DOCUMENT OF INTERNATIONAL MONETARY FUND AND FOR OFFICIAL USE ONLY

IMMEDIATE ATTENTION

EBAP/09/78

May 19, 2009

To: Members of the Executive Board

From: The Acting Secretary

Subject: **Smoking Policy**

Attached for consideration by the Executive Directors is a paper on the smoking policy.

It is not proposed to bring this matter to the agenda of the Executive Board for discussion unless an Executive Director so requests by **noon on Wednesday, May 27, 2009.** In the absence of such a request, the proposed decision that appears on page 6 will be deemed approved by the Executive Board and it will be so recorded in the minutes of the next meeting thereafter.

Questions may be referred to Mr. Harnischfeger, TGS (ext. 34579) and Mrs. Shannon, HRD (ext. 37258).

Att: (1)

Other Distribution:
Department Heads

INTERNATIONAL MONETARY FUND

Smoking Policy

Prepared by the Human Resources Department and Technology and General Services Department

In consultation with the Legal Department

Approved by Shirley Siegel and Frank Harnischfeger

May 19, 2009

Contents Page

I. Introduction 2

II. Current Smoking Policy 2

III. Limitations of the Current Policy 3

IV. Developments Since Implementation of Current Policy 3

V. Other Considerations 4

VI. Proposed Policy and Implementation 5

I. INTRODUCTION

1. **This paper seeks the approval of the Executive Board of a proposed change in the Fund's smoking policy.** The key elements of this revised policy would institute a comprehensive ban on smoking within the Fund headquarters buildings. This change is proposed for the protection of the health of Fund employees and other occupants of Fund office buildings, and is in line with the 2007 policy recommendations of the World Health Organization (WHO) as currently practiced in most international organizations.[1]

2. **The policy amendment is being proposed in recognition of the scientific evidence developed since the current policy was implemented in 1997**, and unambiguous conclusions of the WHO and other premier international standards and policy setting organizations, as to the proven severity of health risks of second-hand smoke (SHS) and the high cost and ineffectiveness of current technology and practices, used within the Fund, to protect nonsmokers from SHS.

3. The paper is organized as follows: Section II describes the current smoking policy; Section III explains the limitations of the current policy; Section IV provides a discussion of developments since the implementation of the current policy; Section V discusses other considerations; Section VI outlines the amended policy and implementation; and Section VII presents a proposed decision to the Executive Board.

II. CURRENT SMOKING POLICY

4. The Fund's smoking policy was first approved by the Executive Board and introduced in 1991.[2] In proposing this smoking policy, management recognized that a uniform policy applicable to all occupants of the Fund's buildings was the best approach. The Board approved smoking policy was, therefore, also applicable to the space occupied by Executive Directors' offices.

5. The same approach was followed in 1997 when the policy was modified. The smoking policy was revised in July 1997,[3] in order to be consistent with the prevailing assessments of the dangers of SHS and with best practices at that time. The revised smoking policy prohibited smoking in all offices and common areas throughout Fund-occupied space in Washington, D.C. Smoking was only permitted in designated, externally ventilated smoking areas. An exception to the policy was made for Executive Directors' offices during the Annual Meetings, meetings of the Interim and Development Committees, and other official visits to the Fund by Governors. Staff who were on Resident Representative assignments or working in the Fund offices overseas were expected to implement rules that were in line with local practice.

---

[1] World Health Organization, *Protection From Exposure To Second-Hand Tobacco Smoke: Policy Recommendations* (Geneva, Switzerland).

[2] See EB/CAP/91/1, Cor. 1 (January 9, 1991) and Sup. 1 (June 5, 1991), and EBAP/91/145, Sup. 2 (June 25, 1991).

[3] See EB/CAP/97/3 (June 6, 1997), EBM/97/68 (July 7, 1997), and EBD/97/81 (July 8, 1997). The effective date of the policy was August 18, 1997.

6. Two of the best practices implemented by the Fund in the 1997 revised smoking policy included:

(i) Separation of smokers and nonsmokers within the same airspace; and

(ii) Air filtration within specially designated smoking rooms.

7. The Fund Headquarters Two (HQ2) building, completed in 2006, includes a separately ventilated smoking room. Smoking is not permitted on the Rooftop Terrace of HQ2, as fresh air intake vents for the building are located in this area. Smoking is currently permitted outside both Headquarters buildings and in the following four externally ventilated smoking rooms: HQ1-CN-309; HQ1-02-100; HQ1-03-405; and HQ2-03-948.

8. Each department is responsible for enforcing the policy within its space. Complaints are handled consistent with Fund policies governing inappropriate workplace behavior.

III. Limitations of the Current Policy

9. **The current measures have not provided adequate separation of smokers and nonsmokers.** Staff regularly report health concerns associated with the tobacco smoke odors near Executive Directors' offices, in the vicinity of smoking rooms, and around building entrances. Permitting smoking in Executive Directors' offices during the Interim Committee (now IMFC), Annual Meetings, and other official visits to the Fund by Governors continues to expose building occupants and visitors to SHS.

10. **Continued use of the current smoking rooms will require financial investments for upgrades and ventilation system verification** to repair and maintain these systems in compliance with building ventilation codes in effect at the time of their installation. A recent mechanical problem necessitated closure of the smoking room in HQ1-CN-309. The cost to repair that equipment and restore it to the former compliance level is estimated at $50,000.

