

# 2008 CHINA TOBACCO CONTROL REPORT

Protect children and young people by banning tobacco advertising, promotion and sponsorship.



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Since the WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (WHO FCTC) came into effect in China on January 9, 2006, the Office of the Leading Group for Implementation of the FCTC, Ministry of Health of China has overseen the compilation of the annual China Tobacco Control Report. The first report was published in 2007.

The theme of the 2007 Report was "Create Smoke-free Environments, Enjoy a Healthy Life". After its publication, there was increased knowledge among the general public of the basic facts on smoking in China, specifically<sup>[1]</sup>: China has 0.3 billion current smokers, about a third of the world's total number of smokers; 0.54 billion people suffer from exposure to secondhand smoke; approximately 1 million die each year from smoking-related diseases, with over 0.1 million deaths due to secondhand smoking.

As understanding of the tobacco issue has increased among the public and Government, marked progress in tobacco control has been made. For example:

- government investment in tobacco control has increased;
- measures have been taken to ensure that the Olympic Games will be tobacco-free;
- smoke-free laws and regulations have been introduced, first in Hong Kong S.A.R, followed by Beijing. The process of enacting similar laws and regulations is underway in Shanghai and other major cities;
- public education on the hazards of tobacco through mass media is increasing;
- there are a greater number of proposals for tobacco control from members of the People's Congress and Political Consultative Committee at various levels; and
- expanding advocacy activities by civil society to promote smoke-free environments and healthy lifestyles for all.

China is the world's biggest tobacco producer and consumer. Tobacco production has continued to grow along with the number of young people who are smoking. Children are starting to smoke at a younger age than in previous years. Smoke-free youth is the theme of both World No Tobacco Day 2008 and this report. The theme has particular significance for China where one of our goals in tobacco control must be to prevent young people from becoming smokers.

Addiction to lethal tobacco products has killed millions of Chinese people - many of whom wanted to stop smoking. In recent years, the mortality rates of smoking-related diseases such as, lung cancer, stroke and coronary heart disease (CHD), have been rising rapidly. According to the 3rd National Survey on Causes of Death launched by the Ministry of Health (MOH), mortality due to lung cancer alone has increased by 465% in the last three decades. Many smokers die in middle age when they would normally be most productive. This is a clear indication of the need to put in place policies and measures to prevent death and disease caused by the tobacco epidemic. Young people are the future and hope of the nation. Protecting young people from tobacco is the duty and responsibility not only of the Chinese Government but of the entire community.



# 1

## Smoking among Young People in China

Studies estimate that by 2025, deaths caused by tobacco will increase to 2 million each year, increasing to 3 million deaths per year by 2050. By the middle of the 21st century, the accumulated death toll will reach 100 million, with half of the deaths occurring in people between the ages of 35 and 69 years. At present, these people are children and youth. We can change the projected death toll in the future with stronger tobacco control measures today. These future premature deaths can be prevented and we can give the children and youth of today a much better outlook for full and healthy lives.

We need a comprehensive strategy to protect young people from tobacco hazards. Through this strategy we need to create smoke-free environments, positive adult role models, strengthened public health education, prominent health warnings on tobacco products, higher prices and taxes on tobacco, and bans on all tobacco advertising, promotion and sponsorship. These measures, which complement the WHO FCTC are recommended by health authorities to reverse the tobacco epidemic and save millions of lives. Article 13 of the WHO FCTC states in paragraph 2:

*"Each Party shall, in accordance with its constitution or constitutional principles, undertake a comprehensive ban of all tobacco advertising, promotion and sponsorship. This shall include, subject to the legal environment and technical means available to that Party, a comprehensive ban on cross-border advertising, promotion and sponsorship originating from its territory. In this respect, within the period of five years after entry into force of this Convention for that Party, each Party shall undertake appropriate legislative, executive, administrative and/or other measures and report accordingly in conformity with Article 21"*

The 2008 China Tobacco Control Report presents the facts on smoking among young people in China, analyses the factors influencing young people's smoking behavior, recommends measures to protect them from tobacco, and describes the successes and lessons learned in other countries. It is hoped that with its publishing, the Report will be able to draw further attention to the need for action by Government and society to support effective educational, legal, administrative and pricing measures to protect young people from the harmful effects of tobacco.

