

POLICY PAPER · MAY 31, 2026

The 2030 Mandate for a Tobacco-Free World

Addressing the Gap in MPOWER Implementation and Responding to
Emerging Nicotine Threats

ISSUED BY

International Federation of
Green Crescent

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01 / EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Executive Summary

The global tobacco epidemic is no longer sustained solely by conventional cigarettes. Today, the rapid expansion of Electronic Nicotine Delivery Systems (ENDS) and Heated Tobacco Products (HTPs) threatens to undermine decades of progress in tobacco control and addiction prevention efforts worldwide.

While global tobacco use is projected to decline to 19.2% by the end of 2025, the total number of tobacco users remains alarmingly high at approximately 1.2 billion people worldwide. Tobacco use continues to cause more than 7 million deaths annually, including 1.6 million deaths linked to second-hand smoke exposure.

As a global civil society network working in the field of addiction prevention, public health, and community resilience, the International Federation of Green Crescent emphasizes that effective tobacco control requires not only regulation, but also sustained prevention, youth engagement, and protection from industry-driven nicotine normalization.

This policy paper calls for accelerated global action toward the 2028 tobacco reduction milestones and the broader goal of achieving a tobacco-free generation by 2030. It further urges governments to close implementation gaps in MPOWER measures and establish comprehensive regulation of emerging nicotine and tobacco products.

KEY FIGURES

1.2 billion tobacco users worldwide · **7M+** deaths annually · **1.6M** from second-hand smoke

WHY THIS MATTERS

Three converging fronts in the global tobacco epidemic.

- 01** **Conventional tobacco**
Persistently high prevalence in low- and middle-income regions.
- 02** **Emerging nicotine products**
ENDS, HTPs, and pouches expand outside regulatory frameworks.
- 03** **Youth normalization**
Flavor-driven marketing accelerates adolescent uptake.

GLOBAL SCALE

1.2B
people use tobacco worldwide

Projected to decline to 17.4% prevalence by 2030, yet nearly 1.154 billion users will remain.

PROJECTED PREVALENCE

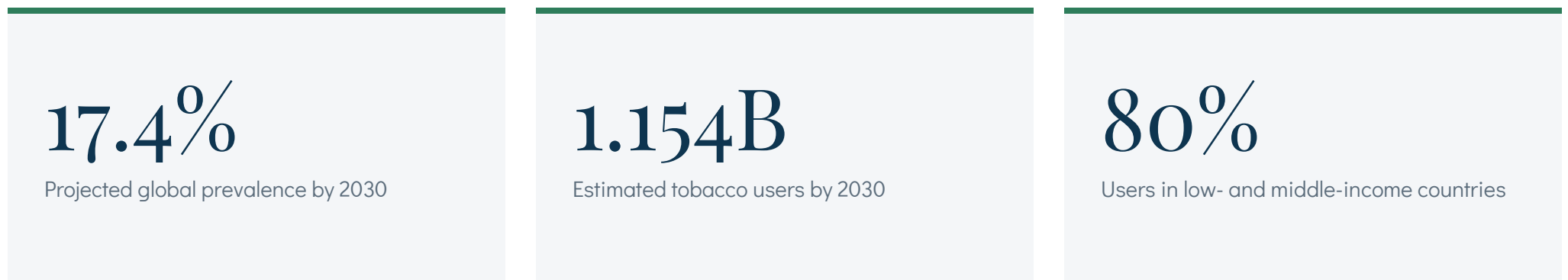


Source: WHO Global Report on Tobacco Use Trends, 2025–2030 Projections.

