

Facts on the tobacco industry, tobacco and health

Impacts: Health (WHO).

- All forms of tobacco are harmful, and there is no safe level of exposure to tobacco.
- Tobacco kills up to half of its users, causing about 8 million deaths a year. This translates to one smoking-related death every five seconds. More than 7 million of those deaths are the result of direct tobacco use, while around 1.2 million are the result of non-smokers being exposed to second-hand smoke.
- An estimated half of all children worldwide regularly breathe air polluted by tobacco smoke in public places, and 65,000 die each year from illnesses attributable to second-hand smoke.
- Tobacco contributes to **25% of all cancer deaths**. It is the primary cause of lung cancer and contributes to cancers of the bladder, blood, bone marrow, cervix, colon, oesophagus, kidneys, larynx, liver, mouth, pancreas, rectum, stomach, and throat.

The Tobacco Industry

- Thanks to effective interventions in many countries to curtail the sale of tobacco, smoking prevalence worldwide has declined by 27% for men and 38% for women since 1990.
- There are, however, still 1.3bn smokers globally. 80% of smokers are in low- and middle-income countries. (WHO).
- The industry produces six trillion cigarettes per year. (FCTC)
- There are more than 7,000 chemicals in tobacco smoke, of which more than 250 are known to be harmful, more than 69 are known to cause cancer, and 16 are classified as Group I carcinogens. (American Lung Association)
- **The global tobacco market size** was valued at USD 850 billion in 2021 and is expected to expand at a compound annual growth rate (CAGR) of 2.4% from 2022 to 2030.
- In 2018, **the combined profits** of the world's biggest tobacco companies exceeded USD 55 billion. This means a profit of nearly USD 7,000 for each person who dies due to tobacco.
- Now a leading cause of concern are new tobacco products (e-cigarettes, heated tobacco products) that are being sold as harm reduction tools but they are being marketed **to a young generation of non-smokers**.
- Increasing evidence shows that novel tobacco products **are also harmful to health**.
- In 2019 alone, USD 8.2 billion was spent **on advertising and promotion of cigarettes and smokeless tobacco** in the USA – about USD 22.5 million every day, and nearly USD 1 million every hour.

- **Big tobacco is also active on social media** to reach youth.
- **Child labour is used for the production of tobacco. (FCTC)**
 - In Malawi alone, **there are about 78,000 children working** on tobacco plantations. But child labour is also widespread in other countries such as Brazil, Indonesia, the USA and other countries.
 - Every year, the US Department of Labor publishes a **List of Goods Produced by Child Labor or Forced Labor**. In 2022, the list contained 17 countries growing tobacco using child labour.
- Farm workers, especially child labourers, minorities and migrant workers **are at risk of nicotine toxicity** (green tobacco illness), caused by handling tobacco leaves without protection during harvest and processing.

Impacts: Environmental (WHO)

- Every year, in addition to lives lost, tobacco production costs 600 million trees, 200 000 hectares of land, 22 billion tonnes of water and 84 million tonnes of CO₂.
- **Deforestation for tobacco growing** has many serious environmental consequences – including loss of biodiversity, soil erosion and degradation, water pollution and increases in atmospheric carbon dioxide.
- **Tobacco growing usually involves substantial use of chemicals** – including pesticides, fertilisers and growth regulators. These chemicals may affect drinking water sources as a result of run-off from tobacco growing areas. Research has also shown that tobacco crops deplete soil nutrients by taking up more nitrogen, phosphorus and potassium than other major crops.
- With 6 trillion cigarettes manufactured annually, about 300 billion packages (assuming 20 cigarettes per pack) are made for tobacco products.
- **This amounts to** about 1,800,000 tonnes of packaging waste, composed of paper, ink, cellophane, foil and glue.
- Roughly 4.5 trillion cigarette butts are discarded every year, polluting oceans, rivers, city sidewalks, parks, soil and beaches. They are the most commonly discarded piece of waste globally and are the most frequent item of litter picked up on beaches and water edges worldwide.
- The weight of all tobacco-attributable non-biodegradable (filter) waste discarded annually **is about 175,200 tonnes**.
- The costs of cleaning up littered tobacco products fall on taxpayers, rather than the industry creating the problem. Each year, this costs China roughly US\$ 2.6 billion and India roughly US\$ 766 million. The cost for Brazil and Germany comes in at over US\$ 200 million.

FCTC implementation

WHO Member States unanimously adopted the WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (**WHO FCTC**). In force since 2005, it has currently 182 Parties covering more than 90% of the world's population.

MPOWER

In 2007, WHO introduced a practical, cost-effective way to scale up implementation of the main demand reduction provisions of the WHO FCTC on the ground: MPOWER. Each MPOWER measure corresponds to at least 1 provision of the WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control.

The 6 MPOWER measures are:

- Monitor tobacco use and prevention policies
- Protect people from tobacco use
- Offer help to quit tobacco use
- Warn about the dangers of tobacco
- Enforce bans on tobacco advertising, promotion and sponsorship
- Raise taxes on tobacco.

Tobacco taxes are the most cost-effective way to reduce tobacco use and health care costs, especially among youth and low-income people, while increasing revenue in many countries.

- The tax increases need to be high enough to push prices up above income growth.
- An increase of tobacco prices by 10% decreases tobacco consumption by about 4% in high-income countries and about 5% in low- and middle-income countries.

Despite this, introducing high tobacco taxes is the least implemented measure among the set of available tobacco control measures.

Implementation of the MPOWER measures has led to decline in smoking rates.

In 2020, 93 low- and middle-income countries (LMICs) were covered by at least one MPOWER measure adopted at best-practice level – an 5-fold increase since 2007. This means only 41 LMICs have yet to implement a best-practice MPOWER measure

Overall, LMICs have adopted three out of the seven MPOWER measures at almost the same level as all countries. These measures are: national bans on smoking in public places, national bans on tobacco advertising, promotion and sponsorship, and running impactful anti-tobacco mass media campaigns.

According to the WHO Report on the Global Tobacco Epidemic (2021), health warning laws and regulations at the highest level of achievement have now been adopted by 101 countries. This means that 4.7 billion people (or 60% of the world's population) are now protected by large graphic pack warnings featuring all recommended characteristics, making it the MPOWER measure with both the highest population coverage and the most countries covered.

By the end of 2020, 17 countries had adopted legislation mandating plain packaging of tobacco products and had issued regulations with implementation deadlines.

Although tobacco advertising, promotion and sponsorship (TAPS) bans remain an under-adopted measure, 1.6 billion people in 57 countries are protected by comprehensive bans on TAPS. Low- and middle-income countries have made particularly strong progress in TAPS bans. Twelve countries that have adopted comprehensive TAPS bans are low-income countries (41% of all low-income countries), 31 are middle-income countries (30% of middle-income countries) and 14 are high-income (23% of high-income countries).

The total number of countries that raised tobacco taxes to 75% or higher of the price of the most sold brand of cigarettes increased from 38 in 2018 to 40 in 2020, but the number of people protected by this level of tax remains at only one billion.