

# TOBACCO THREATENS US ALL



**SAY NO TO  
TOBACCO**

**PROTECT HEALTH,  
REDUCE POVERTY AND  
PROMOTE DEVELOPMENT**



**World Health  
Organization**



**F C T C**

WHO FRAMEWORK CONVENTION  
ON TOBACCO CONTROL

SECRETARIAT

**31MAY:WORLDNOTOBACCO DAY**

**[www.who.int/tobacco](http://www.who.int/tobacco)**

**#NoTobacco**



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# TOBACCO CONTROL PROMOTES SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development was adopted by countries at the United Nations in September 2015. Its far-reaching agenda focuses on eradicating poverty in all its forms and leaving no one behind. This new agenda comprises 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) complete with 169 targets. The means of implementation are encompassed by the Addis Ababa Action Agenda adopted at the Third International Conference on Financing for Development, in 2015, and a renewed and strengthened Global Partnership for Sustainable Development (SDG 17).

Tobacco control is well reflected in these goals and targets. In particular, enshrined in SDG 3 – to “ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages” – are specific targets on reducing premature mortality from noncommunicable diseases (NCDs) by one third by 2030 (target 3.4), and strengthening implementation of the WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control in all countries, as appropriate (target 3.a).

The Addis Ababa Action Agenda emphasizes the importance of tobacco control for revenue generation to achieve the 2030 Agenda. In particular, it states “price and tax measures on tobacco can be an effective and important means to reduce tobacco consumption and health-care costs, and represent a revenue stream for financing for development in many countries”.

# HOW DOES TOBACCO USE CHALLENGE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT?

Tobacco use has devastating health, social, environmental and economic consequences. It represents a major barrier to sustainable development that impacts health, poverty, global hunger, education, economic growth, gender equality, the environment, finance and governance.

Each year, more than 7 million people die from tobacco use (1), with over 80% of deaths occurring in low- or middle-income countries (LMICs) (2).

Tobacco use also imposes a heavy economic burden on the world: the cost of smoking alone is estimated to be US\$ 1400 billion, or 1.8% of global gross domestic product (GDP) (3).





# HEALTH & ECONOMIC IMPACTS

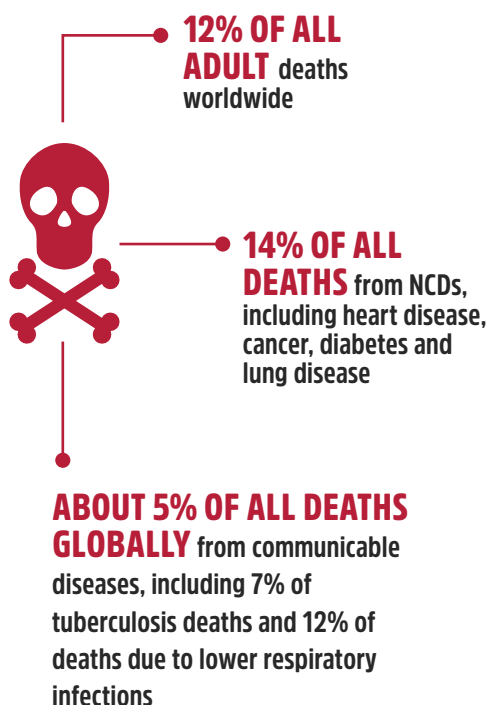
## TOBACCO'S IMPACT ON HEALTH AND ECONOMIC PROSPERITY

Tobacco kills people prematurely. On average, tobacco users lose 15 years of life (4). Up to half of all tobacco users will die of tobacco-related causes (5). The health toll from tobacco use (5) includes:

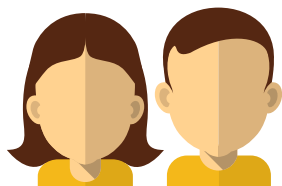
Annual global health care costs associated with smoking are estimated at US\$ 422 billion, equivalent to US\$ 56.34 per person (3). This represents 5.7% of total health expenditure worldwide (3).

Tobacco use also has indirect costs such as lost productivity due to illness and premature death, amounting to US\$ 1000 billion per year (6).

