
Report of WHO's Tobacco Free Initiative on its activities undertaken specifically on the implementation of the WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (decision FCTC/COP2(10))

1. With the mandate to reduce the global burden of the tobacco epidemic, WHO's Tobacco Free Initiative has worked in collaboration and conjunction with the Secretariat of the WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control to assist Parties in implementing their obligations under the Convention.

CAPACITY-BUILDING, TRAINING AND RESEARCH

Capacity assessment

2. The Tobacco Free Initiative has designed a method to help countries to identify their capacity needs and the challenges for implementing effective, sustainable tobacco control policies. Pilot assessments are being conducted in two countries, the first in Brazil in May 2008 and the second to be held in Thailand in October 2008. Once the results have been assessed, technical assistance will be provided on request to countries to help strengthen their capacity to implement key tobacco control policies.

Building national capacity for implementing effective tobacco control policies

3. WHO launched the *WHO report on the global tobacco epidemic, 2008* in New York in February 2008. The report is based on MPOWER, a package of six proven strategies, each of which is reflected in provisions of the WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control. MPOWER is designed to help Member States to build on the WHO Framework Convention by providing strategies for successful tobacco control. The six strategies are: Monitor tobacco use and prevention policies; Protect people from tobacco smoke; Offer help for stopping tobacco use; Warn about the dangers of tobacco; Enforce bans on tobacco advertising, promotion and sponsorship; and Raise taxes on tobacco.

4. In May 2008, WHO released training materials prepared in collaboration with the International Union Against Tuberculosis and Lung Diseases on smoke-free environments and on packaging and

labelling of tobacco products, as part of implementation of Articles 8 and 11, respectively. A pilot workshop on packaging and labelling was held in the WHO Eastern Mediterranean Region, with the objective of acquainting policy-makers and regulators with best practices.

5. In Geneva on 13 February 2008, civil society and government representatives from nine countries in the WHO African Region met to discuss strategies for increasing the Region's tobacco control capacity. The participants agreed that subregional structures are needed to capture and share knowledge and to coordinate tobacco control initiatives in the Region. In response, WHO held a meeting in Accra on 26–27 June 2008 in order to formalize the structure, functions and location of subregional hubs of knowledge for tobacco control and to identify the roles and responsibilities of members and national and international partners. The consultation included representatives from ministries of health and one nongovernmental organization from each of the participating countries.

Legislation and regulation for tobacco control

6. WHO has continued to provide legal and technical assistance to Member States in drafting, enacting and implementing domestic legislation and regulations for tobacco control at country level.

Economics of tobacco control

7. With support from the Chinese Government, WHO (through the Tobacco Free Initiative) and the Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health (Baltimore, Maryland, United States of America) organized an international workshop on tobacco economics and taxation (Beijing, 22–24 November 2007) which included discussion of raising taxes in accordance with Article 6 of the WHO Framework Convention. Subsequently, a research consultation was held in March 2008, where short-term and long-term policy options for tobacco taxation in China were discussed. Proposals will be drafted by the Central University of Finance and Economics, Beijing, and presented at the next policy workshop in early 2009.

8. The Initiative also prepared a background document for the second meeting of the Study Group on Economically Sustainable Alternatives to Tobacco Growing (Mexico City, 17–19 June 2008). Participants reviewed the trends in the world supply of tobacco leaves and global players, and discussed how to meet forthcoming challenges from the tobacco market.

Tobacco Free Initiative support of Bloomberg Initiative grants

9. As one partner in the Bloomberg Initiative, the aim of which is to increase tobacco control in developing countries where the disease burden from tobacco use is highest, WHO provides country coordination and technical support. Since its last report to the Conference of the Parties, WHO has continued to support countries in the second phase of round two of the Bloomberg Initiative grants, which are competitively awarded grants for projects to design high-impact tobacco control interventions at country level. During the second (full proposal) phase, which ran from July to September 2007, WHO provided technical assistance in all regions, supporting over half of all applicants invited to submit full round-two proposals. WHO provided technical support for 31 of the 39 successful proposals, covering projects in countries in all six regions.¹ In Round Three, WHO continued to provide support to countries in both phases of the grant process. All of the round-three

¹ Bangladesh, Burkina Faso, China, Egypt, India, Indonesia, Jamaica, Mexico, Pakistan, Philippines, Russian Federation, Sri Lanka, Thailand, Turkey, Ukraine, United Republic of Tanzania, and Viet Nam.

government grants that were recommended for funding had been the recipient of technical support from WHO.

10. The Tobacco Free Initiative has also prepared materials to assist in the writing and submission of full proposals. These were translated at the regional offices to ensure widespread dissemination.