For the future of the young, for the future of the nation!



Nicotine is highly addictive. Once addicted, it is very hard to quit. The younger a person is when he or she initiates smoking, the more likely he or she will become a regular smoker. The more heavily a person smokes in adulthood, the graver the harm that will result, and the lower the chance is of that person successfully quitting.

China has 130 million young people aged 13-18 years. It is estimated that 15 million of these young people are current smokers, and no less than 40 million have attempted smoking<sup>[2]</sup>. Up to 65 million youth are suffering from exposure to secondhand smoke<sup>[3]</sup>.

### ( 1 ) Active Smoking

Rate of smoking experimentation among young people: Occurrence of any attempt to smoke, ever (even only one or two inhalations).

Rate of current smoking among young people: Occurrence of smoking an entire cigarette in the previous 30 days.

- ❖ The rates of experimentation and current smoking among young people are increasing every year. Most student smokers are male. The rates of experimentation and current smoking among female students are also tending to rise in the major cities.
- ◆ At present, 32.4% of young people have experimented with smoking, that is 44.1% among the young males and 19.9% among the young females, with the male rate significantly higher than the female one<sup>[2]</sup>. The rate of smoking experimentation rises with age among both males and females, and the rate increases considerably faster among the former. The rate rises most quickly during junior high school, and peaks among male students in the first year of senior high school.
- ◆ Eleven point five percent of young people are current smokers. The rate of current smoking is 18.4% and 3.6% among males and females, respectively. Current smoking rates are 10.9% and 2.7% among male and female junior high school students, and 28.9% and 4.9% among male and female senior high-school students, respectively. The male current smoking rate increases with age quickly, but there are marked differences in the extent of increase between age groups. The greatest increase occurs between the third year of junior high-school and the first year of senior high-school. Smoking rates among females stays nearly constant at a low level without significant differences among age groups age<sup>[2]</sup>.

- ◆ In contrast, the current smoking rates among youth tend to decline in foreign countries which have advanced tobacco control efforts. For example, among male senior high-school students in the USA, the current smoking rate has dropped from 29.2% in 2001 to 22.9% in 2005<sup>[4]</sup>.
- ❖ **The initiation age tends to be younger in China.**
- ◆ According to the findings of a 2005 survey of young people who have ever smoked, 66.8% of males and 68.2% of females smoked their first whole cigarette before the age of 13. Compared with the results of a 1998 survey, the percentage of people who have smoked one whole cigarette before age 13 has increased by 15%, indicating that the age of smoking initiation is decreasing<sup>[2]</sup>.

### ( 2 ) Passive Smoking

- ❖ **Nearly half of young people in China are being harmed by exposure to secondhand smoke.**
- ◆ 43.9% of young people are exposure to secondhand smoke at home<sup>[3]</sup>;
- ◆ 55.8% of young people are exposed to secondhand smoke in public places<sup>[3]</sup>.

Both active and passive smoking increase the incidence rate of cardiovascular and respiratory diseases. As demonstrated by medical research, the developing organs and physiology of the young are more vulnerable to external risk factors, more sensitive to toxic materials, and their growth is easily disrupted<sup>[5]</sup>. Therefore, both active and passive smoking pose greater hazards to the young. These research findings provide a further rationale for comprehensive interventions to prevent smoking among youth.



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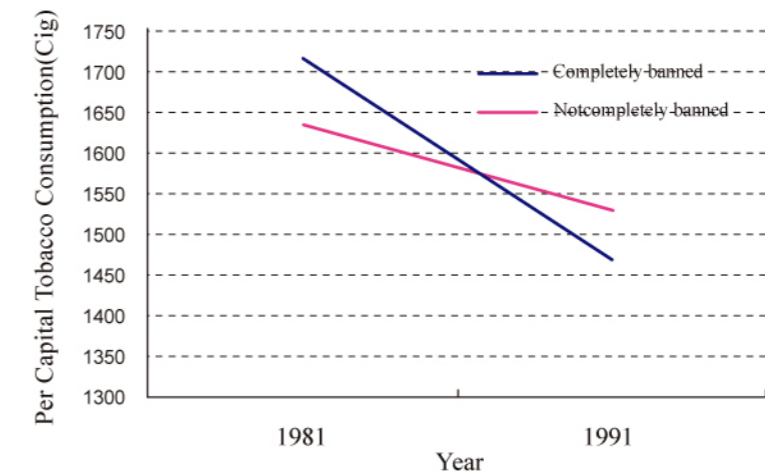
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### ( 1 ) Tobacco Advertisement, Promotion and Sponsorship Activities of the Tobacco Industry to Target and Influence Young People's Smoking Behavior

