

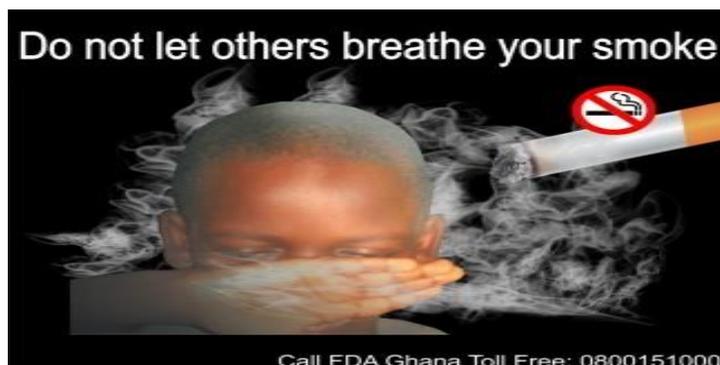
## **WORLD NO TOBACCO DAY -** **TOBACCO; A THREAT TO DEVELOPMENT**

The Food and Drugs Authority (Ghana) is mandated by the Tobacco Control Provisions in Part Six of the Public Health Act 2012 (Act 851) to regulate the use of tobacco in Ghana. Currently the government has passed a new legislative instrument (L.I 2247) to back this purpose and empower the FDA to carry out its mandate in order to reduce continually and substantially the prevalence of tobacco use and exposure to tobacco smoke all in an attempt to protect the people against all the health hazards associated with tobacco use.

“World No Tobacco Day” which occurs on the 31<sup>st</sup> May of every year is a great opportunity to generate public and media interest in issues relating to tobacco use. The World Health Organization (WHO) organizes the event to draw global attention to the widespread prevalence of tobacco use and to announce its health effects. In keeping with the broader understanding that tobacco is not merely a threat to individual health but to the cause of social and environmental justice, the theme for World No-Tobacco Day this year is “*Tobacco: A threat to development.*”

Tobacco is extraordinarily dangerous to human health and highly damaging to national economies. Tobacco either smoked (cigarette, pipe, cigar, shisha) or smokeless (including chew and snuff) are not exempted from the many of its associated negative effects. Tobacco is deadly in any form or disguise (*The tobacco atlas*). The tobacco epidemic is one of the biggest public health threats the world has ever faced, killing nearly six million (6,000,000) people yearly. More than five million (5,000,000) of those deaths, result from direct tobacco use, while six hundred thousand (600,000) are due to non-smokers (passive smokers) being exposed to second hand smoke. Tobacco is the leading cause of preventable death in the world is killing up to half of its users prematurely (1).

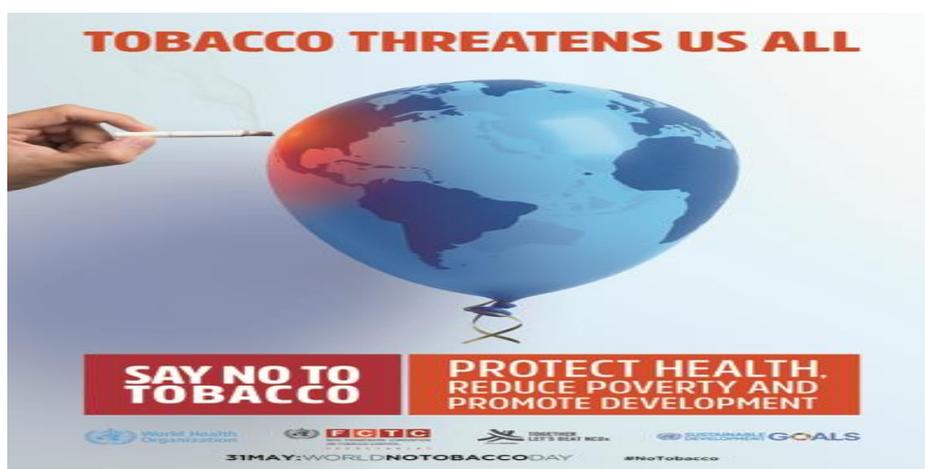
Second-hand smoke is the smoke that fills restaurants, pubs, nightclubs, offices or other enclosed spaces when people burn tobacco products such as cigarettes, bidis and waterpipes. There are more than seven thousand (7000) chemicals in tobacco smoke, of which at least two hundred and fifty (250) are known to be harmful and more than seventy (70) are known to cause cancer.(1)



