

future



Tobacco is the single most preventable cause of death in the world today. It kills more than five million people per year – more than tuberculosis, HIV/AIDS and malaria combined. Unless we take urgent action now, tobacco could kill one billion people this century.

But countries can stop the disease, death and economic damage caused by tobacco by taking advantage of the technical assistance that WHO provides them to implement the WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (WHO FCTC).

The six MPOWER measures are not expensive to use. Moreover, they are proven to work. With them, countries can protect their people's health and go far towards meeting their commitments under the WHO FCTC, which, as WHO's first public health treaty, confirms the vital role of international law in preventing disease and promoting health.



Warn about the dangers of tobacco

Few tobacco users understand the full extent of their health risk.

Health warnings on tobacco packaging reach all smokers and cost governments nothing. As laid out in guidelines to article 11 of the WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control, warnings should appear on both the front and back of the packaging and be large and clear and describe specific illnesses caused by tobacco.

Pictures of disease have a greater impact than words alone. In addition, anti-tobacco advertisements can publicise tobacco's dangers.

Use of graphic images demonstrating the harm of tobacco use can be especially effective in convincing users to quit. In addition to paid advertising, reaching out to the news media can effectively and inexpensively disseminate anti-tobacco messaging.



Enforce bans on tobacco advertising, promotion and sponsorship

The tobacco industry spends tens of billions of dollars worldwide each year on advertising, promotion and sponsorship.

A total ban on direct and indirect advertising, promotion and sponsorship, as provided in guidelines to article 13 of the WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control, can substantially reduce tobacco consumption and protect people, particularly youths, from industry marketing tactics.

To be effective, bans must be complete and apply to all marketing categories. Otherwise, the industry merely redirects resources to non-regulated marketing channels. The tobacco industry strongly opposes such comprehensive bans because they are effective in reducing tobacco use.



Raise taxes on tobacco

Increasing the price of tobacco through higher taxes is the single most effective way to encourage tobacco users to quit and prevent children from starting to smoke.

Taxes on inexpensive tobacco products should be equivalent to higher-priced products, such as premium-brand cigarettes, to prevent substitution in consumption. Taxes need to be increased regularly to correct for inflation and consumer purchasing power.

Tobacco taxes are generally well accepted by the public and raise government revenues. Allocating tax revenues for tobacco control and other important health and social programmes further increases their popularity.

mpower



act now!



The means to stop the tobacco epidemic are clear and within reach. Countries can save lives by applying MPOWER as part of their comprehensive implementation of the WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (WHO FCTC).

The World Health Organization helps countries to implement the WHO FCTC. Towards this end, WHO developed MPOWER – six tobacco control measures of proven cost-effectiveness and ability to save lives. If implemented as a package, these measures protect against the illness and death that the tobacco epidemic will otherwise inevitably bring. With them, even low-income countries can go far towards countering the epidemic of tobacco and meeting their commitments under the WHO FCTC.

Unless urgent action is taken, tobacco could kill one billion during this century. By using MPOWER, governmental and civic leaders can advance the common good and prevent hundreds of millions of premature deaths.

Act now to stop the tobacco epidemic



Monitor tobacco use and prevention policies

Data are necessary to implement and evaluate effective tobacco control policies.

Only through accurate measurement of the tobacco epidemic and of the interventions to control it can those interventions be effectively managed and improved.

Good monitoring provides policy-makers with information about the extent of the epidemic in a country and how to tailor policies to the needs of different groups.

Disseminating the information broadly and effectively gives all stakeholders a clearer picture of the epidemic and provides advocates for tobacco control with important evidence to bolster the case for stronger policies.



Protect people from tobacco smoke

All people have a right to breathe clean air.

There is no safe level of exposure to second-hand smoke, which causes heart disease, cancer and many other diseases. Even brief exposure can cause serious damage. Smoke-free legislation is popular wherever it is enacted, and these laws do not harm businesses.

Any country, regardless of income level, can implement effective smoke-free legislation. Only a total ban on smoking in public places, including all indoor workplaces, protects people from the harms of second-hand smoke, helps smokers quit and reduces youth smoking. Guidelines to article 8 of the WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control help countries know exactly what to do to protect their people from second-hand smoke.



Offer help to quit tobacco use

The more than one billion smokers worldwide who are addicted to tobacco are victims of the tobacco epidemic.

When informed of the risks, most tobacco users want to quit, but few get help and support to overcome their dependence.

Health-care systems have primary responsibility for treating tobacco dependence.

Programmes should include tobacco cessation advice incorporated into primary health-care services, easily accessible and free telephone help lines (known as quit lines), and access to low-cost medicines. All health-care workers should become advocates for tobacco control. Governments can use some tobacco tax revenues to help tobacco users free themselves from addiction.

Six tobacco control measures can counter the epidemic

Monitor tobacco use and prevention policies

Protect people from tobacco smoke

Offer help to quit tobacco use

Warn about the dangers of tobacco

Enforce bans on tobacco advertising, promotion and sponsorship

Raise taxes on tobacco

mpower

... countering the global epidemic of tobacco, advancing the WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control

Visit us at: www.who.int/tobacco/mpower