Tobacco advertisement, promotion and sponsorship link tobacco with sports, independence, success and sex appeal. They build an extremely potent positive image of tobacco, making it very attractive to young people.

- ❖ **Tobacco advertisement and promotion are one of the most important factors which incite young people to start smoking.**
- ◆ Tobacco advertisement and promotion are closely associated with levels of tobacco consumption. A study of the relationship between tobacco advertisement and consumption in 102 countries showed that tobacco consumption tends to decrease drastically in countries where there is a total ban on tobacco advertisement<sup>[6]</sup>.



Relation between Tobacco Advertisement and Tobacco Consumption in 102 Countries

- ◆ The effect of indirect tobacco advertisement using the brand name of a tobacco product is very effective, particularly among youth. The impact of such advertising is three times greater among young people, as compared to the effect on adults<sup>[7]</sup>.
- Tobacco advertising campaigns, which are constantly updated and renewed, cause young people to **OVER-ESTIMATE** the smoking rates among their peers and the adults;
- By linking tobacco with sports, independence, success and sex appeal, tobacco advertisements and promotion cause young people to **UNDER-ESTIMATE** the harm of smoking.

❖ Tobacco advertisement, promotion and sponsorship take on numerous forms.

- ◆ Indirect tobacco advertisement and promotion may take on many forms. Some promotion has even appeared on school uniforms.



❖ The tobacco industry lures youngsters into smoking under the guise of industry-sponsored smoking prevention programs.

- ◆ The World Health Organization has revealed that some programs promote the idea that 'smoking is an adult choice'. The tobacco companies pretend that this message is meant to prevent young people from smoking. However the message actually suggests that smoking is a symbol of maturity and thus seduces the youngsters into smoking.

❖ The tobacco industry uses a variety of means to promotion their products

- Entitling and supporting public service activities to build a positive corporate image;
- Sponsoring sports events, cultural and educational activities, book publication, and movie and TV program production;
- Using the internet to publicize and promote tobacco.

## ( 2 ) Positive Images of Smoking in Movies and Television Programs Encourage Young People to Imitate This Smoking Behavior

Movies and TV programs have very special effects on society, which bear enormous influences upon the healthy development of young people. Smoking images in the programs, in particular smoking of the figures and stars idolized by the youngsters, normalize tobacco for young people and pre-dispose them towards experimenting with smoking.

❖ Images of tobacco use occur frequently in movies and television programs

- ◆ The Chinese Center for Disease Control and Prevention (China CDC) reviewed 8 popular television series and movies in 2003. The TV series each included an average of 165 scenes involving tobacco, and the total time on air of tobacco products was an average of 47.5 minutes per series. All 10 popular movies reviewed contained tobacco footage. On average, there were 26 scenes involving tobacco use per movie with a total duration of about 6 minutes<sup>[8]</sup>.

❖ Tobacco images in movies and television programs have a great influence on young people.

- ◆ Studies have shown that young people who see tobacco images in movies or television are three times more likely to experiment with smoking<sup>[9]</sup>. Even non-smoking youngsters are 16 times more likely to recognize cigarette brands if the figure they idolize smokes<sup>[9]</sup>.

## ( 3 ) Readily Accessible Tobacco Products Make It Easy for Young People to Smoke

Low priced tobacco products, vendors near schools, selling of single cigarettes along with failure to 'forbid the sale of cigarettes to young individuals under the age of 18 years' allow the young people to attain tobacco products easily.

❖ Prices of tobacco products are low.

