

# Policies and legislation

"The welfare of the people is the ultimate law."  
Salus Populi Suprema Est Lex  
Cicero (106 BCE-43 BCE)

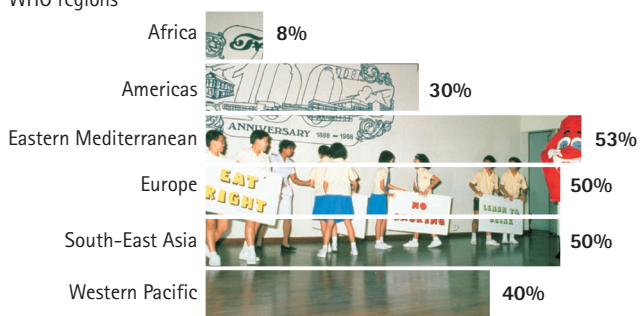
Laws, treaties, policies and regulations have played important roles in the prevention and control of disease. Only governments can legislate for health warnings on cigarettes, introduce mandatory food standards and labelling, crack down on smuggling, set a "pro-health tax policy", or implement national transport policy. Often governments are the main providers of health care; they decide how funding is allocated, from prevention programmes to treatment, research, and training.

The first international convention that relates specifically to cardiovascular disease is the WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control. It was adopted without dissent by the World Health Assembly in Geneva in May 2003, and is currently in the process of ratification. Once 40 countries have ratified the Convention, it will come into effect as a legally binding treaty among those countries. The Convention includes clauses on advertising bans, smoke-free areas, health warnings, taxation, smoking cessation and smuggling.

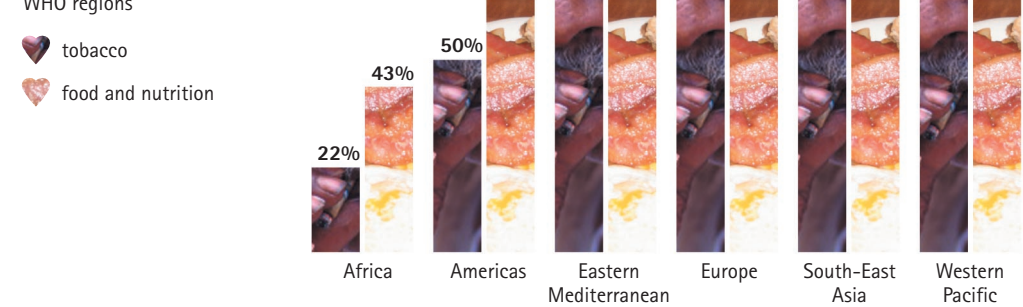


1970 Singapore: smoking banned in buses, cinemas, theatres and other specified buildings.

**Cardiovascular disease plans worldwide**  
Percentage of countries by region with national plans for CVD prevention and control 2001  
WHO regions



**Legislation**  
Percentage of countries by region with tobacco, and food and nutrition legislation 2001  
WHO regions



**17th century: earliest known bans on smoking enacted.**