



31 May 2015 – Today, the [World Health Organization](#) (WHO) and partners mark World No Tobacco Day, highlighting the health risks associated with tobacco use and advocating for effective policies to reduce tobacco consumption.

In 2015, the WHO is calling on countries to work together to end the illicit trade of [tobacco](#) products. This illicit trade constitutes a major global concern, from health, legal, economic, governance and corruption angles.

Eliminating or reducing the illicit trade will reduce tobacco consumption by restricting availability of cheap, unregulated alternatives and increasing overall tobacco prices. Critically, this will reduce premature deaths and raise tax revenue for governments.

This is crucial as the global tobacco epidemic kills nearly 6 million people each year, of which more than 600 000 are non-smokers dying from breathing second-hand smoke.

One in every 10 cigarettes consumed worldwide is illegal

The tobacco industry and criminal groups are among those who profit from the illegal tobacco trade, leaving the public to pay the health and security costs.

The tobacco industry also covertly and overtly supports the illegal trade. This ranges from providing products to the market, to working to block implementation of comprehensive tobacco-control measures by trying to convince governments that any further legislative measures will lead to more illicit trade.

Stopping illicit trade in tobacco products is a health priority, and it is achievable.

This requires the improvement of national and sub-national tax administration systems. Also, ratification by governments of the [Protocol to Eliminate Illicit Trade in Tobacco Products](#) (ITP) is necessary to respond to the financial, legal and health impacts of the illicit trade of tobacco products.

The public, academia and other sectors can take action by urging their lawmakers to make their countries Parties to the Protocol.

Goals of World No Tobacco Day 2015

In this context, today's observance aims to:

1. Raise awareness on **the harm to people's health** caused by the illicit trade in tobacco products, especially to youth and low-income groups;
2. Show how **health care gains and programmes and tobacco control policies**, e.g. increased tax and prices or pictorial health warnings, are undermined by the illicit trade in tobacco products.
3. Demonstrate **how the tobacco industry has been involved** in the illicit trade of tobacco products.

4. Highlight how the illicit trade of tobacco products is a **means of amassing great wealth for criminal groups** to finance other organised crime activities

5. Promote the ratification of, accession to and use of the **Protocol to Eliminate Illicit Trade in Tobacco Products** (ITP) by all Parties to the WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (WHO FCTC) and its early entry into force through the active involvement of all relevant stakeholders.

More information

For in-depth information on what you should know about stopping the illegal trade of tobacco products, consult WHO's [dedicated brochure](#) .

Join in the discussion by using the social media hashtags [#NoTobacco](#) and [#WNTD2015](#) .

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