02 / TRENDS & PROJECTIONS

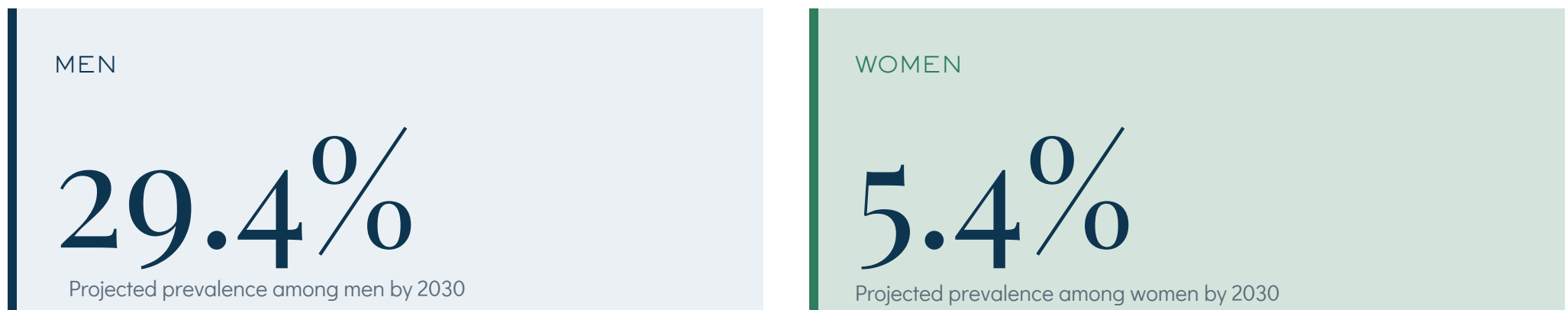
Global Status

- According to the "2000–2024 Tobacco Use Prevalence Trends Global Report and 2025–2030 Projections," current decline rates indicate that international tobacco reduction targets may be achievable by 2028.
- By 2030, global tobacco prevalence is projected to decline to 17.4%, corresponding to approximately 1.154 billion users worldwide.
- Global projections indicate that tobacco use among men is expected to decrease to 29.4% by 2030, while prevalence among women is projected to decline to 5.4%.
- Approximately 80% of tobacco users continue to live in low- and middle-income countries, where the public health and economic burden of tobacco-related diseases remains disproportionately severe.
- Despite declining prevalence rates, tobacco-related mortality, healthcare expenditures, and productivity losses continue to place substantial pressure on national health systems and socioeconomic development.



GENDER PROJECTIONS · 2030

Decline expected across both demographics.



THE BURDEN OF INEQUITY

80% of tobacco users live in low- and middle-income countries, where mortality, healthcare costs and productivity losses fall disproportionately on national health systems.

03 / ENDS, HTPs & NICOTINE POUCHES

The Emerging Frontier

The tobacco and nicotine industry is increasingly shifting toward alternative nicotine products in an effort to attract new consumers, particularly adolescents and young adults.

- According to the "Global Report on Tobacco Use Prevalence Trends," e-cigarette use among 13–15-year-olds is on average nine times higher than among adults in the same countries.
- Flavor-based marketing strategies, digital advertising, and youth-oriented product designs continue to increase the appeal of ENDS products among children and adolescents.
- Based on the WHO Report on the Global Tobacco Epidemic 2025, only seven countries (Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Hungary, Lithuania, Montenegro, and the Netherlands) have implemented a total ban on all flavors as of late 2024.
- More than 62 countries still lack a legal framework regulating ENDS products, leaving approximately 1.7 billion people exposed to unregulated industry practices.
- The "WHO Global Tobacco Epidemic Report 2025" confirms that emissions from Heated Tobacco Products (HTPs) constitute tobacco smoke and therefore pose significant public health risks.

EMERGING CONCERN

Modern Nicotine Pouches

Nicotine pouches have emerged as a rapidly expanding category of nicotine products in several regions of the world. Marketed as tobacco-free, discreet, and socially acceptable alternatives to traditional tobacco products, nicotine pouches are increasingly attracting adolescents and young adults.

Their appealing flavors, high nicotine concentrations, modern packaging, and extensive promotion through digital platforms raise significant public health concerns. While these products do not contain tobacco leaf, they deliver nicotine efficiently and may contribute to nicotine dependence, initiation among non-users, and dual or multiple product use.

Regulatory approaches to nicotine pouches remain highly inconsistent across countries. In many jurisdictions, these products fall outside existing tobacco control frameworks, creating regulatory gaps that may be exploited by the nicotine industry.

Governments should ensure that nicotine pouches as other new nicotine products (e-cigarettes, heated tobacco products) are subject to comprehensive regulation exactly the same as tobacco, including age restrictions, marketing and advertising bans, flavor restrictions, health warnings, product disclosure requirements, and ongoing surveillance of youth uptake and health impacts.



04 / THE POWER OF WARNINGS (W)

Successful Models

Evidence demonstrates that the “W” (Warning) component of the WHO MPOWER package remains one of the most effective and cost-efficient tobacco control interventions globally.

