



WHO FRAMEWORK CONVENTION  
ON TOBACCO CONTROL

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

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**Statement by Dr Anne Marie Worning,  
Executive Director of the Office of the  
Director-General of WHO**

Mr Chairperson, distinguished delegates, ladies and gentleman,

As we all know, the WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (WHO FCTC) is one of the most successful treaties in United Nations history. It broke ground when adopted by the World Health Assembly in 2003, and it continues to create a powerful precedent as it is implemented across the Member States of the Organization.

Since the entry into force of the Convention, WHO has strived to work – as the Conference of the Parties has requested – “synergistically and complementarily” with the Convention Secretariat to ensure effective global implementation of the WHO FCTC.

As anticipated, this is an evolving process, and WHO continues to readily and eagerly position and orient itself to fully support the implementation of the WHO FCTC. In doing so, respective boundaries, roles, and responsibilities are continually clarified and refined.

Since the third session of the Conference of the Parties in 2008, we have all worked concertedly to ensure that the coordinated capacity of WHO and the Convention Secretariat is fully focused on improving cohesive technical delivery at country level. In this regard, WHO’s full commitment to utilize all its resources for treaty implementation, in coordination with the Convention Secretariat, is evidenced by initiatives undertaken across all three levels of the Organization. The collaborative work is grounded in the alignment of a broad, strategic vision for programmatic action in countries; there are numerous illustrations of this vision and commitment.

The 2008–2013 Action Plan for the Prevention and Control of Noncommunicable Diseases (NCDs), adopted by the Sixty-first World Health Assembly, stresses that implementation of the WHO FCTC is key to controlling NCDs worldwide. This crystallization of the WHO FCTC as a cornerstone in the global fight against NCDs further establishes WHO TFI’s commitment to cohesive partnership with the Convention Secretariat for implementation of the WHO FCTC.

That said, while WHO TFI and the Convention Secretariat continue to work together to assist countries in translating the provisions of the WHO FCTC into national level programmes, it must be recognized that, in view of the fact that tobacco is a multisectoral health issue, the Convention Secretariat's engagement with WHO extends across the Organization, including across clusters, regions, and WHO country offices. While this fourth session of the Conference of the Parties has specifically asked for further debate on the WHO TFI–Convention Secretariat collaboration, I would like to underscore the point that there is an “All-of-WHO – Convention Secretariat” engagement, and complete support in this context.

In regard to WHO TFI–Convention Secretariat collaboration specifically, a global retreat of all parts of WHO, including all six regional offices, marked the scaling up of all WHO resources to strengthen coordination and joint work through a comprehensive joint plan. Since the end of 2009, the WHO Director-General's Office has convened frequent and regular coordination meetings attended by the Executive Director of the office of the Director-General, Assistant Director-General for Noncommunicable Diseases and Mental Health, the Director of WHO's Tobacco Free Initiative, and the Head of the Convention Secretariat. These meetings have provided a platform for strategic engagement and coordination at the highest levels of the Organization, ensuring synergistic attunement to the global vision and joint objectives of WHO Secretariat and the Convention Secretariat. At the strategic level, two areas for collaborative engagement were identified:

First and foremost, coordinated action at country level; and secondly, harmonization of data collection and reporting.

On the first strategic priority, I am pleased to report that, in order to maximize coordinated activities at country level, WHO convened the International Working Group for Consultations on National Tobacco Control Programmes in November 2009 in Tunisia. At this meeting, the Convention Secretariat played a key role in reviewing and examining selected experiences and best practices in running effective national tobacco control programmes, and the meeting explored ways of strengthening WHO's role in supporting the implementation of the workplan referred to earlier. This global consultation was attended by recognized tobacco control programme managers from across the globe, regional and country representatives, and both WHO and Convention Secretariat staff. The outcomes of this global consultation were a number of strategic recommendations for developing and strengthening national tobacco control programmes to secure successful implementation of comprehensive tobacco control policies.