11. **Smoldering ashes left unattended in Fund smoking rooms have caused fires. Existing fire detection building systems alarm only when smoke is detected at the ceiling.**

IV. Developments Since Implementation of Current Policy

12. **The WHO[4] reports that there is significant scientific evidence documenting the failure of previously accepted best practices to protect individuals from exposure to SHS.** Key findings leading to this conclusion include:

- Tobacco smoking and tobacco smoke are carcinogenic to humans[5] and there are no known safe levels of exposure.

[4] The WHO has assembled an extensive bibliography of reference documents on the effects of SHS (see WHO, *Protection From Exposure To Second-Hand Tobacco Smoke: Policy Recommendations*).

- SHS contains thousands of known chemicals, at least 250 of which are known to be carcinogenic or otherwise toxic. These chemicals may be present in the air even without the detectable odor of tobacco smoke.

- The physical separation of smokers and nonsmokers within the same airspace offers no substantive protection for the nonsmokers.

- Research indicates smoking room ventilation systems, similar to those used in the Fund, may reduce but do not eliminate exposure for maintenance workers and nonsmokers in adjacent areas.

- Outdoor concentrations of SHS can be significant, even reaching indoor levels, dependent on surrounding conditions. Permitting smoking in outdoor areas near doors, windows, or intake vents can lead to internal SHS problems due to movement of SHS by air currents, caused by wind, movement, or opening and closing of doors. Consequently, exposure to SHS can be significant for those whose jobs require that they spend considerable time in that environment, such as Security Officers.

13. **The WHO concludes that implementing a 100 percent smoke-free environment is the only effective way to protect employees** from the harmful effects of exposure to SHS.

V. OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

14. **The Fund will bear the costs of illnesses that can be related to SHS exposures at work.** Evidence of adverse health effects caused by SHS exposure has been accumulating for nearly 50 years. Illnesses reported in adults include coronary heart disease, lung cancer, breast cancer, and respiratory diseases. Building occupants at Fund Headquarters also include: immune-suppressed individuals, cancer survivors, pregnant women, and children (three months through five years of age) all of whom are viewed as being at very high risk.

15. The February 13, 2007 edition of *Circulation: Journal of the American Heart Association* study entitled, Exposure to Secondhand Smoke indicates, according to the author Dr. Andrea Venn, "secondhand smoke is likely to be an important avoidable cause of cardiovascular disease in the population, and it is therefore important that measures are implemented to minimize the public's exposure to secondhand smoke."[6]

16. **With the exception of a small number of organizations, international institutions have banned smoking inside buildings, consistent with the WHO findings**. The organizations include: The Inter-American Development Bank, United Nations (new) Headquarters, Asian Development Bank, Food and Agriculture Organization, World Intellectual Property

---

[5] World Health Organization, International Agency for Research on Cancer, *IARC Monographs on the Evaluation of Carcinogenic Risks to Human*, Vol. 83 (2004).

[6] U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, *Secondhand Smoke Poses Heart Disease Risk* (February 13, 2007).

Organization, and World Trade Organization.[7] Like the Fund and the World Bank,[8] the European Central Bank currently allows smoking in separately ventilated internal spaces.

VI. Proposed Policy and Implementation

17. **The Fund in recent years has established a strong record of decisive action to protect staff from recognized health risks**, such as the Fund's response to the risks from asbestos, lead, and formaldehyde. The current smoking policy and the facilities created to support it were recommended and approved based on scientific and engineering information available at the time. Subsequent reports and scientific data make it clear that the policy and its supporting measures are insufficient, and the Fund needs to respond accordingly.[9]

18. **The policy change proposed in this paper is to establish a 100 percent smoke-free workplace at headquarters at all times, without exception.** Smoking would be permitted in designated areas at the exterior of the buildings, away from the entrances and outside air intakes. The exception to the policy applicable to Executive Directors' offices during Annual Meetings, meetings of the IMFC and Development Committees, and other official visits to the Fund by the Governors would be rescinded.

19. **Smoking cessation assistance is currently available through the Health Services Department and Medical Benefits Plan.**

[7] Most organizations that have banned smoking within the workplace continue to allow smoking, in selected designated areas, outside of buildings.

[8] The World Bank President recommended banning smoking completely in its headquarters and overseas offices in 1999 (FYI/93/033). There is a smoking ban within all common areas of the Bank and isolated, separately ventilated, smoking rooms are being phased out.

[9] TGS is pursuing certification by the U.S. Green Building Council's *Leadership for Energy and Environmental Design* (LEED) to achieve recognition for the Fund's environmental performance. By implementing the proposed decision and instituting a smoking ban in our buildings, the Fund will be able to apply for LEED certification. An additional benefit of the smoking ban and the resulting certification of Fund buildings will publicly demonstrate a high level of commitment and compliance with standards relevant to building design and operations.

VII. PROPOSED DECISION

It is recommended that the Executive Board adopt the following decision, which would replace the current smoking policy.

The Executive Board hereby approves the following smoking policy:

1. Smoking is prohibited throughout Fund-owned office buildings in Washington, D.C. These rules apply at all times, including weekends and holidays. Smoking will continue to be permitted in designated areas at the exterior of Fund-owned or leased buildings, including the HQ1, 5th floor atrium garden, at a distance of 25 feet or more away from any opening (door, window, or ventilation opening) to the building.

2. Staff who are on Resident Representative assignments or working in the Fund offices overseas are expected to implement a nonsmoking policy inside Fund-occupied office spaces consistent with local laws.

3. The effective date is June 1, 2009, to meet pending environmental certification requirements.