



International Union Against
Tuberculosis and Lung Disease
Health solutions for the poor

PRESS RELEASE

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World No Tobacco Day 2013: 31 May 2013

The Union supports bans on tobacco advertising, promotion and sponsorship as essential to saving lives

Edinburgh, Scotland / 29 May 2013 – This year's World No Tobacco Day theme focuses on the need to ban tobacco advertising, promotion and sponsorship – or TAPS – as tobacco control advocates refer to it. **The International Union Against Tuberculosis and Lung Disease (The Union)** strongly supports this campaign, since the removal of TAPS alone has been shown to reduce tobacco consumption by an average of seven percent.

"If seven percent of the one billion people who now smoke stopped, that would be seventy million people – more than ten times the number of people who will die from tobacco use this year", says Dr Nils E Billo, Executive Director of The Union. "That's significant. That's worth fighting for".

"Tobacco is a leading risk factor for all four of the major non-communicable diseases — chronic respiratory diseases, cardiovascular diseases, cancer and diabetes – which are responsible for 63 percent of all deaths worldwide. The tobacco industry has a vested interest in persuading more people to smoke", Dr Billo says, "and we in public health need to push back and do whatever we can to prevent them from succeeding".

Instituting a comprehensive TAPS ban is required for the 176 countries that have ratified the WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (FCTC), but, to date, only 19 countries have passed comprehensive national legislation. Another 101 countries have set some limits, such as banning advertising in print, TV and radio, but 38% of UN member states still have no protections in place at all.

"With tobacco control, you have to look at progress as well as the long road ahead", says Dr Ehsan Latif, Director of The Union's Department of Tobacco Control. "For example, in 2008 only 80 million people were protected by TAPS bans, and today that number is 425 million".

The Union has worked with 40 countries to advance towards comprehensive tobacco control by strengthening tobacco control organisations and government groups through training, legal and technical advice and grants from the Bloomberg Initiative to support their activities.

"Every one of these countries has made progress, whether it's China, which now has seven cities that are in the process of implementing smokefree legislation, Brazil which has banned flavored additives in cigarettes that are intended to attract young and new smokers, or Indonesia which has recently committed to introducing graphic health warnings on cigarette packs", says Dr Latif. "The picture is very different now than it was in 2003 when the FCTC was adopted."

"In the past year, countries with very strong smoking cultures such as Russia and Bangladesh have passed national legislation that covers TAPS. In Russia, this includes a ban on free product giveaways, brand-stretching marketing to other products and sponsorship of events or individuals. In Bangladesh,

the new law extends the current ban on advertising and promotion to cover point-of-sale displays and so-called 'corporate social responsibility' sponsorships' ", says Latif. "These are huge wins for the people of those countries – and for other countries that will be inspired to follow their example".

Nevertheless the odds are daunting. In 2006, the five largest cigarette manufacturers spent \$12.49 billion to market their products in the United States alone, according to the American Lung Association. And with the decrease in tobacco use in high-income countries, the industry has focused more and more of these marketing resources on low- and middle-income countries.

"This issue of the tobacco companies targeting vulnerable groups with their advertising is not only a health issue, it's a development issue", says Dr Billo. "When people are persuaded to spend their money on tobacco, they are not spending it on food, shelter or education. This is an economic threat for the family that also has broader implications for the whole society. Eighty percent of tobacco deaths are now in low- and middle-income countries", says Dr Billo. "This is a trend that The Union is committed to reversing".

About The Union

The mission of the International Union Against Tuberculosis and Lung Disease (The Union) is to bring innovation, expertise, solutions and support to address health challenges in low- and middle-income populations. With nearly 15,000 members and subscribers from 150 countries, The Union has its headquarters in Paris and offices serving the Africa, Asia Pacific, Europe, Latin America, Middle East, North America and South-East Asia regions. Its scientific departments focus on tuberculosis and HIV, lung health and non-communicable diseases, tobacco control and research. Learn more at www.theunion.org.

For more information about The Union's tobacco control activities, please visit:

www.tobaccofreeunion.org

Corrections

Due to an editorial error, an earlier version of this release stated that "If seven percent of the one billion people who now smoke stopped, that would be seven million people – one million more than the number of people who will die from tobacco use this year" in a quote attributed to Nils E. Billo. The actual statement was as follows: "If seven percent of the one billion people who now smoke stopped, that would be seventy million people – more than ten times the number of people who will die from tobacco use this year."

The earlier release also stated that "The picture is very different now than it was in 2005 when the FCTC was passed," in a quote attributed to Ehsan Latif. The actual statement was "The picture is very different now than it was in 2003 when the FCTC was adopted."