

**Medicus Mundi Switzerland Bulletin + AT Schweiz (Swiss Association for Tobacco Control)**  
**Edition No. 160, December 2021:**  
**Fighting Tobacco in LMICs (working title)**  
**Submission Deadline: 24 November 2021**  
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**Fighting Tobacco in LMICs (working title)**

**This MMS Bulletin is produced in collaboration with [AT Schweiz](#) (Swiss Association for Tobacco Control)**

Dear Colleagues

The consequences of tobacco consumption are well known: 8 million deaths annually, of which around 1 million are from passive smoking. Tobacco use remains one of the main risk factors for people developing non-communicable diseases (NCDs), and the current pandemic has shown that cigarette smokers are more likely to be hospitalised with or die of the respiratory disease Covid-19.

Curbing the consumption of tobacco is an integral part of the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). This is not only with regard to Goal 3 (Goal 3a calls for a strengthened implementation of the WHO's FCTC in all countries); it is also a crucial component in achieving all the other goals. Products that contain tobacco not only harm nature: the cultivation of tobacco also jeopardises food security, since tobacco is grown in place of food crops.

The progress made in some countries to curb the use of tobacco is primarily due to the WHO's Framework Convention ([WHO FCTC](#)) adopted by its member states in 2003 with the aim of achieving a continual reduction in tobacco consumption. Best practice measures ([MPOWER](#)) have contributed to improved prevention and the proportion of people consuming tobacco has declined in Western countries. However, this should not distract from the alarmingly high total number of smokers around the world. The new WHO report ([WHO report on the global tobacco epidemic 2021](#)) estimates that there are 1.3 billion smokers worldwide, 80% of whom live in low and middle income countries (LMICs).

While e-cigarettes (electronic nicotine delivery systems – ENDS) are conquering markets in Europe and are falsely advertised by the tobacco industry as 'safe' alternatives to conventional cigarettes, tobacco products which, for example, are made in Switzerland but banned here due to their nicotine content, are being aggressively marketed and sold in LMICs with devastating consequences.

In this MMS bulletin, we aim to draw attention to global tobacco consumption and its consequences for human health and the environment. We want to take a critical look at the aggressive methods employed by the tobacco industry and show the detrimental effect tobacco has on achieving the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Measures necessary to address these issues should be identified (best practice examples) and the existing abuses and challenges discussed, with the focus on middle and low income countries.

Some key questions from our perspective:

- What burden does tobacco use place on people's health and health systems in low and middle and income countries (LMICs)?
- Are the governments in these countries taking adequate responsibility to protect their populations from tobacco use?
- Which best practice measures ([MPOWER](#)) are particularly effective to prevent the consumption of tobacco in LMICs and how can they be expanded?
- Tobacco is one, if not the main cause of non-communicable diseases (NCDs). To what extent are Swiss NGOs addressing the topic of tobacco use prevention in the area of global health? Should they possibly be investing more in prevention instead of treating NCDs?
- How is tobacco consumption affecting the successful achievement of the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)?
- What signals is Switzerland sending out to comply with its international commitments to curb tobacco consumption?
- What are the existing conflicts of interest and how much damage are they inflicting on societies and the economy as a whole?
- How are we perceived by stakeholders in the LMICs? We sell them cigarettes and then help them to cure tobacco-related diseases.
- What can local NGOs do to fight tobacco and the influence of the tobacco lobbies?

#### References:

- WHO 2021. WHO Report on the Global Tobacco Epidemic. Addressing new and emerging products. <https://www.who.int/publications/i/item/9789240032095>
- WHO. The MPOWER measures. <https://www.who.int/initiatives/mpower>
- WHO 2003. Framework Convention on Tobacco Control. <https://fctc.who.int/>

**We would like to ask you to send a short outline (title and two or three sentences) to us as soon as possible so we can define the form and scope of your contribution with you.**

#### Requirements:

The MMS Bulletin is the Swiss online journal for international cooperation and health. It is an online journal which is published four times a year. To keep our journal of high quality we would like you to follow the following guidelines for submission:

- Your article can be written in **English, German or French**
- Text length: 5,000 – 10,000 characters (2 to 3 pages only)
- **Title and subtitle:** please provide an appealing title incl. a subtitle
- **Lead text:** up to 100 words – text in bold
- References: Please use Harvard Reference Style [In-text citations: "I used to be..." (Fitzgerald, 2004). Reference Lists: Fitzgerald, F. (2004). The great Gatsby. New York: Scribner.]
- Author affiliations: please provide a short description about the author incl. a photograph
- **Please provide some photos in high resolution and in jpg. format.** Please include a caption and the name of the photographer
- **Copy Deadline: 24 November 2021**
- Please review previous MMS Bulletin:

<https://www.medicusmundi.ch/en/advocacy/publications/mms-bulletin/>