Youth activities

11. WHO is coordinating the preparation of recommendations for effective tobacco control policies and strategies among young people. The target audiences for the recommendations are policy-makers and programme managers in middle- and low-income countries. International experts were commissioned to prepare background papers summarizing the evidence on policies, activities and interventions that might affect tobacco use by young people. A global consultation, entitled Global Consultation on Effective Youth Tobacco Control Policy Interventions, was conducted in Geneva on 25–27 March 2008 and conclusions and recommendations are being drafted, taking into account the feasibility and applicability of the strategies for developing countries.

Cessation

12. The WHO pilot project on implementation of smoking cessation services through the Practical Approach to Lung Health Strategy in Nepal is proceeding as scheduled, with training of 134 health professionals at two district hospitals and seventeen primary health care centres. The project was completed at the end of June 2008.

13. A pilot clinical trial of smoking cessation in clinics providing directly observed treatment, short-course (DOTS), in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, conducted by WHO (both the Tobacco Free Initiative and the Stop TB Department) is based on existing collaboration between various academic and governmental partners, including the Brazilian Ministry of Health's National Surveillance Secretariat. The objective of the project is to test the feasibility and efficacy of smoking-cessation interventions for patients attending DOTS facilities for tuberculosis. The strategy includes intensive training of DOTS providers in smoking-cessation counselling and nicotine-replacement therapy regimens.

14. In order to identify priorities in increasing smoking-cessation services in developing countries, a global consultation has been scheduled for December 2008 in Geneva.

Awareness-raising and capacity-building workshops on illicit trade in tobacco products

15. To raise awareness about illicit trade in tobacco products and to build national capacity to counter such trade, Uruguay and PAHO, with the support of the Framework Convention Alliance, hosted a regional conference on illicit tobacco trade for Member States of the WHO Region of the Americas and relevant governmental and civil society organizations (Montevideo, 5–6 December 2007). Similar meetings in other WHO regions took place in 2008, including an awareness-raising workshop organized by the Framework Convention Alliance and the Tobacco Free Initiative in New Delhi on 15–16 September.

Gender and tobacco

16. In view of the high priority of gender issues in tobacco use in the WHO Framework Convention, in 2007 WHO published *Sifting the evidence: gender and tobacco control* and *Gender and tobacco control: a policy brief* in order to emphasize the right of women and girls to refuse

exposure to tobacco. Additionally, the monograph *Women and the tobacco epidemic: challenges for the 21st century* (2001) will be updated.

17. WHO hosted a luncheon on 25 October 2007 for the Committee on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women, which is mandated under the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women, which is to monitor Parties' compliance with their obligations under that instrument. Use of data disaggregated by age and sex in setting policies was discussed. The meeting strengthened both groups' commitment to supporting such disaggregation and to cooperate in formulating and implementing tobacco control policies in gender-related areas within the human rights framework of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women.

18. The International Network of Women against Tobacco has been working closely with the Tobacco Free Initiative in the area of gender and tobacco use by building capacity, integrating surveillance into policy development and programmes and ensuring that gender considerations are included in education and communication.

GLOBAL TOBACCO SURVEILLANCE SYSTEMS

19. At a meeting of the Global Tobacco Surveillance Systems Management Committee (Cairo, 25–26 November 2007), the status of global tobacco surveys was reviewed, and newly hired staff received a comprehensive orientation for upcoming projects, including the Global Adult Tobacco Survey.

WHO report on the global tobacco epidemic, 2008

20. This report contains the first set of internationally comparable estimates of the prevalence of tobacco use in nearly 140 of WHO's Member States. Given the difficulty of comparing national prevalence data, WHO, through its Tobacco Free Initiative and Global InfoBase, collaborated with the Stop TB Partnership and Johns Hopkins University (Baltimore, Maryland, United States of America) in designing an innovative, robust method for making such estimates, which were validated by Member States. A comprehensive communications strategy ensured maximum press coverage and attracted the attention of tobacco control policy-makers globally.

Global Adult Tobacco Survey

21. The Global Adult Tobacco Survey, supported by WHO, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (Atlanta, Georgia, United States of America) and other partners is a new, nationally representative household survey for collecting data on key indicators of tobacco use by the adult population. This Survey will be the standard tool for surveillance of adult tobacco use and will assist countries in conducting tobacco surveillance programmes in accordance with Article 20 of the Framework Convention. The questionnaire, manuals and methods were finalized in 2008, and the materials are being translated and adapted in countries. Technical teams visited Bangladesh, Brazil, China, Egypt, India, Indonesia, Mexico, Philippines, Poland, Russian Federation, Thailand, Turkey, Ukraine and Viet Nam, and the survey is being implemented in several countries. Regional and country surveillance officers are in place, and the survey will continue in countries during 2009.

