



# FCA PACIFIC ISLAND COUNTRIES

*Framework Convention Alliance*

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## Oceania event provides push toward a Tobacco Free Pacific by 2025

In 2013, Ministers of Health from the Pacific island countries (PICs) set an ambitious goal of a *Tobacco Free Pacific by 2025*. While the PICs have made great progress in tobacco control recently, including adopting tax increases, establishing smoke-free spaces, enacting packaging and labelling laws, and establishing licensing regulations, creating a *Tobacco Free Pacific by 2025* will be tough.

Events like the recent Oceania Tobacco Control Conference (OTCC) 2015 provide great opportunities to share successes and challenges in the PICs, and to learn from others.

The three-day conference, and pre-event workshops, in Perth, Australia (20-22 October) brought together government and non-government representatives from the Cook Islands, Palau, the Marshall Islands, Fiji and



*A wonderful and diverse representation from the Pacific Islands at OTCC 2015*

Recent data show that over 50 percent of male youth and 20-40 percent of female youth in some PICs are current users of any tobacco product. Estimates for adults, aged 15 years and over, show over 40 percent of males in several PICs are current smokers of any tobacco product with female smoking rates generally lower (WHO report on the global tobacco epidemic 2015).

Samoa, as well as colleagues from Australia and New Zealand. They discussed issues such as implementation of the WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (FCTC) in the PICs; multi-sectoral coordinating mechanisms to address tobacco control, tobacco industry interference and enforcement of legislation.

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Most Pacific island delegates also made presentations during the conference on topics such as;

- Smoke-free homes
- Effective tobacco control enforcement
- Decreasing the burden of cancer by creating smoke-free workplaces
- Strategic health communication campaigning
- Multisectoral coordination



*A wonderful and diverse representation from the Pacific Islands at OTCC 2015*

Many highly-respected global experts were in attendance who both informed and inspired participants. Plain packaging, industry interference, cessation, tobacco as a social justice issue, smoking in prisons, economic aspects of tobacco control (including taxation), and e-cigarettes were just some of the hot topics discussed.

## **FCTC reporting – what you need to know in 2016**

One of countries' obligations under the WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (FCTC) is to submit, every two years, reports on progress in implementing the Convention. The upcoming deadline is 15 April, 2016.

Countries now have four months to complete an electronic survey instrument that includes both mandatory core questions and an optional module updated for 2016. This information will be used by the Convention Secretariat to produce a [Global Progress Report](#) that will be reviewed by FCTC's governing body – the Conference of the Parties (COP) – in November 2016.

However, the collected data is not generally used, for example, to help countries understand whether they meet the requirements under the Convention or to identify areas where Parties might need additional tools or targeted assistance. This shortcoming will be addressed by the upcoming session of the COP. A process is already underway to examine the reporting process and the possible opportunities to utilize

the data that countries share with the Secretariat.

An expert group was established to deliver recommendations on this matter to Parties when they next meet at COP 7 in November. The first meeting of the expert group took place in December 2015 and the group will meet one more time this year.

To enhance the usefulness of their reporting processes, many international Conventions have established mechanisms, procedures or committees to facilitate the review of individual Party reports. The purpose of such a review is to better understand difficulties in implementation and to provide tailored guidance on how treaty implementation can be improved. The FCTC expert group was tasked to propose a similar procedure for the FCTC.

***REMINDER for Parties that FCTC implementation reports should be submitted in the period***

***1 January – 15 April 2016.***

See [http://www.who.int/fctc/reporting/reporting\\_instrument](http://www.who.int/fctc/reporting/reporting_instrument)

## Pacific unites to scale-up towards Tobacco Free Pacific 2025

Fiji hosted 19 of its regional neighbours for the *Pacific Workshop on Implementation of the WHO FCTC and Regional Action plan for the Tobacco Free Initiative in the Western Pacific (2015-19)* from 17 to 19 November in Nadi.

Co-supported by the WHO Western Pacific Regional Office and the WHO FCTC Secretariat, this was the first time Pacific island tobacco control focal points, tobacco control civil society representatives, and tobacco control experts and advocates came together since the Pacific Health Ministers adopted the Tobacco Free Pacific 2025 goal in 2013.

Participants shared experiences on progress in tobacco control, remaining challenges and obstacles and identified actions moving forward. Tobacco industry interference, limited tobacco control enforcement, and limited resources to support and prioritize tobacco control were some of the common challenges identified.



*Participants enjoy some time to share stories and dance*



*Group work on action plan strategies*

Participants made actions plans for 2016, which included activities such as amending national tobacco control legislation to be FCTC compliant and to facilitate enforcement, build capacity for and implement brief tobacco cessation interventions, and raising awareness among government and non-government sectors about issues such as preventing tobacco industry interference and illicit trade of tobacco products.



