



This document relates to items 3, 5.2 and 5.3 of the provisional agenda

Sixth Session of the Conference of the Parties to the WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control,  
13-18 October 2014, Moscow

### *FCA Policy Briefing*

## **Non-communicable Diseases, sustainable development and the FCTC**

#### **Key recommendations:**

- COP6 should welcome the proposal to include the FCTC in future development goals and targets, and agree to take specific steps to promote the Convention during negotiations on the post-2015 development agenda.
- COP6 should review recent global efforts on prevention and control of NCDs, and declare its commitment to support them.
- The COP should also agree to regularly review progress on the NCD target to reduce prevalence in global tobacco use by 30 percent by 2025, and provide recommendations for action to meet this target.
- Parties should formally recognise the COP as the primary international, intergovernmental forum for negotiating the global response to the tobacco epidemic.

### **Introduction**

Tobacco control is a key strategy to address the epidemic of non-communicable diseases (NCDs). As a result, various global commitments on NCDs call on countries to accelerate implementation of the WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (FCTC). Most recently, implementation of the FCTC has been recognised as an integral part of a global strategy to “ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages”, one of the proposed sustainable development goals.

The sixth session of the FCTC Conference of the Parties (COP6) should build on the political momentum generated around the FCTC and by the global response to NCDs. It should seize leadership in fulfilling the NCD commitments related to tobacco control, and agree on steps to promote the FCTC among future development goals.

### **The FCTC and sustainable development**

Discussions at the United Nations (UN) are underway to agree on new development objectives which should replace the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) in 2015. The FCTC is explicitly mentioned among proposed goals and targets for sustainable development, a component of the post-2015 development agenda<sup>1</sup>. The proposal, along with other relevant documents, will be reviewed by the UN General Assembly in coming months.

<sup>1</sup> Document A/68/970, Report of the Open Working Group of the General Assembly on Sustainable development goals, p.13.

The proposal that the FCTC should be part of the future development agenda provides clear recognition that the Convention is a comprehensive health, and development, strategy. Only two other Conventions have been explicitly mentioned among the proposed goals and targets for sustainable development<sup>2</sup>. The COP should, therefore, welcome the proposal and agree to take specific steps to promote the FCTC and tobacco control during the negotiations on the post-2015 development goals, which will be agreed in September 2015.

### **The FCTC and NCDs**

At the same time, significant progress on the global NCD agenda has been made since the last session of the COP. Over the last two years, the World Health Assembly (WHA) has endorsed a number of global commitments to tackle the NCD epidemic, including a target of a 30 percent relative reduction in prevalence of current tobacco use by 2025<sup>3</sup>. An overarching NCD target to reduce by 25 percent premature mortality from cardiovascular diseases, cancer, diabetes or chronic respiratory diseases by 2025 was also adopted<sup>4</sup>.

The Global Action Plan for the prevention and control of NCDs, adopted by the WHA in 2013<sup>5</sup>, recommends that countries accelerate full implementation of the WHO FCTC to achieve the target on tobacco use. Furthermore, under Objective 3, the Action Plan recommends using the guidelines adopted by the FCTC COP in implementing specific tobacco control measures, including guidelines on Article 5.3 on protection of public health policies with respect to tobacco control from commercial and other vested interests of the tobacco industry.

Most recently, in July 2014, the UN General Assembly (UNGA) reviewed progress in fulfilling the NCD commitments adopted at its high-level meeting in 2011, and reiterated the call to accelerate implementation of the FCTC<sup>6</sup>. The outcome document adopted by the UNGA also highlights the need for multi-sectoral collaboration to address NCDs and their risk factors<sup>7</sup>.

### **The COP and global response to NCDs**

The overall target on premature NCD mortality cannot be achieved without substantially reducing tobacco use globally<sup>8</sup>. The WHA in 2016 and UNGA in 2018 are expected to discuss NCDs and the adopted targets in detail, and provide guidance on further efforts. These meetings would greatly benefit from focused discussions at the COP and its recommendations on achieving the tobacco use target and strategies to accelerate implementation of the FCTC.

The text of the Convention states that “the Conference of the Parties shall keep under regular review the implementation of the Convention and take the decisions necessary to promote its effective implementation ...” (Article 23.5). Clearly, the COP is well positioned to guide global work on fulfilling Objective 3 of the Global NCD Action Plan and in proposing recommendations to meet the global target on tobacco use prevalence.

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<sup>2</sup> The United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change is mentioned on p.8, 19 and 20. The United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea is mentioned on p.21

<sup>3</sup> Resolution WHA66.10

<sup>4</sup> *ibid*

<sup>5</sup> *ibid*

<sup>6</sup> UN resolution A/RES/68/300

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid* para 30

<sup>8</sup> Kontis V. et al. (2014). Contribution of six risk factors to achieving the 25×25 non-communicable disease mortality reduction target: a modelling study. *The Lancet*.

Every two years, sessions of the COP are attended by tobacco control experts and policy makers from all over the world. The COP's plenary sessions on the FCTC Global progress report regularly review global trends in tobacco use. These discussions are then followed by inter-governmental negotiations on selected tobacco control measures and other strategies to tackle the tobacco epidemic.

The COP could easily frame its agenda and negotiations around the global target on tobacco use, and adopt relevant recommendations as necessary. These recommendations could then feed into broader discussions on NCDs at the WHA and UNGA. The COP could also regularly report to the WHA and UNGA on the status of the FCTC and whether its implementation has accelerated.

**The COP should take the lead**

At its sixth session, the COP should welcome the proposal to include a target on the FCTC in the future development goals, and agree to take specific steps to promote the Convention during the negotiations on the post-2015 development goals.

The COP should also reinforce global work on the prevention and control of NCDs by declaring its commitment to support that work. The COP should also agree to regularly review progress toward the global target of a 30 percent relative reduction in prevalence of current tobacco use by 2025, and provide recommendations for actions to achieve this target. These recommendations could then be formally submitted for review and endorsement to the relevant sessions of the WHA and UNGA.

To strengthen coordination among various global fora and to avoid any unnecessary duplication, Parties should recognise the COP as the primary international, intergovernmental forum for negotiating the global response to the tobacco epidemic. Reports of the COP on FCTC implementation could then be regularly submitted to the WHA and UNGA to inform their negotiations.