

## Biocon Limited and Students Working Against Tobacco (SWAT) conduct unique campaign on World Anti-Tobacco Day

*'Pat At The Back' campaign creates awareness amongst Bangaloreans*

Bangalore, Karnataka, IND, 2007-05-31 17:00:30 (IndiaPRwire.com)

Biocon Limited in association with Students Working Against Tobacco (SWAT), today assembled at M.G.Road to mark World Anti Tobacco Day and called on Bangaloreans to refrain from using tobacco products and to quit smoking through a unique campaign - **'Pat At The Back'**. The objective of the campaign was to raise awareness and sensitize people about the harmful effects of tobacco.

Representatives from Biocon Limited and SWAT, a student body working against the consumption of tobacco products, conducted an awareness walk from Anil Kumble Circle near the Biocon Helix on M G Road towards Trinity Circle. The students and Biocon employees wore T- Shirts carrying Anti Tobacco messages and educated the public on the evils of consuming tobacco in any form. The main aim of the **'Pat At The Back'** campaign was to paste stickers with Anti-tobacco messages amongst willing participants in order to spread awareness among people.

Biocon Limited is one among very few corporates in India who have adopted a stringent anti-tobacco policy ensuring a tobacco free campus. Oncology is a key focus area for the company and Biocon has launched India's first cancer drug last year. The incidence of cancer is alarmingly high in India: approximately 100 per 100,000 population, and the highest rates of head and neck cancers are reported in South Asian countries such as India and Sri Lanka. In fact, the Indian sub-continent accounts for one-third of the world burden of head and neck cancers. Smoking and chewing of tobacco in combination with excessive consumption of alcohol are the most important risk factors

Mr. Rakesh Bamzai, President-Marketing, Biocon Limited said, 'We have joined hands with SWAT in order to spread awareness on the ill effects of tobacco consumption in all forms, either chewed or smoked. We are very committed to this cause and have ensured that our campus is a tobacco-free one. Needless to say this has proved to be a deterrent to employees who smoke and several employees have quit the habit altogether. On the occasion of World Anti Tobacco Day, I would like to appeal to all corporates to take a pledge to implement a no-tobacco policy on their campuses. '

At present, India has over 200 million people who use tobacco, of which 70 per cent smoke beedi, 10 per cent smoke cigarettes and 20 per cent use smokeless tobacco. World Anti Tobacco Day is the only global event established to call attention to the impact of tobacco use on public health and reduce individual tobacco dependence. While in the West, tobacco consumption is fast reducing; the East has shown a significant rise in the same. Thus, future health consequences of tobacco use and dependency on tobacco appear to be a growing problem facing the Eastern countries. These findings suggest that immediate attention needs to be given to developing both global and country-specific tobacco control programs to reduce tobacco use among people in order to ensure a healthy society.

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### **ABOUT SWAT:**

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SWAT ( Students Working Against Tobacco) is an initiative of EMDI students since 2004.

Research has shown that if one doesn't pick up their first cigarette between the age group of 12 to 21, it is most probable that they will be non-smokers through out their lifetime.

With this objective in mind the students of EMDI have come together to form an NGO called Students Working Against Tobacco (SWAT). Its objective is to educate young collegians to never try smoking and to encourage those who have decided not to.

SWAT in association with Biocon Limited carried out a signature campaign across the colleges at Bangalore and Mangalore collecting 178,000 signatures from the students endorsing their support to the cause. The Signed banners were displayed for two days (Feb 20th & 21st 2005) on the boulevard of MG Road, Bangalore. Dr. Kiran Mazumdar Shaw, CMD, Biocon Limited & Dy Mayor of Bangalore graced the closing ceremony.

### **About Biocon**

Established in 1978, Biocon Limited is one of India's premier biotechnology companies. Biocon and its two subsidiary companies, Syngene International Ltd and Clinigene International Ltd form a fully integrated biotechnology enterprise, specializing in biopharmaceuticals, custom research, clinical research and enzymes. With successful initiatives in clinical development, bio-processing and global marketing, Biocon delivers products and solutions to partners and customers across the globe. Many of these products have USFDA and EMEA acceptance. Biocon launched the world's first recombinant human insulin, INSUGEN® in November 2004 using Pichia expression and India's first indigenously produced monoclonal antibody BIOMAb- EGFR®. Visit us at

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