

**In the Name of Allah  
(Government Emblem)**

## **Gazette of the Government of Maldives**

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**Law Number: 23/2024**

### **Law on the First Amendment to Law Number 15/2010 (Tobacco Control Act)**

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The bill on the first amendment to Law No. 15/2010 (Tobacco Control Act), which was passed by the 48th sitting of the 20th People's Majlis held on Tuesday, 12th November 2024, has today been ratified by the President on Wednesday, 13th November 2024 (11 Jumada al-Ula 1446) as per Article 92 of the Constitution, and published in the Government Gazette of Maldives.

## **Law on the First Amendment to Law Number 15/2010 (Tobacco Control Act)**

The following amendments are hereby made to Law No. 15/2010 (Tobacco Control Act):

### **1. Amendment to sub-article (f) of Article 3 of the aforementioned Law**

Sub-article (f) of Article 3 of the said Law shall be amended as follows:

#### **3.**

- (f) All government buildings and their premises, as specified in regulation made under this Law.

### **2. Addition of an Article after Article 3 of the aforementioned Law**

The following Article shall be added after Article 3:

#### **3-1. Taking action for using tobacco in Prohibited Areas and against the permit**

- (a) If any person uses tobacco in a place completely prohibited by Article 3 of this Law in violation of the permit, and if that place is a business or service provider, in addition to taking action against the perpetrator and the owner or operator of that place under Article 29 of this Law, the Ministry shall have the authority to recommend to the relevant government authority to temporarily suspend or revoke the business permit issued to that place.
- (b) If any person uses tobacco in a place where it is permitted under regulations made under this Law, but in violation of the conditions of such permit, and if that place is a business or service provider, the Ministry shall have the authority to take the following actions against the perpetrator and the owner or operator of that place.
  - (1) Revoke the permit issued under this Law for tobacco use in that place
  - (2) Recommend to the relevant government authority to temporarily suspend or revoke the business permit issued to that place.
- (c) The Ministry shall revoke a permit issued under this Law for tobacco use in a place, or recommend to the relevant government authority to temporarily suspend or revoke the business permit issued to that place under this Article, in accordance with the procedures specified in regulations made under this Law.

**3. Amendment to sub-article (a) of Article 6 of the aforementioned Law**

Sub-article (a) of Article 6 of the said Law shall be amended as follows:

**6.**

- (a) No person shall sell any type of tobacco or any tobacco product to a person under 21 years of age or to a minor.

**4. Amendment to sub-article (b) of Article 6 of the aforementioned Law**

Sub-article (b) of Article 6 of the said Law shall be amended as follows:

**6.**

- (b) No person shall involve a person under 21 years of age or a minor in any transaction involving the sale of any type of tobacco or any tobacco product.

**5. Amendment to sub-article (c) of Article 6 of the aforementioned Law**

Sub-article (c) of Article 6 of the said Law shall be amended as follows:

**6.**

- (c) It is the responsibility of the seller to ensure that the person buying tobacco is 21 years of age or older, or is not a minor. Accordingly, if the person buying tobacco appears to be under 21 years of age or a minor, no tobacco product shall be sold to that person until they present a valid official document proving their identity or age.

**6. Amendment to Article 7 of the aforementioned Law**

Article 7 of the said Law shall be amended as follows:

**7. Display of signage indicating that the sale of tobacco products to persons under years of age and minors is prohibited 21.**

Parties engaged in the tobacco product business shall display a warning in a publicly visible location within their business premises, indicating that the sale of any tobacco product to persons under 21 years of age and minors is prohibited by law, in accordance with the rules and standards determined by the Ministry.

**7. Amendment to Article 8 of the aforementioned Law**

**Article 8** of the said Law shall be amended as follows:

**8. Prohibition of advertising at tobacco retail outlets**

- (a) No person selling any type of tobacco shall advertise it. Furthermore, no tobacco product, or any packet, carton, or other such item containing a tobacco product, shall be displayed in a publicly visible manner at tobacco retail outlets. Such items shall also not be transported from one place to another in a publicly visible manner.
- (b) For the purpose of sub-article (a) of this Article, displaying any tobacco product or any packet, carton, or other such item containing a tobacco product, or items designed to resemble such products, in a publicly visible manner at tobacco retail outlets, or transporting them from one place to another in a publicly visible manner, shall be considered as advertising.

