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**Governments around the world, in partnership with civil society, must continue to act decisively against the tobacco epidemic – the leading global cause of preventable death.**

Dr Ala Alwan, Assistant Director-General, World Health Organization

## PROGRESS IS BEING MADE – NEARLY 400 MILLION PEOPLE NEWLY COVERED BY TOBACCO CONTROL MEASURES IN 2008

Since the entry into force of the WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (WHO FCTC), we have made considerable progress against the global tobacco epidemic. Through results presented in this *WHO Report on the Global Tobacco Epidemic, 2009* – the second country-level examination of the global tobacco epidemic – we know which countries have implemented effective tobacco control measures to reduce demand for tobacco, which countries need to do more to protect their people against the harms of tobacco use, and which countries can be held up as models for action.

Tobacco use continues to kill more than 5 million people worldwide each year, and this number is expected to grow. The burden of tobacco use is greatest in low- and middle-income countries, and will increase more rapidly in these countries in coming decades. We must continue to expand and intensify our efforts to reduce tobacco use.

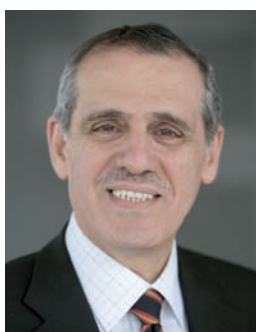
Tobacco control is relatively inexpensive to implement, and the return is enormous. Tobacco use kills or disables many people in their most productive years, which denies families their primary wage-earners, consumes family budgets, raises the cost of health care and hinders economic development. While there are some costs associated with tobacco control programmes, these costs can be overwhelmingly offset by raising tobacco taxes – which themselves are highly effective at reducing tobacco use. Recent progress has highlighted the feasibility of achieving smoke-free environments and generated increased worldwide interest in promoting them.

This report documents many gains in tobacco control achieved over the past year. Nearly 400 million people are newly covered by at least one complete MPOWER measure because of the actions taken by 17 countries to fight the tobacco epidemic. Of particular note is the progress made

on establishing smoke-free environments, which is the focus of the report.

Seven countries, most of which are middle-income, newly adopted comprehensive smoke-free laws in 2008. Several of these countries progressed from having either no national smoke-free law or only minimal protection in some types of public places or workplaces to full protection in all types of places. However, the data presented here also show that we have much more to do. Despite progress, only 9% of countries mandate smoke-free bars and restaurants, and 65 countries report no implementation of any smoke-free policies on a national level.

The WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control sets the bar high and establishes strong momentum for moving forward with global tobacco control. As documented in this report, progress is being made – but we can and must do more. Governments around the world, in partnership with civil society, must continue to act decisively against the tobacco epidemic – the leading global cause of preventable death. By continuing to make tobacco control a top priority, we can build on our successes and create a tobacco-free world.



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