3.0: BACKGROUND:

The World Health Organisation (WHO) has stated that around 4 million persons die each year from tobacco related illnesses and by 2030 this death toll is expected to rise to 10 million. Against this background, agencies with responsibility for global health issues have been studying the patterns of tobacco use, in an effort to design anti-smoking programmes and to judge the success of programmes, which have already been implemented.

In an effort to collect much needed data on smoking habits among young people, the Global Youth Tobacco Survey (GYTS), has been initiated by the Centre for Disease Control (CDC) and the World Health Organisation (WHO). By the end of 2002, this ambitious project would have been implemented in 140 countries and has received support from CDC, the Canadian Public Health Agency, the National Cancer Institute (of the USA), UNICEF and the WHO.

In Barbados the National Council on Substance Abuse (NCSA) is the local executing agency and it collected data during May of 2002. The report to follow comments on data collected in this study and makes comparisons with data collected in the previous surveys of 1999.

4.0: METHODOLOGICAL SUMMARY:

In an effort to obtain information on smoking behaviour, the survey employed a two-stage cluster sample of students in form-levels 3, 4, and 5 of 19 out of the total of 33 (23 public and 10-registered government assisted private) secondary schools in Barbados. In total 1931 students were given self-administered questionnaires and 1654 (86%) of these students returned questionnaires, which were usable and all schools selected, agreed to participate.

Overall, the response rate for schools and students was calculated at 86%, and although this response rate is some 5 percentage points lower than the response rate of the 1999 study, the survey can nonetheless be considered representative of the population of students in secondary schools throughout Barbados. Currently there are 21,752 secondary school students in Barbados.

To minimise the possibility of bias in the survey from different patterns of non-participation/response by students and schools, the questionnaires were weighted according to a formula that accounted for the non-selection probability for schools and classrooms that were not chosen in the sample. This formula is reproduced in Annex II and accommodates school, class and student level non-response factors.