

Report of the United Nations Ad Hoc Interagency Task Force on Tobacco Control, in accordance with decision FCTC/COP1(13)

1. In accordance with decision FCTC/COP1(13), the Conference of the Parties to the WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control decided “to invite the United Nations Ad Hoc Interagency Task Force on Tobacco Control to provide to the Conference of the Parties, at its second session, a report on their activities and possible relevance to increasing accessibility to funding for tobacco control, and an outline of their work in intensifying the United Nations response to tobacco control”. The report of the Task Force is attached at Annex to this document.

ANNEX

Report of the United Nations Ad Hoc Interagency Task Force on Tobacco Control to the Conference of the Parties to the WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control

ORIGINS OF THE AD HOC INTERAGENCY TASK FORCE ON TOBACCO CONTROL AND UPDATE ON ITS MECHANISMS AND ACTIVITIES

1. In its resolution 1993/79 of 30 July 1993, the United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) requested the Secretary-General to establish, under the auspices of the World Health Organization (WHO) and within existing resources, a focal point among existing institutions of the United Nations system on the subject of multisectoral collaboration on the economic and social aspects of tobacco production and consumption, taking into particular account the serious health consequences of tobacco use. The United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) was given this responsibility. Between 1993 and 1998, the focal point submitted three reports to the Secretary-General at the substantive sessions of 1994, 1995 and 1997 of the Council (E/1994/83, E/1995/67 and Add.1, and E/1997/62).

2. In 1999, the Secretary-General agreed to the designation of an Ad Hoc Interagency Task Force on Tobacco Control under the leadership of WHO, thereby replacing the focal point arrangement located at UNCTAD. This decision was taken in order to intensify a joint United Nations response and to strengthen global support for tobacco control. The establishment of the Task Force was endorsed by the Organizational Committee of the Administrative Committee on Coordination at its first regular session of 1999, held in Geneva from 12 to 13 April 1999 (see ACC/1999/2, sect. VII). Since its inception, the Task Force has met six times.

3. In accordance with resolution 1999/56 adopted by ECOSOC at its substantive session of July 1999 endorsing the establishment of the Task Force under WHO leadership, the Secretary-General reported to the Council at its substantive session of 2000 (E/2000/21) on progress made by the Task Force in the implementation of multisectoral collaboration on tobacco or health. Three additional reports were presented at ECOSOC's substantive sessions of 2002, 2004 and 2006. The last of these highlighted the importance of interagency collaboration for the establishment of smoke-free workplaces. As a result, a resolution was adopted by ECOSOC in July 2006, calling for smoke-free United Nations premises.¹

4. The members of the Task Force are the Department of Economic and Social Affairs of the United Nations Secretariat; the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO); the International Civil Aviation Organization; the International Labour Organization (ILO); the International Monetary Fund (IMF); the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF); UNCTAD; the United Nations Development Fund for Women; the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP); the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO); the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP); the United Nations Fund for International Partnerships (UNFIP); the United Nations International Drug Control Programme; the United Nations Population

¹ ECOSOC resolution 2006/4.

Fund (UNFPA); the World Bank; the World Customs Organization (WCO); WHO; the World Intellectual Property Organization; and the World Trade Organization.

PROJECTS AND ACHIEVEMENTS UNDER THE UMBRELLA OF THE UNITED NATIONS AD HOC INTERAGENCY TASK FORCE ON TOBACCO CONTROL

5. Below is a summary of projects and achievements that were made under the umbrella of the Task Force.

6. In the area of research, FAO, in collaboration with the World Bank and WHO, published in 2003 two important documents in the area of tobacco supply. The first publication, *Projections of tobacco production, consumption and trade to the year 2010*, is directed at providing a view of likely developments in the world tobacco economy by 2010. It also contains a review of developments in the global patterns of production, consumption and trade since 1970. The second publication, *Issues in the global tobacco economy*, provides a closer look at the tobacco economies of a few selected countries in which tobacco plays an economically important role.

7. The partnership between the World Bank and WHO's Tobacco Free Initiative has led to the publication of the renowned Health, Nutrition and Population Discussion Papers on the Economics of Tobacco Control. To date, more than 30 studies have been undertaken and published in this series, covering issues as diverse as taxation and government revenue, tobacco employment, privatization, youth consumption, poverty and regressivity of taxes and alternatives to tobacco growing.

