

Cairo, Egypt - 27 October 2013 – At 2.3 billion, the number of people worldwide covered by at least one life-saving measure to limit tobacco use has more than doubled in the last five years, according to the WHO Report on the Global Tobacco Epidemic, 2013. The number of people covered by bans on tobacco advertising, promotion and sponsorship, the focus of this year's report, increased by almost 400 million people, residing mainly in low- and middle-income countries.

Furthermore, the Report shows that 3 billion people are now covered by national anti-tobacco campaigns. As a result, hundreds of millions of nonsmokers are less likely to start.

However, the Report notes, to achieve the globally agreed target of a 30% reduction of tobacco use by 2025, more countries have to implement comprehensive tobacco control programmes.

Bans on tobacco advertising, promotion and sponsorship are some of the most powerful measures to control tobacco use. To date, 24 countries with 694 million people have introduced complete bans and 100 more countries are close to a complete ban.

In the Eastern Mediterranean Region, only 6 out of 23 countries are fully protected from exposure to the tobacco industry advertising, promotion and sponsorship tactics.

“We know that tobacco advertising, promotion and sponsorship are critical to the industry's continued physical and political expansion”, says Dr Ala Alwan, WHO Regional Director for the Eastern Mediterranean. “That is why the tobacco industry continues to fight bans through minimum concessions, half measures, voluntary self-regulation, claims of corporate social responsibility and numerous other innovative ways”.

Tobacco is the leading cause of preventable death globally, killing 6 million people every year. It can cause cardiovascular disease, cancer, diabetes and chronic respiratory diseases. “Unless we act, the tobacco epidemic will kill more than 8 million people every year by 2030”, says Dr Alwan, “more than 80% of these preventable deaths will be among people living in low- and middle-income countries”.

Tobacco companies are spending tens of billions of dollars each year on advertising, promotion and sponsorship.

“As tobacco use decreases in many countries, partly due to restrictions on tobacco marketing and use”, explains Dr Alwan, “the tobacco industry is switching its efforts to the developing world where there are large and growing markets and fewer restrictions on tobacco marketing. In particular, as potential customers, young people and women present a major marketing opportunity for the tobacco industry”.

Other key findings of the report include – in the past five years:

A total of 20 countries with 657 million people put strong warning label requirements in place.

More than half a billion people in nine countries have gained access to appropriate cessation services.

There are 32 countries that passed complete smoking bans covering all work places, public places and public transportation means, protecting nearly 900 million additional people.

In 2008, WHO identified six evidence-based tobacco control measures that are the most effective in reducing tobacco use. Known as “MPOWER”, these measures correspond to one or more of the demand reduction provisions included in the WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (WHO FCTC): Monitor tobacco use and prevention policies, Protect people from tobacco smoke, Offer help to quit tobacco use, Warn people about the dangers of tobacco, Enforce bans on tobacco advertising, promotion and sponsorship, and Raise taxes on tobacco.

This year's report is the fourth in the series of WHO reports on the status of the MPOWER measures. These measures provide countries with practical assistance to reduce demand for tobacco in line with the WHO FCTC, thereby reducing related illness, disability and death.

The WHO FCTC entered into force in 2005 and, with 177 Parties today, is a powerful tool to combat the deadly tobacco epidemic.

Additional links:

[WHO Report on the Global Tobacco Epidemic, 2013](#)

[WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control](#)

[More on MPOWER measures](#)

[Draft action plan for the prevention and control of noncommunicable diseases 2013–2020](#)

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Saturday 27th of April 2024 10:41:12 PM