

**Interagency Committee on Smoking and Health
April 13, 2005**

“Addressing the Global Tobacco Epidemic”

Overview of Global Tobacco Use and Prevention — Presentation Notes

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Dr. Husten focused on four major themes:

- The global tobacco use epidemic is worsening;
- Effective interventions for addressing this epidemic exist and continue to emerge – we know what works;
- Partnerships are critical;
- The time to act is now.

Tobacco use continues to be the leading cause of death in the world, and as the epidemic continues to shift from the developed to the developing world, the majority of tobacco-related deaths are projected to occur in developing nations. Dr. Husten reviewed the four stages of the global tobacco epidemic, as outlined by Alan Lopez:

- Stage 1: smoking prevalence below 20% in men and minimal in women.
- Stage 2: smoking prevalence increases to above 50% in men, early increases in prevalence among women and rising death rates from lung cancer among men. Many countries in Asia, North Africa and Latin America fit this pattern.
- Stage 3: marked downturn in smoking prevalence among men, gradual decline in women, and continued increases in mortality from smoking. Many countries in Eastern and Southern Europe are at this stage.
- Stage 4: further declines in smoking prevalence in men and women. Deaths attributable to smoking among men peak at 30% to 35% of all deaths and then decline. Smoking attributable deaths among women increase to about 20% to 25% of all deaths. Countries in Northern and Western Europe, North America, and Australia are generally at this stage.

The challenge is to stop the increase in prevalence among both men and women in stage 1 countries, avoid the increase in smoking among women in

stage 2 countries, and to accelerate the decline in prevalence for countries in stages 3 and 4.

Dr. Husten continued by noting that worldwide, non-communicable diseases contribute to 60% of deaths and 43% of illnesses. According to 2003 WHO data, in high-income countries an estimated 15,000 youth become addicted to tobacco every day, and in middle and low-income countries, that figure is much higher, with an estimated 84,000 youth becoming addicted every day. Of particular concern is the growing percentage of girls and young women smoking worldwide, which can largely be attributed to the tobacco industry's efforts to target these populations.

Prevention is key to control tobacco consumption, and it is critical that we establish good surveillance systems for tobacco use and the disease outcomes related to that use. In addition, population based strategies are critical to achieving success, and economic, regulatory and comprehensive approaches are likely to have the greatest long-term impact. Global partnerships are also critical to further advance tobacco control interventions, help build regional and/or local capacity of countries, identify targets of opportunity, and identify areas where there is the greatest public health impact.

Dr. Husten concluded her remarks by emphasizing how important it is to act now, in partnership, to address the global epidemic of tobacco use and slow the impending burden of death and disease from tobacco consumption.

Following the conclusion of Dr. Husten's remarks, Admiral Williams introduced the next speaker.