*SEATCA's Bungon Ritthiphakdee and Tibor Szilagyi from the Convention Secretariat take a brief break*

**Pacific Workshop on Implementation of the WHO FCTC and Regional Action Plan for the Tobacco Free Initiative in the Western Pacific (2015-2019)**

17-19 November 2015  
Nadi, Fiji



# Tobacco Free Pacific 2025 Alliance

The TFP2025 Alliance is a growing regional platform for connecting people and organizations, sharing resources, building knowledge and providing awareness related to the Tobacco Free Pacific 2025 campaign.

Inspired by the Pacific's *Healthy Islands* vision and the Southeast Asia Tobacco Control Alliance (SEATCA), the vision for TFP2025 is “a tobacco-free Pacific where tobacco is no longer used and no one dies prematurely from noncommunicable diseases caused by tobacco use or exposure to second-hand smoke”. The purpose of the Alliance is to bring together government, NGO, and technical agencies, to share and exchange technical support, best

practice, advocacy messages, and tobacco control research.

The Alliance is designed to help accelerate action on FCTC implementation so that the region can meet the goal adopted in 2013 by the Pacific Ministers of Health to reduce adult tobacco use to less than 5% for each Pacific Island country and territory by 2025. **All those interested to join the Alliance are encouraged to register at [www.TFP2025.org](http://www.TFP2025.org).**



## New tool developed to help track progress in tobacco control

A new tool to help PICs see a brief but clear picture of the status of their tobacco control efforts is being developed as an initiative of the Tobacco Free Pacific 2025 Alliance. The Tobacco Free Pacific 2025 Dashboard was shared at a recent meeting of TC focal points in Fiji and is still undergoing minor revisions. It is designed to help PICs keep track of progress and gaps in tobacco control.

Potential uses of the Dashboard are for Multi-sectoral Coordinating Mechanisms, tobacco control focal points, NGOs, and other tobacco control advocates. Once finalized, the tool will be available at [www.TFP2025.org](http://www.TFP2025.org).

Strategic area (FCTC Article)	Action (target)	Status/gaps	Enforcement (red, yellow, green)
General obligations (Article 5)	National comprehensive tobacco control legislation	Partial	
	Coordinating mechanism	Yes	
	Official NGO partner(s)	Yes	
	Tobacco control focal point	Yes	
	<b>Enforcement</b>		
Price and tax measures (Article 6)	Responsible tobacco control enforcement authority	Yes	
	National enforcement protocol	Yes	
	Mechanism implemented for imposing 'instant' or 'spot' fines on violators of any tobacco control law	Yes	
	<b>Preventing tobacco industry interference</b>		
Protect from exposure to second-hand smoke (Article 8)	Code of conduct for public servants	No	
	Raising awareness about TII among gov'n't & public	No	
	Ban on accepting donations from tobacco industry	Yes	
Price and tax measures (Article 6)	Excise tax on tobacco products (at least 70% of retail price) <sup>#</sup>	55%	
	Limit or ban duty free import of tobacco products	200 cigarettes	
	Limit or ban duty free outgoing	No	
Protect from exposure to second-hand smoke (Article 8)	<b>Smoke free indoor public places:</b>		
	Health care facilities	Yes	
	Educational facilities	Yes	
	Restaurants	Partial	
	Bars/pubs	Partial	
	Indoor workplaces	Partial	

Screenshot of partial TFP 2025 Dashboard for Pacific Island Countries

## News from the region

### Update from the Pacific mCessation Project

The Pacific mCessation Project, a partnership project between the University of Auckland and the Samoa Ministry of Health to increase quitting in Samoa will be launching a new anti-smoking mass media campaign early this year.

The campaign, entitled “*Smoking Will Kill You*” or “*E Te Oti I Le Tapa’a*” in Samoan, includes three 30-second public service announcements (PSAs) for radio and television. The advertisements were developed in partnership with the World Lung Foundation (WLF) with technical support from Cameron Sugden.

The PSAs graphically show the damage caused by smoking to various organs of the body and highlight the harm of exposure to second hand smoke among children and non-smokers.

The campaign has been based on international evidence that the most effective tobacco control campaigns are those that draw out strong emotions and use graphic imagery that show the negative effects of tobacco. However, to assess

how it is received in Samoa, an evaluation of smokers and non-smokers opinions and feedback regarding the effects of the advertisements will be conducted following the campaign launch.

The campaign will dovetail with the project’s mCessation programme called *TXTTaofiTapa* (TXTStopSmoke), a mobile phone cessation programme for smokers wanting to quit. *TXTTaofiTapa* is set to start early in 2016 and will be piloted among 100 smokers who will receive a series of text messages on their mobile phones helping them quit by giving advice, tips and encouragement. The project team is working with the Ministry of Health and Bluesky to deliver the programme.

According to latest World Health Organization STEPS data, the current prevalence of smoking in Samoa among adults remains at 25.6% (36.5 % males and 13.7% females). This initiative is one of several projects focused on reducing tobacco consumption in Samoa.