- 110 countries have now adopted best-practice graphic health warnings, covering 62% of the global population.
- As highlighted in the 2025 report, 25 countries have mandated plain packaging to reduce product appeal.
- Seven countries (Ethiopia, Ireland, Jordan, Mexico, New Zealand, Slovenia, and Spain) remain global leaders, implementing at least four MPOWER measures at the highest level.
- These examples demonstrate that comprehensive tobacco control policies are achievable across diverse economic and regional contexts when supported by sustained political will and multisectoral cooperation.



GLOBAL LEADERS

Ethiopia · Ireland · Jordan · Mexico · New Zealand · Slovenia · Spain

MPOWER FRAMEWORK · AT A GLANCE

Six interlocking measures for tobacco control.



The “W” component (Warn about the dangers of tobacco) is the focus of this section – the most effective and cost-efficient measure in the framework, with proven impact across diverse economies.

THE GAP TO CLOSE

65

countries still lack mandatory visual warnings on smokeless tobacco products – a critical gap in global protection.



05 / GLOBAL STRATEGIC RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendations

The International Federation of Green Crescent calls upon all UN Member States and health authorities to:

I. Enforce Universal Warning Standards (W)

- Implement plain packaging and high-impact graphic health warnings on all nicotine products.
- Ensure visual warnings are mandatory for smokeless tobacco products, a gap currently existing in 65 countries.
- Launch evaluated national mass media campaigns (minimum 3 weeks) that include rigorous pre-testing and outcome evaluation.

II. Intensify Global Advocacy on Advertising and Sponsorship Bans (E)

- Develop and enforce strict legal frameworks to identify and penalize covert (alibi) advertising strategies designed to circumvent existing tobacco marketing bans.
- Establish robust monitoring mechanisms to control social media promotion, holding digital platforms and influencers accountable for direct or indirect tobacco and nicotine product endorsements.
- Create and maintain accessible, transparent, and responsive public reporting and feedback systems, empowering civil society and citizens to report violations of advertising, promotion, and sponsorship bans in real time.

III. Ensure Worldwide Regulation of Emerging Nicotine Products

- Apply the WHO FCTC standards to HTPs and ENDS immediately, including indoor usage bans and advertising restrictions.
- Ban all characterising flavors and establish a minimum purchase age in the 74 countries currently lacking such protections.
- Strengthen digital platform regulations to prevent youth-targeted nicotine marketing and online promotion of tobacco and nicotine products.
- Address critical regulatory deficiencies in ENDS frameworks by aligning them fully with comprehensive public health policies and revising national taxation policies to ensure alternative nicotine products are subject to high excise taxes, thereby reducing financial accessibility.

IV. Integrity of Public Policy

- Shield tobacco control policies from industry interference as prioritized in the COP10 and MOP3 decisions.
- Reject industry-funded "harm reduction" claims regarding HTPs that lack independent scientific verification.
- Strengthen collaboration with civil society organizations, youth networks, healthcare professionals, and educational institutions in the design and implementation of tobacco prevention policies.



06 / CLOSING REMARKS

Conclusion

The evidence is clear: the global tobacco epidemic is preventable and reversible. However, sustained progress depends on governments’ willingness to address both conventional tobacco products and the rapidly evolving nicotine product landscape.

The rapid growth of new (emerging nicotine) products (electronic cigarettes, heated tobacco and nicotine pouches) demonstrates how the nicotine industry continues to diversify its product portfolio while maintaining dependence on nicotine as its core business model. Public health policies should therefore focus not only on individual products but also on preventing the normalization of nicotine use in all forms.

In light of these challenges, the International Federation of Green Crescent calls on all governments and international stakeholders to fully implement the MPOWER framework, strengthen protections for children and adolescents, and prioritize public health over the commercial interests of the tobacco and nicotine industries.

Through coordinated global action, evidence-based prevention, and strong public policy safeguards, a tobacco-free generation can become an achievable global public health objective.

A CALL TO ACTION

A tobacco-free generation by 2030 is achievable.

— International Federation of Green Crescent · Advocacy Working Group

THE ROAD AHEAD

Three milestones on the path to a tobacco-free generation.



A SHARED COMMITMENT

Governments, civil society, healthcare professionals and youth networks — together accountable for the generation that follows.

APPENDIX

References

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