



In the Name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful

MESSAGE FROM

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WHO EASTERN MEDITERRANEAN REGION

ON THE OCCASION OF WORLD NO TOBACCO DAY, 31 MAY 2017

Every year, on 31 May, we celebrate World No Tobacco Day. This year's campaign highlights the dangers of tobacco and its devastating effects on all of us, and on the development of our societies in the Eastern Mediterranean Region. Tobacco threatens more than health. It impacts the environment, the economy and other aspects of our lives. Estimates indicate that tobacco kills more than seven million people every year; more than 80% of these people live in low- and middle-income countries. Tobacco use also impacts sustainable development. In the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, one of the objectives of health-related Sustainable Development Goal 3 is to "Strengthen the implementation of the WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control in all countries, as appropriate".

On this World No Tobacco Day, we are renewing our call to governments to strengthen their tobacco control efforts, guided by the WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control and the six measures known as MPOWER. In particular, we call on countries to increase taxes on tobacco products, and to enforce a comprehensive ban on advertising, promotion and sponsorship of all tobacco products. Tobacco control can break the cycle of poverty, contribute to ending hunger, promote sustainable agriculture and economic growth, and combat climate change. Governments can benefit from increasing taxes on tobacco products, and use revenues to finance universal health coverage, and spend on education and other development programmes.

We all have a role to play. Individuals also have a role in making a sustainable, tobacco-free world by committing to never taking up tobacco products. Those who do use tobacco can quit the habit, or seek help in doing so. Countries should protect their populations, especially children

and young people from secondhand smoke, by prohibiting smoking in public places to protect both health and the environment.

Today, let us all renew our commitment to combat tobacco use in all its forms.