For further information please contact:  
Dr Judith McCool, School of Population Health  
University of Auckland [j.mccool@auckland.ac.nz](mailto:j.mccool@auckland.ac.nz)

### **DATES TO REMEMBER**

**22-23 January, 2016** Guam, USA—Non-communicable Disease Collaboration meeting for USAPI

**2-4 February, 2016** Istanbul, Turkey – Meeting of the working group on Articles 9 & 10 of the WHO FCTC

**4 February**, World Cancer Day

**15-17 February, 2016** Geneva, Switzerland—First WHO Global Meeting of National NCD Programme Directors and Managers <http://www.who.int/nmh/events/2016/ncd-focal-points/en/>

**7-12 November, 2016** New Delhi, India—FCTC COP7

## Civil society cheers Philip Morris loss on Australia's plain packaging

Civil society groups cheered news in December that Philip Morris had lost its latest challenge to Australia's laws requiring plain packaging of tobacco products.



The company claimed the laws violated trademark provisions in an Australia-Hong Kong investment agreement, but a tribunal ruled that it had no jurisdiction to hear the case.

"This is the second victory against the tobacco industry in legal challenges against plain packaging," said Mr. Todd Harper, CEO of [Cancer Council Victoria](#), in Australia. "It is time for them to abandon this desperate legal strategy aimed at undermining plain packaging."

[Read more here.](#)

## Needs assessment mission held in Tonga

In response to a request for assistance, a needs assessment mission was held in the Kingdom of Tonga in late November. Congratulations to Tonga for the good progress in implementing the FCTC to which the Kingdom has been a party since 2005. The main recommendations resulting from the mission include:

- adopt the new regulations to the Tobacco Act;
- implement a total ban of smoking in all public places, including restaurants;
- include graphic health warnings on tobacco packages; and
- create a code of conduct for civil servants to protect tobacco control measures from the interference of the tobacco industry.

[Read more here.](#)



## Enforcement of TC legislation in the Solomon Islands

The enforcement plan executed by the Ministry of Health and Medical Services (MHHS) is beginning to have an impact in terms of compliance on the key areas of tobacco control legislation, including sales to the minors, sale of single sticks and indoor second hand smoking.

Evidence of this compliance has been seen as all the wholesale and retail shops in Honiara are being visited, provided brief education and key information on the specifics and penalties associated with noncompliance.

The brief awareness and education has set a

high demand causing some shop owners to post their own public notices regarding the law.



*GYLN's Pastor Geoff Alacky, member of SI Tobacco Task Force points to key provisions of tobacco act and penalties for noncompliance*

The MHHS and the Tobacco Task Force are coordinating the effort and will follow up in early 2016 to identify gaps and strategies to strengthen operation of the overall plan.

# Framework Convention Alliance in the Pacific Islands

*Working together to free the world from the devastating health, social, economic and environmental consequences of tobacco and tobacco use*

The Framework Convention Alliance (FCA) represents the voice of civil society in support of the world's first global public health treaty – the WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (FCTC). The FCA is made up of nearly 500 organizations from more than 100 low, middle and high income countries.

**For membership information: write to [membership@fctc.org](mailto:membership@fctc.org).**

FCA publishes the *Bulletin* and *Tobacco Watch*  
<http://www.fctc.org/publications>

FCA has representatives in all WHO regions. The Western Pacific—Pacific Island Countries Regional Office (WPRO—Oceania) of FCA is located in Palau. The Coordinator is Annabel Lyman.

The Office's main activities are:

- Mobilise and support civil society capacity in support of the FCTC
- Collaborate with other technical assistance providers serving the Pacific Islands
- Provide technical assistance to members & Parties

For more information contact the [Coordinator](#)

## Thanks to outgoing FCA

### Director

FCA's Director Mr. Laurent Huber has recently stepped down from this role. Laurent has been involved with the Alliance since 2000 and in the role of Director since 2003. The FCA has been an influential force in global tobacco control under Laurent's leadership. Since 2011 he has played dual roles as Director of both FCA and ASH (US) and will continue to serve as Director of ASH which has already pledged its continuing support to FCA



Mr. Laurent Huber



Mr. Francis Thompson

and tobacco control. The FCA Board has invited Francis Thompson, who has served as FCA Policy Director for over five years, to take on the role of Executive Director. We give our wholehearted thanks to Laurent for his inspiration and leadership and our very warm welcome and support to Francis in his new role.

**Thanks to all who contributed to this issue of the newsletter. News on progress, challenges, announcements, photos, etc. are all welcome. Next deadline is April 4th.**

### FCA Members in Pacific Island Countries

- Coalition for a Tobacco Free Palau
- Global Youth Leadership Nexus (Solomon Islands)
- Kumit Bobrae Coalition Inc. (Marshall Islands)
- Marshall Islands Epidemiology and Prevention Initiatives, Inc. (MIEPI)
- Kia-Henry Nema (Papua New Guinea)
- Nauru National Women's Council
- Samoa Cancer Society
- The Child of the South Pacific Incorporated Society (Niue)
- Tobacco Free Coalition Kosrae (Federated States of Micronesia)
- Tonga Family Health Association
- Tuvalu Association of NGOs (TANGO)
- Ulkerreuil a Klengar– UAK (Palau)

