



REGIONAL TRAINING ON THE GLOBAL TOBACCO SURVEILLANCE SYSTEM

CAIRO, EGYPT, 26–30 JULY 2009

HIGHLIGHTS

This training on the Global Tobacco Surveillance System was the 14th training in a series that started in 2000. The Regional Office for the Eastern Mediterranean is proud to have been involved in implementing the Global Tobacco Surveillance System, which is a landmark in the success that has been achieved in tobacco control. This success would never have happened without the involvement and commitment of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Atlanta, and the Ministries of Health in the Region.

Monitoring and surveillance have been identified by the Framework Convention on Tobacco Control as a key component into the advancement of tobacco control globally and at national level. The Global Tobacco Control Report of 2008 elaborated on this fact by calling upon all countries to provide accurate measures of tobacco use in order to plan tobacco control strategies and interventions effectively; and to implement them where they are needed, measure their impact and adjust them to ensure success.

In addition, accurate data allow for the implementation of appropriate interventions, efficient impact measurement and timely adjustment when necessary, which greatly improve the likelihood of success in tobacco control. Any surveillance, monitoring and evaluation system must use standardized and scientifically-valid data collection and analysis practices.

Population surveys, using a representative, randomly selected sample of sufficiently large size, can provide good estimates of tobacco use patterns within an acceptable margin of error. Surveys can be conducted on tobacco use alone or can be combined with surveys of other priority health issues.

Surveys should be repeated at regular intervals using the same questions, sampling, data analysis and reporting techniques so that data are comparable across different survey years. This is necessary to enable accurate evaluation of the impact of tobacco control interventions over time. And that is exactly what the Global Tobacco Surveillance System has been providing to countries for the last 10 years.

Based on the Global Youth Tobacco Survey Conference held in Atlanta in the United States of America in June this year; the first evaluation of policy based on the results of implementing the survey will be held in the Region in April in 2010. The purpose of this meeting is to lead to in-depth analyses and significant changes in tobacco control policies at national level.

In 2007 a new component was added to the Global Tobacco Surveillance System – a Global Adult Tobacco Survey. The Adult Tobacco Survey was pilot-tested in Egypt in 2008–2009 and is considered the jewel of the crown, from which all Member States should benefit, not only a small group.