8. ILO, in collaboration with the World Bank and WHO, undertook research on the employment effects of tobacco control in developing countries. From this collaboration, the ILO Sectoral Activities Programme published two working papers in 2003: a research study entitled *Making ends meet: bidi workers in India today* and *The world tobacco industry: trends and prospects*.

9. After the presentation of the Secretary-General's report to ECOSOC on the activities of the Task Force in 2004, the Council's Member States adopted a resolution (2004/62) on tobacco control, stressing, among other issues, the importance of tobacco control for efforts towards poverty alleviation.

THE WHO FRAMEWORK CONVENTION ON TOBACCO CONTROL AND AREAS OF POSSIBLE COLLABORATION WITH DIFFERENT INTERGOVERNMENTAL AGENCIES

10. The implementation of comprehensive tobacco control policies at the country level, as stipulated in the WHO Framework Convention, is a priority. In particular, the recent decisions of the Conference of the Parties require, in many areas, the expertise of the member agencies of the Task Force in order to help advance the implementation of the Convention. The principal areas of possible technical collaboration with WHO, as highlighted by the Task Force and in line with the provisions of the Convention, are as follows:

- (a) *Employment in the tobacco growing and manufacturing sectors*: Technical collaboration among WHO, FAO and ILO would be beneficial on issues relevant to support for economically viable alternative activities for those employed in the tobacco sector who could be affected in the long term by a reduction in tobacco demand.

- (b) *Smoke-free policies in the United Nations system*: ILO has considerable experience in the promotion of healthy workplaces and is providing support for employers and employees to achieve smoke-free workplaces; its input could be valuable on this issue.
- (c) *Children and youth*: Interagency collaboration, specifically with UNICEF and UNFPA, in order to raise the profile of tobacco control with a special emphasis on children and young people would be valuable.
- (d) *Taxation of tobacco products*: Given their economic expertise and mandate, the World Bank and IMF could be key collaborators in helping countries to establish and implement effective evidence-based policies to reduce tobacco use.
- (e) *Illicit trade in tobacco products*: The experience and work of WCO could be very constructive in this area.
- (f) *Tobacco and poverty*: Tobacco use has an adverse effect on poverty, particularly in low-income developing countries. In light of the United Nations Millennium Development Goals, input from UNDP at the country level to reduce tobacco use and its burden on the poor could advance the fight against poverty.
- (g) *Education, communication, training and public awareness*: Close collaboration between WHO and UNESCO at the country level would facilitate access to relevant educational and public-awareness programmes.
- (h) *Protection of the environment*: The protection of the environment and the health of persons in relation to the environment in respect of tobacco cultivation and manufacture could be enhanced at the country level by collaboration between WHO and UNEP.
- (i) *Trade and investment issues*: The implications for tobacco control of global trade liberalization have already been studied by WHO in collaboration with the World Trade Organization and the World Bank and need to be examined further.

AREAS OF POSSIBLE COLLABORATION ON SPECIFIC PROJECTS

Protocol on illicit trade in tobacco products

11. At its first session in February 2006, the Conference of the Parties to the WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control recognized that international collaboration for the control of illicit trade is an important area of tobacco control and decided to convene an expert group to prepare a template for a protocol on illicit trade on the basis of Article 15 of the WHO Framework Convention, taking into account the work of entities competent in the matter (decision FCTC/COP1(16)). Article 15 of the Convention states that the Parties recognize that the elimination of all forms of illicit trade in tobacco products, including smuggling, illicit manufacturing and counterfeiting, and the development and implementation of related national law, in addition to subregional, regional and global agreements, are essential components of tobacco control. The technical input of specialized agencies, such as WCO and the European Anti-Fraud Office of the European Union, based on their work and experience in the area of smuggling, could be of great significance during the development of the protocol.

World Customs Organization

12. WCO, through its central, regional and national offices collects information (such as number of seizures and quantities seized around the globe) for its database. Among its main activities, WCO assists its member countries in their daily risk assessments, intelligence work and training, and also prepares analytical reports on smuggling of different products, including tobacco. In 2005, it published customs and tobacco reports intended for officials only. The following is a summary of certain data from the reports. Between 2003 and 2004, the number of seizures of smuggled tobacco products increased mainly in Eastern Europe, Asia and the Pacific, whereas it decreased in Western Europe and South America. In addition, the quantities seized increased in Eastern Europe, Asia and the Pacific and slightly in Western Europe, but decreased in the other regions of the world. Globally, seizures of smoking tobacco increased fourfold between 2003 and 2004, while seizures of counterfeit cigarettes almost doubled between 2002 and 2004. Knowledge and surveillance of seized smuggled tobacco products can provide important insight for policymakers working in fighting the illicit trade in tobacco products.

