



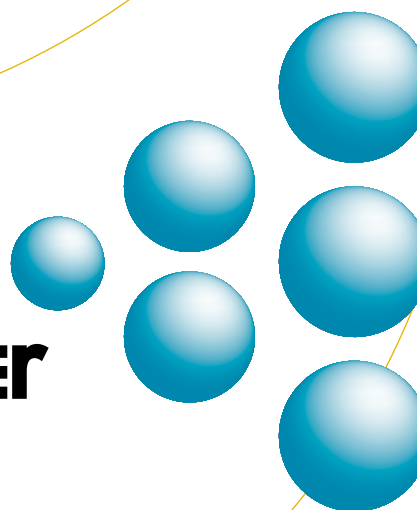
**World Health  
Organization**

# **WHO REPORT ON THE GLOBAL TOBACCO EPIDEMIC, 2015**

**Raising taxes on tobacco**

fresh and alive

**mpower**



**Raising taxes on tobacco  
is the most effective  
way to reduce  
tobacco use.**

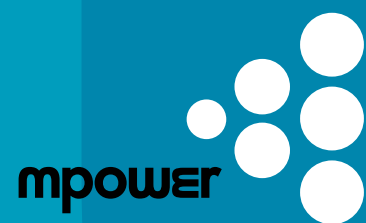


**The tobacco industry  
will do whatever it can  
to keep taxes low.**

**UBR**

# Public support for tobacco tax increases is widespread.

*WHO report on the global tobacco epidemic, 2015: Raising taxes on tobacco is the fifth in a series of WHO reports that tracks the status of the tobacco epidemic and the impact of interventions implemented to stop it.*



- M**onitor Monitor tobacco use and prevention policies
- P**rotect Protect people from tobacco smoke
- O**ffer Offer help to quit tobacco use
- W**arn Warn about the dangers of tobacco
- E**nforce Enforce bans on tobacco advertising, promotion and sponsorship
- R**aise Raise taxes on tobacco

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## WHO REPORT ON THE GLOBAL TOBACCO EPIDEMIC, 2015

### Raising taxes on tobacco

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**Progress in adopting MPOWER measures demonstrates countries' commitment to tobacco control.**

**The fate of millions of lives depends upon all of us acting decisively to end this global epidemic.**

Dr Oleg Chestnov, Assistant Director-General, World Health Organization

## **GLOBALLY, THE NUMBER OF PEOPLE FULLY PROTECTED BY AT LEAST ONE MPOWER MEASURE HAS NEARLY TRIPLED SINCE 2007**

When the WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (WHO FCTC) entered into force in February 2005, it marked a momentous achievement in the history of tobacco control. In the decade that has ensued, the treaty has become one of the most rapidly embraced and measurably successful in United Nations history. This is testament to the conviction of countries worldwide, large and small, rich and poor, to combat the global tobacco epidemic and protect the health, and ultimately the lives, of their people. The MPOWER measures were established by WHO in 2008 to scale up key WHO FCTC demand reduction measures, with a focus on cost-effectiveness, practicality and impact.

Since publication of the first *WHO report on the global tobacco epidemic*, the number of people worldwide covered by at least one MPOWER measure at the highest level of achievement has nearly tripled from 1 billion to 2.8 billion: an increase representing one quarter of the world's population (the number of countries has more than doubled).

This report, the fifth in the series of WHO reports on the global tobacco epidemic, presents a country-level examination of the epidemic and identifies countries that have applied effective tobacco control measures. The number of people worldwide protected by effective tobacco control measures continues to grow, and countries that have adopted these measures at the highest level of achievement can be considered models for action for those countries that have yet to do so.

Progress in adopting MPOWER measures demonstrates countries' commitment to tobacco control. In 2007, only 1 in 10 people living in low- and middle-income countries were protected by at least one MPOWER measure at the highest level of achievement. Seven years later, this level of protection is enjoyed by nearly 1 in 3 people in those countries.

The focus of this report is raising taxes on tobacco, the 'R' component of MPOWER. Time and again, increasing taxes on tobacco products to increase retail prices has been proven to be the most effective and efficient of the best-buy demand reduction measures to reduce tobacco use. And yet it is also the least widely implemented measure.

For all the positive progress made, raising tobacco taxes lags behind implementation of the other MPOWER measures. In 2014, only 10% of the world's population were covered by taxes that total to more than 75% of retail price. Worryingly, the proportion of low- and middle-income countries that has implemented sufficiently high taxes on tobacco remains small, at only 9%. More effort is needed to advance progress under the 'R' measure to levels achieved with the other measures.

The big picture, however, is promising: we are moving in the right direction on all MPOWER measures, with great progress made on some. But it is not enough. Without significant tobacco taxation, cigarettes remain affordable to the world's billion-plus smokers, and we risk reversing the progress made on other measures.

This report comes at a crucial moment in the history of tobacco control: 2015 marks the end of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), and the advent of a new development era with new priorities and targets. Decisions made this year will shape the development landscape for years to come. The new Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) are set to be far more comprehensive than the MDGs, encompassing a much broader definition of what successful development entails.

