



NEW DATA SHOW MORE THAN A THIRD OF SMOKERS IN SOUTH AFRICA HAVE TRIED TO QUIT BUT HAVE BEEN UNSUCCESSFUL

On World No Tobacco Day, Foundation for a Smoke-Free World pledges innovative research aimed at giving world's 1 billion smokers additional help to quit or switch to less harmful products

May 31, 2018 (New York, New York) – Despite more than eight of 10 smokers in South Africa being aware that smoking is dangerous, 36 percent have been unsuccessful in their attempts to quit, new data released by Foundation for a Smoke-Free World showed. This makes it clear that new cessation and harm-reduction options are needed to help smokers live longer and healthier lives.

“The data show what we have anecdotally known for decades-- that many smokers have the desire to quit, but not the means to match it,” said **Derek Yach**, President of Foundation for a Smoke-Free World, who was deeply involved with the development of the world’s treaty on tobacco control, Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (FCTC), and served as the Executive Director for non-communicable diseases and mental health at the World Health Organization.

These new data look at the challenges in creating a one-size fits all approach to smoking cessation across the globe. It is clear: Smokers are sacrificing their physical and economic well-being to smoke, even though many of them have the desire to quit.

“In the two years since the Royal College of Physicians found that ‘harm reduction has huge potential to prevent death and disability from tobacco use,’ we continue to largely ignore the fact that many smokers do not want to quit, obtain pleasure from smoking and are largely unaware that nicotine is not what harms people. Harm-reduction advancements are literally a matter of life or death for these people,” added Yach.

The Foundation is taking a new approach to help smokers quit or reduce their risks. It is listening to the smokers and looking, through their eyes, at the challenges they face as they try to quit. It is committed to funding a research agenda that prioritizes new methods of harm reduction and cessation to fulfill the FCTC, while importantly responding to the behavioral and health needs of smokers who struggle to quit.

More findings in South Africa include:

- 87% of smokers report that they are “well informed” about the impact of smoking on one’s health.
- 41% of smokers said they are planning to quit.
- 55% of smokers who tried to quit said they would need assistance to do so.



- 40% of smokers incorrectly believe that nicotine causes lung cancer.

Even in South Africa, where cessation efforts have been partly successful, 6.3 million people continue to imperil their health by using combusted tobacco every day. South Africa took a step in the right direction by hosting the World Conference on Tobacco or Health for the first time March 2018, this momentum needs to be applied to the millions of smokers seeking better solutions at an affordable cost.

“As we mark the 30th World No Tobacco Day, I am proud that Foundation for a Smoke-Free World is standing with smokers to help them break their addiction. As evidenced by the situation in South Africa, there have been significant strides in smoking cessation, but there is still a tremendous amount of work to do,” continued Yach.

Foundation for a Smoke-Free World will fund innovative research to discover new cessation and harm-reduction tools that will save additional lives.

ABOUT FOUNDATION FOR A SMOKE-FREE WORLD

Foundation for a Smoke-Free World is an independent, non-profit organization created to accelerate global efforts to reduce health impacts and deaths from smoking, with the goal of ultimately eliminating smoking worldwide in this generation. The Foundation focuses on learning from existing research, identifying where gaps in knowledge exist, and funding new research to seek answers regarding the most effective smoking cessation and harm reduction strategies. It also works to ensure that vulnerable populations affected by this transformation, especially small tobacco farmers, are able to transition to sustainable livelihoods.

With one billion smokers in the world, and one billion people projected to die from smoking in this century, the Foundation’s task is urgent. The Foundation will fund research and support collaborative initiatives to accelerate progress in reducing harm and deaths from smoking worldwide.

ABOUT DR. DEREK YACH

Dr. Derek Yach, a global health expert and anti-smoking advocate for more than 30 years, is the President of Foundation for a Smoke-Free World. Throughout his career, he has supported and led smoking cessation research and policy development and has been a strong proponent of harm reduction policies, calling for a greater emphasis on harm reduction as early as 2005. He is also a passionate advocate of health promotion and disease prevention and is advancing his career’s work at Foundation for a Smoke-Free World.

Dr. Yach is a former World Health Organization (WHO) Cabinet Director and Executive Director for noncommunicable diseases and mental health where he was deeply involved with the development of the world’s treaty on tobacco control, the Framework Convention on Tobacco Control.



Contact:

Maria Alvarado-Behl

malvaradobehl@mercuryllc.com