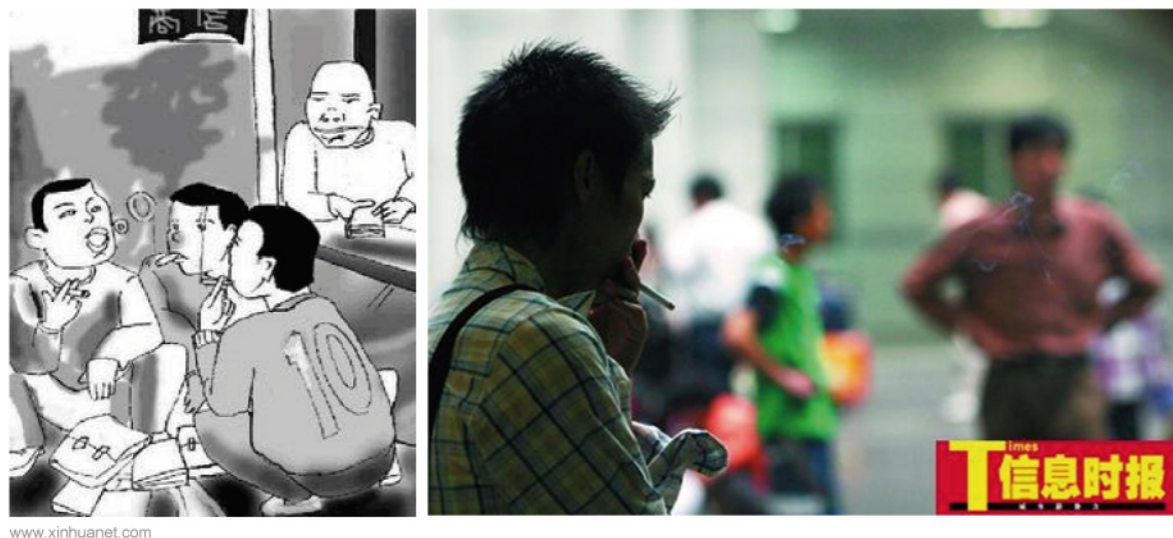
- ◆ The top 3 most highly consumed cigarette brands are all priced at less than 5 Yuan/Pack. This is affordable to most young people.

❖ Sales of single cigarettes

- ◆ A survey conducted in 2007 indicated that young people are able to purchase single cigarettes from more than half of mobile vendors and 30% of snack shops<sup>[10]</sup>.



- ❖ There are many tobacco retail vendors near schools and homes of students.
  - ◆ A survey performed in Beijing Municipality showed that there are an average of two cigarette vendors near each primary or high school, with a maximum of five; cigarette sales points can be found within 200 meters of the homes of 91% of the students. Three or more sales points can be found near the homes of 45% of students<sup>[11, 12]</sup>.
- ❖ Tobacco control related laws and regulations are not effectively enforced.
  - ◆ Survey findings indicate that over 90% of young people have never been refused when attempting to purchase cigarettes<sup>[13]</sup>.



#### ( 4 ) Smoking Environments at School and Home Are Important Factors Contributing to Smoking by Young People

Young people spend most of their time in school or at home. They are most exposed to their teachers, peers and parents, whose smoking status is a key factor in shaping their smoking behavior. Furthermore, the characteristics of the school environment, including local norms and discipline, also play a considerable role.

- ❖ Peer smoking has a major impact on the smoking behavior of young people.
  - ◆ Forty percent of young people are offered their first cigarette by one of their peers, and 55-65% 'smoke with their friends and classmates'<sup>[3, 12]</sup>.
- ❖ Teachers' smoking builds a positive image of tobacco use making them a negative or harmful role model for students.
  - ◆ Teachers are important role models for students, particularly for those in the lower grades. Teachers' smoking can harm students by encouraging them to smoke. Approximately 48.4% of male teachers smoke<sup>[14]</sup>.
- ❖ Children of smoking parents are more likely to smoke.
  - ◆ Children whose parents are both smokers are twice as likely to smoke as children whose parents are non-smokers<sup>[11, 12]</sup>;  
Families are an important source of tobacco for young people. Some parents even offer cigarettes to their children<sup>[15, 16, 17]</sup>.





