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См. наш номер: На Ваш номер:

Date: 8 June 2020

Ms Tamar Gabunia
First Deputy Minister
National Counterpart
Ministry of Internally Displaced Persons from the
Occupied Territories, Labour, Health and Social
Affairs
144, Ak. Tsereteli Ave.
0119 Tbilisi
Georgia

Dear Ms Gabunia,

The eighth edition of the WHO report on the global tobacco epidemic

The harms of tobacco use are well established. Tobacco not only causes 8 million deaths from major noncommunicable diseases every year, but also is also a known risk factor for many respiratory infections. We have seen that the underlying diseases caused by smoking are key risk factors for death from COVID-19, and that smoking is associated with increased severity of disease and death in hospitalized patients. Many countries therefore have already taken steps to strengthen tobacco control as part of the fight against COVID-19. Better understanding of the tobacco epidemic and the impact of interventions being implemented to stop it can provide valuable information and support countries in creating a healthier environment for their populations.

While our vigilance and our work to minimize the harm from COVID-19 continue, we do not lose focus on the other main drivers of health, including tobacco use. The European Programme of Work 2020–2025 guides us towards addressing these drivers and ensuring healthy lives and well-being for all at all ages. More specifically, it calls for acceleration of progress in tackling tobacco use in the Region and supports increased cooperation between regional and global partners on data gathering and analysis for better country impact.

To support countries in the development of health policies and to evaluate their impact, WHO has produced since 2008 the *WHO report on the global tobacco epidemic*, which tracks the status of the tobacco epidemic and interventions to combat it. The [seventh edition](#) of the report was launched by WHO in July 2019. We have already started collection of data for the eighth edition, which is expected to be published in mid-2021.

The most important part of this report is the correct reflection of country data. To ensure the correctness of the data, we would like to provide Member States with an opportunity to share with us their most up-to-date policy information. Once the data collection and analysis phase is complete, we would share our analysis with ministries of health in the respective Member States for data validation and sign-off before the report is published. The Regional Office has been tasked to execute this global survey in accordance with the current WHO global policy on the use of surveys for data collection.

The person who helped us with the compilation of your country data for the previous edition of the report was Ms Lela Sturua, and this support was highly valuable to the outcome. We would appreciate if you could confirm that it would be appropriate for us to contact Ms Sturua again for the data collection for the next report. In case you would like to nominate a new person to work with us in this endeavour, kindly provide his/her name, email address and telephone number, and we will contact the person with more details concerning the data-collection process.

Ms Elizaveta Lebedeva, consultant, Tobacco Control, is responsible for day-to-day management of this activity under the overall supervision of Ms Kristina Mauer-Stender, programme manager, Tobacco Control. It would be highly appreciated if you could provide Ms Lebedeva with the required information by **30 June 2020** at email: lebedevae@who.int.

Should you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Thank you in advance for your valuable cooperation on this report, which is of high priority to the World Health Organization.

Yours very truly,



Dr Nino Berdzuli
Director
Division of Country Health Programmes

Copy for information to:

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