**8. Amendment to Article 10 of the aforementioned Law**

**Article 10** of the said Law shall be amended as follows:

**10. Prohibition of cultivating tobacco and manufacturing tobacco and tobacco products.**

- (a) It is prohibited to cultivate any type of tobacco plant in the Maldives to any extent, or to manufacture tobacco in the Maldives to any extent.
- (b) It is prohibited to import into the Maldives any part of a tobacco plant, including tobacco seeds and plants, that can be used for cultivating tobacco.
- (c) It is prohibited to manufacture any type of tobacco product in the Maldives.

**9. Addition of two Articles after Article 10 of the aforementioned Law**

The following two Articles shall be added after **Article 10**:

**10-1. Prohibition of importing electronic cigarettes and vaping devices into the Maldives.**

- (a) It is prohibited to import electronic cigarettes and similar vaping devices and products designed for use with such devices into the Maldives.
- (b) If any party violates sub-article (a) of this Article, that party shall be fined MVR 50,000 (Fifty Thousand Rufiyaa). In addition, for each electronic cigarette or vaping device imported by that party into the Maldives, a fine of MVR 10,000 (Ten Thousand Rufiyaa) shall be imposed.

**10.2 Prohibition of selling, distributing for free, and using electronic cigarettes and vaping devices.**

- (a) It is prohibited to sell electronic cigarettes and similar vaping devices and products designed for use with such devices in the Maldives.
- (b) It is prohibited to distribute electronic cigarettes and similar vaping devices and products designed for use with such devices for free in the Maldives.
- (c) It is prohibited to use electronic cigarettes and similar vaping devices and products designed for use with such devices in the Maldives.
- (d) If any party violates sub-article (a) of this Article, that party shall be fined MVR 20,000 (Twenty Thousand Rufiyaa). In addition, for each electronic cigarette or vaping device sold by that party, a fine of MVR 10,000 (Ten Thousand Rufiyaa) shall be imposed.
- (e) If any party violates sub-article (b) of this Article, the party who committed the act shall be fined MVR 10,000 (Ten Thousand Rufiyaa).
- (f) If any party violates sub-article (c) of this Article, that party shall be fined MVR 5,000 (Five Thousand Rufiyaa).
- (g) If an electronic cigarette or a similar vaping device or product designed for use with such a device is sold or distributed for free to a minor in violation of sub-articles (a) and (b) of this Article, in addition to the fines imposed under sub-articles (d) and (e) of this Article, that party shall be fined MVR 50,000 (Fifty Thousand Rufiyaa).

**10. Amendment to the introductory phrase of sub-article (b) of Article 11 of the aforementioned Law.**

The introductory phrase of sub-article (b) of Article 11 of the said Law shall be amended as follows:

**11.**

- (b) Importers and sellers of tobacco products shall handle packages, packets, cartons and other such items containing tobacco products in accordance with the following:

**11. Deletion of sub-article (d) of Article 11 of the aforementioned Law.**

Sub-article (d) of Article 11 of the said Law shall be deleted.

**12. Amendment to the introductory phrase of Article 12 of the aforementioned Law.**

The introductory phrase of **Article 12** of the said Law shall be amended as follows:

12. On every packet, carton, or other item containing a tobacco product, the following information shall be printed in English on the exterior when it is packaged.

**13. Amendment to Article 13 of the aforementioned Law**

**Article 13** of the said Law shall be amended as follows:

**13. Adherence of tobacco importers and sellers to regulations and agreements**

Notwithstanding compliance with this chapter by parties importing or selling tobacco products in the Maldives, such parties shall not be exempt from their responsibilities stated in other regulations, rules, and international agreements to which the Maldives is a party, which they must adhere to and respect in order to promote information about the harms of tobacco products.

**14. Deletion of sub-article (b)(2) of Article 14 of the aforementioned Law.**

Sub-article (b)(2) of **Article 14** of the said Law shall be deleted.

**15. Deletion of sub-article (b)(4) of Article 14 of the aforementioned Law.**

Sub-article (b)(4) of **Article 14** of the said Law shall be deleted.

**16. Amendment to Article 17 of the aforementioned Law**

**Article 17** of the said Law shall be amended as follows:

**17. Change of registration for tobacco product names**

From the effective date of this Law, no registered name for tobacco products, or a name commonly used for tobacco products, or for devices used for tobacco use, or a part of such a name, shall be given to any item or place containing tobacco products. Furthermore, a name that has been registered or used for a non-tobacco product or place at any time shall not be given to a tobacco product.

