

TOBACCO HARMS ECONOMY AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

The association between tobacco and poverty is now well established and this issue has been more seriously addressed as a result of last years' World No Tobacco Day theme: *Tobacco and poverty: A vicious circle*. Not only are the poorer populations those who consume tobacco the most but tobacco in turn increases poverty.

The tobacco epidemic is moving towards the poorer and least educated worldwide. The tobacco industry is targeting developing countries where they find less resistance to introduce their products and have an enormous potential new market, especially among women and youth. These countries, which have scarce resources for health and still suffer from the burden of communicable diseases, will not be able to afford to treat a population suffering from the consequences of tobacco consumption. The impact of tobacco consumption and production goes beyond the areas of health and poverty in the strict sense. Tobacco also has a negative impact on diverse areas that can reflect poverty such as maternal health, child mortality and morbidity and environmental sustainability. A recent World Health Organization (WHO) publication *The Millennium Development Goals and Tobacco Control: An Opportunity for Global Partnership* also addresses the negative impact

of tobacco in development issues. The paper documents the negative effect that tobacco cultivation and tobacco use have on poverty and development and demonstrates the relevance of tobacco control in achieving each of the eight United Nations Millennium Development Goals (Box 1).

BOX 1 The UN Millennium Development Goals

- Goal 1: Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger
- Goal 2: Achieve universal primary education
- Goal 3: Promote gender equality and empower women
- Goal 4: Reduce child mortality
- Goal 5: Improve maternal health
- Goal 6: Combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases
- Goal 7: Ensure environmental sustainability
- Goal 8: Develop a Global Partnership for Development

Source: <http://www.un.org/millenniumgoals/>