

Tobacco: a threat that cannot be ignored

The health and economic costs of tobacco are devastating to the world. The single greatest preventable cause of death in the world today, tobacco kills 5.4 million people a year. If left unchecked, that number will increase to more than 8 million a year by 2030.

Tobacco kills many people at the height of their productivity depriving families of their breadwinners, and nations of a healthy workforce.

Tobacco also contributes to the cycle of poverty: many studies have shown that in the poorest households in some low-income countries as much as 10 percent of total household expenditure is on tobacco, which means less money is spent on basic items such as food, education, and health care.

The challenge of non-communicable diseases

Alongside the other major modifiable risk factors, tobacco is a significant cause of the non-communicable diseases (NCDs) that pose a major challenge to development in the 21st century. According to the recently released World Economic Forum's 2010 Global Risks report, NCDs could cost the world in excess of a trillion US dollars per year.

	Tobacco use	Unhealthy diet	Physical inactivity	Harmful use of alcohol
Cardiovascular	✓	✓	✓	✓
Diabetes	✓	✓	✓	✓
Cancer	✓	✓	✓	✓
Chronic respiratory	✓	-	-	-
Attributable deaths per year	5.4m	2.7m*	1.9m	2.3m

Source: WHO NCDnet, www.who.int/ncdnet

* due to low intake of fruits and vegetables

A legally binding global response to tobacco

The world has an evidence-based tool to address the global tobacco epidemic: the world's first public health treaty, the WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (FCTC). 168 countries are now Parties to the FCTC, representing more than 86 percent of the world's population.



Parties to the treaty commit to implementing an evidence-based and highly cost-effective set of strategies to reduce tobacco consumption, including:

- tobacco tax and price increases
- smoke-free environments in all public and workplaces
- bans on all direct forms of tobacco advertising
- public education including large pictorial health warning labels on tobacco packages
- prohibition against deceptive labels such as “low” and “light”
- prohibition against the sale of tobacco products to minors
- regulation of the content of tobacco products

The Framework Convention Alliance

The Framework Convention Alliance is a civil society alliance of more than 350 NGOs from over 100 countries, whose mission is to help develop and implement the FCTC as the basis for effective global tobacco control.

FCA's vision is a world free from the devastating health, social, economic and environmental consequences of tobacco and tobacco use.

Since its inception in 1999, FCA has been a powerful force in the initial campaign for a global treaty on tobacco control and represents the voice of civil society in the negotiations of the FCTC.

FCA provided leadership, technical expertise and logistical support during key FCTC negotiations and WHO meetings such as the World Health Assembly and the Conferences of the Parties, as well as for the regional and expert groups that have developed guidelines on implementation for specific articles of the treaty.

Before and during each meeting, FCA develops policy position papers, educational materials, and presentations that are made available to government delegates as well as NGO representatives. Through FCA workshops and grants programs to NGOs in low income countries, civil society has been very active at the national and regional level.

The work done by FCA members will result in millions of lives saved in the years to come. However, much work remains to be done as more countries are in urgent need of assistance in their efforts to reduce tobacco use and the chronic diseases and impoverishment it causes.

Framework Convention Alliance

701 4th Street NW, 3rd floor

Washington, DC 20001, USA

Phone: +1 202 289 7155, Fax: +1 202 289 7166

Email: fca@fctc.org

www.fctc.org