2009 Edition Of The Tobacco Atlas Catalogues Catastrophic Toll Of Tobacco Worldwide

By 2015 two million will die each year from tobacco-induced cancers

Atlanta 2009/08/25 -The Tobacco Atlas, Third Edition, published by the American Cancer Society and World Lung Foundation, estimates that tobacco use kills some six million people each year- more than a third of whom will die from cancer- and drains US$500 billion annually from global economies. Unveiled at the LIVESTRONG Global Cancer Summit, the Atlas graphically displays how tobacco is devastating both global health and economies, especially in middle- and low-resource countries, and tracks progress and outcomes in tobacco control.

The Most Preventable Cause of Cancer

According to The Tobacco Atlas, 2.1 million cancer deaths per year will be attributable to tobacco by 2015. By 2030, 83% of these deaths will occur in low and middle-income countries. Unique among cancer-causing agents, the danger of tobacco is completely preventable through proven public policies. Major measures include tobacco taxes, advertising bans, smokefree public places, and effective health warnings on packages. These cost-effective policies are among those included in the Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (FCTC), a global treaty endorsed by more than 160 countries, and recommended by the World Health Organization MPOWER policy package.

A $500 Billion Hole in Global Economy

The global economy lost a staggering US$500 billion due to tobacco use. These economic costs come as a result of lost productivity, misused resources, missed opportunities for taxation, and premature death.

- Because 25 percent of smokers die and many more become ill during their most productive years, income loss devastates families and communities.
- Cigarettes are the world's most widely smuggled legal consumer product. In 2006, about 600 billion smuggled cigarettes made it to the market, representing an enormous missed tax opportunity for governments, as well as a missed opportunity to prevent many people from starting to smoke and encourage others to quit.
- Tobacco replaces potential food production on almost 4 million hectares of the world's agricultural land, equal to all of the world's orange groves or banana plantations.
- In developing countries, smokers spend disproportionate sums of money relative to their incomes that could otherwise be spent on food, healthcare, and other necessities.

Burden Shift to the World's Poorest Countries

The Tobacco Atlas crystallizes an undeniable trend: the tobacco industry has shifted its marketing and sales efforts to countries that have less effective public health policies and fewer tobacco control resources in place:

- In 2010, 72 percent of those who die from tobacco related illnesses will be in low- and middle-income countries.
- Since 1960 global tobacco production has increased three-fold in low- and middle-resource countries while halving in high-resource countries.
- In Bangladesh alone, if the average household bought food with the money normally spent on tobacco, more than 10 million people would no longer suffer from malnutrition and 350 children under age five could be

saved each day.

Quotes from Leadership

“The Tobacco Atlas is crucial to helping advocates in every nation get the knowledge they need to combat the most preventable global health epidemic,” said John R. Seffrin, Ph.D. chief executive officer, American Cancer Society. “It is especially appropriate to present the Atlas here in Ireland, where so much progress has already been made against the scourge of tobacco. By utilizing this information to develop public health strategies to reduce tobacco use and help people stay well, we will save millions of lives.”

“The Tobacco Atlas presents compelling evidence that the health burden is shifting from richer countries to their lower-resource counterparts,” said Peter Baldini, chief executive officer, World Lung Foundation.” This evidence clearly articulates the breathtaking scope and dimensions of the problem. It calls out to be used actively in strengthening the case for policy change.”

"I'm not telling people how to live their lives,” said Lance Armstrong, “but I am certainly trying to educate them on healthy lifestyles and preventing this train wreck that potentially awaits them."

About the Authors

The four authors of the publication bring together an impressive array of credentials. Hana Ross, Ph.D. is an economist and strategic director of international tobacco control research at the American Cancer Society. She is also deputy director of the International Tobacco Network (ITEN), a network promoting collaboration among economists interested in tobacco control issues. Judith Mackay, M.D., is a 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. Omar Shafey, Ph.D., M.P.H., is a medical anthropologist and epidemiologist, and an adjunct professor of Global Health at Emory University. Among many publications and studies, he was a coauthor of the second edition of The Tobacco Atlas. 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 Organisation (WHO), and was director of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention’s Office on Smoking and Health.

About the Revised Edition

The new edition was previewed in March at the World Conference on Tobacco OR Health, and is now being released with the most up-to-date information on tobacco and tobacco control available. 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 being released online at TobaccoAtlas.org, where policy makers, public health practitioners, advocates and journalists interact with the data and create customizable charts, graphs and maps.

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; 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 programs, visit www.cancer.org/international.

About World Lung Foundation

World Lung Foundation was established in response to the global epidemic of lung disease, which kills 10 million people each year. The organization improves global lung health by improving local capacity to conduct research, develop public policy and deliver public health education. The organization’s areas of emphasis are tobacco

control, tuberculosis, HIV/AIDS, asthma, and child lung health. For more information, please visit worldlungfoundation.org.

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