



Address by

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to the

WORLD NO TOBACCO DAY

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This year's World No Tobacco Day is of a somewhat unique nature. For the first time since its entry into force over five years ago, we are coming together – parties and non-parties, decision-makers and advocates, politicians and organizations, media and people – to support the full implementation of and compliance with WHO's Framework Convention on Tobacco Control.

The Framework Convention was developed in response to the globalization of the tobacco epidemic. It represents a milestone for the promotion of public health and provides new legal dimensions for international health cooperation. The Convention contains core demand and supply reduction measures that:

- reaffirm the right of all people to the highest standard of health;
- hinder the tobacco industry's efforts to affect the health policies that are designed to protect people from tobacco;
- call for enhanced international cooperation to protect present and future generations from the devastating health, social, environmental and economic consequences of tobacco consumption and exposure to second-hand smoke.

The Framework Convention has brought tobacco control to the forefront of our regional and national health and political agendas. Despite the promising progress that the Region has witnessed since the beginning of the development of the Convention, a more

comprehensive approach still needs to be adopted if rapid and sustained reduction in tobacco consumption is to be achieved.

Full implementation and enforcement of, and compliance with, the Convention is vital to decreasing the considerable health and economic burden caused by tobacco. Countries must: establish strong tobacco control legislation; delegate the implementation of this legislation to the relevant authority; and create a strong policy to monitor the tobacco industry and a mechanism for international collaboration in this area.

The agency responsible for the implementation of the tobacco control legislation at the national level must be well defined; otherwise confusion and conflict of interest between many agencies will occur. The responsible agency staff must be trained and familiarized with all existing tobacco control legislation at national level in addition to the Framework Convention, to ensure successful implementation and adherence.

The Framework Convention has proved to be more than just an ordinary convention. It has fulfilled its promise, creating a whole new public health era for tobacco control. Now, we need to meet our obligations. We need to do more. Countries must actively take the steps needed to pass and enforce the necessary legislation.

The Convention is a means for parties and non-parties alike to curb the tobacco epidemic. Although the majority of countries in our Region are now parties to the WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control, non-parties can still use the Convention as their guide in designing and implementing legislation at national level to protect themselves and their peoples.

We all have a role to play in ensuring the full implementation of the Framework Convention in our countries. Tobacco control cannot and will not advance to the next level unless all partners work together towards this common goal.

Parties to the WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control need to meet all their obligations...

Non-parties need to get on board...

Civil society and nongovernmental organizations need to advocate...

The public needs to demand compliance from their governments.

The tool for a tobacco-free world is at our fingertips. Its provisions have been trialled, tested and proved effective in many countries, globally and regionally.

With the WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control, we stand the biggest chance of achieving what could be the single largest positive impact on health in this century.

Let us join forces...

Let us commit to reducing the preventable morbidity and mortality caused by tobacco use...

Let us ensure the effective implementation of the WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control.