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“Reversing this entirely preventable tobacco epidemic must now rank as a top priority for public health and for political leaders in every country of the world.”

Dr Margaret Chan, WHO Director-General

The tobacco industry casts a global net to capture young people in its deadly snare. The industry spends tens of billions of dollars each year marketing its products, and enticing young people into tobacco addiction is a major goal of these efforts. With a closely woven marketing net that includes advertising, promotion and sponsorship, the industry has successfully linked tobacco with glamour, fun and adventure to lure the world’s youth. The more young people are exposed to these messages and ploys, the more likely they are to use tobacco.

Approximately 1.8 billion young people aged 10-24 live in our world today, more than 85% of them in developing countries. Having survived the vulnerable childhood period, these young people are generally healthy. However, as the tobacco industry intensifies its efforts to hook a new generation of replacement smokers, the results will be catastrophic. Currently, 5.4 million people die each year from the global tobacco epidemic. The death toll is rising relentlessly, and will reach over 8 million a year in two decades, with more than 80% of those deaths occurring in the developing world. Unless major action is taken, it is estimated that up to one billion people could die from tobacco use during the 21st century.

To reverse these trends and protect young people from the harm caused by tobacco, we must move beyond half-measures. We must break the tobacco marketing net by banning tobacco advertising, promotion and sponsorship. Partial advertising bans are ineffective; the tobacco industry adeptly shifts its resources from one promotional tactic to another. Only a total, comprehensive ban on tobacco advertising, promotion and sponsorship will effectively reduce tobacco consumption. This is clearly reflected in Article 13 of the WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control, and is also a major element of the WHO MPOWER policies to reverse the tobacco epidemic.

The World Health Organization dedicates World No Tobacco Day 2008 to a global ban on all tobacco advertising, promotion and sponsorship and calls upon governments, organizations and individuals to help break the marketing net so that young people around the world can grow up tobacco-free.
The survival of the tobacco industry depends on attracting and retaining young people as consumers of its products. Without new, young tobacco users to replace those who quit or die, the tobacco industry could not continue to exist.

The industry claims that tobacco marketing only influences brand loyalty in current users and does not recruit new smokers. But research shows otherwise. Many consumer studies have consistently shown a strong link between advertising and smoking in young people. The more aware and appreciative young people are of tobacco advertising, the more likely they are to smoke or to say they intend to. In addition, the renowned Cochrane Collaboration reviewed nine major studies that followed more than 12,000 nonsmokers and their exposure to advertising. It found that, in all of the studies, nonsmoking adolescents who were more aware of, or receptive to, tobacco advertising were more likely to become smokers later.

Corporate documents also show immense efforts by cigarette manufacturers to monitor youth smoking patterns of use and preferences. Youth lifestyles, attitudes, motivations, and aspirations are all subjected to detailed market research, and every strategy is used to attract and retain young people as consumers. This intense focus on young people reinforces how important they are to the industry’s bottom line.
While youth tobacco sales help to generate immediate revenue for tobacco companies, what is most important to the industry is capturing smokers while they are young to establish long-term consumer relationships. New smokers quickly develop brand loyalty and by hooking young smokers to a particular brand, a tobacco company will generate revenue for the long term. As young smokers move from experimentation to addiction, the only winners in this scenario are the tobacco companies and their shareholders.

The tens of billions of dollars that the industry spends each year to market its products would thus appear to be a worthwhile investment in creating and sustaining high levels of youth smoking. As a consequence, most people begin using tobacco well before the age of 18 years, and almost a quarter of them begin using tobacco before the age of 10. The younger children are when they first try smoking, the more likely they are to become regular tobacco users and the less likely they are to quit. To the tobacco industry, the world’s 1.8 billion youth, particularly the 85% of this population living in developing countries, represents the key to its continuing survival.

“The cigarette industry has been artfully maintaining that cigarette advertising has nothing to do with total sales. This is complete and utter nonsense. The industry knows it is nonsense. I am always amused by the suggestion that advertising, a function that has been shown to increase consumption of virtually every other product, somehow miraculously fails to work for tobacco products.”

Emerson Foote, 1988
Former advertising executive
WHAT IS THE TOBACCO MARKETING NET?

The tobacco industry’s marketing net is made up of many strands of advertising, promotion and sponsorship strategies, all of which work together to promote and reinforce tobacco use, particularly among youth. However, to achieve this goal to the maximum effect, the tobacco industry uses a very sophisticated integrated marketing mix, based not only on promotion, but also on product, place (distribution) and price. This strategy is known in the business world as the “four P’s”.

