pragmatic solutions," added Philip Morris.

Philip Morris Malaysia managing director Naeem Shahab Khan said the country had a unique once-in-a-generation opportunity to reduce smoking prevalence if all parties worked together.

"Finding the right balance of supporting new regulations aimed at preventing smoking initiation and promoting smoking cessation can be complemented by measures that enable those



The Philip Morris International survey involved more than 44,000 respondents in 22 countries, including Malaysia. EPA PIC

adults who would otherwise continue to smoke to have access to and information about science-based alternatives.

"Inclusion of a harm reduction approach in strategies aimed at decreasing smoking prevalence has the potential to foster more rapid declines and can allow for progress in the realm of public health," he added.

The global survey results also showed support for a balanced approach to tobacco regulation.

"If we are to address the challenges we face as a society in a meaningful and expeditious way, a more balanced and inclusive approach is required," said Philip Morris senior vice-president of external affairs Gregoire Verdeaux.