

## FREE TRADE, TOBACCO AND PUBLIC HEALTH

**Three Objectives:** (What will participants be able to do at the end of the session? What will they learn?)

- Whether global free trade in tobacco can be compatible with protecting public health
- What current US trade policy is vis-à-vis tobacco.
- Whether there needs to be a public health exception in global trade agreements.

**Description:** Conventional economic theory holds that liberalized trade increases competition, lowers prices and ultimately increases consumption of a products. This should hold true for tobacco as it is does for any other product. Therefore countries advocacy of free trade and liberalized markets may conflict with their desire to decrease tobacco consumption both nationally and internationally. Can these two goals be reconciled? Should there be exceptions in regional and global trade agreements for tobacco and other public health-related issues? What steps can governments take to combat the tobacco epidemic that will not conflict with free trade agreements? These are not simply academic questions. Following pressure from the United States to open up their markets to tobacco imports, a number of Asian countries saw smoking rates soar in the 1980s. Currently, China is under pressure to further open up its market to foreign tobacco companies as one of the conditions of its joining the World Trade Organization. Panelists would discuss and debate these questions using real-world examples.

Format: Panel

If format is "Other," please describe:

Co-moderators: Introductions 10 Minutes

Panelists/Presenters (limit—approx,4):

- 1) Rob Weissman-15 Minutes
- 2) Cynthia Callard-15 Minutes
- 3) Hatai Chitanondh-15 Minutes

4) Frank Chaloupka -15 Minutes  
Question and Discussion-35 Minutes