

**Asean Feels Tobacco Should Be Excluded From AFTA List – Liow
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PETALING JAYA, July 9 (Bernama) -- Malaysia and Asean member nations are of the opinion that tobacco should be excluded from the Asean Free Trade Area (AFTA) list for implementation by 2015.

Health Minister Datuk Seri Liow Tiong Lai said this opinion was expressed at the 11th Asean Health Ministers Meeting at Phuket, Thailand last Thursday.

He said Asean Health Ministers discussed how to reduce consumption of tobacco as well as the ways to control the item from becoming widespread in the region.

"We felt that tobacco needs to be withdrawn from the list of AFTA products as it could reduce the number of smokers and create a tobacco-free environment," he said, adding that he would talk to International Trade and Industry Minister Datuk Seri Mustapa Mohamad on the matter.

Liow was speaking to reporters after opening a 'Gastrointestinal & Nutrition Management: Continual Care' 2012 conference organised by the Malaysian Dietitians' Association (MDA) at Sunway Medical Centre, here Monday.

Liow said the meeting among others also touched on efforts to improve cooperation among Asean countries in handling the outbreak of infectious diseases especially the influenza A virus infection (H1N1) apart from holding workshops and seminars for Asean countries to share experience on health issues.

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