GENEVA ¦ 29 May 2013 – On **World No Tobacco Day**, **31 May**, the World Health Organization (WHO) is calling for countries to
ban all forms of tobacco advertising
,
promotion
and
sponsorship
to help reduce the number of tobacco users. Tobacco use kills nearly 6 million people every year.

Bans on advertising, promotion and sponsorship are one of the most effective ways to reduce tobacco consumption, with countries that have already introduced bans showing an average of 7% reduction in tobacco consumption.

Research shows about one third of youth experimentation with tobacco occurs as a result of exposure to tobacco advertising, promotion and sponsorship. Worldwide, 78% of young people aged 13-15 years report regular exposure to some form of tobacco advertising, promotion and sponsorship.

“Tobacco use ranks right at the very top of the list of universal threats to health yet is entirely preventable,” says WHO Director-General Dr Margaret Chan. “Governments must make it their top priority to stop the tobacco industry’s shameless manipulation of young people and women, in particular, to recruit the next generation of nicotine addicts.”

“Most tobacco users start their deadly drug dependence before the age 20”, says Dr Douglas Bettcher, Director of WHO’s Prevention of Noncommunicable Diseases department. “Banning tobacco advertising, promotion and sponsorship is one of the best ways to protect young people from starting smoking as well as reducing tobacco consumption across the entire population.”
Dr Bettcher warns however that, even when bans are in place, the tobacco industry is constantly finding new tactics to target potential smokers including:

- handing out gifts and selling branded products such as clothing, in particular targeting young people
- “stealth” marketing such as engaging trendsetters to influence people in places such as cafes and nightclubs
- using online and new media, such as pro-smoking smartphone applications and online discussions led by tobacco company staff posing as consumers
- placement of tobacco products and brands in films and television, including reality TV and soap operas
- corporate social responsibility activities such as making donations to charities.

"That is why the ban has to be complete in order to be fully effective," he added.

WHO's report on the global tobacco epidemic 2011 shows that only 19 countries (representing just 6% of the world's population) have reached the highest level of achievement in banning tobacco advertising, promotion and sponsorship. More than one third of countries have minimal or no restrictions at all.

Countries that are making strong progress in banning the last remaining forms of advertising include Albania, Brazil, Colombia, Ghana, Iran, Mauritius, Panama and Vietnam.

WHO supports countries to meet their obligations under the WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (WHO FCTC), which requires Parties to introduce a comprehensive ban of all forms of tobacco advertising, promotion and sponsorship within five years of the entry into force of the WHO FCTC for that Party.

According to the "2012 Global Progress Report on Implementation of the WHO FCTC", 83 countries have already reported that they have introduced a comprehensive ban of all tobacco advertising, promotion and sponsorship.

Countries that have banned displays of tobacco products at points of sale include Australia, Canada, Finland, Ireland, Nepal, New Zealand, Norway, Palau and Panama, with Australia also introducing plain packaging of tobacco products.

A recent survey on tobacco use in Turkey shows the ban on advertising, promotion and sponsorship, combined with other tobacco-control measures, has contributed to cutting tobacco use by more than 13% – translating to 1.2 million fewer tobacco users – since 2008.

Tobacco kills millions

Tobacco kills up to half its users. By 2030, WHO estimates that tobacco will kill more than 8 million people every year, with four out of five of these deaths occurring in low and middle-income countries. Tobacco is a major risk factor for noncommunicable diseases such as cancer, cardiovascular disease, diabetes and chronic respiratory diseases.

First global treaty for health

The WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control is the first international treaty negotiated under the auspices of WHO and demonstrates the world's commitment to decisive action to reduce tobacco use, the leading preventable cause of death. The treaty was adopted in 2003 and now has 176 Parties, covering 88% of the world's population.

More about World No tobacco day Campaign is available at:
www.who.int/world-no-tobacco-day