European Anti-Fraud Office

13. The role of the European Anti-Fraud Office is to protect the financial interests of the European Union against all fraud and irregularities affecting the revenue and expenditure of its budget. The smuggling of both genuine and counterfeit cigarettes into the European Union has led to significant budgetary losses for both the Union and its Member States. In order to fight against such problems, the European Commission and certain Member States signed an anti-contraband and anti-counterfeit agreement with Philip Morris International, a comprehensive anti-smuggling and anti-money-laundering system covering Philip Morris products *before* and *after* distribution. It requires: (a) supplemental payments of up to 500% of duties and taxes due on smuggled genuine Philip Morris cigarettes seized in the future; (b) compliance protocols to protect against smuggling and money-laundering; and (c) tracking and tracing protocols to assist law-enforcement authorities to prevent future smuggling. Previously, WHO collaborated with the European Anti-Fraud Office to prepare a paper for the first session of the Conference of the Parties describing the possibility of developing a protocol to establish an international tracking and tracing regime for cigarettes, which would fall under Article 15 of the Convention on illicit trade in tobacco products.

Guidelines on protection from exposure to tobacco smoke

14. In accordance with decision FCTC/COP1(15) of the first session of the Conference of the Parties regarding the elaboration of guidelines for implementation of the WHO Framework Convention, a working group was formed to present draft guidelines to the second session of the Conference of the Parties, if possible, or a progress report, on Article 8 of the Convention (*Protection from exposure to tobacco smoke*).

15. Protecting workers' health is one of the arguments that is able to mobilize politicians to pass laws on smoking bans. At the same time, such laws would protect the health of large sections of the population and reduce public health-care costs. ILO, as the United Nations agency responsible for the world of work, is a natural home for international workplace action on smoking.

16. ILO has established structures and procedures for creating international legal documents relating to labour issues. There is increasing awareness of the costs of second-hand smoke, in addition to the fact that some unions are beginning to spearhead developments in the area. ILO's involvement in the development and finalization of the guidelines for Article 8 should be instrumental.

Ad hoc study group on alternative crops to tobacco

17. In accordance with decision FCTC/COP1(17) of the first session of the Conference of the Parties to establish an ad hoc study group on alternative crops open to interested Parties to the Convention, a first meeting was held from 27 to 28 February 2007 in Brasilia, to summarize the uptake of existing economically viable alternatives for tobacco growers and to provide recommendations to the second session of the Conference of the Parties on the way forward for the work on the issue of alternatives to tobacco growing.

18. During the discussion by the participants at the meeting, and as highlighted by decision FCTC/COP1(17), cooperation of the study group with the United Nations Ad Hoc Interagency Task Force on Tobacco Control was emphasized.

19. Questions related to tobacco growing, the problems farmers may face and potential viable alternatives to tobacco growing, are complex and there is an evident research gap that needs to be filled. FAO, the specialized agency in agriculture, and the World Bank, the leading agency in economics, can provide valuable technical expertise in the future work of the study group to help advance knowledge in this area of work related to tobacco.

CONCLUSION

20. Tobacco represents a multifaceted problem because it affects a number of sectors (including health, finance, customs, trade, environment, agriculture and industry). The global aspect of tobacco use should also be considered; the tobacco epidemic is reinforced through global marketing, trade liberalization and increased illicit trade. Consequently, tobacco control can only become effective if it is made through multisectoral collaboration of the different sectors of government and intergovernmental agencies. The United Nations Ad Hoc Interagency Task Force on Tobacco Control is a platform where this multisectoral collaboration can be strengthened and explored in the most efficient way.

21. This report summarizes the achievements of the Task Force and highlights the areas of collaboration where tobacco control can best be accomplished. Still, considerable work needs to be completed in the area of collaboration and more concrete joint work between agencies is required.

22. With regard to the Task Force work and possible relevance to increasing accessibility to funding for tobacco control, the issue had not been specifically discussed in the past. However, the question will be included in the agenda of the next meeting of the Task Force, scheduled for the end of 2007.

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