# 3

## Challenges & Responses

### Effective Measures to Reverse the Tobacco Epidemic<sup>[18]</sup>

- ❖ Monitor tobacco use and prevention policies
- ❖ Protect people from tobacco smoke
- ❖ Offer help to quit tobacco use
- ❖ Warn about the dangers of tobacco
- ❖ Enforce bans on tobacco advertising, promotion and sponsorship
- ❖ Raise taxes on tobacco

-World Health Organization

#### ( 1 ) Create Supportive Smoke-free Policy Environments

The Chinese Government accords a high level of importance to the health of young people. There are explicit provisions for the control of tobacco in five laws and regulations. These are the Advertisement Law of the People's Republic of China, Interim Measures for Administration of Tobacco Advertisement, Law of the People's Republic of China Tobacco Monopoly, Law of the People's Republic of China on the Protection of Minors, and the Law of the People's Republic of China on Prevention of Juvenile Delinquency:

- ❖ Tobacco advertisements released via radio broadcast, movie, TV program, newspaper and magazines shall be prohibited;
- ❖ Tobacco advertisements set up in such public places as waiting rooms of public vehicles, theatres, conference rooms and sports venues shall be prohibited;
- ❖ Disguised tobacco advertisements released via programs on radio, TV program and movie or articles in newspaper and magazines shall be prohibited;
- ❖ Sale of cigarette and alcoholic beverage to minors shall be prohibited;
- ❖ Tobacco retailers shall provide signage to forbid sale of cigarette and alcoholic beverage to minors at prominent locations. Individuals, whose age is hard to determine, shall be request to display their document of identity.

- ◆ The WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (WHO FCTC) entered into effect for China in January 2006. It is the first international public health treaty China has ever signed. The Chinese Government offers its solemn commitment to the international community that China shall follow the requirements of the WHO FCTC and advance tobacco control actively.
  - Significant gaps remain to be bridged between the above-mentioned Chinese legal and regulatory codes and the requirements of the WHO FCTC. Tobacco control legislation, needs to be improved and tobacco control efforts expanded to ensure full implementation of the WHO FCTC
  - The existing laws and regulations are not effectively enforced. For example, in Beijing in the third season of 2005, six television channels have broadcast 351 tobacco advertisements in violation of the related provisions<sup>[19]</sup>.

#### ( 2 ) Provide Smoke-free Sports

##### Implications of Tobacco-free Sports<sup>[20]</sup>:

Players, coaches and sports administrators do not use tobacco when engaging in sports activities;

Participants and spectators at sports event are not exposed to secondhand smoke;

Tobacco sales, advertisement, promotion, sponsorship and marketing activities are absent from sports events and venues.

Because sports events attract many young people as spectators and participants, their influence on the smoking behavior of young people is greater than that of other forms of tobacco advertisement and sponsorship.

- ❖ Civil society, the academic community and the government work together. Formula 1 Grand Prix Race turns down tobacco ads.
- ◆ Formula 1 Grand Prix (F1) of the Federation Internationale de l'Automobile (FIA) is tremendously influential among young people. Previous events held in Europe were predominantly sponsored by the tobacco industry. The race was moved to Shanghai in 2004. Concerned about the impact of tobacco advertisements and brands, 23 experts prepared an open letter to the FIA to 'Fight Tobacco Advertisement and Sponsorship, and Call for a Tobacco-free F1'. The letter drew an enormous popular response.

◆ Through the efforts of the stakeholders, the petroleum corporations of China were awarded the right to sponsor the FI, replacing a foreign tobacco company. The Organizing Committee expressed its will to follow the relevant laws and regulations and to prevent any violation of these through the placement of tobacco advertisements in the venues or at the F1 press conferences.

◆ **The Industry and Business Administration authorities act against disguised tobacco advertisements.**

◆ 'Cranes dance over white sand, my soul flies high' is the advertising message of Baisha Co, a Chinese cigarette brand. This message has been broadcast on television and at sports events. The Advertisement Supervision Center of Beijing Municipal Industry and Business Administration reported this violation of the law to the State Industry and Business Administration for confirmation that this is a tobacco advertisement, and ordered the involved media agencies to cease broadcasting of the message according to the provisions of the Law on Advertisement<sup>[19, 21]</sup>.



