



Regional workshop on implementation of the WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (WHO FCTC), Cairo, Egypt, 12–15 December 2011

Summary of workshop discussions and outcomes

The workshop brought together national experts from 15 States Parties to the Convention from the World Health Organization (WHO) Eastern Mediterranean Region, as well as representatives of the European Union, the World Bank, United Nations (UN) Office, Office of the Health Minister's Council for Gulf Cooperation Council States, and three nongovernmental organizations accredited as observers to the Conference of the Parties, to discuss the major challenges and achievements in implementation of the WHO FCTC.

Topics discussed included treaty instruments, resources, mechanisms of assistance and international cooperation. The meeting provided an opportunity to exchange country experiences and identify best practices in implementation of the Convention. Based on the discussions held during the workshop, the Parties unanimously supported the following recommendations.

WHO FCTC implementation

1. All tobacco control initiatives in the WHO Eastern Mediterranean Region should derive from the WHO FCTC and focus on its implementation to ensure the sustainability of commitment and action.
2. The WHO FCTC should be seen in the context of the global response to the tobacco epidemic and its potential contribution to effective regional and global strategies to combat noncommunicable diseases.
3. Parties should use existing UN structures at regional and national level to maximize support for WHO FCTC implementation and to incorporate the Convention into the core of the national development agenda, through integration of the Convention into national health and development plans.
4. Higher judicial authorities should be engaged and trained to increase their knowledge and the readiness of judicial systems towards national obligations under the Convention.
5. Implementation of the WHO FCTC should cover all tobacco products, including *shisha* and chewing tobacco, and should begin to address problems related to other nicotine products.
6. In keeping with the partial guidelines on Articles 9 and 10 of the WHO FCTC, tobacco manufacturers and importers should be held responsible for disclosing to government authorities information about the contents and emissions of tobacco products and should bear any related costs, including laboratory testing costs, incurred.
7. The capacity of Parties in tobacco product testing should be strengthened.
8. National cessation strategies and action plans should be strengthened and tobacco dependence treatment and tobacco cessation should be further integrated into health care systems.

9. The misleading arguments used by the tobacco industry against government efforts to increase tobacco taxes and introduce pictorial health warnings on tobacco packaging should be combated.
10. Regional representatives should be supported to attend the workshop on trade-related tobacco control measures being organized by the WHO FCTC Secretariat in March 2012 in Geneva.
11. Technical support should be provided to Parties to help them address research gaps in tobacco use and control.

Regional and national coordination

12. Noting the importance of Article 12 of the WHO FCTC and its guidelines in achieving the overall objective of the Convention, multisectoral engagement beyond the health sector should be enhanced and effective partnerships built with all relevant government agencies and civil society.
13. Parties should use the information, tools, reference materials and country best practices that are available through the WHO Regional Office for the Eastern Mediterranean and WHO FCTC Secretariat web sites.
14. Parties should share materials and best practices through the WHO Regional Office for the Eastern Mediterranean web site and should support the Tobacco Free Initiative in the reproduction and translation of materials, and obtaining rights of use for copyright materials from other countries where needed.
15. Parties should attend the pre-Intergovernmental Negotiating Body (INB) regional consultation on the draft protocol on illicit trade which will be held in early February 2012, hosted by Jordan. To ensure continuity, Parties should send representatives who have already been involved in the negotiations or should thoroughly brief any new representative(s).
16. A detailed regional consultation should be convened on guidelines on Article 6 of the WHO FCTC after the working group on Article 6 has submitted its report to the Conference of Parties during its fifth session in November 2012.

International cooperation and assistance

17. Parties should include WHO FCTC implementation and tobacco control as a priority in the United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) process when establishing the UNDAF agenda at national level. Progress in this area should be reflected in all relevant reports and forums.
18. Training on tobacco taxation should be arranged to increase understanding of the issues by Parties.