



# WORLD HEALTH ORGANIZATION

FIFTY-THIRD WORLD HEALTH ASSEMBLY  
Provisional agenda item 12.10

A53/12 Corr.1  
11 May 2000

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## WHO framework convention on tobacco control

### Report of the working group

#### CORRIGENDUM

Please insert at the beginning of the Annex the italicized text set out below.

#### **PROVISIONAL TEXTS OF PROPOSED DRAFT ELEMENTS FOR A WHO FRAMEWORK CONVENTION ON TOBACCO CONTROL WITH COMMENTS OF THE WORKING GROUP<sup>1</sup>**

##### *General comments*

*Participants made a number of general comments on the framework convention as a whole and gave their views on the elements in section I, covering the preamble, definitions, objective and guiding principles. Speakers considered that the document provided a valid basis for the negotiation stage.*

*Several delegations commented on the balance between the framework convention and possible protocols; the protocols should be complementary to the convention. The view was expressed that the convention should be tough and set standards for countries. It was also suggested that the obligations should be seen as minimum standards, countries being encouraged to adopt higher standards at domestic level. There appeared to be sufficient consensus on a number of areas such as protection of youth, prevention of smuggling, and proper labelling of tobacco products. However, a number of countries pointed out that too many specific obligations in the convention itself could deter countries from supporting it. A majority of delegations favoured a strong but general convention so that as many Member States of WHO as possible could accede to it. In general, it should focus on broad, comprehensive and inclusive principles, giving countries necessary flexibility, though it was suggested that the degree of specificity in the convention might depend on the nature of the topic. Some speakers felt that it was premature to decide at this stage whether issues should be dealt with in the convention or the possible protocols. One suggestion was that the convention*

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<sup>1</sup> Comments of the working group are shown in indented italics.

*might be completed first, beginning with the objectives and obligations; working groups could then be appointed to prepare the protocols.*

*Participants noted that tobacco control measures were a matter for countries. Both the convention and possible protocols should allow for the specific circumstances of countries and differences between developed and developing countries; countries of different types should be accountable in different ways. Although support should be provided for strong country programmes, tobacco growing was a highly political matter and governments needed flexibility.*

*Some participants stated that special emphasis should be laid on vulnerable groups such as women, children and the poor. A gender perspective should be integrated throughout. Although growth in tobacco use should be addressed, the current prevalence was already a major problem in many countries.*

*A number of delegations stressed that tobacco control required a multisectoral approach, involving all national departments. The comprehensive mix of measures set out in the document was welcomed. However, several participants suggested that the main focus should be on transnational measures, in such domains as cross-border advertising, sponsorship and smuggling. Thus the convention would complement national and local legislation and identify responses that required international cooperation. Other participants emphasized that the convention should embrace both national and cross-border issues. Further discussion within countries would be needed.*

*Some speakers stressed that the important role of nongovernmental organizations should be emphasized in the convention and that those organizations should be involved in the negotiation process. Others expressed the view that provisions contained in the convention should be cost effective and that barriers to tobacco control needed to be identified.*

*The view was expressed that further research was needed on trade policy and tobacco law. In general, the text should give more clarity to the relationship between the convention and other international agreements. It was suggested that developing countries should be protected from the effects of international trade in tobacco products and that developed countries exporting tobacco products and/or leaves to them should be held accountable.*

*A number of speakers considered that the text showed insufficient regard for the interests of developing countries; more emphasis should be laid on financial and technical support for countries incurring losses in the future as a result of implementation of the convention. Details of financing mechanisms to support such countries should be clear before the convention was adopted. The economies of some countries depended on tobacco, but little had been done to identify alternative crops or livelihoods; such countries should be exempted from the provisions of the convention pending support from FAO and the World Bank. Moreover, all stakeholders, including growers, should be involved in the consultations concerning the convention. A further view was that the possible negative impact on developing countries should be taken seriously, but that all countries stood to benefit from the convention.*

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