## **17. Addition of an Article after Article 17 of the aforementioned Law**

The following Article shall be added after **Article 17**:

### **17.1 Taking action against parties that advertise, sponsor, or promote in violation of the law.**

- (a) It is prohibited for any party to advertise, promote, or sponsor a tobacco product in violation of the standards specified in this Law regarding the advertisement, sponsorship, and promotion of tobacco products.
- (b) If any party advertises, promotes, or sponsors a tobacco product in the Maldives in violation of sub-article (a) of this Article, in addition to taking action against the perpetrator and the owner or operator of that place under Article 29 of this Law, the Ministry shall have the authority to take the following actions against the operator of that place.
  - (1) Revoke the license issued under this Law for tobacco product business in that place.
  - (2) Recommend to the relevant government authority to temporarily suspend or revoke the business permit for that place.
- (c) The Ministry shall revoke a license issued under this Law for tobacco product business, or recommend to the relevant government authority to temporarily suspend or revoke the business permit for that place under this Article, in accordance with the procedures specified in regulations made under this Law.

## **18. Amendment to Article 18 of the aforementioned Law**

**Article 18** of the said Law shall be amended as follows:

### **18. Taxation**

It shall be mandatory to pay import duty and other taxes payable under relevant laws, as specified in Law No. 3/79 (Maldives Export-Import Act), on all tobacco products, all types of tobacco substitutes, and all devices used for tobacco consumption imported for sale in the Maldives.

**19. Amendment to Article 19 of the aforementioned Law**

**Article 19** of the said Law shall be amended as follows:

**19. Unlawful handling of tobacco**

No person shall import, export, distribute, or sell tobacco or any tobacco product in the Maldives in violation of this Law and the regulations made there under.

**20. Amendment to Article 21 of the aforementioned Law**

**Article 21** of the said Law shall be amended as follows:

**21. Submission of tobacco-related reports**

Every person who imports tobacco products into the Maldives shall prepare a report containing the information mentioned in this chapter, as stipulated in the regulations made under this Law, and submit it to the Ministry.

**21. Amendment to the introductory phrase of Article 22 of the aforementioned Law**

The introductory phrase of **Article 22** of the said Law shall be amended as follows:

22. Parties selling or exporting tobacco products for tobacco use and other purposes in the Maldives shall list each such type by its brand name in the report and include the following information about that product.

**22. Amendment to the introductory phrase of Article 25 of the aforementioned Law.**

The introductory phrase of **Article 25** of the said Law shall be amended as follows:

25. In addition to the sections required to be included in the report under this chapter every party importing or exporting tobacco products from the Maldives shall submit the following information to the Ministry at least once a year, in a specified manner, unless otherwise stated in the regulations made under this Law. In addition such a report shall include all other information required by the regulations made under this Law.

**23. Amendment to sub-article (a) of Article 25 of the aforementioned Law**

Sub-article (a) of Article 25 of the said Law shall be amended as follows:

**25.**

- (a) The number of cigarettes, cigars, tobacco packets, or other items used for tobacco consumption imported or exported into the Maldives during the reporting period, and the weight of tobacco products imported or exported for purposes other than tobacco consumption, along with the amount of money earned from selling each type, clearly itemized.

**24. Amendment to sub-article (d) of Article 25 of the aforementioned Law**

Sub-article (d) of Article 25 of the said Law shall be amended as follows:

**25.**

- (d) The price at which the goods were exported by the exporting party, changes in brand prices during the reporting period, and the names of those brands.

**25. Amendment to Article 28 of the aforementioned Law**

Article 28 of the said Law shall be amended as follows:

**28. Obligation to obtain a license for tobacco product business**

- (a) Every party that imports or exports tobacco products to or from the Maldives and every party that sells tobacco products wholesale or retail in the Maldives, must possess a valid license issued by the Ministry under this Law, in addition to the business permit issued by the relevant government authority.
- (b) The licenses mentioned in sub-article (a) of this Article shall include licenses issued for the following types of businesses.
  - (1) License for wholesale or retail sale of tobacco products.
  - (2) License for importing tobacco products.
  - (3) License for re-exporting tobacco products.
- (c) The license mentioned in sub-article (a) of this Article shall not be issued solely for operating a tobacco-related business.
- (d) Applications for the license mentioned in sub-article (a) of this Article shall be submitted to the Ministry in accordance with the regulations made under this Law.

- (e) The rules regarding the issuance of licenses under sub-article (a) of this Article the matters to be considered when issuing licenses, the duration of the license, procedures for renewing licenses, conditions for issuing licenses, rules for renewing license durations, license fees, and other rules related to license issuance shall be specified in the regulations made under this Law.

