

## A call to action

**Despite the fact that more countries are implementing pictorial warnings, 9 out of 10 people in the world do not have access to pictorial warnings on tobacco packages. This represents a tragic underutilization of a simple, cost-effective strategy that can vastly reduce tobacco use and save lives.**

This is not due to lack of evidence or experience. Governments wishing to implement effective package health warnings have access to substantial research evidence, as well as the experiences of the many countries from all WHO regions that have pioneered these measures. **Now is the time to act.**

WHO calls upon all governments to implement, without delay, the legislative framework necessary to require large pictorial warnings on all tobacco packaging. Governments should follow the best-practice recommendations provided in the guidelines to Article 11 of the WHO Framework Convention<sup>2</sup> as a blueprint for action.

**Governments are also directed to the many other resources available to guide them through the “how-to” of implementing effective package health warnings:**

- The repository of warnings and licensing facilitation system to be established and maintained by the World Health Organization Tobacco Free Initiative (TFI) and the Secretariat of the WHO Framework Convention, as mandated by the Conference of the Parties to the treaty. This repository will contain samples of pictorial warnings currently in use and, with the collaboration of the Framework Convention Secretariat, will help to facilitate the licensing of images for use across countries.
- Technical assistance for the implementation of pictorial warnings is available from the Tobacco Free Initiative through the MPOWER package.
- The collection of labelling examples and evidence compiled at <http://www.tobaccolabels.org> (University of Waterloo, Canada) and at <http://www.smoke-free.ca/warnings/default.htm> (Physicians for a Smoke-Free Canada).



### The MPOWER package

MPOWER is a set of six tobacco control measures that was designed to help countries counter the epidemic of tobacco use and to meet their commitments under the WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control. The “W” in MPOWER stands for “Warn about the dangers of tobacco” and encompasses the use of often grisly pictures to show the true negative impact of tobacco on human health. The placement of such graphic images on tobacco packages has been shown to be an especially effective mechanism to convince smokers to quit.