

135 states agree anti-tobacco trafficking deal: WHO

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Negotiators from 135 nations sealed Wednesday a global deal to stem the illegal tobacco trade that could net governments \$50 billion more annually in tax revenues, the World Health Organisation said.

"[Illicit trade](#) in tobacco is one of the most dangerous trades at the moment, it's a way of getting cheap, illegal cigarettes into the hands of young people, poor people, people who are in a vulnerable position," said Ian Walton-George, who chaired the negotiations.

The protocol, to be put to a ministerial meeting in November in Seoul for adoption, would not only have a health impact, but could also help governments recover between \$40 and \$50 billion in duties lost in smuggling.

It would require signatory states to establish a tracking mechanism that could help detect and investigate any illegal trade in [tobacco products](#).

Companies involved in the trade, including agents, suppliers and [tobacco manufacturers](#), would have to be licensed under the deal.

Manufacturers would also have to carry out checks on their customers to ensure that they are genuine or if they have associations with criminal organisations.

The products themselves would also have identification markings showing where they were produced, when they were produced and who

were their first customers.

"If those products with identification markings fall out of the legal chain, then we can check who produced them, who is the first customer," said Walton-George.

"This would make sure that if there are bad apples in the chain, then we can take action to stop that leakage."

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