In addition, WHO TFI invited the Convention Secretariat to participate in two of WHO TFI's Global Management Group meetings, comprising WHO TFI's Regional Advisors and senior staff at headquarters, in January 2009 and March 2010. The Director-General of WHO also participated in the meeting convened in January 2009. These meetings aimed to expand upon country-level priorities and further solidified the coordinated approaches of WHO TFI and the Convention Secretariat towards country-level delivery of programmatic action.

The second strategic priority is data harmonization concerning the COP reporting mechanism and the WHO Global Report on the Tobacco Epidemic. On this issue, WHO TFI and the Convention Secretariat have worked together to examine restructured data collection frameworks. As mandated by the Conference of the Parties, the Convention Secretariat has undertaken work detailing the standardization and harmonization of data and data collection initiatives. WHO TFI collaborated closely on this initiative and provided a number of strategic inputs for consideration. One substantive outcome of these consultations is a recognition that the data collection processes for Parties should be

streamlined, and WHO TFI and the Convention Secretariat are continuing to collaborate to ensure effective data collection procedures and mechanisms for all Parties to the WHO FCTC.

Furthermore, in order to better delineate the roles of WHO TFI in assisting Parties in the implementation of national level policies in accordance with the WHO FCTC, both WHO TFI and the Convention Secretariat agreed to a “TFI roles and responsibilities” document which was presented to the Bureau of the Conference of the Parties in July 2010.

From an operational perspective, there also exist multiple examples of TFI-Convention Secretariat collaboration.

One area of work to which WHO TFI has contributed significantly is that of the country-level Convention Secretariat needs assessment exercises. The Convention Secretariat coordinated a series of in-country needs assessment missions aiming to provide support to Parties by assessing their needs, identifying priorities for the implementation of WHO FCTC, and promoting access to internationally available resources on the basis of identified needs. WHO TFI, employing its experience in technical capacity assessments at country-level, has accompanied delegations from the Convention Secretariat on almost every one of these missions. These missions retain a particular focus on lower-resource countries with the aim of promoting and accelerating access to internationally available resources, and of communicating their prioritized needs to development Partners.

Similarly, WHO TFI continues to provide substantial contributions to treaty implementation through the provision of technical assistance for normative development and implementation of demand and supply measures of the treaty. In this regard, WHO TFI has produced a comprehensive technical report relating to price and tax policies (Article 6), and continues to further the international method validations relating to the product regulation provisions of the treaty (Articles 9 and 10).

Moreover, WHO TFI continues to work on a broad range of initiatives important to Member States in WHO FCTC implementation and national capacity building; many of these programmes align closely with the workplan of the Conference of the Parties and are detailed in the expanded “side-by-side” workplan produced by WHO TFI in consultation with the Convention Secretariat which can be found in White Paper Number 1 of 17 November 2010.

Furthermore, with a view to facilitating further coordination with the Convention Secretariat, WHO has created a programme manager position in TFI to ensure effective technical collaboration with the Convention Secretariat across all levels of the Organization. This position has been found to add significant value to the alignment between TFI and the Convention Secretariat, as this staff member oversees WHO’s day-to-day work on the implementation of Treaty measures.

Finally, while WHO TFI and the Convention Secretariat continue to diligently refine their collaboration, full cohesiveness will only be achieved when there is a similar formalized and demonstrated integrated synergy at the governance levels. In this regard, the Conference of Parties may wish to explore pragmatic avenues of interaction with the World Health Assembly and the Executive Board. Similarly, an examination of the manner by which the Bureau of the COP, which is regionally constituted, interfaces with WHO Regions may also translate to further strengthening between the work of WHO and all levels of governance of the WHO FCTC.

A consistent and pragmatic approach to aligning the needs and priorities of the Conference of Parties in respect of tobacco control with the public health policy setting agenda of the World Health Assembly, may also involve an examination of the elements of tobacco consumption, currently being

addressed by WHO, which are not expressly delineated in the WHO FCTC; areas such as integration of tobacco control measures within strategies addressing the relationship between tuberculosis and tobacco, and links to maternal and child health.

As always, WHO is fully committed to supporting Parties' implementation of the WHO FCTC, and to continuing to strengthen the work of WHO and the Conference of the Parties.

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