

Tobacco Control in Developing Countries



Restricting Supply is Ineffective in Reducing Smoking

Government efforts to reduce cigarette consumption by restricting supplies have been largely unsuccessful. Banning tobacco is unrealistic and unlikely to work. However, governments should make a serious effort to crack down on smuggling.

TRADE RESTRICTIONS

- The liberalization of trade has contributed to an increase in cigarette consumption in low- and middle-income countries.
- However, a clamp down on trade would be counter productive – inviting retaliatory action that could threaten economic growth and incomes.
- The General Agreement on Trade and Tariffs allows countries to adopt and enforce measures to protect public health – provided the measures apply equally to both domestic and imported products.
- The proposed World Health Organization Framework Convention on Tobacco Control offers a long-term approach to global cooperation and coordination on tobacco control.

PROHIBITION

Prohibition is unlikely to be effective:

- Banned substances continue to be used illicitly – increasing crime rates and entailing costly enforcement.
- Prohibition could provoke a political backlash in some countries.

RESTRICTIONS ON TEENAGE SMOKING

- In high-income countries, efforts to restrict the sale of cigarettes to teenagers are difficult to enforce and largely unsuccessful.
- Meanwhile, low-income countries lack the resources and infrastructure needed to limit sales to teenagers.

CROP SUBSTITUTION

- Of the 100 tobacco-producing countries worldwide, four – China, the United States, India, and Brazil – account for two-thirds of global production.
- Only two countries worldwide are significantly dependent on tobacco for their export earnings : Malawi (61%) and Zimbabwe (23%).
- Tobacco is a highly profitable cash crop and farmers often receive incentives from the tobacco industry.
- With the possible exception of Canada, efforts to persuade tobacco farmers to switch to other crops have been unsuccessful.
- However, crop substitution may be helpful in the long term to help meet the transition costs of the poorest farmers.

The 512-page book, *Tobacco Control in Developing Countries*, is an authoritative and comprehensive study that examines such key issues as poverty and smoking, rationale for government intervention, taxation, advertising and promotion bans, smuggling, trade and the supply side impact of control policies. Building on the comparative advantages of WHO and the World Bank in epidemiology and health economics, an international team of 40 professionals from 13 countries, under the guidance of Dr Prabhat Jha and Dr Frank Chaloupka, prepared this book over a period of three years. It is targeted primarily at ministries, academics and health professionals engaged in tobacco control.

The book is available in English only; Price: US\$ 49.50 paperback ISBN 0192632469. For more details or to place your order, please contact:

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