## **26. Addition of an Article after Article 28 of the aforementioned Law**

The following Article shall be added after **Article 28**:

### **28-1 Engaging in tobacco product business without a license**

- (a) It is prohibited to operate any type of tobacco product business in the Maldives without a valid license for tobacco product business, as stipulated in this Law and the regulations made thereunder.
- (b) For the purpose of this Article, “engaging in a tobacco product business” refers to the types of businesses, mentioned in Article 28(b) of this Law and any other transaction involving the buying and selling of a tobacco product.
- (c) If any type of tobacco product business is operated without obtaining a valid license for tobacco product business, as stipulated in this Law and the regulations made thereunder, in addition to taking action against the owner or operator of that place under Article 29 of this Law, the Ministry shall have the authority to take the following actions against the operator of that place.
  - (1) Revoke the license issued under this Law for tobacco product business in that place..
  - (2) Recommend to the relevant government authority to temporarily suspend or revoke the business permit for that place.
- (d) The Ministry shall revoke a license issued under this Law for tobacco product business, or recommend to the relevant government authority to temporarily suspend or revoke the business permit for that place under this Article, in accordance with the procedures specified in regulations made under this Law.

**27. Amendment to sub-article (b)(1) of Article 29 of the aforementioned Law**

Sub-article (b)(1) of Article 29 of the said Law shall be amended as follows:

**29. (b)**

- (1) Imposing a fine of an amount between MVR 1,000 (One Thousand Rufiyaa) and MVR 1,000,000 (One Million Rufiyaa) in accordance with the regulations made by the Tobacco Control Board, as stipulated in Chapter Eleven of this Law. If the act committed by the fined party involves dealing in unauthorized types of tobacco, or conducting unauthorized business, or smuggling, or failing to disclose required information during the import and export stage, or misleading information, or violating rules regarding packaging, bundling, and labeling, the amount of the fine shall be determined as 10 (ten) times the total amount , which is the value of the goods related to the act plus the taxes and fees payable at that stage. If the total amount so derived is less than MVR 1,000 (One Thousand Rufiyaa), the fine amount shall be MVR 1,000 (One Thousand Rufiyaa).

**28. Amendment to Article 35 of the aforementioned Law**

Article 35 of the said Law shall be amended as follows:

**35. Enforcement of the Law**

- (a) Every government authority shall enforce the Articles of this Law related to its respective domain. Furthermore, they shall prioritize the effective enforcement of the matters stated in those Articles and enforce the regulations required to be enforced in relation to international agreements on tobacco control to which the Maldives is a party.
- (b) To enforce this Law, to monitor the actions of parties acting in violation of this Law, to investigate such matters and take action, and to encourage compliance with this Law, government authorities responsible for enforcing the Articles of the Law shall appoint an officer to perform these tasks under the most senior official of that authority and grant that person full discretion and power.

**29. Amendment to sub-article (a)(2) of Article 37 of the aforementioned Law**

Sub-article (a)(2) of Article 37 of the said Law shall be amended as follows:

**37. (a)**

- (2) Regulations required to be made under this Law and the formulation of technical standards.

**30. Amendment to the introductory phrase of Article 38 of the aforementioned Law.**

The introductory phrase of Article 38 of the said Law shall be amended as follows:

- 38.** Relevant government authorities shall plan and implement robust activities to raise public awareness about the harm caused by tobacco cultivation and use to health, the economy, the environment, and society. Such activities shall include the following:

**31. Amendment to sub-article (d) of Article 42 of the aforementioned Law**

Sub-article (d) of Article 42 of the said Law shall be amended as follows:

**42.**

- (a) "Advertising" refers to directly or indirectly publicizing information about tobacco products, their brands, manufacturers, and sellers through various commercial means, and promotional activities undertaken to sell tobacco products and brands, or to increase sales, or to promote the act of tobacco consumption. The meaning of tobacco advertising includes words, names, phrases, slogans, letters, numbers, images, drawings, designs, logos, colors, and other such items related to tobacco products brands manufacturers, and sellers, or those used by such parties, or referring to such parties or items as well as sounds, songs, tunes, and music.

**32. Amendment to sub-article (k) of Article 42 of the aforementioned Law**

Sub-article (k) of Article 42 of the said Law shall be amended as follows:

**42.**

- (k) "Tobacco" refers to all types of tobacco plants and their leaves.

**33. Amendment to sub-article (l) of Article 42 of the aforementioned Law**

Sub-article (l) of Article 42 of the said Law shall be amended as follows:

**42.**

- (l) "Tobacco products" refers to tobacco, tobacco stems, nicotine, and products prepared by including tobacco, tobacco stems, and nicotine. Furthermore, any product from which a substance or substances are absorbed into the body, whether by chewing, drinking, inhaling, sticking, pressing, or rubbing it on a part of the body and which contains any amount of any such type, is a tobacco product. Notwithstanding this definition, nicotine replacement therapy or other such products used as part of "cessation" treatment to help people quit tobacco, and approved and determined by relevant technical authorities, shall not be considered tobacco products for the purposes of this Law.

