

The Global Case for Investment in Tobacco Control

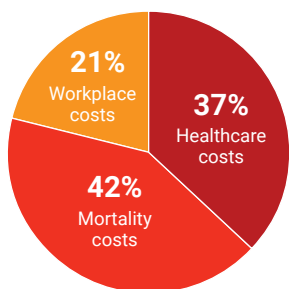
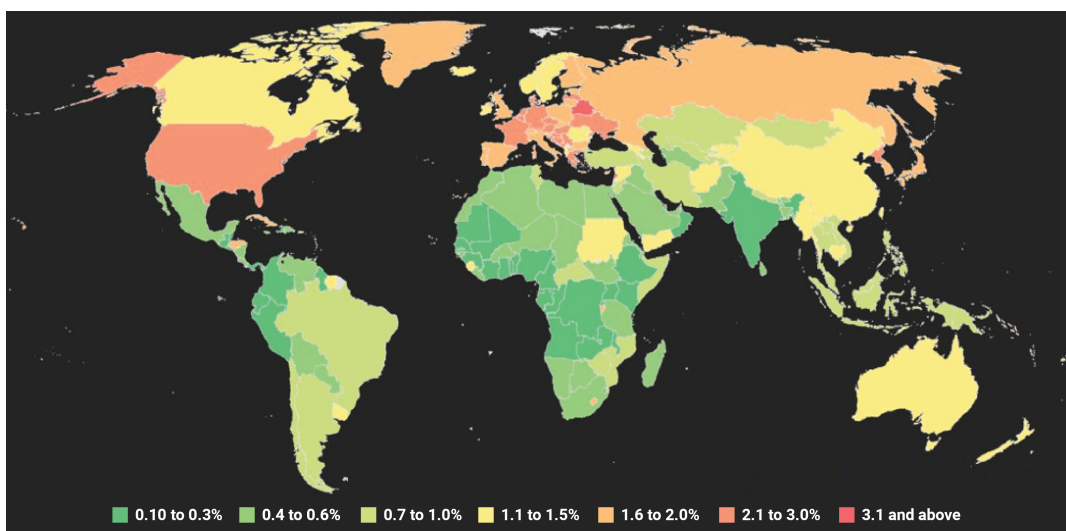
Tobacco use generated **US\$ 1.7 trillion** in social and economic losses in 2022, the equivalent of **1.7% of global GDP**.

In the 20 years since the adoption of the WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (WHO FCTC), countries worldwide have demonstrated their commitment to public health. More than 5.6 billion people – 71% of the world’s population – are now covered by at least one core tobacco control demand reduction measure implemented comprehensively.¹

Even though the prevalence and absolute number of current tobacco users aged

15 years old or older has declined steadily in that period, the journey is far from over.² Over 8.7 million lives continue to be lost each year due to tobacco use, with 1.3 million of those deaths due to environmental tobacco smoke, leading to enormous economic losses. Altogether, the investment case estimates that tobacco use resulted in US\$ 1.7 trillion in social and economic losses in 2022, the equivalent of 1.7% of annual global gross domestic product (GDP).

Tobacco-attributable social and economic losses as a percent of 2022 GDP



The largest proportion of the global costs of tobacco use comes from the economic value of tobacco-attributable deaths, US\$ 698 billion, representing 42% of the burden imposed by tobacco use. Healthcare costs born by governments, insurance companies, and private citizens account for US\$ 612 billion. Workplace costs that make up the remaining 21% of costs

(US\$ 354 billion) are comprised of absenteeism (missed days of work) and presenteeism (reduced productivity while at work). By fulfilling the mandates of the WHO FCTC, countries can save lives, protect households from catastrophic health expenditures, and bolster labor productivity by improving the health of populations.



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Tobacco Control Measures Included in the Investment Case

- Increase taxes to reduce the affordability of tobacco products (Article 6)
- Protection from exposure to tobacco smoke (Article 8)
- Health warnings in tobacco packages (Article 11)
- Plain packaging (Guidelines for implementation of Articles 11 and 13)
- Mass media campaigns to promote and strengthen public awareness (Article 12)
- Ban of tobacco advertising, promotion, and sponsorship (TAPS) (Article 13)
- Counselling for tobacco cessation (Article 14)
- Pharmaceutical treatment for tobacco cessation (Article 14)
- Tobacco quit-lines (Article 14)

53.4%

Reduction in smoking prevalence

42.8 million

Lives saved

US\$ 2.3 trillion

In averted healthcare expenditures

US\$ 6.2 trillion

In social and economic benefits

By investing in and enforcing these nine proven tobacco control measures, over 15 years, global smoking prevalence could decline by over half (53.4%), saving 42.8 million lives and generating US\$ 6.2 trillion in social and economic benefits, including US\$ 2.3 trillion in direct healthcare savings.

Over 15 years, the value of the benefits generated by the tobacco control measures far outweigh the cost of implementation, both as individual interventions and as a package, as shown in the table below.

Intervention	Implementation Cost (US\$ billions)	Savings (US\$ billions)	Return on Investment
Increase taxes (Art. 6)	2.0	889.1	435
Protection from exposure to smoke (Art. 8)	6.9	3116.5	452
Health warnings (Art. 11)	1.7	1372.8	820
Plain packaging (Art. 11)	2.8	531.0	188
Mass media campaigns (Art. 12)	21.6	869.9	40
TAPS ban (Art. 13)	3.1	1274.9	413
Counselling for tobacco cessation (Art. 14)	19.6	278.6	14
Tobacco quit-lines (Art. 14)	11.6	348.9	30
Pharmaceutical treatment (Art. 14)	56.6	361.4	6
Package	130.3	6220.4	48

While the return on investment (ROI) is positive across world regions and income levels, there is a great deal of variation between them. ROIs for regions and income levels range from 2.3 in Africa to 109 in the Americas and from 1.4 in low-income countries to 104 in high-income countries. The reasons for these variations are numerous; they include varying implementation costs, differences in the valuation of premature mortality, variation in life expectancy, and

the impact of large countries that can disproportionately affect results.

In summary, tobacco use is a significant threat to health and sustainable development. The results of the global investment case show that by acting now, countries can reduce the health and economic burden from tobacco use and invest in a healthier future.

Works Cited

- 1 World Health Organization. WHO report on the global tobacco epidemic, 2023: protect people from tobacco smoke. Geneva: World Health Organization, 2023 <https://www.who.int/publications/i/item/9789240077164>.
- 2 World Health Organization. WHO global report on trends in prevalence of tobacco use 2000-2025, fourth edition. 2021.



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