



McCabe Centre
FOR LAW & CANCER



Warning Labels and Plain Packaging in the Tobacco Context

Why packaging and labelling?

- Packs are ‘mini-billboards’
- Cheapest form of advertising for the industry
- A pack-a-day smoker looks at a pack 7300 times a year (20 cigarettes x 365 days)



Images: lovelypackage.com (above)
New York Daily News (below)



Misleading packaging and labelling

- Parties must ensure that packaging and labelling do not promote a tobacco product by any means that are
 - false, misleading, or
 - likely to create an erroneous impression about its characteristics, health effects, hazards, and emissions,
 - including any term, descriptor, trademark, figurative or any other sign that directly or indirectly creates the false impression that a particular tobacco product is less harmful, e.g. 'low tar,' 'light,' 'ultra-light' or 'mild'

Health Warnings

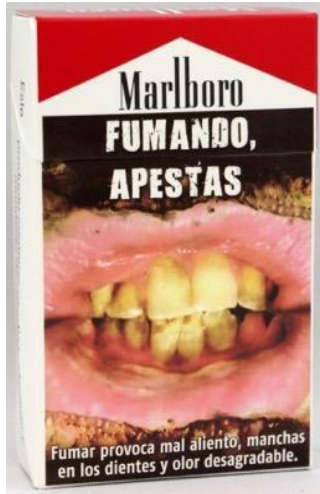
- Tobacco consumers look at the pack whenever they take out a cigarette or product
- Warnings use this behaviour for health education instead of marketing
- Cost of implementation borne by industry



Image: Mauritius, Ministry of Health and Quality of Life, WHO FCTC Health Warnings Database

Health Warnings

– Large, clear, visible and legible



Images: Canadian Cancer Society

Health Warnings

– Pictures

- More effective than text-only warnings
- More noticeable
- Emotional impact
- More easily understood
- Effective in low literacy populations



Image: WHO Health Warnings database

Health Warnings

- In all principal languages of the country
- Address a range of issues, e.g. messages tailored to gender, age, or particular groups
- Clear, concise and culturally appropriate
- Address gender-specific risks



Images: Canadian Cancer Society

Health Warnings

- Size
 - Should be 50+%, but no less than 30% of the principal display areas
 - Larger is better – effectiveness increases with size
- Placement and location
 - All principal display areas
 - At the top



Image: Canadian Cancer Society

Health Warnings

– Rotation – change warnings from time to time



Images: WHO Health Warnings Database / Ministry of Public Health, Uruguay

Plain or Standardized Packaging

–WHO FCTC Article 11 Guidelines defines plain packaging as:

“measures to restrict or prohibit the use of logos, colours, brand images or promotional information on packaging other than brand names and product names displayed in a standard colour and font style”

Plain or Standardized Packaging

- WHO FCTC Article 13 Guidelines describe plain packaging as:
 - “black and white or two contrasting colours, as prescribed by national authorities;
 - nothing other than a brand name, a product name and/or manufacturer’s name, contact details and the quantity of product in the packaging, without any logos or other features apart from health warnings, tax stamps and other government-mandated information or markings;
 - prescribed font style and size; and
 - standardized shape, size and materials.
 - There should be no advertising or promotion inside or attached to the package or on individual cigarettes or other tobacco products.”

Why Implement Plain or Standardized Packaging?

- Rationale
 - Increasing the noticeability and effectiveness of health warnings
 - Addressing misleading packaging and labelling
 - Eliminating tobacco packaging as a form of advertising and promotion
 - Reducing the attractiveness of tobacco products
- In order to contribute to the broader goal of protecting health by reducing demand for tobacco products



Why Implement Plain or Standardized Packaging?



- Recommended under the FCTC guidelines
- One of the WHO ‘best buys’ for NCDs
- Australia was the first country to adopt plain packaging
- 22 countries and counting have now adopted plain packaging

Image: Plain Packaging Tobacco Products:
Evidence, Design and Implementation (WHO, 2016)

Resources on Tobacco Plain Packaging



Available at: <https://www.who.int/publications/i/item/9789240051607>

Questions:

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