For example, the marketing of a premium cigarette brand will include advertising strategies involving mass media and other innovative promotions, wide distribution with point-of-sale promotions, a stylish and easily recognized pack design, and a price that reflects its select marketing position. With this kind of synchronized approach, a company maximizes the cumulative impact of its marketing efforts.

1. PROMOTION

Promotion includes all levels of communication with a target group and includes a wide variety of strategies ranging from television advertisements and free product samples to sponsorship of sports and the arts. Although many countries have banned direct advertising of tobacco products, it is essential that indirect advertising also be prohibited, since research shows that only a comprehensive ban will significantly reduce tobacco consumption.

a. Direct Advertising

Direct advertising is a more traditional form of promoting tobacco products and is conducted via channels such as television, radio, the Internet, magazines and billboards. One third of countries still allow tobacco advertising on television and half still allow it in print and on billboards. According to the Global Youth Tobacco Survey, a worldwide school-based study of 13-15-year-olds, 56.5% of students reported that they had seen advertisements for cigarettes on billboards in the previous month and nearly five in 10 students had seen tobacco advertisements in newspapers or magazines. These percentages were highest in the Americas and Western Pacific regions.
b. Indirect advertising

A large proportion of tobacco marketing is in the more subtle form of indirect advertising. The industry often relies on this type of advertising in countries that ban direct advertising of tobacco products. Indirect tobacco advertising does not openly urge consumers to use a tobacco product, such as a particular brand of cigarettes. Instead, it uses brand names, corporate names, trademarks, emblems or other distinctive features of tobacco products in a wide variety of settings and goods to catch consumers’ attention without naming the product explicitly. Indirect advertising creates a positive image of a tobacco product that consumers see while watching a movie, attending a concert or sporting event or shopping for clothes.

Indirect advertising includes “brand stretching,” where tobacco brand names are used on other products such as T-shirts, hats and backpacks. Young people with T-shirts and backpacks with tobacco logos become walking billboards, which allows tobacco companies to circumvent advertising restrictions. Young people who wear clothing and accessories displaying cigarette names and logos are four times more likely to smoke than children who do not. According to the Global Youth Tobacco Survey, almost two in 10 students reported that they had an item with a cigarette brand logo on it.

Another common form of indirect advertising is product placement in entertainment media, such as movies. This may take the form of an actor smoking a particular brand, or a tobacco billboard in the background of a major scene. Placement fees paid by tobacco companies are lucrative for the entertainment industry. Unbranded images of smoking in movies are also an increasing cause for concern; tobacco use is on the rise in films made in the USA and in India, the world’s largest film industry. Longitudinal surveys demonstrate a clear dose-response relationship between exposure to smoking in movies and an increase in the likelihood of adolescents starting to smoke. Studies also show that adolescents who have a favourite film actor who smokes are more drawn to smoking.

c. Sponsorship

Sponsorship of sports, entertainment and cultural events is another widespread form of indirect advertising that promotes tobacco use as socially acceptable and tobacco companies as legitimate members of the community. Sponsorship of racing, music and arts festivals not only promotes brand and company awareness, but also portrays tobacco companies as good corporate citizens and associates tobacco products with healthy, active pursuits. According to the Global Youth Tobacco Survey, nearly 80% of students saw advertisements for cigarettes at sporting and other events.
d. Public Relations

A particularly insidious form of tobacco marketing is corporate social responsibility programmes by tobacco companies, which promote donations and sponsorship of positive social causes - such as education, environmental protection or public safety - using a corporate name. This is especially popular in countries where direct advertising and tobacco brand sponsorship are banned. Corporate social responsibility programmes often provide grants and scholarships for college students, as well as contributing to the arts, including museums, dance troupes, theatres and educational institutions. Organizations, programmes and events that represent or serve youth are also recipients of donations from tobacco companies. While attempting to present a socially responsible face to the world, tobacco companies continue handing out free cigarettes to children; one in 10 high school students have received free tobacco samples from tobacco industry representatives.\(^\text{18}\)