◆ **Joint efforts create Smoke-free Olympic Games.**

◆ The 2008 Beijing Olympic Games is the first Olympiad since the coming into effect of the WHO FCTC. The Smoke-free Olympic Games is drawing worldwide attention. The Chinese Government and the host cities have made the event a priority. The state leaders of China announced the inclusion of the Smoke-free Olympic Games as part of the Green Olympic Games initiative in 2004. After completely banning smoking in indoor public places and workplaces in Hongkong, the Chinese Ministry of Health, incollaborated with WHO, initiated the Smoke-free Olympic Games Project in January 2007 to promote the creation of smoke-free environments in the host cities.

- 2007.04 Beijing initiated the Action on Smoke-free Restaurants;
- 2007.10 Smoking is completely banned in taxis in Beijing;
- 2008.05 Regulations on Areas of Public Place for Banning Smoking in Beijing Municipality take effect;
- 2008.03 Shanghai Municipality initiated the revision of the regulations on banning smoking in public places;
- The other four Olympic cities including Tianjin also take measures to realize the goals of the Smoke-free Olympic Games.





### ( 3 ) Advocate Smoke-free Movies and Television Programs

The increasing number of smoking scenes in the media is a major public health concern. Advocacy of smoke-free movie and television is an essential part of the control of tobacco use among young people.

- ❖ The State Administration of Radio, Film and Television (SARFT) responds to the frequent display of smoking scenes on movies and TV programs.
- ◆ Public health experts, media workers and tobacco control groups appealed for tobacco-free movies and television in July 2007. The appeal was widely supported by members of the media as well as by the general public. The Bureaus for Film and TV Series Administration of SARFT responded by requiring the auditing authorities at all levels to pay attention to the abuse of smoking scenes on movies and TV programs, to strengthen the auditing efforts, and to carry out a rigorous review.



### ( 4 ) Provide Tobacco Control Interventions

Tobacco control communication, education and the interventions discussed above to ban advertising and sponsorship are effective measures for reducing smoking among young people. The Ministry of Health and the Office of the National Patriotic Health Campaign Committee issued a trial Standard of Smoke-free Health Service Institution in March, 2008. The Ministry of Health, Ministry of Education, State Industry and Business Administration, and the National Committee for the Patriotic Health Campaign issued a Circular on the 21st World No Tobacco Day and Further Implementation of the WHO FCTC, calling for cross-sectoral action to advance the control of tobacco use among young people.

- ❖ Such topics as 'smoking and passive smoking are harmful to health' are included the health education curriculum of primary and secondary schools;
- ❖ The education administration authorities at all levels should require primary and secondary schools as well as day care centers to create 'smoke-free schools'. The institutions should include tobacco control in their work plans and make relevant policies and rules. Smoking rooms or areas shall not be provided on the premises. Staff who smoke should be actively encouraged to quit;
- ❖ Industry and business administration authorities at all levels should reinforce the monitoring and inspection of tobacco advertisements. Illegal release of tobacco advertisements and illegal tobacco commercials containing images of minors and contents encouraging smoking shall be punished by the law;
- ❖ With the implementation of the national tobacco control project supported by the central government, surveillance of tobacco use among teachers and students and creation of model smoke-free schools and public places have been carried out across the country, and;
- ❖ Quit and win contests have been held throughout the country to create a smoke-free social norm.



## SUMMARY

There is an urgent need to develop means to effectively control the global tobacco epidemic and reduce its harmful impact. The WHO FCTC contains a comprehensive list of effective tobacco controls based on experience generated throughout the world.

China has the largest population of smokers in the world and is the No.1 tobacco producer and consumer. Tobacco consumption will not abate until the rate of smoking within the population is reduced by encouraging smokers to quit and by keeping young people away from tobacco. The latter is particularly important.

To protect young people from lethal tobacco use, all walks of society must act together. There must be a comprehensive ban on tobacco advertisement, promotion and sponsorship in any form, and all proven measures must be taken to create a tobacco-free environment.

This is a duty of the entire community, because young people are our future.



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