

# Working Group on Sustainable Implementation of the WHO FCTC GOING FROM OBSTACLES TO SOLUTIONS

The WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (FCTC) will reach an important milestone in 2013. For the first time in its history, a working group will meet to address challenges to implementation of the FCTC.

The **Working Group on sustainable measures to strengthen implementation of the WHO FCTC** will need to address a number of issues<sup>1</sup>, but in essence it will focus on three areas:

- mobilisation of resources;
- multi-sectoral coordination;
- international cooperation.

All these issues are critical to progress on global tobacco control. The WHO FCTC is an international legal instrument and its implementation depends significantly on active knowledge-sharing and on-going mutual assistance at the international level.

The Convention includes many important provisions that need to be implemented by different parts of governments. For instance, increasing taxes on tobacco products requires ministries of health and finance to coordinate their efforts. Similarly, promoting economically viable alternatives for tobacco growers can be done only when health and agriculture departments work hand in hand.

Effective implementation of the FCTC in any country cannot be achieved without a well staffed and funded tobacco control office. Sufficient resources – human, financial and technical – are essential to address the tobacco epidemic.

The working group (WG) has an important and challenging task: to propose recommendations in the above mentioned three areas by the sixth session of the Conference of the Parties (COP6) in October 2014.

The first meeting of the working group in October 2013 will be critical in setting the tone and pace of work.

## KEY STEPS

The following six steps will help Parties to have a productive meeting of the working group in October 2013.

### Assess obstacles to FCTC implementation

There might be a number of barriers that hinder progress on FCTC implementation. Exchanging Parties' experiences early on will permit the group to begin elaborating possible solutions as soon as possible.

### Build on progress and opportunities

It will be important to review work undertaken so far, such as the outcomes of the existing mechanisms of assistance.

### Request additional information

Sufficient information and background data will be critical for the working group to elaborate recommendations.

### Craft solutions

The group was tasked to propose a wide range of recommendations. Some suggestions are provided in this document. An initial list of options should emerge during the meeting in October.

### Engage relevant stakeholders

Inter-governmental and non-governmental organizations with relevant expertise should be invited to the meetings of the working group to share their views.

### Support second meeting of the WG

All Parties should consider providing financial contributions to allow the working group to meet at least twice before reporting to COP6.



## Six initial steps to succeed

The mandate of the working group includes an ambitious list of eight areas of work, meaning time will need to be used wisely when the Parties meet in Geneva.

The following six steps will help Parties to pave the way for a productive first meeting of the working group.

### 1 Assess obstacles to FCTC implementation

As planning and preparations for the first meeting of the working group are currently underway, Parties should consider why tobacco control does not receive sufficient support internationally or domestically. It is likely that each Party will have a slightly different experience, so an exchange of views will be important to understanding this phenomenon.

One of the obstacles to obtaining more resources for tobacco control could be that there are insufficient tools to help tobacco control staff to assess – and hence request – necessary resources for tobacco control.

Another explanation for why tobacco control is marginalized by the international community might be

that tobacco use was not included in the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and as a result, tobacco control is not on the radar of international donors.

These and other reasons identified by Parties – including obstacles posed by the tobacco industry – should be carefully reviewed by the working group.

### 2 Build on progress and opportunities

At COP5, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) introduced a review of countries' development strategies and tobacco control. According to preliminary results, out of 46 UN Development Assistance Frameworks (UNDAFs) reviewed, only four referred to the FCTC and just five others included any tobacco control measures<sup>2</sup>.

While it is important to ask why only nine countries included tobacco control in their UNDAFs, it is also important to look at the cases where tobacco control was identified as a development priority, and to learn from them.

The working group should not limit itself to looking only at past experiences. It should also review

## MANDATE OF THE WORKING GROUP

*The fifth session of the Conference of the Parties established a working group on sustainable measures to strengthen implementation of the WHO FCTC (decision FCTC/COP5(14)).*

*The mandate of the working group is to:*

- **prepare a report** on barriers and successful experiences in mobilizing the range of resources in implementing the WHO FCTC at the country level, including through existing bilateral and multilateral mechanisms of assistance;
- **provide recommendations** on how resources can be accessed for the WHO FCTC implementation and best practice can be shared;
- **provide recommendations** to strengthen South–South and triangular cooperation as well as North–South cooperation for implementation of the WHO FCTC, contributing to capacity building in Parties;
- **review** existing tools and mechanisms of assistance to the Parties to ensure they meet the needs of the Parties;
- **identify** new tools to support Parties to implement Article 5.2 of the WHO FCTC;
- **identify** and recommend best practices to access international resources for tobacco control through bilateral and multilateral cooperation and other opportunities in development cooperation;
- **examine** possibilities of using modern technologies for the exchange of information, cooperation between Parties, and to promote the effective implementation of the WHO FCTC;
- **provide** recommendations on how to promote the WHO FCTC in wider international fora.

existing opportunities to step up international co-operation or resource mobilization for tobacco control.

In recent years, the fight against non-communicable diseases (NCDs) has gained international attention. Tobacco use is the one risk factor common to the four main groups of NCDs. Hence, it will be important to ensure that efforts towards prevention and control of NCDs are in synergy with work on the FCTC.

