



WAGGGS POSITION STATEMENT

Smoking

The World Association of Girl Guides and Girl Scouts (WAGGGS) is taking a stand against smoking and is committed to tackling this global public health challenge. As the voice of girls and young women, WAGGGS has identified smoking and tobacco as priority issues on which to take a stand and speak out.

WAGGGS provides millions of girls and young women with non-formal education, giving them the opportunity to develop self-esteem, confidence and life skills. Working with Member Organizations in 144 countries, our vision is to build a better world through advocacy and action. We aim not only to speak out on behalf of girls and young women everywhere, but also to empower young women to speak out for themselves.

Smoking and Tobacco Globally

- Tobacco is the second major cause of death globally, responsible for the death of one in ten adults. There are an estimated 1.3 billion smokers around the world and more than 15 billion cigarettes are smoked every day.ⁱ The vast majority of these people, around 84 percent or one billion people, live in developing countries.
- Worldwide, one in five young people aged 13 to 15 smokes and more than 50 percent of young people who continue, will die as a result of smoking. Girls are more likely to be smokers than boys - 1 in 6 boys and 1 in 4 girls are regular smokers by the age of 15.ⁱⁱ The main reasons young people give for smoking include being sociable, appearing mature, showing their independence, peer pressure, slimness and enhancing their attractiveness.
- Use of smokeless tobacco products, (such as snus and snuff) is on the increase, especially for women and young people in cultures where it is not socially acceptable for them to smoke, and where milder-tasting 'starter' products are being marketed.ⁱⁱⁱ
- Second-hand smoke in the home is a major source of exposure for children – an estimated 700 million, or almost half of the world's children, are exposed to tobacco smoke.^{iv} Such passive smoking has the strongest impact on the youngest children and can be linked to a permanently increased risk of asthma and wheezing. Older children who are exposed are more likely to have poor lung function and to take time off school.^v
- Experts agree that the only safe way to protect non-smokers from exposure to cigarette smoke is to eliminate this health hazard from public places, workplaces and the home.
- Tobacco products remain largely unregulated. In many countries, the basic rules that apply to all other consumer goods, to ensure that their safety has been tested and that ingredients or contents are disclosed, do not apply to tobacco products.
- The WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (FCTC), ratified in February 2005, is a legally-binding international treaty. As the world's first public health treaty, it is supported by 125 countries and is committed to the creation of regulatory guidelines for tobacco products.

i WHO 2006

ii Wired for Health

iii A Global Youth Tobacco Survey (WHO and Centres for Disease Control and Prevention)

iv ASH April 2006

v US National Centre for Environmental Health, Atlanta, 2001



girls worldwide say

“ban smoking in public places”

World Association of Girl Guides and Girl Scouts
Association mondiale des Guides et des Eclaireuses
Asociación Mundial de las Guías Scouts

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WAGGGS calls on the international community and national governments to reduce the number of people using tobacco by:

- **Ensuring** enforcement of policies and efforts to limit underage access to tobacco
- **Providing** comprehensive public education and awareness campaigns to help smokers quit, together with prevention programmes
- **Imposing** restrictions on tobacco advertising, sponsorship and promotion
- **Adopting** and implementing measures on the packaging and labelling of tobacco products, such as health warnings and messages on tobacco products
- **Taking** measures to provide protection from exposure to second-hand smoke, which especially poses health risks for children
- **Implementing** effective measures against the illicit trade, manufacturing and counterfeiting of tobacco products
- **Strengthening** efforts to regulate the growing range of non-cigarette tobacco products
- **Supporting** and fully implementing the Framework Convention on Tobacco Control to protect present and future generations from the devastating health, social, environmental and economic consequences of tobacco consumption and exposure to tobacco smoke

WAGGGS urges Member Organizations to:

- **Provide** Girl Guides and Girl Scouts with opportunities to make a positive contribution to the development and management of local and national projects on youth smoking prevention
- **Lobby** for effective regulation and control measures for all tobacco products and use advocacy opportunities to raise awareness (including ‘World No Tobacco Day’ on May 31 each year)
- **Support** public education efforts on the harm of smoking and tobacco
- **Actively encourage** young people to give up or avoid smoking

How WAGGGS is addressing smoking and tobacco use:

- In a recent worldwide survey, WAGGGS found that 83 per cent of Girl Guides and Girl Scouts who responded believe that smoking should be banned in all public places.
- Member Organizations are committed to tackling this public health challenge.

“It is now, more than ever, critical that we ban exploitative marketing practices, regulate safe and equitable production practices, and protect women from exposure to second-hand smoke. It is equally important to push for equality and enhanced women’s rights — living free of tobacco is one of those.”

Margaretha Haglund, President of the International Network of Women Against Tobacco