Tobacco does not only harm the individual's health, it risks the lives of those people around the smoker and also hinders development of the family as a unit and the nation as a whole. Many studies have shown that in some low income countries, as much as 10% of the total household expenditure is used on tobacco neglecting basic needs such as food, education, etc. In addition to its direct health effects, tobacco leads to malnutrition, increased health care costs and premature death. It also contributes to a higher illiteracy rate, since money that could have been used for education is spent on tobacco instead. Tobacco plays a role in exacerbating poverty and it's a major threat to our middle income countries especially as we can least afford the resulting health and economic consequences. (1)



Over-burdened health systems in all countries are already caring for countless people who have been disabled by cancer, stroke, emphysema and other non-communicable diseases (NCDs) caused by tobacco. The diseases caused by tobacco use impose high productivity costs to the economy because of sick workers and those who die prematurely during their working years. Lost economic opportunities in highly populated developing countries will be particularly severe as tobacco use is high and growing in those areas. (2)



Sustainable development has been defined as development that promotes prosperity and economic opportunity, greater social well-being and protection of the environment (4). Including tobacco control as a development issue can target up to three or more of sustainable development goals such as good health and wellbeing, environmental protection, poverty reduction and even more. Overall, research shows that the business of tobacco is simply not compatible with such a vision. Tobacco does not promote widespread prosperity. While some people make profit from it, the burdens are disproportionately distributed among nations and groups already suffering from higher rates of disease, poverty and marginalizing factors. (3).

Current marketing strategy by manufacturers targets the youth as current brands of tobacco and tobacco product are made to attract and deceive. Smokeless tobacco, Hookahs (shisha), Flavored little cigars, E-cigarettes are among the new trends and research has shown that an hour of continuous use of hooker is equivalent to more than a 100 sticks of cigarette smoked.



*Shisha is as harmful as cigarette*



*E – Cig is not a safe form of smoking*

Ghana in her commitment to protect her populace is fighting against the tobacco epidemic by putting in appropriate regulatory measures to ensure reduction and subsequent prevention of tobacco use through education and effective enforcement and implementation of the tobacco control regulation. In view of this vision, the country among other measures is introducing Graphic Health Warnings (GHW) on tobacco products which reportedly are more effective in communicating the health hazards associated with smoking especially among children and those with low education and literacy and will help to reduce disparities in health knowledge. Below are some of the pictures that will be routinely displayed on packs of tobacco and tobacco product for sale in Ghana.



The damage inflicted by tobacco use holds back the human potential of entire societies. Ending the tobacco epidemic will realize gains above and beyond improved public health. (5)

Join us as we advocate in this year's celebration of "World No Tobacco Day" the impact of tobacco use on the economy of our country Ghana.

1. [www.globalissues.org/article/533/tobacco](http://www.globalissues.org/article/533/tobacco)
2. [http://global.tobaccofreekids.org/files/pdfs/en/SDG\\_en.pdf](http://global.tobaccofreekids.org/files/pdfs/en/SDG_en.pdf)
3. [tobaccocontrol.bmj.com](http://tobaccocontrol.bmj.com) › Archive › Volume 26, Issue 3
4. *United Nations. Promote sustainable development. 2017.*  
<http://www.un.org/en/sections/what-we-do/promote-sustainable-development/index.html>
5. the tobacco atlas/<http://www.tobaccoatlas.org/topic/development>

