THE FCTC & SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

UNITED NATIONS OPEN WORKING GROUP

With less than two years until the current Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) expire, discussions are underway on what should replace them. Tobacco was not explicitly mentioned in the MDGs, which were developed at the turn of the century. Some argue that as a consequence, tobacco control receives very little attention outside of health ministries and remains under resourced, especially in low- and middle-income countries[1].

The ongoing global negotiations on the new set of development priorities provide a unique opportunity to remind world leaders about their FCTC commitments and move tobacco control up the list of global development priorities. Discussions at the United Nations (UN) on the sustainable development goals are one such opportunity.

What are the sustainable development goals (SDGs)?

The sustainable development goals will likely replace the MDGs. In 2012, world leaders agreed to develop priorities which would address social, economic, and environmental challenges[2] – the sustainable development goals (SDGs).

Tobacco is, undoubtedly, one such issue. Apart from its health impacts, tobacco use robs families of resources that would otherwise go to shelter, food, education and health care; it contributes to poverty within households and reduces productivity at the national level. Moreover, tobacco farming undermines food security and environmental sustainability and leads to poor working conditions for farmers.

OWG Countries	EURO
AFRO	Belarus
Algeria	Bulgaria
Benin	Croatia
Congo	Cyprus
Ghana	Denmark
Kenya	France
Tanzania	Germany
Zambia	Hungary
Zimbabwe	Ireland
	Israel
AMRO	Italy
Argentina	Kazakhstan
Bahamas	Montenegro
Barbados	Netherlands
Bolivia	Norway
Brazil	Poland
Canada	Romania
Colombia	Serbia
Ecuador	Slovenia
Guatemala	Spain
Guyana	Switzerland
Haiti	Turkey
Mexico	UK
Nicaragua	
Peru	**SEARO**
Trinidad and Tobago	Bangladesh
USA	Bhutan
	India
EMRO	Indonesia
Egypt	Nepal
Iran	Sri Lanka
Morocco	Thailand
Pakistan	
Saudi Arabia	**WPRO**
Tunisia	Australia
United Arab Emirates	China
	Japan
	Korea
	Nauru
	Palau
	Papua New Guinea
	Singapore
	Viet Nam

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[1] WHO FCTC: The challenge of implementation (http://www.fctc.org/index.php/news-blog-list-view-of-all-214/opinion-pieces/1055-who-fctc-the-challenge-of-implementation)
[2] United Nations General Assembly, The Future We Want: Outcome Document of the UN Conference on Sustainable Development. A/Res/66/288. New York, 2012.

What is the Open Working Group?

In order to develop a list of possible SDGs, the UN established an Open Working Group (OWG). It includes 70 countries, with Hungary and Kenya as co-chairs. The OWG allows civil society groups and other stakeholders to make statements during its meetings.

The OWG's mandate is to develop a report proposing global sustainable development goals (SDGs). The OWG is expected to meet 8 times in 2013 and 2014 and to deliver its recommendations to the UN General Assembly prior to September 2014. This process is currently running parallel to other discussions, such as the MDG review process. All of the discussions on development priorities are expected to merge later in 2014.

What needs to happen?

Tobacco control needs to be recognised by the UN as a strategy to address sustainable development and improve health, particularly during the OWG discussions.

There are many reasons why tobacco control needs to be included in global development priorities, and we need to ensure that people negotiating the SDGs are aware of them. (Please see FCA's key messages in the box to the right.) It is very important that:

- Ministries of Health promote tobacco control within governments' discussions on the new development priorities and highlight tobacco's health, and economic, impacts.

- Ministries leading the discussions on development priorities are briefed about the economic and health threats resulting from tobacco use and the importance of tobacco control for sustainable development.

FCA's key messages

- Tobacco use is a major preventable cause of disease and death and the only risk factor common to the four main groups of non-communicable diseases (NCDs) – one of the major threats to development in this century.

- Solutions to address tobacco use are simple and easily available through implementation of the WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control, which now has 177 Parties representing nearly 88 percent of the world's population.

- Clear and ambitious commitments are needed to bring down the number of deaths caused by tobacco. The recently adopted global target for tobacco use prevalence (30 percent relative reduction by the year 2025)[3], should serve as the technical basis for a tobacco-related target in the post-2015 development agenda.

- Any ambitious target needs to be linked to effective interventions. In the case of tobacco control, the WHO FCTC contains a comprehensive set of tobacco control policies. Accordingly, the tobacco-related target should be monitored through tobacco control indicators based on these policies, such as: affordability of tobacco products; the presence of large and effective pictorial health warnings on packaging; comprehensive bans on tobacco advertising, promotion and sponsorship; access to tobacco dependence treatment, and requirements for smoke-free public spaces.

[3] WHA resolution WHA66.10 – Follow-up to the Political Declaration of the High-level Meeting of the General Assembly on the Prevention and Control of Non-communicable Diseases.

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