

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**Timely global tobacco control produces fast results for health at low cost – *The Lancet***

WASHINGTON, Sep 29 – An [article](#) in this week's *The Lancet* medical journal illustrates that timely global action on tobacco control would yield swift health gains at a low price, says the Framework Convention Alliance (FCA).

"This *Lancet* article is further proof that implementing the WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (FCTC) is an effective way to cut tobacco use," said FCA Director Laurent Huber. "It is also a public health best buy. A [WHO report](#) released just ahead of the NCD Summit found that tobacco control can be put in place in low and middle income countries for an investment of just US\$0.11 per person per year."

The FCTC is the global tobacco treaty. It has 174 Parties.

The *Lancet* article, by researchers Stanton Glanz and Mariaelena Gonzalez, argues that tobacco control does not – as is often assumed – take decades to produce benefits; nor does the amount of revenue lost because of lower tobacco sales outweigh healthcare savings.

For example, in the US state of Arizona, hospital admissions for asthma dropped by 22 per cent after a year of strong smoke-free legislation (including bans on smoking in workplaces, restaurants and bars). Scotland saw a 13 per cent annual decrease in childhood asthma admissions after the introduction of a smoke-free law.

Lost tax revenue is often used as a reason for being lenient with tobacco restrictions. Yet the numbers do not support this, say the authors. "The California tobacco control programme cost US\$1.4 billion during its first 15 years, and saved \$86 billion in direct health-care costs, a 61 times return on investment." Meanwhile, the 3.6 billion packs of cigarettes not smoked during the first 15 years of the state's programme reduced tobacco tax revenues by only \$3.1 billion, a small fraction of the \$86 billion in health-care savings.

Last week, a high-level United Nations meeting on non-communicable diseases (NCDs) urged accelerated implementation of the FCTC. Tobacco use is the one risk factor common to the four main groups of NCDs, including cancer, which killed 36 million people globally in 2008. The Meeting also encouraged countries that are not Parties to the FCTC to accede to the treaty.

A cornerstone of the FCTC is tobacco price and tax measures. It is accepted that raising prices is the most effective way to cut tobacco consumption. For example, increasing tobacco taxes in China from 40 per cent to 68 per cent would save 13.7 million lives.

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