**34. Amendment to sub-article (m) of Article 42 of the aforementioned Law**

Sub-article (m) of Article 42 of the said Law shall be amended as follows:

**42.**

- (m) "Tobacco manufacturing" refers to drying tobacco with air, sun, and fire heater otherwise preparing fresh tobacco leaves in various ways for use in tobacco manufacturing.

**35. Amendment to sub-article (n) of Article 42 of the aforementioned Law**

Sub-article (n) of Article 42 of the said Law shall be amended as follows:

**42.**

- (n) "Tobacco use" refers to inhaling or exhaling smoke or vapor from a tobacco product through the mouth or nose, or consuming a tobacco product by putting it in the mouth, chewing, eating, drinking, or inhaling its scent, or otherwise absorbing its substance into the body by sticking, pressing, or rubbing it on a part of the body.

**36. Amendment to sub-article (o) of Article 42 of the aforementioned Law**

Sub-article (o) of Article 42 of the said Law shall be amended as follows:

**42.**

- (o) "Tobacco use device" refers to all items used to introduce smoke, vapor, or any other substance emitted from a tobacco product into the body of the person using tobacco.

**37. Amendment to sub-article (p) of Article 42 of the aforementioned Law**

Sub-article (p) of Article 42 of the said Law shall be amended as follows:

**42.**

(p) "Tobacco sponsorship" refers to directly or indirectly making known, in any place or in any way, the involvement or association of any party that manufactures, sells, or markets any tobacco product with any of the following activities, and using an item symbolizing such a tobacco-related party in any form, in any such activity item, or place;

- (1) Entertainment activities, sports competitions, scientific and literary activities cultural and fashion-related matters, and other types of similar works, activities, shows, films videos, drawings, and audio.
- (2) Clothing, uniforms, and equipment used by participants or individuals in any such activity, and related social media accounts.
- (3) Activities held on any social media and digital platform, and in public places, or places where people gather.
- (4) Buildings, educational institutions, open land, and public places.
- (5) Other matters and places specified in the regulations made under this Law.

**38. Amendment to sub-article (q) of Article 42 of the aforementioned Law**

Sub-article (q) of Article 42 of the said Law shall be amended as follows:

**42.**

(q) "State institutions" refers to all state institutions, government agencies government-owned companies, legal entities operated by the government, and all places that perform official government responsibilities.

**39. Addition of the following sub-articles after sub-article (q) of Article 42 of the said Law**

The following sub-articles shall be added after the sub-article (q) of Article 42:

**42.**

- (r) "Tobacco plant" refers to plants of the *Nicotiana tabacum* and *Nicotiana rustica* species.
- (s) "Owners" refers to the most senior person of a place, or the person entrusted with the responsibility for a specific period or permanently, and the person

entrusted with overseeing a place at a specific time. This includes the person responsible for and present in places providing public services at that particular time.

- (t) “Tobacco dependents” refers to individuals who habitually use tobacco due to the nicotine it contains (or for any other reason), and who physically and psychologically rely on the nicotine in tobacco.
- (u) “Tobacco smoke” refers to smoke, vapor, and all other substances emitted during tobacco use.
- (v) “Electronic cigarettes and similar vaping devices” refers to all devices designed to allow the inhalation of vapor containing nicotine or other substances through the mouth. This includes devices designed to be refillable via a refill container, tank, or single-use cartridge, or designed to be disposable after single use, and cartridges, tanks, and refill containers containing nicotine, and individual parts of such devices produced separately without cartridges and tanks. This definition does not include heated tobacco products and tobacco heating products.
- (w) “Products designed for use with electronic cigarettes and similar vaping devices” refers to all chemical products prepared for insertion into or use with electronic cigarettes and similar vaping devices.
- (x) “Heated tobacco product” refers to tobacco sticks or other tobacco products that emit an aerosol containing nicotine or nicotine and other chemicals when heated.
- (aa) “Tobacco heating product” refers to any device designed to heat a tobacco stick or other tobacco product inserted into it without combustion, and to allow the inhalation of nicotine or aerosol containing nicotine and other chemicals produced by such heating, into the body through the mouth.

**40. Regulations and rules required to be formulated or amended in connection with the amendments brought to the aforementioned Law by this Law shall be made and published in the Government Gazette of Maldives within 60 (sixty) days from the effective date of this Law.**

**41. Article 10-1 of this Law shall come into effect on 15th December 2024. The remaining Articles of this Law shall come into effect from 15th November 2024.**

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