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BRAZIL STUDY FINDS THAT A STRONGER TOBACCO MARKETING BAN IS NEEDED TO CURB TOBACCO INDUSTRY EFFORTS TO ATTRACT NEW SMOKERS

* Survey reveals huge support from Brazilians for further legislation to restrict the marketing activities of the tobacco industry *

* A comprehensive TAPS bans alone would reduce smoking prevalence in Brazil by 2-7 percent by 2050 and help protect youth*

(Tuesday May 28th, 2013, Brasilia, Brazil and Waterloo, Ontario, Canada): The International Tobacco Control Policy Evaluation Project (the ITC Project) today released the results of a four-year study (the ITC Brazil Survey) of the effectiveness of bans on tobacco advertising, promotion and sponsorship (TAPS) in Brazil. The release of the ITC Brazil Report on TAPS (the Report) is part of Brazil's events for World No Tobacco Day, which this year is focused on TAPS. The Report finds that incomplete and poorly enforced bans on TAPS mean that nearly a quarter of Brazilians still see marketing messages from tobacco companies at Point-of-Sale (PoS) displays, through corporate social responsibility initiatives run by the industry, on tobacco product packaging and in TV shows and films. Almost half of smokers (49 percent) and non-smokers (45.4 percent) agree that tobacco companies should be required to sell cigarettes in packs with only the brand name and health warnings, but without colorful designs on the rest of the pack.

Continued tobacco industry marketing directed towards youth is markedly noticeable. In 2012-2013, the ITC Brazil Survey found that 22.6 percent of smokers and 24.9 percent of non-smokers recalled seeing things that promoted smoking ‘often’ or ‘very often’. This increased to over 27 percent of smokers and non-smokers aged from 18-24 years old. Over a quarter of smokers from lower educational backgrounds and a third of non-smokers from lower educational backgrounds noticed things that promote smoking ‘often’ or ‘very often’. This compares with around 21 percent of smokers and non-smokers from moderate educational backgrounds. Similarly, over 30 percent of smokers with lower incomes and 25 percent of non-smokers with lower incomes noticed things that promote smoking ‘often’ or ‘very often’, compared with just 17.2 percent of smokers with high incomes and 14.7 percent of non-smokers with high incomes. Over 65 percent of smokers and 83 percent of non-smokers agree that smoking in films and TV programs encourages people to smoke.

In many ways, Brazil has been at the forefront of tobacco control. It first passed legislation to restrict tobacco advertising in 1988. It was the first country to ban misleading descriptors like “mild” and “light” in 2001 and in the same year it became the second country to adopt pictorial warnings on cigarette packs. Brazil ratified the Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (FCTC) – the world’s
first public health treaty - in 2005. However, gaps remain in Brazil’s implementation of the FCTC Guidelines; e.g. the protocols to enforce a 2011 ban on tobacco industry advertising at PoS have not yet been agreed and the ensuing lack of enforcement has enabled the tobacco industry to continue developing its presence at PoS.

PoS advertising has a particular impact on youth. A 2008 survey of 12-16 year-olds commissioned by ACTbr found that 63 percent said that seeing cigarette products displayed at PoS might make them feel like smoking a cigarette. An ACTbr study in 2010 in Sao Paulo found that the majority of retail outlets selling cigarettes were found within 1 kilometer of an elementary school or high school. In 83 percent of these establishments, cigarettes were displayed close to candy products and the visibility of tobacco displays to children was found to be higher in stores near schools than those further away from schools. A 2011 ACTbr study found that 78 percent of Brazilians agree that shops should be banned from exposing cigarettes for sale where they could be seen by children and youth. Similarly, the ITC Brazil Survey found that 83 percent of smokers and 89 percent of non-smokers agree that tobacco products should be more tightly regulated.

Dr. Marcos Moraes, President of Brazil Cancer Foundation (Fundação do Câncer), commented: “We know that 15 percent of male deaths and 6 percent of female deaths in Brazil are related to tobacco use. To replace those who die because of its deadly product, the tobacco industry must recruit new smokers and this report makes it clear that the incomplete ban on TAPS is helping the industry specifically target youth. If we want to try to prevent youth from initiating smoking, if we want to reduce the high rate of mortality and morbidity associated with tobacco, then we must be more effective in reducing the industry’s ability to promote itself in a favorable way. We must move further to prohibit the exposure of cigarette packs in retail outlets and implement plain packaging, following the positive example of Australia.”