### 3 Request additional data

Sufficient background information will be critical to allow the working group to fully review progress made in the three areas: resource mobilization, multi-sectoral coordination and international cooperation.

Additional documents may include a review of how many countries have established a multi-sectoral coordination mechanism, whether it is fully operational and sufficiently funded, and which development agencies provide resources for in-country tobacco control.

WHO, relevant UN agencies and international bodies such as the World Bank should be invited to the meeting of the working group to provide a brief overview on their work in this regard.

### 4 Craft solutions

Once obstacles to implementation of the FCTC are identified, the next step for the working group will be to propose recommendations to overcome them.

There are likely to be no silver bullets, and each recommendation will need to reflect existing challenges, the mandate of the working group and global opportunities.

If, for example, it is difficult to assess financial needs for domestic tobacco control, the working group may propose that the COP mandates development of a model budget for tobacco control and additional tools to help countries promote and justify tobacco control expenses.

If the working group agrees that the FCTC needs to be promoted within discussions on sustainable development, the group may identify key events at which to highlight contributions of tobacco control.

If there are concerns that government departments, such as finance, customs or trade, are insufficiently involved in tobacco control, the working group may wish to recommend that COP6 commission a study on economic losses related to slow progress on tobacco control.

## Proposed actions for the working group

		ASSESS		REQUEST	PROPOSE
		POTENTIAL OBSTACLES	PROGRESS & OPPORTUNITIES	ADDITIONAL INFORMATION	POSSIBLE RECOMMENDATIONS
Scope of the working group's mandate	RESOURCES MOBILIZATION	Lack of capacity to assess resource gaps	WHO estimates of cost to implement selected FCTC articles <sup>3</sup>	Outcomes of FCTC needs assessments undertaken since 2009	Model budgets for tobacco control
	MULTI-SECTORAL COORDINATION	Little awareness of tobacco control (economic) benefits	International, regional or country-level commitments on NCDs	Parties' experiences	Studies demonstrating economic losses associated with weak implementation of the FCTC
	INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION	Tobacco control excluded from MDGs	International negotiations on post-2015 development priorities	Upcoming events and consultations to determine sustainable development goals	Roadmap to promote tobacco control in the next set of development priorities

Chart: Suggested steps for the working group on how to address its mandate

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## GOING FROM OBSTACLES TO SOLUTIONS

### 5 Engage relevant stakeholders

Sharing Parties' views and experiences will be key for this working group to assess the existing obstacles to FCTC implementation, and then propose effective solutions.

At the same time, inter-governmental organizations (IGOs) such as the UNDP, as well as non-governmental organizations (NGOs) involved in tobacco control, may provide valuable contributions, so the working group should call upon their expertise.

*“The development of in-country financing mechanisms is clearly critical if sustainable funding of tobacco control work is to be ensured....*

*The role of donors will largely be to assist developing countries get to that point.”*

Report A/FCTC/COP/1/4 para 149

### 6 Support a second meeting of the WG

The mandate of the working group contains many important points. In order to sufficiently address each of them and elaborate a comprehensive list of recommendations, the group will likely need to meet more than once before reporting back to COP6.

Unfortunately, no resources were provided by COP5 for either of the working group meetings. Thanks to Australia's generous extra-budgetary contribution, the working group will meet in October 2013. But the workplan agreed at COP5 envisaged two meetings.<sup>4</sup>

Given the importance of this working group and its extensive mandate, all Parties should consider providing financial contributions to support a second meeting of this working group.

<sup>1</sup> COP5 decision FCTC/COP5(14)

<sup>2</sup> Presentation of Douglas Webb, UNDP, November 2012

<sup>3</sup> WHO. 2011. Scaling up action against non-communicable diseases: How much will it cost? Geneva: WHO

<sup>4</sup> COP5 decision FCTC/COP5(19)

<sup>5</sup> COP1 decision FCTC/COP1(13)

### MECHANISMS OF ASSISTANCE ESTABLISHED BY THE FCTC COP

During the FCTC negotiations most developing countries emphasised that they would not be able to implement the Convention unless additional resources were made available.

As a result, tools – also called mechanisms of assistance – were established in 2006<sup>5</sup> to stimulate greater national and international investment in the implementation of the Convention.

### NEEDS ASSESSMENTS

FCTC Needs Assessments include four key stages: assessment of the implementation of all substantive articles of the Convention; analysis of gaps and corresponding needs; development of concrete recommendations to accelerate FCTC implementation; and promotion of access to international resources.

The output of a Needs Assessment mission, the Needs Assessment Report, therefore needs to provide information that will serve as the basis for developing national plans and starting discussions with development partners about concrete support for tobacco control.

The completion of Needs Assessments represents a critical step in enhancing implementation, developing national plans, and triggering targeted discussions between a Party that requires assistance with FCTC implementation and potential donors.

### DATABASE OF AVAILABLE RESOURCES

The FCTC database represents a useful tool to connect potential donors with potential recipients of resources for tobacco control.

The main purpose of the database is to allow Parties real-time access to information on possible resources for FCTC implementation. At the same time, the tool provides an opportunity for donors to advertise available funds or technical assistance for FCTC implementation.

Hence, the FCTC Database of Available Resources complements FCTC Needs Assessments.