

# THE TOBACCO ATLAS

SIXTH EDITION

## The Tobacco Atlas: The Epidemic in Latin America

**Policy implementation and innovation is reducing tobacco use – but the tobacco industry is aggressively targeting youth and countries with lax tobacco control laws.**

### Smoking Prevalence and Consumption

Despite significant achievements in reducing prevalence, population growth means there are still tens of millions of smokers across Latin America and the Caribbean:

- Tobacco use across the region declined from 21.4% in 1980 to 11.0% in 2015.
- The number of smokers declined from 77.3 million in 1980 to 69.1 million in 2015 (peaking at 85.4 million in 1993).
- Cigarette consumption declined from 459.6 billion to 401.2 billion cigarettes per year between 1980 and 2016. Most of this decline was in the 21st century, thanks to strong tobacco control policies.

### Youth Smoking

- To stem the future growth of the epidemic, countries need to prevent youth from initiating smoking.
- The industry uses additives like flavorings to hook youth.
- Increasing rates of youth smoking and similar or higher rates of smoking among youth than adults warn of an urgent need for stronger tobacco control policies.

Cigarette Use Prevalence	Men	Boys	Women	Girls
Colombia	11.4	11.9	4.1	9
El Salvador	15.9	11.4	2	8.2

Youth smoking rates increased from 13.5% in 1990 to 20.3% in 2015 in Suriname and from 7.6% in 1990 to 11.2% in 2015 in Guatemala.

### Deaths

- In 2016, tobacco caused 9.4% of all deaths in the region, down from 10.9% in 1995.
- Tobacco-related deaths increased from 247,000 in 1990 to 303,000 in 2016.
- Deaths have not yet peaked in countries where the epidemic is growing.



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## **Tobacco Cultivation**

- Tobacco is not profitable for most farmers, and harms farmers and the environment.
- Across the region, 556 372 hectares of land was dedicated to tobacco cultivation in 2014, down from a peak of 668 890 hectares in 2006.
- Brazil accounts for around 75% of the regional tobacco crop.
- Argentina, Colombia, Guatemala and Cuba combined account for 18.4%

## **Solutions and country highlights**

### **Increase tobacco taxes to raise prices and reduce affordability**

- Esta es la herramienta más efectiva para reducir el consumo de tabaco.
- Argentina y Chile cuentan con impuestos al tabaco al nivel más alto recomendado por la OMS.
- Colombia aprobó una legislación en 2016 para casi duplicar el precio de los cigarrillos en 4 años<sup>1</sup>.

### **Increase tobacco taxes to raise prices and reduce affordability**

- This is the single most effective tool to reduce tobacco use.
- Argentina and Chile tax tobacco at the highest level recommended by WHO.
- Colombia passed legislation in 2016 to nearly double the price of cigarettes over 4 years<sup>1</sup>.

### **Ban all forms of tobacco marketing to reduce new smokers, particularly youth**

- Panama's strictly enforced model policy is one of the most comprehensive in the world.

### **Implement Graphic Warning Labels on Packaging**

- Uruguay has been a global leader in adopting large, shocking graphic warning labels and limiting brand variants (e.g., red, blue, etc.) that mislead consumers.

### **Fight Industry Tactics on Illicit Trade**

- The industry misleads consumers, governments and the media by claiming that tobacco tax and price increases significantly increase illicit tobacco sales.
- In Chile, BAT claimed that illicit cigarettes represented 24% of the market. Independent research found just 11% of smokers possessed illicit cigarettes<sup>2</sup>.

### **Ban Additives**

- Flavored tobacco products are popular across the region, especially among youth.
- Banning additives, especially flavors, will help reduce smoking initiation.
- In Chile, nearly half of young people report using flavored tobacco products.
- The industry has vigorously opposed legislation to ban flavors in Brazil.



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## Improve Surveillance

- More frequent, detailed surveys help governments track the epidemic and identify groups most in need of assistance to curb tobacco use.

## Regional leaders in policy implementation reduce prevalence:

- Strong tobacco control policies have more than halved smoking prevalence in Brazil since 1980<sup>3</sup>:
  - » By 2050, these efforts will have reduced smoking-attributable deaths by 36%.
- Uruguay has reduced smoking prevalence from 40% in 2006 to 21.6% in 2017<sup>4</sup>.
  - » Youth smoking rates fell from 28.3% in 1990 to 15.4% in 2015.

1. [http://wecanprevent20.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/02/Prevent20\\_LaLiga\\_CaseStudy.pdf](http://wecanprevent20.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/02/Prevent20_LaLiga_CaseStudy.pdf)

2. <https://tobaccoatlas.org/2018/05/09/blowing-smoke-in-santiago-chile-the-myth-of-growing-illicit-trade/>

3. <https://www.scielosp.org/article/csp/2017.v33n12/e00207416/>

4. <https://nccd.cdc.gov/GTSSDataSurveyResources/Ancillary/DownloadAttachment.aspx?ID=3400>

