

# Millions of Lives at Stake as Tobacco Burden is Expected to Escalate in Africa

## 4th Edition of The Tobacco Atlas Warns of Death, Disease and More Poverty If Current Trends Continue

Dakar, Senegal – October 1, 2012 –Africa is a major target for tobacco industry sales and marketing according to the American Cancer Society and World Lung Foundation, who released the [French version of The Tobacco Atlas – Fourth Edition](#) today. The Ministry of Health of Senegal joined the American Cancer Society and World Lung Foundation to warn citizens here and across the continent of this looming public health threat. Cigarette consumption in Africa and the Middle East increased by 57% between 1990 and 2009. Experts predict devastating health and economic harm in Africa without aggressive interventions in tobacco control.

### A Looming Crisis In Africa

Tobacco industry activity is booming across the continent. According to the Atlas, four African countries – Mozambique, Zambia, Mali and Ghana – are among the top five countries with the greatest increase in tobacco production in the last decade; and cigarette consumption in the Middle East and Africa combined increased by 57 percent between 1990 and 2009.

Currently, three percent of all male deaths in Senegal can be attributed to tobacco use, but this number is set to skyrocket as the tobacco industry increases its efforts to addict more people to its products. Women in Africa, who have a relatively low smoking prevalence compared to other regions of the world, are of particular concern because of aggressive targeting by the industry.

In comparison to Senegal's 12% smoking rate in boys, in other French speaking African countries, the rate is higher and likely to keep growing--- Cote d'Ivoire (19%), Algeria (18%) and Congo (15%). Almost 48% of Senegalese youth live in homes where other smoke in their presence. Similarly alarming levels of exposure to deadly secondhand smoke occur in Mali (48%), Sierra Leone (44%), and Mauritania (43%).

According to the Atlas, almost 20% of youth in Senegal report having an item with a tobacco logo on it, with even higher percentages in Chad (30%), Niger (30%) and Mauritania (28%). This data suggest young people are being subjected to health harms and an aggressive marketing is already underway to addict a new generation of users.

"We have an unprecedented opportunity to prevent a pandemic in many parts of this region," said Michael Eriksen, Sc.D., professor and founding director of the Institute of Public Health at Georgia State University in Atlanta, GA (USA), and lead author of the Tobacco Atlas – Fourth Edition.

"Tobacco control is especially important in Africa, where smoking rates in most countries are still low. Given the track record and devious behaviors of tobacco companies, we must take urgent action. We hope to arm public health officials and communities with user friendly information in the Tobacco Atlas, to use as an advocacy tool to fight the tobacco burden and save lives from this deadly product."

"Tobacco is the only legal product that kills when used as directed," said John R. Seffrin, PhD, chief executive officer of the American Cancer Society. "Africa represents the last untapped market for the tobacco industry. It is critical that public health and government officials in Africa work together to prevent a potential tsunami of deaths from this deadly product."

"In many countries, the higher percentages of smokers are adults, but in Africa, youth are catching up and even surpassing the previous generation," said Peter Baldini, Chief Executive Officer, World Lung Foundation. "We must act now to prevent millions of people from losing their lives to an insidious industry."

In 2011, according to The Tobacco Atlas, tobacco use killed almost 6 million people, with nearly 80 percent of these deaths occurring in low- and middle-income countries. If trends continue, one billion people will die from tobacco use and exposure during the 21st century – one person every six seconds. Globally, tobacco-related deaths have nearly tripled in the past decade, and tobacco is responsible for more than 15 percent of all male deaths and 7 percent of female deaths.

### **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.

### **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](#) or [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](#).

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