

## WHO urges govt to raise tax to curb smoking

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**Singapore:** With a view to improve public health and reduce smoking and consumption of tobacco products, the World Health Organization has urged member nations to increase taxes on cigarettes and other tobacco products.

The health agency further said that the funds thus generated, should be used for strengthening the healthcare sector of the country and to improve services. As per WHO estimates one person dies from tobacco-related disease every six seconds or so, equivalent to about 6 million people a year.

The number is forecast to rise to more than 8 million people a year by 2030 unless strong measures are taken to control-what it calls a "tobacco epidemic". "Raising taxes on tobacco products is one of the most effective-and cost-effective-ways to reduce consumption of products that kill, while also generating substantial revenue," WHO director-general Ms Margaret Chan said in the report.

She urged all governments to look at the evidence and "adopt one of the best win-win policy options available for health". WHO also pointed out that since 2008, when 22 countries had tobacco tax that accounted for more than 75 percent of the price of a packet of cigarettes, only 11 more countries have taken action to increase taxes to appropriate levels.

In a report entitled "The Global Tobacco Epidemic 2015", the United Nations (UN) health agency recommends that at least 75 percent of the price of a pack of cigarettes should be tax.