



WHO FRAMEWORK CONVENTION
ON TOBACCO CONTROL

**Conference of the Parties to the
WHO Framework Convention
on Tobacco Control**

Fifth session
Seoul, Republic of Korea, 12–17 November 2012
Provisional agenda item 8.4

FCTC/COP/5/22
24 July 2012

Travel support available to Parties to the WHO FCTC

Report by the Secretariat

BACKGROUND

1. At its fourth session (Punta del Este, Uruguay, 15–20 November 2010), the Conference of the Parties (COP) decided¹ on financial measures regarding travel support to Parties to the WHO FCTC, until and including the fifth session of the COP, with a view to facilitating the participation of least developed countries and low- and lower-middle-income countries and harmonizing the travel support available to Parties to the WHO FCTC with current WHO administrative policies.
2. The COP requested the Convention Secretariat to prepare a report on this issue for consideration at its fifth session, taking into account the severe budgetary constraints.
3. Decision FCTC/COP4(21) was taken in light of the discussions at the fourth session of the COP on the workplan and budget for the financial period 2012–2013, during which a number of Parties expressed the view that, while wide participation in the work of the Convention should be encouraged, travel costs and subsistence allowances should not represent the main financial burden on Parties of work related to the Convention, and that resources should, in the light of budgetary constraints, be allocated to activities with the highest priority. Other Parties expressed concern at the fact that participation from low- and lower-middle-income countries in meetings of the COP and its subsidiary bodies could be affected by a change of travel policy.²

¹ Decision FCTC/COP4(21).

² See the summary records of the proceedings of Committee B at the fourth session of the COP in document FCTC/COP/4/REC/3 (available at: http://apps.who.int/gb/fctc/PDF/cop4/FCTC_COP4_REC3-en.pdf).

TRAVEL SUPPORT PROVIDED TO PARTIES TO THE WHO FCTC

Travel support until and including the fourth session of the COP

4. Travel support extended to Parties until and including the fourth session of the COP stemmed from the practice applied during the negotiations of the WHO FCTC, which gave special consideration to securing the participation of delegates from low- and lower-middle-income countries. This practice was subsequently followed for participation in the meetings of the COP and its subsidiary bodies, including meetings of working groups established by the COP. Financial support under these arrangements included the provision of an economy air ticket and payment of a subsistence allowance (per diem) for one representative from each low- and lower-middle-income country Party.

5. Travel support to low- and lower-middle-income countries until and including the fourth session of the COP was mostly covered from the voluntary assessed contributions (VAC) of the Parties, as adopted by the COP. In the biennium 2010–2011, the total expenditure related to travel support provided to eligible Parties represented US\$ 1 211 734. In addition, the European Union, through the European Commission's Anti-Fraud Office (OLAF), provided direct travel support to Parties' representatives who participated in the two meetings of the informal working group on the draft protocol established by the COP. The total amount spent by OLAF in this regard represented €75 000. On average, the cost of travel and per diem for a six-day session of the COP or Intergovernmental Negotiating Body on a Protocol on Illicit Trade in Tobacco Products (INB), when held in Geneva, represented approximately US\$ 400 000 to US\$ 500 000. When sessions of the COP were held outside Geneva, the difference in the cost of travel was covered by the host country.

Travel support after the fourth session of the COP

6. Since the adoption of decision FCTC/COP4(21) in November 2010, travel support funded through VAC has been provided as follows for participation in meetings of the COP and its subsidiary bodies:

- provision of an economy air ticket and payment of per diem for one delegate from each least developed country Party;
- provision of an economy air ticket only for one delegate from each of the other low- and lower-middle-income country Parties.

7. In line with decision FCTC/COP4(21), all low- and lower-middle-income country Parties that nominated representatives to the meetings convened by the Secretariat (in particular the working groups for the development of guidelines, the informal working group on the draft protocol established by the COP, and the fifth session of the INB) received financial support in accordance with the provisions of that decision.

