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## **Financial resources and mechanisms of assistance – implementation of decisions FCTC/COP1(13) and FCTC/COP2(10) of the Conference of the Parties**

### **Progress note of the Convention Secretariat**

1. In Article 26 of the WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control it is recognized that financial resources play an important role in achieving the objective of the Convention. In addition, in the preamble to the treaty, the Parties state that they are mindful of the social and economic difficulties that comprehensive tobacco-control programmes may engender in the medium- and long-term in some developing countries and countries with economies in transition and recognize the need of such countries for technical and financial assistance in the context of nationally developed strategies for sustainable development. Parties and other entities with the potential to offer such assistance have been called upon by the Convention to offer this support as part of treaty measures.
2. In decision FCTC/COP1(13), the Conference of the Parties at its first session reaffirmed this principle of assistance by calling upon developed country Parties to provide technical and financial support to developing country Parties and Parties with economies in transition, in accordance with their obligations under the Convention. The second session of the Conference of the Parties, in decision FCTC/COP2(10), urged donor Parties to provide voluntary extrabudgetary contributions and asked the Convention Secretariat to actively seek extrabudgetary contributions from Parties and other international donors, specifically for the purpose of helping Parties in need to carry out needs assessments and develop project and programme proposals for financial assistance from all available funding sources.
3. The budget for the financial period 2008–2009, adopted by the Conference of the Parties at its second session,<sup>1</sup> contains an initial allocation to begin treaty-specific technical assistance during the biennium 2008–2009. The current report therefore reflects the work that was performed in this area in the first nine months of 2008, work that will continue until after the third session of the Conference of the Parties. A full report will therefore be presented to the Conference of the Parties at its fourth session.

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<sup>1</sup> Decision FCTC/COP2(11).

4. Immediately after the second session of the Conference of the Parties, the pursuit of activities to satisfy other time-bound priorities – namely, those relating to draft guidelines and protocol negotiations – meant that the work of the Convention Secretariat in support of implementation of the two decisions concerned did not begin until early 2008, with the Secretariat developing the relevant capacity and tools in the first half of 2008. As a result of these efforts, the provision of assistance has been accelerated in recent months and a platform has been created for making substantial progress after the third session of the Conference of the Parties.

5. The work was carried out in the areas mentioned below.

#### **Database on available resources**

6. The interim secretariat conducted a study to review existing and potential sources and mechanisms of assistance and presented a report to the first session of the Conference of the Parties.<sup>1</sup> The Convention Secretariat reviewed the potential sources of assistance indicated in the report, updating it into a database that reflects the full scope of the Convention. The Convention Secretariat has also developed a tool to support the identification of not only institutions representing potential sources of assistance but also the specific area of tobacco control in which such institutions would be able to enter into a partnership. An additional tool was developed to help Parties to make a rapid assessment of their gaps in resources and resulting needs in order to implement the WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control. The database and the other tools will constitute an important component in efforts to offer assistance to developing country Parties and Parties with economies in transition. The initial versions of the tools were used during the regional workshops preceding the third session of the Conference of the Parties; the final versions, including the updated database, will be presented during the third session.

#### **Analysis of needs, resources and assistance in Party reports**

7. To date, more than 80 Party implementation reports received by the Convention Secretariat have been analysed in order to assess the nature and degree of the gaps between Parties' needs and the resources they have been allocated and/or the assistance they have secured.

8. The analysis shows that many developing Parties and Parties with economies in transition have not yet conducted an assessment of their needs in respect of their obligations under the treaty. Without a needs assessment, identifying resource gaps and specific targets for the provision of assistance remains a challenge. Most of the Parties concerned, however, identified lack of funds and inadequate technical capacity as major challenges in implementing the treaty.

9. Half the Parties reported having received assistance, with the majority of those providing details of that assistance. Twenty-eight of the Parties concerned reported receiving support from WHO at headquarters or regional levels. Other sources of assistance that were identified in various countries include the Research for International Tobacco Control initiative in Canada, the Swedish International Cooperation Development Agency, and the Centers for Disease Control in the United States of America (which was mainly cited in respect of surveillance support). Several regional intergovernmental organizations and nongovernmental organizations, as well as philanthropic organizations are reported to have made contributions in assisting significant numbers of Parties to implement the treaty.

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<sup>1</sup> Document A/FCTC/COP/1/4.

10. The analysis of reports of potential donor Parties shows that 31 reported providing assistance to other countries; however, only 16 such Parties provided details of that assistance. In general, the assistance was provided to neighbours or countries in the same subregion. For example, New Zealand reported providing assistance to six Pacific island States, while Brazil reported offering support to countries in Latin America. However, a few countries provided support with a wider reach. Norway, for example, reported providing support for capacity building related to implementation of the Convention in south-east Europe, while Canada reported providing support through the International Health Grants Program and the Research for International Tobacco Control initiative.

