

Accelerating global progress in tobacco control: Lessons from MPOWER and beyond

Tobacco use is one of the leading causes of preventable death and disease worldwide, claiming more than seven million lives each year. Yet the past two decades have shown that progress is possible when governments, civil society, academia, and international partners align behind evidence-based action. Since 2007, Bloomberg Philanthropies has made global tobacco control a central focus of its public health work.

Through the Bloomberg Initiative to Reduce Tobacco Use, Bloomberg Philanthropies has invested US \$1.6 billion in global tobacco control since 2005 and supported more than 110 countries where the tobacco burden is highest. Working closely with our partners, the initiative supports the advancement of comprehensive tobacco control laws while generating data and evidence to inform future policy.

Our work to reduce tobacco use focuses on the adoption of the World Health Organization's MPOWER package – a set of six proven interventions to reduce tobacco demand:

- **Monitoring** tobacco use and prevention policies;
- **Protecting** people from tobacco smoke with smoke-free air legislation;
- **Offering** help to quit tobacco use;
- **Warning** about the dangers of tobacco with pack labels and mass media;
- **Enforcing** bans on tobacco advertising, promotion, and sponsorship;
- **Raising** taxes on tobacco

When first launched in 2007, just over one billion people were protected by at least one MPOWER measure. Today, more than 6.1 billion people, or roughly three-quarters of the world's population, are covered by at least one best-practice policy, according to WHO's Report on the Global Tobacco Epidemic, 2025.

Comprehensive smoke-free laws, large graphic health warnings, excise tax reforms, and public education campaigns have contributed to global declines in smoking rates—from 22.3% in 2007 to 16.4% in 2023. These achievements demonstrate how targeted investments and sustained technical engagement can produce measurable health impact.

Türkiye provides a particularly significant example. It was the first nation to adopt all five MPOWER policies and remains one of only four countries—alongside Brazil, Mauritius, and the Netherlands—to have passed all five measures at best-practice level. Türkiye's early adoption of strong legislation and its visible public awareness campaigns have been instrumental in shaping global momentum. At the same time, enforcement has remained an ongoing challenge, underscoring the need for continuous monitoring, institutional capacity, and sustained political commitment to ensure that laws are effectively translated into real-world protection.

As we look to the future, the global tobacco control community faces emerging challenges: emerging nicotine products, industry interference, and barriers to accessing cessation support. The next phase of work must prioritize continued adoption of evidence-based policies, improved enforcement quality, data transparency, and equitable implementation, ensuring that every country can fully realize the benefits of MPOWER.

The experience of Türkiye, and of many other nations engaged in this global effort, reminds us that leadership, vigilance, and collaboration are indispensable. Together, we can build on the progress achieved and move closer to ending the tobacco epidemic for good.

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