

UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon's message for World No Tobacco Day, 31 May

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This year's observance of World No Tobacco Day falls in the midst of preparations for September's United Nations high-level meeting on non-communicable diseases. By controlling tobacco, we can go a long way towards addressing many of these chronic ailments, including cancer and heart disease. The use of tobacco, which is highly addictive, killed approximately 100 million people in the twentieth century, and unless we act, it could kill up to a billion in this century. The greatest tool in our arsenal is the World Health Organization's Framework Convention on Tobacco Control. Since it was opened for signature in 2003, more than 170 countries have become parties, making it one of the most rapidly embraced treaties in United Nations history. From reducing demand through higher prices and taxes to restricting advertising and sponsorship, from warnings on packages to prohibitions against sales to minors, countries are using the Treaty's provisions to protect their citizens. They are sending a clear message that tobacco use makes us poorer — in health and economic terms. The Treaty's comprehensive defence against industry tactics includes measures to reduce the illicit trade in tobacco products, address issues of liability, support economically viable alternative crops and protect public health policies from undue pressure. The Framework Convention is clearly working to safeguard health in all countries that have adopted and enforced it. Yet, as the reports from States parties show, we have a long way to go. I urge all parties to fully meet their obligations under the Treaty, and I call on the few countries that have not yet become parties to do so. Together, we can halt the tobacco epidemic and the many problems it brings. On this World No Tobacco Day, let us push for progress that will cut tobacco-related deaths and enliven the battle against other non-communicable diseases, helping to create a healthier world for all. More information and resources on World Tobacco Day: World Health Organization:

<http://www.who.int/tobacco/wntd/2011/en/index.html> [1] Framework Convention Alliance:

http://www.ftc.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=544:get... [2]

Post Date: Friday, 27 mayo, 2011

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[1] <http://www.who.int/tobacco/wntd/2011/en/index.html>

[2] http://www.fctc.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=544:get-involved-with-world-no-tobacco-day&catid=229:general-news&Itemid=233