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Friday, 24 September 2010

Dear Mr McBride,

I am writing on behalf of ASH Wales, a public health and tobacco control advocacy charity based in Wales that supports efforts to reduce tobacco use and its devastating health consequences. We are deeply concerned that your band, the Stereophonics, is scheduled to perform in an October music festival in Jakarta, called Java Rockin'Land, that is being sponsored and heavily promoted by the tobacco company Gudang Garam and the popular cigarette brand of the same name.

We urge the Stereophonics to demand that the festival organisers eliminate the tobacco sponsorship and any associated branding, and if they fail to do so, for your band to pull out of the festival. We also urge the Stereophonics to adopt a policy of not performing in any tobacco-sponsored events or engaging in any activities that promote tobacco products in the future. These actions would send a powerful message that the band members are concerned about the health of the world's children and will not allow the band's name, talent and popularity to be used to market deadly and addictive products to children in Indonesia or anywhere else.

Should you choose to participate in a tobacco-sponsored concert, you would unfortunately be helping Gudang Garam, Indonesia's second largest tobacco company, to market its tobacco products to children. The tobacco industry has long used sponsorship of music concerts popular with young people to promote its products and tobacco use among youth. Public health experts agree that tobacco sponsorships contribute to youth tobacco use.

Unfortunately, Indonesia has few laws to protect its youth from this type of egregious tobacco marketing. As a result, the tobacco industry aggressively promotes its deadly products with dreadful success: Tobacco use kills an estimated 200,000 Indonesians each year, and approximately 35 percent of the population smokes. At this rate, 1,644 Indonesians will die from tobacco-related illness during the three days of the Java Rockin'Land festival.

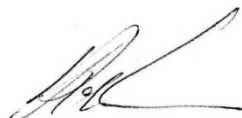
Because their products kill so many Indonesians every year, tobacco companies relentlessly seek to addict replacement smokers, and children serve this purpose. It is chilling to note that an estimated 78 percent of current Indonesian smokers started before the age of 19. You undoubtedly have seen or heard about the video of the “smoking baby”—the disturbing images of an addicted Indonesian toddler puffing deeply on cigarettes that brought the world’s attention to the intensity of the tobacco problem in Indonesia.

By taking decisive steps to eliminate tobacco sponsorship of your upcoming performance, you will let your many fans know that you understand how harmful tobacco use truly is and that you refuse to be used by the tobacco industry to promote its deadly products. These actions would complement your charitable works such as the 2009 Tsunami Benefit Concert and your current work to support Wales’ Air Ambulance provision.

Other prominent musicians have recently taken action to eliminate tobacco sponsorship of their concerts after facing significant public and media outcry. In April 2010, Kelly Clarkson and the organiser of her Jakarta concert withdrew sponsorship by the *LA Lights* cigarette brand after coming under pressure from tobacco control advocates, international media, and fans on her social networks. Similarly in July 2008, Alicia Keys asked the tobacco company Philip Morris International (PMI)/ Sampoerna to withdraw its sponsorship of her concert in Jakarta. In both cases, tobacco branding was removed as well.

We urge you to follow the example of these talented musicians and act to remove tobacco sponsorship of your upcoming performance as well. Because time is short, we request that you and your representatives contact us about your intentions by Friday, October 1st. Please contact our Press and Campaigns Manager, Carole Jones on +44(0)29 2075 1666 or [carole@ashwales.co.uk](mailto:carole@ashwales.co.uk).

Sincerely,



Tanya Buchanan  
Chief Executive, ASH Wales

**CC:** Indonesian National Commission on Child Protection, Jakarta  
Southeast Asia Tobacco Control Alliance, Bangkok