Parties' representation in sessions of the COP and INB

8. The level of representation of Parties in previous sessions of the COP and INB was reviewed to assess the possible impact of any travel policy adopted by the COP. Low- and lower-middle-income country Parties represent on average approximately 50% of the total number of Parties attending a COP or INB session. The table below shows, based on actual attendance of low-resource and other Parties, the percentage of Parties that were represented by one delegate only at each of the session of the COP and INB until and including 2010, when the travel policy was revised by the COP.

Information is also provided for such participation at the fifth session of the INB, when the travel policy as adopted by the COP at its fourth session was applied. It may be worth noting that the first session of the COP was held in Geneva while the second, third and fourth sessions were held outside Geneva. All sessions of the INB were held in Geneva.

Percentage of Parties that were represented by one delegate only at COP and INB sessions¹

	COP1	COP2–COP4 (on average)	INB1–INB4 (on average)	INB5
Low- and lower-middle-income country Parties represented by one delegate only	28%	55%	41%	49%
Other Parties represented by one delegate only	14%	26%	16%	13%

RELEVANT PRACTICE

WHO travel policy

9. WHO travel policy to support the participation of Member States in the meetings of its governing bodies is based on resolution WHA50.1. Reimbursement for travel expenses is provided upon request, the maximum amount reimbursed being the equivalent of an economy air ticket for one delegate from each least developed country. No financial support is provided to other low-resource countries. The World Health Assembly also adopted resolution WHA52.9 that establishes similar principles for the reimbursement of travel costs of representatives attending WHO regional committees.

Practice in other treaties of the United Nations system

10. A review of relevant practice in other treaties of the United Nations² showed that travel support is generally provided to developing country parties, with priority given to least developed countries, small island developing States, and countries with economies in transition, if possible, for participation in the meetings of the COPs and subsidiary bodies of these treaties. Funding for such travel support is normally provided through dedicated funds (voluntary trust fund or a trust fund for participation) established by the COP, to which parties contribute. Owing to the voluntary nature of the funds, the level of contributions and hence the level of support available to parties may vary from one year to the next. Parties are informed by the secretariat of the relevant treaty of the availability of funds and of the need to apply for travel support within a set deadline.

¹ Based on the total number of Parties that attended in each of the two categories.

² Basel Convention on the Control of Transboundary Movements of Hazardous Wastes and their Disposal; Convention on Biological Diversity; Rotterdam Convention on the Prior Informed Consent Procedure for Certain Hazardous Chemicals and Pesticides in International Trade; Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants; United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification; and United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and the Kyoto Protocol.

11. Annex 1 provides estimates for three possible arrangements for the provision of travel support to representatives of low- and lower-middle-income countries, based on average costs for meetings held in Geneva:

(a) provision of an economy air ticket for one representative from each least developed country Party, aligned with the WHO travel support policy;

(b) provision of an economy air ticket for one representative from each low- and lower-middle-income country Party;

(c) provision of an economy air ticket and per diem for one representative from each least developed country Party and provision of an economy air ticket only for one representative from each other low- and lower-middle-income country Party, as per the travel policy adopted by the COP at its fourth session.

12. As at 30 June 2012, 81 Parties were listed as being low- and lower-middle-income countries, out of which 41 were least developed countries.¹

13. The estimates contained in Annex 1 concern two types of meetings: a six-day meeting (e.g. a COP or INB session); and a three-day meeting (e.g. a working group) in which participation is determined by the membership of the group or workshop as established by the COP. In the past, the membership of such working groups has included an average of 20 low- and lower-middle-income country Parties, of which on average 10 were least developed countries.

14. Subject to the funding approved by the COP, different arrangements for travel support may be considered regarding participation in COP sessions as opposed to other meetings, such as meetings of working groups, informal meetings, regional workshops, etc.