11. Nevertheless, the Party reports express needs for assistance that far outweigh the resources dedicated. A significant gap has developed as a result, which is affecting implementation of the Convention. This situation is expected to improve when the Parties scale up mutual assistance and resource mobilization in order to meet their obligations under the treaty. Future reports should therefore show more progress in this area.

### **Regional and subregional workshops**

12. In collaboration with WHO's regional offices and their respective hosting governments, the Convention Secretariat has co-organized three workshops on the implementation of the Convention. The first was held in Kingston from 12 to 15 August 2008 and was attended by 12 North American and Caribbean countries;<sup>1</sup> the second was held in Manila from 20 to 22 August 2008, attended by 25 Parties in the WHO Western Pacific Region;<sup>2</sup> and the third meeting was held in Lima from 9 to 12 September 2008, attended by 17 Latin American countries.<sup>3</sup> The workshop for Parties in the WHO African Region, with the majority of Parties registered to attend, is being organized in Geneva, from 16 to 18 October 2008, immediately before the second session of the Intergovernmental Negotiating Body on a Protocol on Illicit Trade in Tobacco Products. Workshops for the other regions are planned for 2009.

13. These regional workshops cover several areas including sharing information on the history, aim and working mechanisms of the WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control, as well as on Convention instruments and the process of their development. The workshops also considered the agenda of the second session of the Intergovernmental Negotiating Body on a Protocol on Illicit Trade in Tobacco Products and preparations for the third session of the Conference of the Parties in order to give support to governments in their preparations and participation. Participants were also given an update on the reporting system of the Convention, especially the revised data collection tool, as well as on lessons learnt by Parties during reporting and on the support that the Convention Secretariat can provide in the reporting process. Parties were also introduced to the potential sources and mechanisms of support and given information on liaising with the Secretariat, in accordance with decisions of the Conference of the Parties, in order seek such assistance.

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<sup>1</sup> Antigua and Barbuda, Bahamas, Barbados, Belize, Grenada, Guyana, Haiti, Jamaica, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Suriname, and Trinidad and Tobago.

<sup>2</sup> Australia, Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, China, Cook Islands, Fiji, Japan, Kiribati, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Malaysia, Marshall Islands, Micronesia (Federated States of), Mongolia, Nauru, New Zealand, Palau, Papua New Guinea, Philippines, Republic of Korea, Samoa, Singapore, Tonga, Tuvalu, Vanuatu and Viet Nam.

<sup>3</sup> Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Uruguay and Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of).

## **Bilateral reviews with Parties**

14. In addition to the formal regional meetings, bilateral reviews with Party delegations constituted an important element of the workshops mentioned above. The reviews were aimed at identifying country-specific experiences, needs and challenges, and determining the potential for providing implementation assistance to Parties and the necessary mechanisms for doing so.

15. These bilateral reviews have so far been conducted with delegations from 50 Parties during the three workshops. The Parties shared details of the challenges they face in implementing the Convention and possible priorities for initial support were identified. The discussions were also designed to identify the Parties that will be supported for needs assessment and the development of project proposals after the third session of the Conference of the Parties.

16. The main issues raised by Parties during the bilateral discussions include difficulties in drafting and passing laws and regulations to implement the various provisions of the treaty. Countries like Singapore have comprehensive tobacco control legislation, while others are introducing regulation gradually, depending on the prevailing national environment. For example, Jamaica has standards on packaging and labelling, while Guatemala has proposed a draft law on smoke-free public places that identifies penalties to use in tobacco control activities.

17. The fact that needs assessment was generally not comprehensive was also considered to be a barrier to effective planning for implementation, while the lack of technical capacity was felt to have contributed to the slow completion of needs assessment work. Underfunding of tobacco-control initiatives within countries was reported to have slowed down the expansion of implementation activities. Insufficient support from other government agencies was also viewed as contributing to inadequate funding and consequent slow expansion.

18. The negative influence exerted by the tobacco industry, as well as cross-border challenges posed by weaker regulations in neighbouring States that are not Parties to the Convention, were also cited as potential impediments to implementation of the Convention.

19. Of the Parties with which the Convention Secretariat conducted bilateral reviews during the three workshops, eight are considered to require immediate support for achieving specific priorities that they have identified within their country. Cooperation with the Convention Secretariat in this regard has already started. Another 10 Parties are ready for support for performing needs assessment, and then for developing proposals for implementation based on country-specific priorities in the first half of 2009. These activities will call for substantial resources, particularly once other regions are included in the bilateral reviews. Overall, the bilateral reviews on country-specific assistance conducted in advance of the third session of the Conference of the Parties (including those scheduled with Parties in the WHO African Region in October 2008) involved more than 70 Parties, representing nearly 75% of all low- and lower- middle-income country Parties.