Effectively addressing noncommunicable diseases (NCDs) – primarily cancers, diabetes, cardiovascular disease and chronic lung disease – will be a key requirement to achieving the progress in health necessary for successful and sustainable development.

The progress and development of low- and middle-income countries around the world is threatened if disease, disability and death from NCDs are left unaddressed. Already, more than 80% of premature deaths from NCDs occur in developing countries. This burden is projected to rise unless we act.

As tobacco use is the largest preventable risk factor for NCDs, strong tobacco control efforts will have a huge role to play in reducing this burden and ensuring countries' development and prosperity. If we are to succeed in achieving the targets we set for ourselves this year, we must continue our fight to rid the world of its leading preventable cause of death.

Dr Margaret Chan, Director-General of WHO, has been a tireless champion of tobacco control worldwide. Her strong words against tobacco industry interference remind us that the fight is not over and that it is of the utmost importance, now more than ever, for all of us to work together across countries to implement these key MPOWER tobacco control measures. The fate of millions of lives depends upon all of us acting decisively to end this global epidemic.



**Dr Oleg Chestnov**



## MANY PARTIES IMPLEMENTED CHANGES IN THEIR TOBACCO TAXES IN LINE WITH ARTICLE 6 OF THE WHO FCTC AND ITS GUIDELINES

The World Health Organization Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (WHO FCTC) Secretariat welcomes the publication of the *WHO report on the global tobacco epidemic, 2015*, which coincides with the 10th anniversary of the entry into force of the WHO FCTC. The 180 Parties to the WHO FCTC – the world's first public health treaty under the auspices of WHO – have committed to making tobacco control and saving lives a priority.

Price and tax measures to reduce the demand for tobacco, the focus of this report, are one of the core demand reduction strategies that the WHO FCTC requires its Parties to implement: in Article 6, Parties recognize that, "price and tax measures are an effective and important means of reducing tobacco consumption...". Further, the WHO FCTC calls on the Parties to adopt and maintain tax and price policies that will, "contribute to the health objectives aimed at reducing tobacco consumption". To assist Parties in their efforts, the Conference of the Parties (COP) adopted a set of guiding principles and recommendations in 2012, and 2 years later, in October 2014, a full set of Guidelines for implementation of Article 6 (*Price and tax measures to reduce the demand for tobacco*) of the WHO FCTC.

This effort has already started to bear fruit. As detailed in this report, more than half of countries have increased their excise taxes since 2012, many of which implemented changes in their tobacco taxes in line with these new guidelines.

The WHO FCTC Secretariat, in collaboration

in prices and taxes still exist among neighbouring countries and even within subregions and regions of some countries. We will continue to work to ensure that WHO FCTC requirements and guidelines are appropriately addressed by each Party. Regional and subregional economic organizations have the unique opportunity to promote tobacco tax harmonization within their constituencies to eliminate differential tax treatment. Additionally, the WHO FCTC Secretariat strongly encourages WHO Member States who are not yet Parties to the WHO FCTC to put in place the evidence-based provisions of the treaty that serve as the foundations of meeting its requirements.

Article 5.3 of the WHO FCTC requires that, "in setting and implementing their public health policies with respect to tobacco control, Parties shall act to protect these policies from commercial and other vested interests of the tobacco industry...". However, Parties report that the tobacco industry often presents significant challenges to implementation of the WHO FCTC. Since increasing tobacco taxes is a potent public health tool that measurably reduces tobacco consumption, it is strongly opposed by the tobacco industry and its front groups, both openly and behind the scenes, who actively interfere with Parties' development and introduction of strong tobacco taxation policies.

To identify industry attempts at interference, Parties, non-Parties and observers from intergovernmental and civil society organizations need to remain vigilant. Front groups such as chambers of commerce

observers to the COP, stands ready to promote and support Parties as they work to adopt taxation measures that achieve public health goals. The WHO FCTC provides three main policy approaches to do so: application of the provisions and guidelines for implementation of Article 6; addressing tobacco industry interference by adopting guidelines for implementation of Article 5.3; and implementation of Article 15 and entry into force of the Protocol to Eliminate Illicit Trade in Tobacco Products. These approaches, if used together, will have a combined effect that will ensure that tax and price policies lead to reduced tobacco consumption along with all the attendant health benefits.

We would like to congratulate our WHO colleagues at all levels (from headquarters to Regional and Country Offices), as well as the many Bloomberg Initiative partners, for the solid research findings published here. This high-quality information and comparable data on progress in implementing selected demand reduction measures, as well as the monitoring mechanisms that allow the tobacco epidemic to be measured and interventions evaluated, shows the advances that have been made and provides guidance for future progress.

We hope the *WHO report on the global tobacco epidemic, 2015*, series continues to contribute to the advancement of global tobacco control and that consideration will be made to discuss the remaining WHO FCTC demand and supply reduction measures in future editions. Providing countries with accurate and comparable information in areas as diverse as product

**Price and tax measures are one of the core demand reduction strategies that the WHO FCTC requires its Parties to implement.**

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