



## GLOBAL TOBACCO SURVEILLANCE SYSTEM PROGRAMME POLICY WORKSHOP

CAIRO, EGYPT, 27–29 APRIL 2010

### HIGHLIGHTS

This workshop was held in collaboration with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Atlanta, our partners in implementing the Global Tobacco Surveillance System for over a decade.

It is a source of immense strength that the Global Tobacco Surveillance System in the Eastern Mediterranean Region has expanded beyond merely covering tobacco use among youth. Surveys under the umbrella of this system cover a wide range of components including: tobacco use among school personnel; tobacco use among health professional students; and tobacco use among adults. The survey results of those components are readily available and can be used by countries as tools for better planning in the area of tobacco control at national level.

The outstanding advancements and successes achieved through the Global Tobacco Surveillance System would not have been possible without the technical support provided by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the partnerships established at national and regional levels across the years.

Studies indicate that tobacco-related deaths worldwide will dramatically increase to reach more than 8 million deaths every year by 2030, and that 80% of those deaths will occur in developing countries. Existing data show that developing countries are the new victims of the tobacco industry's marketing activities. In those countries and elsewhere, young girls and women are an attractive market segment with lucrative growth potential, and are therefore being extensively targeted. Moreover, developing countries are ill-equipped to cope with the added costs and rising health needs resulting from the chronic diseases caused by increased tobacco use.

The surveillance system has brought to the table a wealth of information related to tobacco use. This information not only confirms the importance of the system but offers an opportunity to move forward through analysis and in-depth study of the data available. The Regional Office for the Eastern Mediterranean is actively encouraging the use of the data that has emerged from this system as a supporting tool for countries in the area of tobacco

control, as well as in meeting their obligations in line with the WHO FCTC. However, it must be noted that the use of the surveillance data available is still weak and has yet to reach its full potential.

The Regional Office is committed and willing to support countries in making better use of the data available. In particular, use of the data by decision-makers and tobacco control advocates will lead to better enforcement, as well as enhancement, of existing tobacco control policies and programmes.

WHO will continue to support Member States in the expansion of this surveillance system, and will continue to encourage countries to move from the data phase to the action phase.