



World No Tobacco Day 2018: Turning the Spotlight on Tobacco and Heart Disease

Ottawa/Geneva, May 31, 2018 – Most people are familiar with the warning that tobacco use is harmful to their health. However, many do not know the specific health hazards caused by tobacco use or exposure to second-hand smoke. The cardiovascular disease (CVD) death toll caused by tobacco use and second-hand exposure around the globe is a case in point.

According to the Global Adult Tobacco Survey, adult smokers who do not believe, or do not know that smoking causes heart attack, range from 61% in China to 5% in Egypt; and adult smokers who do not believe, or do not know that smoking causes stroke, range from 73% in China to 11% in Romania.

Governments can loosen the death grip of heart disease on their populations by implementing measures that are in line with the World Health Organization Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (WHO FCTC) including: raising taxes on tobacco products, making them less affordable and enacting smoke-free legislation, protecting people from exposure to tobacco smoke; among others.

With World No Tobacco Day 2018 focused on the links between tobacco and heart disease, countries have an opportunity to redouble their efforts to reduce tobacco use and promote heart health, through new mechanisms or existing platforms, such as: the Eighth Session of the Conference of the Parties to the WHO FCTC and the Third UN General Assembly High-Level Meeting on the Prevention and Control of NCDs, being held in 2018.

All countries agreed to a set of 17 United Nations Sustainable Development Goals. A key element of the SDGs is a commitment to strengthening implementation of the evidence-based WHO FCTC, and to reduce by one third premature death from noncommunicable diseases, including heart and lung diseases, cancer and diabetes, for which tobacco use is a leading common risk factor.

“We have made progress across the world in advocating for strong national tobacco control policies within the frameworks of health and development priorities. But we must not underestimate the massive burden of tobacco-related illnesses on the economies and healthcare systems of low and middle income countries, where nearly eighty percent of the more than one billion smokers live,” Framework Convention Alliance Executive Director Francis Thompson said. “Since evidence suggests that the tobacco control policies outlined in the FCTC are cost-effective in preventing deaths from noncommunicable diseases, we encourage governments to take urgent action to fully implement the Convention, so they can break the vicious cycle of tobacco use and heart disease,” he added.

To promote heart health, countries must educate people and address the gaps in knowledge about the use of tobacco products and heart diseases.

“It is critical that we act now to raise awareness of the link between tobacco and CVD globally, and to ensure that governments and the public understand how, and take steps to, reduce the risks posed by smoking and second-hand smoke to heart health. Quitting smoking is the single best thing people can do to improve their heart health and that of those around them. World No Tobacco Day 2018 is an opportunity to bolster commitment and empower the cardiovascular community in the necessary fight against tobacco,” World Heart Federation President David Wood said.

Tobacco use with its related death and heart disease burden, demand greater public awareness and a forceful response by governments, healthcare practitioners and civil society. Framework Convention Alliance and World Heart Federation will continue to work to advance a world free of the devastating harms of tobacco to heart health.

Quick Facts

- Tobacco use is the second leading cause of cardiovascular disease, after high blood pressure.
- Tobacco use and second-hand smoke exposure contribute to approximately 12% of all heart disease deaths.
- Tobacco use kills over 7 million people each year, with health care costs and lost productivity totalling more than US\$ 1.4 trillion.

About Framework Convention Alliance

Framework Convention Alliance works to rid this world from the devastating health, social, economic and environmental consequences of tobacco and tobacco use. With nearly 500 non-government member organisations from over 100 countries, the Alliance grew out of civil society’s participation in the work that produced the World Health Organization Framework Convention on Tobacco Control in 2005, the first modern-day public health treaty. We are a leading advocate for including the FCTC and tobacco control in the international health and development framework, including the Sustainable Development Goals. The Alliance is an influential voice for civil society at the FCTC Conference of the Parties.

About World Heart Federation

The World Heart Federation is dedicated to leading the global fight against cardiovascular disease (CVD), including heart disease and stroke. We are the only global advocacy and leadership organization bringing together the entire CVD community to drive the CVD agenda and help people live longer, better, more heart-healthy lives. We and our members - more than 200 organizations, scientific societies, foundations and patient associations in over 100 countries - believe in a world where heart health for everyone is a fundamental human right and a crucial element of global health justice. Because every heartbeat matters.