Global Youth Tobacco Survey

22. The Global Youth Tobacco Survey, a collaboration between WHO, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the Canadian Public Health Association and the United States National Cancer Institute, is a school-based survey of children aged 13–15 years. More than 160 countries, areas and territories have completed or are about to complete the Survey for the first time.

Global Health Professionals Student Survey

23. WHO in collaboration with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the International Development Research Center and the Research Center for International Tobacco Control invited national research coordinators to a training and analysis workshop (Ottawa, 20–24 August 2007) in order to inform them about the background, method and implementation of the Global Health Professionals Student Survey. Preparation of research and budget proposals, timelines and establishing a letter of agreement were discussed with each participant. The aim of the analysis session was to review the data collected through the Survey in 2006–2007 and to draft a report. Preliminary analyses were made by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. A training and analysis workshop will be held in November 2008, before the third Conference of the Parties to the WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control.

MONITORING THE TOBACCO INDUSTRY

24. Given the importance of understanding the tobacco industry's practices, the Tobacco Free Initiative continues to monitor industry activities. A "tobacco industry monitoring" database will be launched at the end of 2008, containing information on assertions made by the tobacco industry about tobacco products. In addition, the Tobacco Free Initiative continues to respond to Member States' requests for information on the industry's tactics and activities. The Initiative convened a consultation (Washington DC, 29–30 October 2007) in order to prepare an expert background paper and gather opinions about how to address tobacco industry interference with tobacco control.

COMMUNICATION AND PARTNERSHIPS

World No Tobacco Day

25. The theme of World No Tobacco Day 2008, "Tobacco-free youth", highlighted the need to protect young people from tobacco industry marketing tactics. Under the slogan "Break the tobacco marketing net" the central messages of the day were that tobacco advertising, promotion, and sponsorship contributes to disability and death. World No Tobacco Day also underscored that complete bans on advertising, promotion and sponsorship can combat the billions of dollars the industry spends each year on spreading its marketing net, which targets youth through media, music and cinema. The activities and materials prepared for World No Tobacco Day 2008 were used to emphasize the enforcement of bans on tobacco advertising, promotion and sponsorship, one of the six cost-effective tobacco control policies contained in the WHO Framework Convention and in the MPOWER package.

United Nations Task Force

26. At the seventh session of the United Nations Ad Hoc Interagency Task Force on Tobacco Control (New York, 21–22 February 2008) the main issues discussed were the status of a smoking ban on United Nations premises, tobacco growing and alternative livelihoods, illicit trade in tobacco products, technical support from United Nations Task Force members for implementation of the WHO Framework Convention, and gender and tobacco. Participants also defined the outline and the principal themes for the Secretary-General’s fifth report to the Economic and Social Council, which was presented at its Substantive Session in July 2008.

27. A high-level diplomatic briefing took place on 8 July 2008 during the Coordination Segment of the Economic and Social Council in New York. The session was chaired by the Minister of Health of Uruguay, and diplomatic missions were briefed about exposure to second-hand smoke and the importance of making the United Nations premises smoke-free.

PRODUCT REGULATION

28. The WHO Study Group on Tobacco Product Regulation, established by the WHO Director-General, continues to be the think tank for WHO on tobacco product regulation. In 2007, the Tobacco Free Initiative convened the fourth meeting of the WHO Study Group on Tobacco Product Regulation (Palo Alto, California, United States of America, 25–27 July 2007), which discussed subjects including “fire safer” cigarettes, which might reduce potential harm from fires due to lit cigarettes.

29. In accordance with the decisions of the Conference of the Parties, WHO’s Tobacco Free Initiative, and members of the WHO Study Group on Tobacco Product Regulation and the WHO Tobacco Laboratory Network participated in several meetings of the Articles 9 and 10 Working Group mandated to draw up guidelines for implementation of Articles 9 and 10 of the WHO Framework Convention. Representatives of the Study Group and the Laboratory Network also attended the 27th Plenary Meeting of Technical Committee 126 of the International Organization for Standardization (Budapest, 15–16 October 2007), which sets standards for tobacco and tobacco product testing and measuring but is dominated by industry. WHO recognizes the mutual benefit to be derived from coordinating the work of Technical Committee 126 with that of the Conference of the Parties in order to serve various stakeholders, including public health authorities.

30. At the third meeting of the WHO Tobacco Laboratory Network (London, 26–28 November 2007), experts updated and discussed the global state and capacity of laboratories in tobacco control. They also considered funding, biomarker initiatives, expansion of capacity of laboratories, independent verification of industry testing, methods for identifying counterfeit cigarettes, methods for testing bidis, roll-your-own and other cottage products, and approaches to investigating water pipes. Once laboratory tobacco testing capacity is strengthened, the WHO Tobacco Laboratory Network will be able to counter the industry’s dominance in this area.

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