GENEVA / PANAMA CITY, Panama ¦ 10 July 2013 – At 2.3 billion, the number of people worldwide covered by at least one **life-saving measure** to **limit tobacco use** has more than doubled in the last five years, according to the WHO *Report on the Global Tobacco Epidemic 2013*. The number of people covered by **bans on tobacco advertising**, **promotion** and **sponsorship**, the focus of this year's report, increased by almost 400 million people residing mainly in low- and middle-income countries.

Furthermore, the Report shows that 3 billion people are now covered by national anti-tobacco campaigns. As a result, hundreds of millions of nonsmokers are less likely to start.

However, the Report notes, to achieve the globally agreed target of a 30% reduction of tobacco use by 2025, more countries have to implement comprehensive tobacco control programmes.

Bans on tobacco advertising, promotion and sponsorship are one of the most powerful measures to control tobacco use. As of today, 24 countries with 694 million people have introduced complete bans and 100 more countries are close to a complete ban. However, 67 countries currently do not ban any tobacco advertising, promotion and sponsorship activities or have a ban that excludes advertising in national broadcast and print media.

"If we do not close ranks and ban tobacco advertising, promotion and sponsorship, adolescents and young adults will continue to be lured into tobacco consumption by an ever-more aggressive tobacco industry," says WHO Director-General Dr Margaret Chan. "Every country has the responsibility to protect its population from tobacco-related illness, disability and death."

Tobacco is the leading global cause of preventable death and kills 6 million people every year. It can cause cancer, cardiovascular disease, diabetes and chronic respiratory diseases. If current trends continue, the number of deaths attributed to tobacco smoking is projected to rise to 8 million a year by 2030. In defiance of the deleterious effects of smoking, tobacco companies are spending tens of billions of dollars each year on advertising, promotion and sponsorship.

"We know that only complete bans on tobacco advertising, promotion and sponsorship are

effective," stresses Dr Douglas Bettcher, the Director of WHO's Prevention of Noncommunicable Diseases department. "Countries that introduced complete bans together with other tobacco control measures have been able to cut tobacco use significantly within only a few years."

Other key findings of the report include:

- Effective health warning labels on tobacco packaging continue to be established by more countries. In the past five years, a total of 20 countries with 657 million people put strong warning label requirements in place, with 11 countries (with 265 million people) doing so since 2010.
- More than half a billion people in nine countries have gained access to appropriate cessation services in the past five years. However, there has been little progress since 2010, as only four additional countries with a combined population of 85 million were newly provided access to cost-covered services including a toll-free national quit line.
- Creation of smoke-free public places and workplaces continues to be the most commonly established measure at the highest level of achievement. There are 32 countries that passed complete smoking bans covering all work places, public places and public transportation means between 2007 and 2012, protecting nearly 900 million additional people. Since 2010, 12 countries and one territory, with 350 million people, passed strong smoke-free laws at a national level.

In 2008, WHO identified six evidence-based tobacco control measures that are the most effective in reducing tobacco use. Known as "MPOWER", these measures correspond to one or more of the demand reduction provisions included in the WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (WHO FCTC): Monitor tobacco use and prevention policies, Protect people from tobacco smoke, Offer help to quit tobacco use, Warn people about the dangers of tobacco, Enforce bans on tobacco advertising, promotion and sponsorship, and Raise taxes on tobacco.

This year's report is the fourth in the series of WHO reports on the status of the MPOWER measures. These measures provide countries with practical assistance to reduce demand for tobacco in line with the WHO FCTC, thereby reducing related illness, disability and death.

The WHO FCTC entered into force in 2005 and, with 177 Parties today, is a powerful tool to combat the deadly tobacco epidemic.