The tobacco industry continues to market its products to young people, while at the same time pretending to protect them from tobacco use. Nearly every major tobacco company has developed and promoted its own brand of ineffective youth-smoking prevention programme as a way to boost its image. Yet none of these programmes address the tobacco industry’s role in encouraging youth smoking.\(^\text{19,20}\) Moreover, many of these programmes have been shown actually to increase youth smoking. By portraying smoking as an adult activity forbidden to youth, these programmes increase the appeal of cigarettes for adolescents. They also steer public and government attention away from proven, effective solutions to stop young people from using tobacco.\(^\text{21}\)

“...If we are to maximize growth in the long term in the developing countries, we must strive to neutralize anti-smoking pressure by being perceived as ... behaving responsibly in the light of the overwhelming view regarding the health effects of smoking.”\(^\text{22}\)

British American Tobacco Corp., 1980
e. Public Affairs

The tobacco industry is globally aggressive in public affairs and lobbying in order to build a critical mass of support, influence decision-makers and defeat efforts to regulate tobacco. Tobacco companies have organized conferences targeting media professionals to tilt regional journalists’ opinions in the industry’s favour. Many companies have developed joint media plans to respond to health concerns about tobacco. They have also organized “junkets” by journalists to tobacco companies’ headquarters. Tobacco industry lobbyists and supporters often push false anti-government claims that tobacco control legislation is the beginning of harsh and restrictive laws that violate basic rights. Tobacco industry arguments soon find their way into popular debate.

“Over the past dozen or so years we have faced more than 1,000 public smoking bills and have defeated more than 90 percent of them.”

Tobacco Institute (undated)

2. PRODUCT DESIGN

Ingredients and additives play an important role in influencing young people to start smoking or to continue smoking. The tobacco industry has a long history of manipulating ingredients in order to increase use and dependence. Both the appeal and addictiveness are manipulated: Smoke can be rendered either strong-tasting or smooth when inhaling, flavored with exotic or sweet tastes, or marketed as low tar and nicotine products. Many smokers believe flavoured tobacco products are less toxic than unflavoured tobacco and that brands advertised as “light” are actually safer.

Packaging goes far beyond the regular use of wrapping to protect the product. Packs are transformed into popular brand icons. Brands become very important to young people – both smokers and potential smokers – in portraying an image, such as making a chic fashion statement or being tough and cool. In the same way as a brand or logo, tobacco product packs have a specific appearance which can be appealing to youth, such as attractive colorful packs for flavored cigarettes. Recent reports describe the use of metal cigarette and smokeless tobacco cases with fancy colors and designs to promote new brands, and even cigarette packets designed to look like miniature digital cameras.
3. PLACE

The tobacco industry has a sophisticated system of distribution - from grocery stores to outdoor vending machines and even video rental shops - making tobacco products readily available in a variety of venues throughout the world.

Tobacco products are sold and made accessible to youth in a variety of legal and illegal ways. Some countries still have no minimum age restrictions. However, even in countries with a minimum age for the purchase of tobacco, illegal retail sales are common. The situation is further complicated in many developing countries by the widespread sale of tobacco products by unlicensed street vendors. Unregulated street selling is also used to distribute smuggled cigarettes.

In some retail stores, tobacco products are offered in self-service displays, allowing easy access by young people. Vending machines make tobacco very accessible to young people because they are weakly regulated and frequently located close to schools, often being placed next to vending machines selling candy and soft drinks.

The Internet is increasingly used as a tobacco distribution and marketing tool. Underage youth can easily purchase cigarettes online. In addition to unrestricted sales to young people, the Internet has also become an avenue for unregulated marketing to youth.

4. PRICE

A basic law of economics states that as the price of a commodity rises, demand for that product will fall. This principle also applies to tobacco products. Many studies show that an increase in price decreases consumption, and that raising tobacco taxes and prices is one of the most effective policies to reduce use. It is estimated that youth are three times as price-sensitive as adults when it comes to tobacco purchases. Reasons for this include the fact that young smokers have lower addiction levels since they have used tobacco for a shorter period of time, and the fact that they have lower purchasing power than adults.
The tobacco industry strongly opposes legislation that raises taxes; tobacco companies and their proxies lobby vigorously around the world to thwart tax increases. Consequently, the cost of tobacco is very low in many countries. But lobbying against tax increases is not the only way the tobacco industry keeps prices low. Marketing strategies include coupons for free or discounted cigarettes sent through the mail, two-for-one product promotions and sweepstake incentives. Internal industry documents show that young adults are the target of promotional cigarette offers. Another way tobacco companies entice young people with lower prices is by selling smaller packs containing, for example, only five or ten cigarettes rather than the usual 20.

