

The American Cancer Society and World Lung Foundation Release The Tobacco Atlas, Third Edition in Chinese

Data shows some progress in tobacco control, but further action needed for China to meet international treaty commitments

Shenzhen, August 19, 2010 --- Today, the American Cancer Society and World Lung Foundation released the Chinese language version of *The Tobacco Atlas*, Third Edition, which is now available globally in several languages. *The Tobacco Atlas* is a tool to help civil society and governments take decisive action to reduce the harms of tobacco, such as lung cancer and other cancers, heart disease, stroke, emphysema, low birth weight, and sudden infant death syndrome. The book offers maps and graphics that illustrate the breadth of the tobacco epidemic, expose the behavior of the tobacco industry, and predict the future course of the epidemic globally. It also offers solutions to curbing the global usage of tobacco.

China is the world's leading consumer and producer of tobacco products. According to the Global Adult Tobacco Survey in China, 300 million people, including nearly 53 percent of Chinese men, are smokers. The country consumes more than 37 percent of the world's cigarettes. According to *The Tobacco Atlas*, tobacco use costs China \$5 billion U.S. dollars per year in health-care expenditures, employee absenteeism, reduced labor productivity, lost tax opportunities, and premature death.

"Millions of people in China will die from tobacco-related illness over the coming years if we do nothing," said Professor Yang Gonghuan, Deputy General Director of China CDC and Director of the China CDC Office of Tobacco Control. "The Tobacco Atlas demonstrates clearly that this is not just a problem in our country, but throughout the world. It also shows the solutions to this epidemic are simple steps we can all take to protect people no matter where they are."

China's Progress and Commitments in Tobacco Control

The Tobacco Atlas highlights the importance of the Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (FCTC), a global public health treaty focused on reducing tobacco use that was ratified by China in 2005. Over the past five years, China has implemented policies to meet these commitments, yet more could be done.

For example, graphic pack warnings have been found to be effective in warning people about tobacco's harms. China introduced basic text warnings covering 30% of cigarette packs but, as noted in *The Tobacco Atlas*, FCTC guidelines recommend that warning labels should use images in addition to text and cover 50% of a cigarette pack. *The Tobacco Atlas* can be a useful tool for China's government and public health advocates to work toward strengthening such provisions and for implementing the next series of treaty commitments by January 2011. These upcoming commitments include:

- Banning all forms of tobacco advertising, promotion and sponsorship. International best practice, as outlined in *The Tobacco Atlas*, includes ensuring there are no exceptions to such bans because the tobacco industry will redirect its marketing to areas not covered by the ban.
- Banning smoking in all workplaces and public places to reduce exposure to secondhand smoke.

- Protecting tobacco control policy from tobacco industry influence, recognizing fundamental conflicts of interest between public health and tobacco business. This obligation poses a special challenge for China whose State Tobacco Monopoly Administration is a part of the Government.

“China should be congratulated for its commitment to tobacco control and for taking significant steps to reduce tobacco consumption and prevent smoking initiation. *The Tobacco Atlas* is crucial to understanding the nature of the most preventable disease epidemic in China and in the Western Pacific Region,” said John R. Seffrin, Ph.D., Chief Executive Officer, American Cancer Society. “As China has ratified the Framework Convention on Tobacco Control, there is an enormous opportunity to save lives and positively impact the health of generations to come.”

“About one million people die in China every year from illness related to tobacco and yet, unlike other public health crises, we know what the solutions are to change this,” said Peter Baldini, Chief Executive Officer, World Lung Foundation. “We are encouraged by the progress China has made and hope this book will help the country move toward a healthy, harmonious society.”

Facts from *The Tobacco Atlas*, 3rd Edition

Consumption of tobacco can cause serious economic losses – about US \$500 billion globally.

- The Chinese tobacco market is dominated by the China National Tobacco Corporation (CNTC), and its sales account for one-third of the global market.
- Because 25 percent of smokers die and many more become ill during their most productive years, income lost 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.
- 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. More than a quarter of this land, about 1.4 million hectares, is used in China.
- In developing countries, smokers spend disproportionate sums of money relative to their incomes that could otherwise be spent on food, education, healthcare and other necessities.
- Population growth in low and middle-income countries is expanding the overall number of smokers even though prevalence may be decreasing in some places

The Tobacco Atlas also crystallizes an undeniable trend: the tobacco industry is exacerbating these negative health and economic effects by aggressively promoting their products. Tobacco companies are shifting from traditional advertising to point-of-sale promotions, and are using deceptive and subliminal forms of advertising, particularly through brand placement.

About the Authors

The four authors of the publication bring together an impressive array of credentials.

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.

Judith Mackay, MBChB is a Fellow of the Royal Colleges of Physicians of Edinburgh and London, and a senior 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.

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 Evidence Network (ITEN), a network promoting collaboration among economists interested in tobacco control issues.

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*.

About *The Tobacco Atlas*, Third Edition

The Tobacco Atlas, Third Edition was previewed in 2009 at the World Conference on Tobacco OR Health in Mumbai, India. An updated version was released in August 2009 at the LIVESTRONG Global Cancer Summit in Dublin, Ireland. The Spanish version has also been published and released in Mexico City, Mexico. For more information on how to obtain a copy of the book or download book PDF files, please visit TobaccoAtlas.org. Data contained within *The Tobacco Atlas* are gathered from multiple sources and validated to ensure they present a holistic and accurate picture of tobacco and tobacco control across the globe.

On TobaccoAtlas.org, policymakers, public health practitioners, advocates, and journalists can interact with the data and create customizable charts, graphs and maps.

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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 programs, visit www.cancer.org/global.

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