



## **Smoke-free Policies in China – Evidence of Effectiveness and Implications for Action**

*A joint report from the World Health Organization, the International Tobacco Control Policy Evaluation Project (ITC Project) and the Chinese Centre for Disease Control and Prevention (China CDC)*

### **THE FACTS**

“In 2015, China stands on the cusp of a quantum leap forward on tobacco control. If the national smoke-free law is adopted and fully implemented, China will be put on the path to a much healthier and more prosperous future.”

– Dr Bernhard Schwartländer, WHO Representative in China

### **Noncommunicable Diseases (including those caused by smoking)**

- Noncommunicable diseases cause 63% of deaths worldwide, but 80% of deaths in China

### **Smoking in China**

- 28.1% of China’s 1 billion adults are smokers
- 52.9% of China’s adult men and 2.4% of adult women are smokers
- More than 3,000 people die every day, or more than 1 million each year, from smoking-related illnesses

### **Second-hand smoke (SHS) in China**

- Over 700 million non-smokers in China, including about 180 million children, are exposed to second-hand smoke (SHS) at least once a day in a typical week
- Exposure to SHS causes 100,000 deaths annually

### **Beijing as a game changer in tobacco regulations in 2015**

- From 1 June 2015, tobacco smoking is banned in all indoor public places in Beijing, including restaurants, offices and on public transportation, with no exceptions

### **State Council’s 2014 draft national smoke-free regulation**

- Draft tobacco control regulations published by the State Council in November 2014 include a broad package of tobacco control measures: a national ban on smoking in all indoor public places, workplaces and public transportation facilities; a ban on tobacco advertisements; requirements for graphic warnings on all tobacco packages; and stronger enforcement of prohibition of tobacco sales to juniors

### **WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (WHO FCTC)**

- China signed the WHO FCTC in 2003, ratified in 2005, and the treaty came into legal force for China in 2006



- Article 8 of the WHO FCTC requires Parties to adopt and implement legislative and other measures to protect against exposure to tobacco smoke in indoor public places, workplaces, public transport and, as appropriate, other public places
- China has yet to adhere to the recommendation of the Guidelines for implementing Article 8 that all Parties achieve “universal protection” from exposure to tobacco smoke within five years of the WHO FCTC coming into force for the Party
- However, the new and comprehensive smoke-free law in Beijing is fully compliant with the Guidelines of the WHO FCTC

### **Summary & Conclusions from the report**

- China is the only country from the BRICS (Brazil, Russia, India, China, South Africa) group that does not have a national smoke-free law. Brazil and the Russian Federation have implemented strong smoke-free laws with very few or no exemptions, while India and South Africa are finalizing regulations to strengthen their national smoke-free laws
- The adoption of the draft national smoke-free regulation currently before China’s State Council would allow China to be on par with and even surpass the other BRICS countries with respect to compliance with the WHO FCTC Article 8 Guidelines
- Data from the report show that China has the highest level of smoking in workplaces (70%), the second highest level of smoking in restaurants and bars (82% and 89% respectively), and the lowest percentage of smokers with smoke-free homes (20%), in comparison with other countries in the International Tobacco Control Policy Evaluation Project (ITC Project)
- ITC survey results indicated relatively high levels of support for smoke-free policies in China, even among smokers. Over half or close to half of smokers in each surveyed city supported a complete ban on smoking in indoor workplaces; over one-third of smokers in each city supported a complete ban on smoking in restaurants
- Evidence from the ITC China survey demonstrates that the current patchwork of national- and city-level smoke-free policies in place before 2015 have not significantly reduced exposure to tobacco smoke in public places. The new Beijing smoke-free law may be about to change this situation

### **Recommendations for action**

- To protect the 1.3 billion citizens of China from the serious health hazards of exposure to SHS, the Report recommends China adopt a comprehensive national smoke-free law without delay. Adoption of the State Council’s 2014 draft national smoke-free regulation offers vast potential to decrease smoking in public places and in homes, reduce exposure to SHS, improve public health, and reduce the tobacco-related economic burden in China
- A comprehensive national smoke-free law for China must be accompanied by a strong, rigorous enforcement effort that includes compliance monitoring and a strategic communications campaign to educate the public, elicit behavior change and change social norms around tobacco use
- The draft national regulation recently issued by the State Council includes measures to ban tobacco advertising, promotion and sponsorship, and to introduce graphic health warnings on cigarette packages. These supporting regulations are recommended to be implemented in conjunction with national smoke-free measures as part of a comprehensive tobacco control strategy



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- Cities and civil society organizations are key to success by building support for and improving compliance with smoke-free laws at the local level

### **About the ITC Project**

- The evidence presented in the report is primarily based on findings from the International Tobacco Control Policy Evaluation Project (ITC Project), the first-ever international cohort study to evaluate the psychosocial and behavioural effects of tobacco control policies and the only research project that focuses on measuring the impact of key policies of the WHO FCTC.
- The ITC Project conducts surveys of smokers and non-smokers in China and 21 other countries. Four waves of ITC China Survey data were collected between 2006 and 2012 from 5600 adult smokers and 1400 non-smokers in seven cities in China. Findings from the ITC China Survey and other ITC countries can provide policy-makers with a roadmap to guide the adoption and implementation of a comprehensive smoke-free law.

*Download the full report:* [http://www.wpro.who.int/china/tobacco\\_report\\_20151019\\_en.pdf](http://www.wpro.who.int/china/tobacco_report_20151019_en.pdf)

### **For more information please contact:**

Ms WU Linlin

WHO China Office

E-mail: [wul@wpro.who.int](mailto:wul@wpro.who.int)

Office Tel: +86 10 6532 7191