Dr. Antonio Santini, Director of the Brazilian National Cancer Institute (INCa) and Vice-President of the National Commission for the Implementation of the Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (Comissão Nacional para Implementação da Convenção-Quadro para o Controle do Tabaco (Conicq)), added: “For several years, Brazil was at the forefront of tobacco control both in Latin America and across the world. Others followed our example in introducing restrictions on tobacco advertising, banning misleading descriptors like ‘mild’ and ‘light’, and implementing highly graphic, disturbing warning images on cigarette packs. Yet our piecemeal approach to banning the tobacco industry from advertising and promoting itself – whether through Point-of-Sale or sponsorship or supposed Corporate Social Responsibility initiatives – has given tobacco companies loopholes through which they can continue to reach smokers and non-smokers – and particularly youth. Surveys show that the people of Brazil want to protect their children and youth from initiating smoking. We must respond to that wish by properly enforcing the existing laws and introducing new regulations to block the other gaps in our implementation of the FCTC.”

Professor Geoffrey T. Fong of the University of Waterloo in Canada, Chief Principal Investigator of the ITC Project, the international research collaboration that is evaluating the impact of Framework Convention on Tobacco Control policies in 22 countries, said: “Brazil is an excellent example of how the tobacco industry seeks to overcome tobacco control regulations by lobbying governments to disrupt effective enforcement and by investing heavily in indirect marketing tactics. It seeks to normalize tobacco, making cigarettes seem like any other consumer product - even candy products, to encourage youth to initiate smoking. Similarly, the industry has been very creative in using colors, graphics and brand names to overcome the ban on descriptors on cigarette packaging and has invested in lit display units to attract attention at Point-of-Sale. We recommend that Brazil implement a full Point-of-Sale display ban, plain cigarette packaging, a ban on brand descriptors including words and numbers, and unpaid placement of tobacco products in TV, films and other media. Our survey findings indicate that there is strong support among smokers and non-smokers for the Brazilian government’s continued active role in tobacco control to close the gaps that currently exist. In
addition, we would encourage the full enforcement of existing TAPS bans, including sponsorship, so Brazil fulfills its obligations with regard to Articles 11 and 13 of the Framework Convention on Tobacco Control."

The findings are based upon two waves of the ITC Brazil Survey, polling representative samples of smokers and non-smokers in three major cities between 2009 and 2013. The ITC Brazil Report (the Report) also includes research from the Tobacco Control Alliance of Brazil (ACTbr) and GERP Research Strategy, conducted between 2008 and 2011. The ITC Brazil Report on Tobacco Advertising, Promotion and Sponsorship (2013) is available at the ITC project website: www.itcproject.org from 17:00 Brasilia Time/ 16:00 Eastern Daylight Time on May 28, 2013.


Notes for editors:
About The ITC Brazil Survey
The ITC Project is an international comparative study that examines the effects of tobacco control policy measures in 22 countries by following large cohorts of smokers over time in each country. The ITC Brazil Survey is conducted by ITC Brazil Project researchers centered at the University of Waterloo, Canada and coordinated in Brazil by the National Cancer Institute of Brazil (INCa), in collaboration with the National Secretariat for Drug Policy and Brazilian Cancer Foundation. The Survey was conducted in two Waves; Wave 1 commenced in April 2009 and Wave 2 in October 2012. The Survey was conducted among a representative random sample of adult (aged 18 years and older) smokers and non-smokers residing in Rio de Janeiro, São Paulo, and Porto Alegre. All interviews were conducted by the Brazilian survey firm Expertise using computer assisted telephone interviews (CATI). The sample was selected using systematic sampling from extensive electronic phone number directories of the three cities. In addition, various studies were commissioned by Tobacco Control Alliance, Brazil (ACTbr) and Gerp Research Strategy between 2008 and 2011.

The main objectives of the ITC Brazil Survey are to:
1) evaluate the impact of tobacco control policies in Brazil
2) understand the determinants of tobacco use behavior
3) compare the evidence from Brazil against that from other ITC Project countries.

About The ITC Project
The International Tobacco Control Policy Evaluation Project (the ITC Project) is an international research collaboration involving 100 tobacco control researchers and experts from 22 countries (Canada, United States, United Kingdom, Australia, Ireland, Thailand, Malaysia, China, Republic of Korea, New Zealand, Mexico, Uruguay, France, Germany, The Netherlands, Brazil, Mauritius, Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Kenya, and Zambia) who have come together to conduct research to evaluate the impact of tobacco control policies of the WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (FCTC), the world's first health treaty. These policies include more prominent warning labels (including graphic images), comprehensive smoke-free laws, restrictions or bans on tobacco advertising, promotion, and sponsorship, higher taxes on tobacco products, removal of potentially deceptive labelling (e.g., "light" and "mild") and packaging design that lead consumers to the misperception that certain brands may be less harmful), promotion of cessation, education of public on the harms of tobacco, reduction of illicit trade, reduction of youth access, and product regulation. In each country, the ITC Project team conducts longitudinal cohort surveys and capitalizes on natural experiments to evaluate the impact of these policies over time. ITC Surveys contain over 150 measures of tobacco policy impact and have been conducted in countries inhabited by over 50% of the world's population, 60% of the world's smokers, and 70% of the world's tobacco users. Reports can be downloaded at www.itcproject.org

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