Distributing free cigarettes in promotion campaigns is another way the tobacco industry uses price as a marketing tool. Free samples are often distributed at places where there are a lot of people – particularly young people – such as street corners, shopping malls, festivals and concerts.
WHY ARE TOBACCO ADVERTISING, PROMOTION AND SPONSORSHIP A THREAT TO YOUNG PEOPLE?

1. INCREASE THE LIKELIHOOD OF TOBACCO USE

“Defendants’ marketing activities are intended to bring new, young, and hopefully long-lived smokers into the market in order to replace those who die (largely from tobacco-caused illnesses) or quit ... Defendants used their knowledge of young people to create highly sophisticated and appealing marketing campaigns targeted to lure them into starting smoking and later becoming nicotine addicts.”

United States of America v. Philip Morris

The tobacco industry and its supporters deny that tobacco promotion entices young people to use tobacco. In fact, many surveys on smoking and awareness of tobacco advertising among young people consistently show that the more familiar and appreciative they are of tobacco advertising, the more likely they are to smoke or to say they intend to smoke. The causal link between advertising, sponsorship and promotion and smoking among young people begins before youths take their first puff. Young people who have never smoked are more likely to become future smokers if they’re receptive to tobacco advertising, promotion and sponsorship.

A recent study by the American Academy of Pediatrics shows that exposure to tobacco promotion causes children to initiate tobacco use. A Cochrane Review of nine longitudinal studies concludes that “tobacco advertising and promotion increases the likelihood that adolescents will start to smoke.” Other research shows a dose-response relationship between tobacco promotion and youth initiation of tobacco use, a relationship that has been demonstrated among youth from various cultures and language backgrounds and that persists after controlling for other factors. These findings are consistent across income groups and whether or not peer or parental smoking is present. The consistent findings lead public health experts to conclude that tobacco advertising, promotion and sponsorship increase the likelihood that young people will start to smoke.
2. NORMALIZE TOBACCO USE

Another serious problem that threatens youth is that widespread advertising, promotion and sponsorship “normalize” tobacco, making it seem just like any other consumer product in the marketplace. Yet it is the only consumer product that kills half of all people who use it as directed.

But because the tobacco industry spends tens of billions of dollars depicting tobacco as a desirable consumer product, it is difficult for people to understand its enormous dangers. Instead of cancer, heart disease and other illnesses, tobacco is falsely associated with desirable qualities such as youth, energy, glamour and sex appeal. To prevent the premature deaths of millions of young people around the world, it is essential to break the ubiquitous and positive associations between tobacco use and many desirable qualities.

3. ENDANGER HEALTH

Among young people, the short-term health consequences of smoking include respiratory effects, addiction to nicotine and the associated risk of other drug use. Long-term health consequences of youth smoking result from the fact that most young people who smoke regularly continue to smoke throughout adulthood. In adults, cigarette smoking causes cancer, heart disease and stroke. Studies have shown that early signs of these diseases can be found in adolescents who smoke.
WHY DO WE NEED A COMPREHENSIVE BAN ON ADVERTISING, PROMOTION AND SPONSORSHIP?

A comprehensive ban is necessary because the tobacco industry has shown that it can easily circumvent partial bans. Without a comprehensive ban, young people will not be protected from tobacco marketing, as tobacco companies will simply transfer expenditure from one marketing strategy to another. Since the industry’s viability depends on extending its marketing net to capture more and more of the world’s young people, tobacco companies will find a way to market their products unless they are no longer permitted to do so.

Bans on advertising, promotion and sponsorship lead to a decline in awareness of tobacco marketing among young people. Following implementation of the Tobacco Advertising and Promotion Act in the United Kingdom in 2003, which banned all tobacco advertising, the awareness of tobacco marketing among British children aged 11-16 declined, and susceptibility to beginning tobacco use was expected to follow suit. Other studies show reductions in tobacco use, particularly among young people, following bans on advertisements. A complete ban on tobacco advertising, promotion and sponsorship is a powerful tool to protect young people and curb the tobacco epidemic.
IS THE DEVELOPING WORLD’S YOUTH PARTICULARLY AT RISK?
WHAT ABOUT YOUNG WOMEN AND GIRLS?

More than 80% of the world’s 1.8 billion young people aged 10-24 live in developing countries, where they are aggressively targeted by the global tobacco industry. Four out of five teenagers living in developing countries say they have recently seen pro-tobacco advertising.

