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World No Tobacco Day today Anti-Tobacco Laws remain unimplemented

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ISLAMABAD—Today, people around the globe will mark World No Tobacco Day (31 May) with a hope to have a tobacco free society. This hope remains more distant for Pakistanis because almost a decade has passed since the 'Prohibition of Smoking and Protection of Non-smokers Health Ordinance 2002' was promulgated and six years since WHO 'Framework Convention on Tobacco Control' (FCTC) was ratified, the enforcements of these legal frameworks remain a challenge for the government.

This is the reason that this year's World No Tobacco Day theme - "the World Health Organization Framework Conven-

tion on Tobacco Control (WHO FCTC)" turn out to be most relevant for Pakistan.

Talking to *Pakistan Observer*, several anti-tobacco campaigners have complained that Pakistan has neither worked out a solid program to minimize use of tobacco in Pakistan nor a concerted effort was made to compile a regular data on tobacco hazards.

Dr. Arif Azad, a health campaigner said that "Pakistan has been too slow to implement the anti-tobacco laws". He urged that educational institute should be targeted to launch anti-tobacco campaigns.

Dr. Samia K. Babar, a health expert told this scribe that "tobacco smoking is 90% cause of

fatal lung disease including Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary (Lung) Disease (COPD) which has no cure." By the year 2020, COPD is predicted to become the third leading cause of death worldwide, she added.

Around 100,000 deaths occur from tobacco use annually in Pakistan and over half of the adult population is addicted to some form or the other, while 1200 Pakistani children between ages 6 and 15 begin smoking every day.

Health experts point out that the most terrible reality is that, the harmful effects of smoking do not end with the smoker but even brief exposure to nonsmokers can be equally dangerous.