The total annual cost of smoking globally is equivalent to:



- **10 times the amount spent on aid worldwide (7)**
- **40% of total government expenditure on education in 2012 (8)**
- **nearly all the GDP of Canada, the world's tenth richest country (9).**



# WOMEN & CHILDREN

## TOBACCO'S IMPACT ON VULNERABLE GROUPS, SUCH AS WOMEN AND CHILDREN

The tobacco industry actively targets women by linking tobacco use to women's rights, gender equality, glamour, sociability, success, and slimness (10). The industry uses various strategies to promote the social acceptability of smoking by women, including product development, design and advertising, involvement in social responsibility programmes, and using the influence of popular media.

Tobacco growing and production often involve hazardous chemicals, which endanger the health of workers, including women and children. Up to 7 in 10 tobacco farm workers are women (11) and around 1.3 million children aged 14 years and under are exploited through tobacco farming in the 12 major tobacco-growing countries (12).

The tobacco industry relies heavily on child labour and results in many children missing out on school. Key facts include:

- **63% of children of tobacco-growing families are involved in child labour (13)**
- **32% of children in tobacco-growing families are exposed to hazardous work environments (13)**
- **24% of children apply dangerous chemicals (13)**
- **10–14% of children from tobacco-growing families miss school due to working in tobacco fields (10).**

About half the world's children and women of reproductive age are regularly exposed to second-hand smoke (14), which kills almost 900 000 people each year (1).



# POVERTY

## TOBACCO'S IMPACT ON POVERTY AND HUNGER

Tobacco use is mainly concentrated among the poor, and is a significant cause of health disparities between the rich and poor. These disparities are exacerbated by the limited access many people from poorer backgrounds have to health care. Tobacco spending also drains resources from households that could have been spent on other basic needs, such as food, education and shelter.

In a number of leading tobacco-growing economies, more than 10% of people are undernourished (10).

Illnesses caused by tobacco use contribute to poverty by increasing health care spending for people and families.

Tobacco farming also uses agricultural land where food could have been grown, often in countries where food insecurity and productivity are major concerns.

In addition, tobacco use has a greater impact on populations experiencing both food insecurity and a high prevalence of undernutrition, especially in South-East Asia, where tobacco consumption is high (15).



In a number of leading tobacco-growing economies, **MORE THAN 10% OF PEOPLE ARE UNDERNOURISHED (10)**



# ENVIRONMENT

## TOBACCO'S IMPACT ON THE ENVIRONMENT

The tobacco industry damages the environment in many ways that go far beyond the effects of cigarette smoke being expelled into the air. The harmful impact of the tobacco industry on deforestation, climate change, litter and forest fires is enormous and growing, threatening both the environment and public health.

Tobacco farming involves heavy use of pesticides, growth regulators and chemical fertilizers (11). These can create environmental health problems, particularly in LMICs with limited regulatory standards. Tobacco waste contains over 7000 toxic chemicals, including human carcinogens. Tobacco smoke emissions also contribute thousands of tonnes of human carcinogens, toxicants and greenhouse gases to the environment.

Tobacco growing is also a contributor to deforestation. One tree is lost for every 300 cigarettes/1.5 cartons produced (11). This deforestation can contribute to climate change, by removing trees that eliminate carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>) from the atmosphere (11).

Litter from cigarettes fouls the environment. Up to 680 000 tonnes of discarded waste from global cigarette consumption are generated annually. Cigarette butts account for 30–40% of all items picked up in annual international coastal and urban clean-ups. Material that leaches out of these filters is toxic to aquatic life (16–19).



**TOBACCO SMOKE EMISSIONS** also contribute thousands of tonnes of human carcinogens, toxicants and greenhouse gases to the environment



Tobacco waste contains over **7000 TOXIC CHEMICALS**, including human carcinogens

# TOBACCO CONTROL: A BOOST FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

Tobacco control can drive sustainable development. It offers a comprehensive and cost-effective solution to the challenges tobacco poses, from promoting health and economic prosperity to protecting vulnerable groups and the environment.

The WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (WHO FCTC) is the most powerful tool available to counter tobacco's negative impacts on development. Some 179 countries and the European Union are parties to the WHO FCTC, demonstrating national commitments to implement tobacco control policies and, in doing so, save lives and promote development. Implementing the provisions of this legally-binding, evidence-based treaty can also help governments meet the target of a 30% relative reduction in current tobacco use by 2025 (20).

The WHO FCTC contains both tobacco demand and supply reduction measures. In particular, Article 6 of the WHO FCTC encourages price and tax measures to reduce demand for tobacco.

These include tax increases resulting in an increase in the sales price of tobacco products, and prohibiting or restricting sales of tax- and duty-free tobacco products.

In line with the WHO FCTC, WHO introduced the MPOWER measures in 2008 – a set of six cost-effective and high-impact measures that help countries reduce demand for tobacco. These measures include:

- monitoring tobacco use and prevention policies;
- protecting people from tobacco smoke;
- offering help to quit tobacco use;
- warning about the dangers of tobacco;
- enforcing bans on tobacco advertising, promotion and sponsorship;
- raising taxes on tobacco.

Today, more than half of all countries, with nearly 40% of the world's population (2.8 billion people), have implemented at least one MPOWER measure to the highest level of achievement (21).

Increasing tobacco tax and prices has proven to be one of the most effective, yet least-utilized tobacco control measures that countries can use to address various development issues.

Increasing tobacco taxation represents a “phenomenal” (22) return on investment within the SDG framework. Governments collect nearly US\$ 270 billion in tobacco excise tax revenues each year (22). This could increase by over 50%, generating an additional US\$ 141 billion, simply from raising taxes on cigarettes by just US\$ 0.80 per pack (equivalent to one international dollar) in all countries (5). Increased tobacco taxation revenues would strengthen domestic resource mobilization, creating the fiscal space needed for countries to meet development priorities under the 2030 Agenda.

Tobacco use impacts the health and income of the poor in many countries. Therefore, it is essential that tobacco control measures reach those who are most affected.

Tobacco taxation is often wrongly seen as disproportionately affecting vulnerable people. But the reality is very different. By increasing prices, taxation protects the

poor from exposure to a product that kills and causes disease. Taxation, in fact, is the most effective means to motivate current, mostly male, tobacco users to quit. This is especially so for lower-income populations, and tobacco users in LMICs, where 75% of smokers live. And by stopping people smoking, tobacco taxes also reduce exposure to second-hand smoke among non-smokers, including children and women.

Measures also exist to control tobacco supply. The Protocol to Eliminate Illicit Trade in Tobacco Products to the WHO FCTC is the key policy tool to reduce tobacco use and its health and economic consequences. Other measures, such as supporting viable alternatives to tobacco production, and restricting access of children and youth to tobacco products, are effective, especially as part of a comprehensive strategy to reduce tobacco use.

# WHAT SHOULD COUNTRIES DO?

The vast majority of people in the world are not adequately covered by the most effective tobacco control interventions. These include sufficiently high levels of tobacco taxation, comprehensive smoke-free policies, complete bans on tobacco marketing, information interventions, and cessation support.

Therefore, all countries should adopt a whole-of-government approach to do the following.

- Ensure tobacco control is included in national SDG implementation frameworks, plans and policies.
  - Fully implement the WHO FCTC.
  - Encourage countries that are not Parties to look to the WHO FCTC as the foundational instrument in global tobacco control.
  - Implement the MPOWER measures at the highest level in line with the WHO FCTC, as these are most impactful and cost-effective in reducing tobacco use.
  - Raise taxes on tobacco as the most cost-effective method of demand reduction, and as a mechanism to increase domestic resource mobilization and funding for attaining the SDGs.
- Ensure effective governance of tobacco control policy-making by creating a firewall with the tobacco industry.
  - Adopt a human-centred development approach to meet the needs of individuals in tobacco control and empower people in supporting tobacco control.
  - Help individuals take steps to beat tobacco. People can support government tobacco control policies and programmes, including compliance with tobacco control laws. Tobacco users should also quit to protect their own health and that of their loved ones and other members of their communities. In their various ways, such steps also help make communities and countries more resilient and sustainable.

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