

If you are organizing an activity, or developing your own campaign materials, here are some facts and figures that you might want to use:

More than 7 million people die from tobacco use every year, including the 900 000 people that die from exposure to secondhand smoke.

Some 80% of premature deaths from tobacco occur in low- or middle-income countries, which face increased challenges to achieving their development goals.

In some countries of the Eastern Mediterranean Region, smoking can be as high as 52% among men and 22% among women. Data for young boys and girls are equally alarming. Smoking can reach 42% among boys and 31% among girls.

Tobacco use brings suffering, disease, and death, impoverishing families and national economies.

Tobacco use costs national economies enormously through increased health care costs and decreased productivity. It worsens health inequalities and exacerbates poverty, as the poorest people spend less on essentials such as food, education and health care.

Tobacco growing requires large amounts of pesticides and fertilizers, which can be toxic and pollute water supplies. Each year, tobacco growing uses 4.3 million hectares of land, resulting in global deforestation between 2% and 4%.

Tobacco manufacturing also produces over 2 million tonnes of solid waste.

The WHO FCTC guides the global fight against the tobacco epidemic. It is an international treaty with 180 Parties.

Today, more than half the world's countries, representing nearly 40% of the world's population (2.8 billion people), have implemented at least one of the WHO FCTC's most cost-effective measures to the highest level. An increasing number of countries are creating firewalls to ward off interference from the tobacco industry in government tobacco control policy.

The comprehensive implementation of the WHO FCTC and the MPOWER measures to reduce tobacco use in the Eastern Mediterranean Region would lead to a reduction in tobacco use ranging from 20% to 40% in 5 years and, in some countries, by up to 36% in 5 years and 56% in 15 years.

Through increasing cigarette taxes worldwide by US\$ 1, an extra US\$ 190 billion could be raised for development. High tobacco taxes contribute to revenue generation for governments, reduce demand for tobacco, and offer an important revenue stream to finance development activities.

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