



On World No tobacco Day, The International Union Against Tuberculosis and Lung Disease calls for urgent action to curb tobacco marketing to youth

Paris, France - 31 May, 2008 – The International Union Against Tuberculosis and Lung Disease (The Union), an international organisation established in 1920 to fight TB and promote lung health worldwide, today celebrates **World No Tobacco Day** by calling on governments to enact policies that protect young people: bans on tobacco promotion, increases in taxes, and graphic picture warning.

Initiated by the member states of the **World Health Organization (WHO)** in 1987, **World No Tobacco Day** is observed annually on 31 May to raise awareness around the world about the dangers of tobacco, the single largest preventable cause of disability and death. This year's theme is **'Tobacco and Youth'**.

Tobacco will kill 5 million people this year, more than tuberculosis, HIV/AIDS and malaria combined. By 2030, the death toll will rise to 8 million each year. The burden is growing fastest in low- and middle-income countries where today 85% of the world's 1.8 billion young people aged between 10 and 24 live.

Addressing tobacco use among young people is a major challenge. The younger children start to smoke or use tobacco, the more likely they are to become regular consumers, and the less likely to quit.

Dr Sinéad Jones, Director of the Tobacco Control Department of The Union highlights the importance of banning tobacco promotion: *"Every day, some 100,000 young people try tobacco for the first time. For tobacco manufacturers, children and young people are future customers. Each year, the global tobacco industry spends tens of billions of dollars to glamorise and market deadly products. Governments must protect our young people by banning all forms of tobacco promotion. - Protecting young people from a predatory industry cannot be left to teachers, parents or youth workers. While youth programmes can be part of tobacco control strategies, they cannot – and must not - be the sole strategy. Tobacco is not simply a youth problem: it is an economic, social and political issue"*.

Dr Nils E. Billo, Executive Director of The Union, declared *"Warning and informing people of the dangers of smoking is a must. Tobacco is set to kill more than one billion people in the 21st century. The Union works to prevent and curb threats to lung health. The Union tobacco control programmes promote understanding of the harms of tobacco use and effective policies to reduce it. Much has been achieved to curb the epidemic, but governments must still do more, especially in low and middle income countries, where tobacco use is fast becoming a leading cause of death."*

The Union assists countries in their efforts to improve tobacco control, providing permanent on-site technical assistance; it conducts operational research with its network of international experts in low- and middle-income settings to invest in research, to offer international training courses and conferences worldwide, and it also conducts extensive field work while providing strong management tools to support programmes and policies.

To join The Union in promoting tobacco control, please visit our website:

www.iuatld.org

About The Union

The *International Union Against Tuberculosis and Lung Disease* (The Union), is the only international voluntary scientific organisation with partners in all regions providing a neutral platform to fight TB, HIV, asthma, tobacco and lung disease. The Union was established in 1920 as a federation of national associations, and today provides direct field assistance to over 75 countries, conducts clinical trials and organises international conferences and training courses. It also publishes *The International Journal of Tuberculosis and Lung Disease* (IJTLD), which is the reference for clinical research and epidemiological studies on tuberculosis. Among its international initiatives, it manages the grants programme for the Bloomberg Initiative to Reduce Tobacco Use, as well as the FIDELIS Fund for Innovative DOTS Expansion through Local Initiatives to Stop TB, and many others.

For further information, please visit our web site at: www.iuatld.org

About The Union Department of Tobacco Control

The Union works to cut tobacco use and save lives by:

- Promoting effective tobacco control **policy** through technical resources
- **Training** a new generation of managers and practitioners
- Supporting effective programmes through **grants**
- Building knowledge for action through **research**

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