

# Big Tobacco Fueling Global Economic Crises and Exploiting Trade Agreements

## Experts from the American Cancer Society, World Lung Foundation and the World Bank reveal links between the tobacco industry's aggressive tactics and impediments to economic development

Washington, D.C. – October 15, 2012 – A panel of global experts on health and economics warned today that the tobacco industry is having a devastating impact on productivity, trade, and the global economy. According to the new edition of [The Tobacco Atlas](#), during 2000–2004, the value of cigarettes sold in the United States alone averaged \$71 billion per year, while cigarette smoking was responsible for an estimated \$193 billion in annual health-related economic losses.

The panel included leaders from the American Cancer Society, World Lung Foundation, and the World Bank, as well as global expert scientists and authors of the new edition of *The Tobacco Atlas* ([www.tobaccoatlas.org](http://www.tobaccoatlas.org)). Together, the panel called for global concerted governmental action to reduce the affordability of cigarettes, implement smokefree policies, increase awareness of the true harms of smoking and remove the tobacco industry's ability to use slick advertising and packaging.

According to *The Tobacco Atlas*, tobacco use is the single most preventable cause of death in the world, resulting in nearly 6 million deaths in 2011, with nearly 80 percent of these deaths occurring in low- and middle-income countries. Data within The Atlas confirms that the burden of death, disease, and disability caused by the use of tobacco products outweighs any economic benefit from their manufacture and sale. The tobacco industry is also igniting conflicts in international trade, stunting economic development and fueling poverty among many of the world's most vulnerable populations.

American Cancer Society and World Lung Foundation also unveiled two new platforms to build knowledge about the tobacco epidemic and the tactics of the tobacco industry. A video entitled "How Much is a Life Worth? The Truth About Tobacco" being launched on [Youtube](#) at <http://ow.ly/eqNMN> and at [www.tobaccoatlas.org](http://www.tobaccoatlas.org), highlights that the tobacco industry makes US\$6,000 for every person its products kill. It also makes the point that the industry targets children to hook a steady stream of smokers as many smokers die from tobacco related illnesses. In addition, a new mobile phone version of *The Tobacco Atlas*, was made available to enable those with mobile internet access to view key data by country or by data issue in a faster-loading, text-based format.

"The tobacco industry tries to hide the truth of its activities and the harm of its products behind decades of misinformation and through the misuse of local, national and international law," said Peter Baldini, Chief Executive Officer, World Lung Foundation. "As *The Tobacco Atlas* makes clear, those harms and the industry's spurious legal challenges negatively hurt economies as much as they hurt people."

John R. Seffrin, PhD, chief executive officer of the American Cancer Society, said: "Today's discussion peeled back additional layers of the tobacco industry's well-funded tactics that cause physical and financial harm to the global community. We must work together to make the global economy stronger by preventing the tobacco industry's deceitful practices of addicting new users and challenge international laws to protect health."

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### About the Authors

The three authors of *The Tobacco Atlas* bring a deep knowledge of the tobacco epidemic and its solutions. Michael Eriksen, Sc.D., is a professor and founding director of the Institute of Public Health at Georgia State University. He has been a senior advisor to the World Health Organization

(WHO), and was director of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's Office on Smoking and Health. Hana Ross, Ph.D., is an economist and managing director of international tobacco control research at the American Cancer Society. She has published more than 50 articles and independent reports on issues related to tobacco taxation, cigarette prices, costs of smoking, illicit trade and other economic aspects of tobacco control. Judith Mackay is a medical doctor, Fellow of the Royal Colleges of Physicians of Edinburgh and London, and a special advisor at World Lung Foundation. She is also a senior policy advisor to the World Health Organization (WHO) and a director of the Asian Consultancy on Tobacco Control.

#### About the Fourth Edition

The Fourth Edition of The Tobacco Atlas was launched in English on March 21, 2012, at the World Conference on Tobacco OR Health in Singapore, a decade after the publication of the first edition. The Atlas presents the most up-to-date information on tobacco and tobacco control available in a highly graphic, easily understandable format. Data contained within the Atlas is gathered from multiple sources and validated to ensure it presents a holistic and accurate picture of tobacco and tobacco control across the globe. The updated version is also available online at TobaccoAtlas.org, where policy makers, public health practitioners, advocates and journalists may interact with the data and create customizable charts, graphs and maps. On October 15, 2012, a text-only version of the Atlas was launched for mobile devices. The application provides a quick look-up tool for data on countries or issues covered in the Atlas. The mobile site is automatically loaded when TobaccoAtlas.org is accessed via a phone's web browser or may be accessed in a regular web browser by visiting <http://www.tobaccoatlas.org/m/>. It is anticipated that the mobile version of the Atlas will be of particular benefit to health professionals, advocates and journalists in countries with high levels of mobile internet access, particularly in Africa and Asia.

#### About the American Cancer Society

The American Cancer Society combines an unyielding passion with nearly a century of experience to save lives and end suffering from cancer. As a global grassroots force of more than three million volunteers, and with programs in more than 20 countries, we fight for every birthday threatened by cancer in communities worldwide. We save lives by helping people stay well by preventing cancer or detecting it early; by helping people get well by being there for them during and after a cancer diagnosis; by finding cures through investment in groundbreaking discovery; and by fighting back by rallying lawmakers to pass laws to defeat cancer and by rallying people across the globe to join the fight. As a global leader in cancer research investment, we turn what we know about cancer into what we do. To learn more or to get help, and for more information on our global cancer and tobacco control programs, visit [www.cancer.org/global](http://www.cancer.org/global) or [www.global.cancer.org](http://www.global.cancer.org).

#### About World Lung Foundation

World Lung Foundation (WLF) was established in response to the global epidemic of lung disease, which kills 10 million people each year. The organization also works on maternal and infant mortality reduction initiatives. WLF improves global health by improving local health capacity, by supporting operational research, by developing public policy and by delivering public education. The organization's areas of emphasis are tobacco control, maternal and infant mortality prevention, tuberculosis, asthma and child lung health. For more information, please visit [worldlungfoundation.org](http://worldlungfoundation.org).

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