

## **Pictorial health warnings on tobacco packs**

**Statement by Dr Nata Menabde, WHO Representative to India  
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India is party to the WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (FCTC). In line with its commitment to this global treaty, India implemented pictorial health warnings on all tobacco packs in 2009. However, India is not fully FCTC compliant as the tobacco pack warnings currently occupy only 40% of the principal display on one side of the pack.

In October 2014, in keeping with its commitment with WHO FCTC, India notified the implementation of larger tobacco pack warnings and announced this progressive step at the sixth session of the Conference of the Parties (COP 6) to the WHO FCTC in Moscow. Acknowledging India's leadership role in this context, WHO congratulated the government for taking this historic step to display pictorial health warnings, occupying 85% of the display area of the tobacco pack.

Nearly a million lives are lost due to tobacco-related diseases every year in India with a staggering economic cost of INR 104 500 crores attributable to tobacco use. Display of large pictorial warnings on tobacco products packs is a proven cost-effective mechanism to increase public awareness about the harmful effects of tobacco use and reducing tobacco consumption, especially among vulnerable youth.

Given the heavy public health and economic costs to the country due to tobacco consumption, WHO strongly supports early implementation of the October 2014 notification for increasing the size of tobacco pack warnings. We are confident that the Government of India will take an early considered decision in this regard as it prepares to host the next meeting of the governing body of the WHO FCTC - the seventh session of the Conference of Parties (COP 7) in 2016, that will bring together all 180 countries that are parties to the convention.

### **More information on WHO FCTC**

[http://www.who.int/fctc/about/WHO\\_FCTC\\_summary\\_January2015.pdf](http://www.who.int/fctc/about/WHO_FCTC_summary_January2015.pdf)