15. Annex 2 contains the list of Parties that were eligible for travel support as at 30 June 2012. The list also indicates those Parties that were in arrears in the payment of their VAC for one or more bienniums in the period 2006–2011 as at 30 June 2012. In this respect, the COP may wish to note the information contained in Annex 2 in conjunction with that contained in document FCTC/COP/5/21 on arrears in the payment of VAC, in particular with regard to possible measures that the COP may wish to consider in order to improve payment of VAC.

ACTION BY THE CONFERENCE OF THE PARTIES

16. The COP is invited to note this report and provide further guidance on the financing of travel support to Parties participating in the meetings of the COP and its subsidiary bodies.

¹ The classification of low- and lower-middle-income countries was based on the World Bank classification (see: <http://data.worldbank.org/about/country-classifications/>). The list of least developed countries was obtained from the United Nations Office of the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries (see: <http://www.unohrrls.org/en/ldc/25/>).

ANNEX 1

POSSIBLE ARRANGEMENTS FOR TRAVEL SUPPORT TO LOW- AND LOWER-MIDDLE-INCOME COUNTRY PARTIES TO THE WHO FCTC¹

(all figures expressed in US\$)

	(A)		(B)		(C)	
	Air ticket for one delegate from each least developed country Party <i>(aligned with WHO policy)</i>		Air ticket for one delegate from each low- and lower-middle-income country Party		Air ticket and per diem for one delegate from each least developed country Party <u>and</u> Air ticket only for one delegate from each other low- and lower-middle-income country Party <i>(current practice as per COP4 decision)</i>	
	6-day meeting ²	3-day meeting ³	6-day meeting	3-day meeting	6-day meeting	3-day meeting
Air tickets	106 600	26 000	210 600	52 000	210 600	52 000
Per diem⁴					128 904	15 720
Total	106 600	26 000	210 600	52 000	341 800	68 000

¹ As at 30 June 2012, 81 Parties were listed as being low- and lower-middle-income countries, out of which 41 were least developed countries.

² Such as a COP or INB session with all low- and lower-middle-income country Parties expected to attend.

³ Such as a meeting of a working group with an average of 20 low- and lower-middle-income country Parties participating, out of which 10 would be least developed countries, as per practice so far.

⁴ Based on per diem applicable in Geneva as at 1 July 2012.

ANNEX 2

PARTIES ELIGIBLE FOR TRAVEL SUPPORT
(low- and lower-middle-income countries as at 30 June 2012)¹

Afghanistan	Mali*
Angola	Marshall Islands*
Armenia	Mauritania
Bangladesh*	Micronesia (Federated States of)*
Belize	Mongolia*
Benin*	Myanmar
Bhutan	Nauru
Bolivia (Plurinational State of)*	Nepal
Burkina Faso	Nicaragua
Burundi	Niger*
Cambodia	Nigeria*
Cameroon	Niue
Cape Verde*	Pakistan*
Central African Republic*	Papua New Guinea*
Chad*	Paraguay
Comoros*	Philippines
Congo	Republic of Moldova*
Cook Islands*	Rwanda
Côte d'Ivoire	Samoa
Democratic People's Republic of Korea*	Sao Tome and Principe*
Democratic Republic of the Congo	Senegal*
Djibouti*	Sierra Leone*
Egypt	Solomon Islands
Fiji	Sri Lanka*
Gambia*	Sudan*
Georgia	Swaziland
Ghana	Syrian Arab Republic*
Guatemala*	Timor-Leste
Guinea*	Togo
Guinea-Bissau*	Tonga
Guyana	Turkmenistan
Honduras*	Tuvalu
India	Uganda
Iraq	Ukraine
Kenya	United Republic of Tanzania*
Kiribati*	Uzbekistan
Kyrgyzstan	Vanuatu*
Lao People's Democratic Republic*	Viet Nam
Lesotho	Yemen*
Liberia*	Zambia*
Madagascar	

= = =

¹ Least developed countries are shown in **bold**. An asterisk (*) indicates a Party that is in arrears of payment of voluntary assessed contributions for one or more bienniums in the period 2006–2011.