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New Tobacco Atlas Estimates U.S. \$35 Billion Tobacco Industry Profits and Almost 6 Million Annual Deaths

Wednesday, March 21, 2012

*In 2010, tobacco industry's profit was equivalent to US\$6,000 for each death caused by tobacco.

* Since the 1st Tobacco Atlas in 2002, almost 50 million people have died from tobacco.

* 43 trillion cigarettes have been smoked in the last decade.

(Singapore) - *The Tobacco Atlas*, Fourth Edition, and its companion website TobaccoAtlas.org, were unveiled today by the American Cancer Society and World Lung Foundation at the **15th World Conference on Tobacco OR Health**. The Atlas graphically details the scale of the tobacco epidemic, progress that has been made in tobacco control, and the latest products and tactics being deployed by the highly profitable tobacco industry – such as the use of new media, trade litigation, and aggressive development of smokeless products.



Tobacco Industry Profits Greater Than Ever

According to *The Tobacco Atlas*, estimates of revenues from the global tobacco industry likely approach a half trillion U.S. dollars annually. In 2010, the combined profits of the six leading tobacco companies was U.S. \$35.1 billion, equal to the combined profits of Coca-Cola, Microsoft, and McDonald's in the same year. If Big Tobacco were a country, it would have a gross domestic product (GDP) of countries like Poland, Saudi Arabia, Sweden and Venezuela.

The Most Preventable Cause of Death

In 2011, according to *The Tobacco Atlas*, tobacco use killed almost 6 million people, with nearly 80% of these deaths occurring in low- and middle-income countries. When considering 2010 deaths with

tobacco industry revenue, *the tobacco industry realizes almost \$6,000 in profit for each death caused by tobacco.*

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% of all male deaths and 7% of female deaths. Tobacco is also a risk factor for the four leading noncommunicable diseases (NCDs) – cancer, heart disease, diabetes and chronic respiratory diseases – which account for more than 63% of global deaths according to the World Health Organization.

Tobacco use is the number one killer in China, causing 1.2 million deaths annually; this is expected to rise to 3.5 million deaths annually by the year 2030. Tobacco is also responsible for the greatest proportion of male deaths in Turkey (38%) and Kazakhstan (35%), and the greatest proportion of female deaths in the Maldives (25%) and the United States (23%).

Uniquely among cancer-causing agents, however, tobacco is a man-made problem that is completely preventable through proven public policies. Effective measures include tobacco taxes, advertising bans, smoke-free public places, mass media campaigns and effective health warnings. These cost-effective policies are among those included in the World Health Organization's Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (WHO FCTC), a global treaty endorsed by more than 174 countries, and recommended by the World Health Organization in its **MPOWER** policy package.

The Economic Cost of Tobacco Increases

According to *The Tobacco Atlas*, countries do not profit economically from tobacco production and consumption – in fact, they suffer great financial harm. The direct costs that arise from health care expenditures for treating smoking-related illnesses and indirect costs that largely include the value of lost productivity and cost of premature deaths caused by smoking-related illnesses can cripple economies:

- The health damage from a single pack of cigarettes costs US\$35 to an American smoker.
- In Egypt, tobacco-related illness drained over 11% of total health care expenditure.
- During 2000–2004, the value of cigarettes sold in the United States averaged \$71 billion per year, while cigarette smoking was responsible for an estimated \$193 billion in annual health-related economic losses.

Tobacco Industry Tactics to Block Progress

More than 43 trillion cigarettes have been smoked in the last ten years and cigarette production has increased by 16.5% in that time period, according to *The Tobacco Atlas*. Annual cigarette consumption has also increased significantly during this time period.

The tobacco industry has increased its efforts to combat demand reduction efforts, launching legal challenges in every region of

The tobacco industry has increased its efforts to combat demand reduction efforts, mounting legal challenges in every region of the world. Since 2008, it has worked to delay or stop plain packaging, smoke-free legislation, advertising bans and graphic pack warnings.

In addition, the industry has sought to subvert existing tobacco control legislation by introducing new smokeless products, often bearing the same branding as existing cigarette brands, and the use of the Internet and new media, where over 70% of analyzed content has been identified as pro-tobacco.

Burden Shifts to the World's Poorest Countries

The Tobacco Atlas outlines in graphic detail that the burden of tobacco cultivation, consumption, illness and death is moving from developed to developing parts of the world and is taking an increased toll on low- and middle-income countries:

- Nearly 80% of those who die from tobacco-related illnesses are in low- and middle-income countries.
- In 2009, six of the top 10 tobacco-producing countries had malnourishment rates between 5% and 27%.
- Cigarettes have become an average of 21.7% more affordable in low- and middle-income countries over the past decade.
- In low-resource countries, only US\$0.0001 is spent on tobacco control per capita.
- 39% of countries – predominantly low- and middle-income countries – do not provide cessation support services in the offices of health professionals.

Quotes from Leadership

"We can no longer deny nor accept the massive human and economic harm caused by tobacco. This book is a vital tool for not only public health advocates, but also for governments, economists, educators and the media to use to tell the story of how a cohesive, well-funded tobacco industry is systematically causing preventable deaths and crippling economies. We know what needs to be done to counteract these tactics and save up to hundreds of millions of lives," said John R. Seffrin, Ph.D., chief executive officer, American Cancer Society.

"The tobacco industry thrives on ignorance of the true harms of tobacco use and using misinformation to subvert health policies that could save millions," said Peter Baldini, chief executive officer, World Lung Foundation. "*The Tobacco Atlas* graphically illustrates the human toll and massive scale of the tobacco epidemic, breaking the best and most recent evidence out of the research world for an audience that can affect change. We urge advocates, media, governments and health professionals to visit tobaccoatlas.org and use the available data to expose the deadly harms of tobacco and the industry that benefits from those harms."

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, M.D.**, is a Fellow of the Royal Colleges of Physicians of Edinburgh and London, and a special advisor at the 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* is being launched 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 being released 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.

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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; 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 programs, visit cancer.org/international.

About World Lung Foundation

World Lung Foundation 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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