## **Raising awareness of potential donors**

20. The Convention Secretariat has also held discussions with several potential donors in order to raise awareness of the need for providing assistance to Parties, and has explored the possibilities of creating partnerships to perform this activity. These potential donors include the following: Parties to the Convention; international, regional and subregional organizations; and other partners in the development arena. Particular attention is being paid to integrating the implementation of the Convention into existing development plans and programmes. However, work in this area is in its initial stages, with much ground to be covered in 2009.

21. In decision FCTC/COP2(10), the second session of the Conference of Parties urged donor Parties to provide voluntary extrabudgetary contributions specifically for country-level work, including conducting needs assessment and developing project and programme proposals for financial assistance. This provision has the potential to improve progress in the implementation of the Convention but is still underutilized.

### **South-to-South cooperation**

22. In decision FCTC/COP1(13), the Conference of the Parties requested the Convention Secretariat to promote South-to-South cooperation, as relevant to the implementation of the Convention. The Convention Secretariat has been promoting this principle through the mechanisms described below.

- The regional workshops present an opportunity for Parties from the same region to share experiences and exchange information on their progress and best practices. They also encourage networking among the people involved in treaty implementation, especially since such personnel tend to change from time to time. The three workshops that have already been held, covering more than the half the low- and lower-middle-income country Parties, have demonstrated substantial potential in this area.
- The publishing of Party reports by the Convention Secretariat allows Parties to share in each others' knowledge and progress, offering them the opportunity to draw on one another's strengths in implementation of the Convention. The reports constitute a rich database of what has been shown to work at a global level as well as at regional and subregional levels, thus promoting an environment for improvement of regulation and implementation.
- Focusing policy discussions on matters that are particularly relevant to countries in the South is also important, for example the exploration of economically viable alternatives to tobacco growing, and the stimulation of policy dialogue based on the work of the study group on economically sustainable alternatives to tobacco growing. The majority of Parties attending the two meetings of the study group, in Brazil (2007) and Mexico (2008), were developing countries and this dialogue has opened up another opportunity for South-to-South sharing of experiences, challenges and possible solutions.
- Promoting regional intergovernmental meetings in the South offers the opportunity to share technical expertise. For example, during the recent workshop for Latin American countries, Brazil provided information on its Government's policy of supporting low-resource countries to access technical assistance, inviting such countries to benefit from the opportunity thus provided. Similarly, during the workshop in the WHO Western Pacific Region, Singapore offered to share its technical expertise within the Region.

### **Conclusions**

23. The WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control and the decisions of the Conference of the Parties are clear on the need to provide financial and technical support to developing country Parties and Parties with economies in transition if they are effectively to meet their obligations under the treaty. The provisions concerned have not been fully utilized; nevertheless, they retain the potential to make a significant contribution to effective implementation of the Convention.

24. The Convention Secretariat has prioritized several ways of putting into operation the provisions of the treaty and the decisions of the Conference of the Parties concerning financial resources and mechanisms of assistance. The approaches concerned include, but are not limited to:

- promoting regional and subregional meetings and dialogue, by means of which Parties can share and exchange information in support of the scaling up of implementation activities;
- conducting bilateral reviews with Parties to assess specific country needs and abilities; and planning assistance and/or mobilizing resources, and preparing country-specific assistance plans based on such reviews and on other sources, including policies, needs and priorities outlined in Party implementation reports;
- providing support to Parties in assessing their needs and preparing project and programme proposals for meeting their obligations, and in submitting proposals to relevant donor and development sources for funding and assistance;
- analysing Party reports and making both the reports and the analyses available so that Parties may benefit from the experiences and progress of others and from access to a source of best practices to reflect on as they plan implementation;
- creating a database of internationally available resources and using it as a tool for providing support to low-resource countries so that they can access those resources based on their national priorities; and
- increasing awareness among the donor community of the scope of the treaty and of the ways of contributing to its effective implementation.

25. Most of the mechanisms referred to above have already been introduced and launched; some, such as the database on available resources and the results of bilateral reviews, are generating momentum and creating a platform for scaling up the work in this area immediately after the third session of the Conference of the Parties.

26. The implementation reports of the Parties outline good examples of assistance provided by Parties and of assistance that Parties have received. However, they do not yet appear to reflect sufficiently the spirit and scope of the Convention concerning mutual assistance and a common global effort in combating the tobacco epidemic.

27. Several sources and mechanisms of assistance outlined in the Convention and the decisions of the Conference of the Parties remain largely underutilized. This is particularly true for the following: the provision of bilateral technical support; the integration of implementation of the treaty into strategies for sustainable development; and the utilization of Parties' representation in other international organizations and financial and development institutions in order to encourage provision of assistance to low-resource countries.

28. The high expectations already expressed by Parties suggest that substantial resources will be required to exploit the provisions of the treaty and the decisions of the Conference of the Parties on financial resources and mechanisms of assistance for the implementation of the Convention.

## **ACTION BY THE CONFERENCE OF THE PARTIES**

29. The Conference is invited to note the report and provide further guidance. The Conference may also wish to reflect on the conclusions contained in this report.

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