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THE WHO FCTC: SAVING LIVES FOR A DECADE
ONLY TEN PERCENT OF COUNTRIES HAVE NOT YET COMMITTED TO THIS INTERNATIONAL HEALTH TREATY

27 February 2015 - The only international health treaty -- drawn up to prevent the suffering and premature death caused by tobacco use -- came into force ten years ago on February 27.

Ten years on, and just ten percent of the world’s nations have not yet committed to the World Health Organization’s Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (WHO FCTC) -- an internationally coordinated strategy to reduce tobacco use.

“90 percent of countries around the world are actively protecting public health with WHO FCTC policies. But we must press on to fully implement the strongest tobacco control tools available to us for the protection of the health of both populations and economies,” said Dr Ehsan Latif, Director of Tobacco Control for the International Union Against Tuberculosis and Lung Disease (The Union),

“Much has been achieved, but over the next decade we must continue working to consolidate our gains, overcome legal challenges from the tobacco industry and continue saving lives.”

Raising tobacco taxes; banning smoking in public places; banning tobacco advertising, promotion and sponsorship; introducing high-impact health warnings on tobacco packaging are all requirements of the WHO FCTC – measures proven to control and reduce tobacco use. The 179 countries now party to this treaty are legally bound to implement these policies, as well as measures to prevent the tobacco industry from obstructing tobacco control.

Since 2007 The Union has assisted 50 countries to develop high impact tobacco control programmes, working with governments and civil society on the policies, legislation and infrastructure proven to reduce tobacco use.

Evidence demonstrates that with effective implementation of high-impact tobacco control measures, as many as 200 million lives could be saved by the year 2050. Tobacco use is a leading risk factor for chronic lung diseases, as well as cancers, cardiovascular diseases and diabetes.

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