Student Resources in Context Tutorial

Full-text magazines, newspapers, reference, overviews, critical essays, primary sources, and multimedia on a broad range of topics, people, places, and events.

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The World Health Organization Takes on the Tobacco Industry

The Conflict

Beginning in 1999 the World Health Organization undertook a series of meetings designed to create a Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (FCTC). Envisioned as a comprehensive, international, multilateral effort to reduce smoking rates, abate smoking-related illnesses, and regulate the trade, sale, and marketing of tobacco products, the FCTC marked the first truly global public health effort against tobacco consumption.

Economic

- Tobacco companies have long argued that undue restrictions on the sale and trade of tobacco interfere with their ability to sell and market their product to consumers, an economic loss that is borne by their shareholders. The effort to reduce smoking also limits the revenue that national governments collect as taxes on tobacco products. In countries where the tobacco sector is state-owned, as in China, the potential economic loss from reduced tobacco consumption is considerable.

Social

- Anti-smoking efforts in more affluent, industrialized nations have been in place for a generation, and smoking rates have declined accordingly. Smoking rates in many less-developed nations, however, are just beginning to take off as consumers have more to spend on tobacco products. Because of these trends, the WHO predicts that smoking-related illnesses, finally declining in Western countries, will be a major source of mortality in coming decades unless aggressive anti-smoking efforts are put into place on an international basis.

Political

- Although the WHO has issued numerous anti-smoking public health resolutions in past decades, the lack of
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