

## May 31: World No Tobacco Day

Language English



The Non-Communicable Diseases Alliance is marking World No Tobacco Day, 31 May 2010, by calling for greater awareness of the global burden of disease and death caused by tobacco use and the need for more concerted efforts to both pass and implement effective tobacco control legislation.

With the decline of smoking rates in many developed countries, the tobacco industry has transferred its marketing efforts to low- and middle-income countries. The industry is also heavily marketing its products to women — who currently comprise only 20% of the world's smokers. Consequently the World Health Organization (WHO) has made "Gender and Women with an emphasis on marketing to women" the theme for World No Tobacco Day 2010.

The public health toll \*

In 2008, WHO Director-General Margaret Chan said "Tobacco use can kill in so many ways that it is a risk factor for six of the eight leading causes of death in the world". These are coronary heart disease; stroke and other cerebral vascular diseases; lower respiratory infections; chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD); tuberculosis; and tracheal, bronchus and lung cancer. Smoking is also associated with mouth, liver, kidney, bladder, cervical and other cancers, as well as diseases ranging from osteoporosis to fertility problems.

Tobacco control is a priority for the NCD Alliance because:

- 80% of smokers live in low- and middle-income countries.
- 520 million people will die from tobacco use in the next 50 years.
- By 2030 the number of deaths from tobacco each year will increase from 5 million to more than 8 million.

In addition to the dangers of tobacco use, studies have shown that there is no safe level of exposure to second-hand smoke, which contributes to 600,000 premature deaths each year.

Social, economic and political impact

While statistics are not available for all regions, the costs incurred by tobacco use are more than US\$190 billion per

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year in the United States alone. Of this amount approximately half is attributable to health-related costs and half to lost productivity.

The NCD Alliance is seeking to remind policy-makers that people want to see change:

More than 160 countries, representing 86% of the world's population, are now Parties to the first international public health treaty: WHO's Framework Convention on Tobacco Control.

Yet only 2% of the world's population live in countries with comprehensive smoke-free laws and high levels of compliance with these laws.

While 154 million people became covered by new comprehensive smoke-free laws in 2008, there is still much work to be done to reverse the global tobacco epidemic.

For more information about World No Tobacco Day, please visit:

<http://www.who.int/tobacco/wntd/2010/announcement/en/index.html> [1]

To learn more about the tobacco epidemic and tobacco control:

WHO Report of the Global Tobacco Epidemic 2009 <http://www.who.int/tobacco/mpower/2009/en/index.html> [2]

The Tobacco Atlas: [www.TobaccoAtlas.org](http://www.TobaccoAtlas.org) [3]

For free smoke-free guides, case studies and other tobacco control resources: [www.tobaccofreeunion.org](http://www.tobaccofreeunion.org) [4]

For information about 2010: The Year of the Lung: [www.2010yearofthelung.org](http://www.2010yearofthelung.org) [5]

\* Sources: The Tobacco Atlas, 3rd ed.; WHO Report on the Global Tobacco Epidemic; WHO Tobacco Free Initiative website; The Union Department of Tobacco Control

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### Links

[1] <http://www.who.int/tobacco/wntd/2010/announcement/en/index.html>

[2] <http://www.who.int/tobacco/mpower/2009/en/index.html>

[3] <http://www.TobaccoAtlas.org>

[4] <http://www.tobaccofreeunion.org>

[5] <http://www.2010yearofthelung.org>