The Global Youth Tobacco Survey\textsuperscript{36} shows that in Afghanistan 65% of teens had seen pro-tobacco billboards in the past 30 days, 44% in Bangladesh, 78% in the Ukraine and 46% in China. Studies from countries ranging from Ecuador to Turkey to Singapore confirm that young people are subject to a wide range of advertising, promotion and sponsorship by the tobacco industry.

The global tobacco industry now exploits the developing world by using the same marketing and lobbying tactics perfected – and often outlawed – in the developed world. For example, in the developing countries, the industry now targets women and teens to use tobacco while pressuring governments to block marketing restrictions and tax increases –the same tactics it has used for decades in developed countries\textsuperscript{9}.

It is clear that smoking among girls is rising at an alarming rate. Traditionally, males have used tobacco much more than females. But that is changing. Recent global surveys show that smoking prevalence among girls is almost as high as or, in some cases, equal to smoking prevalence among boys. The susceptibility to begin smoking is similar among boys and girls who never smoked. The Global Youth Tobacco Survey has found that cigarette smoking is higher among girls compared with adult females.

Carefully researched marketing strategies by the tobacco industry encourage girls and young women to use tobacco while seeking to weaken cultural opposition in countries where women have traditionally not used tobacco. The tobacco industry targets women through advertisements showing smoking associated with independence, stylistliness, weight control, sophistication, power and a fun-loving spirit\textsuperscript{18}.

There are also specific “female” brands, supported by marketing campaigns and imagery tailored to adult and young females. Product development and promotion aimed at girls and women include “light” and “slim” cigarettes\textsuperscript{37}. Descriptors like “light”, “mild” or “low-tar” are often specifically targeted at women. Half of all women smokers in the European Union smoke “light” cigarettes, as opposed to 33% of male smokers\textsuperscript{37}.
Tobacco-industry sponsorship is also tailored to female audiences. Examples include the sponsorship of fashion shows, talent contests and concerts. The tobacco industry also uses cigarette product placement in television shows and movies\textsuperscript{38} that are aimed at female audiences.

"... [W]e are naturally more interested to learn how you plan to target the emerging young adult female smokers rather than the older female smokers.\textsuperscript{39} "

Philip Morris Asia, 1989.
Inter-Office Correspondence

The rate of women beginning and continuing to smoke will not peak until well into this century. Globally, male rates have peaked and stabilized. This fact gives no comfort. Male rates of smoking are very high, particularly in high-population countries in the early stages of the tobacco epidemic that have yet to suffer the tidal wave of tobacco-related disease and death that is inevitably coming their way. Rising rates of smoking among young females around the world will eventually cause a second wave. However, if governments implement a comprehensive ban on advertising, promotion and sponsorship, the tide can be turned to minimize the devastation of the tobacco epidemic.
IS A COMPREHENSIVE ADVERTISING BAN THE ONLY WAY TO PROTECT YOUTH FROM TOBACCO USE?

Comprehensive bans on advertising, promotion and sponsorship will go a long way towards protecting young people from the devastating consequences of tobacco use. However, in order to protect young people to the greatest extent possible, they must be implemented as part of a broader strategy.

In recent years, a critical global initiative has emerged that reflects a growing worldwide consensus that the tobacco epidemic must be stopped and that we have the means to do so. The WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control policies are being embraced by governments, civil society and philanthropic institutions to break through the tobacco marketing net with a comprehensive ban on tobacco advertising, promotion and sponsorship as well as other critical measures.

The WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control is one of the United Nations’ most widely embraced treaties – and the world’s first against tobacco. It is an evidence-based treaty that reaffirms the right of all people to the highest standard of health. To expand the fight against the tobacco epidemic, and implement the Framework Convention standards, WHO introduced the MPOWER package of six effective policies. Each of these policies directly helps young people remain tobacco-free or quit using tobacco:

- **Monitor tobacco use and prevention policies**
- **Protect people from tobacco smoke**
- **Offer help to quit tobacco use**
- **Warn about the dangers of tobacco**
- **Enforce bans on tobacco advertising, promotion and sponsorship**
- **Raise taxes on tobacco**

Together, the WHO Framework Convention and the MPOWER package can create a safety net to protect young people from the devastating harms of tobacco. Governments are urged to take immediate actions to implement these measures in order to reverse this entirely preventable epidemic.
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