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FCA Briefing Paper:

South-South cooperation to support FCTC implementation

Key recommendations

- Parties and COP5 should agree on the key expected outcomes of activities to support South-South cooperation in the current and next biennium;
- COP5 should encourage Parties to take full ownership of these activities and to submit proposals for demonstration projects;
- COP5 should request that a report on activities and achievements in facilitating South-South cooperation be submitted to COP6.

Introduction

South-South cooperation is a broad framework for collaboration among countries of the South on various issues, including health policy. While the potential of this type of cooperation to implement the WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (FCTC) was recognized already at the first session of the Conference of the Parties (COP1)¹, resource constraints in past years prevented any activities outlined in FCTC workplans to be delivered until 2012, when the first ever expert meeting on South-South cooperation for FCTC implementation took place.

Several important activities to facilitate cooperation of developing countries on FCTC implementation are expected in upcoming years. Parties should take full ownership of all these activities and agree on their expected outcomes. The Framework Convention Alliance (FCA) recommends that the success of the demonstration projects and other activities be measured in terms of increased prioritization of tobacco control within national health and development agendas or strengthened capacities to develop, implement, and enforce tailored tobacco control measures.

South-South and triangular cooperation: general principles

The term *South-South cooperation* refers to situations when countries of the global South help each other by sharing knowledge and skills to advance social, economic and environmental development. This cooperation takes place through a variety of organisations and mechanisms on a number of issues, such as agriculture, trade, education and health. The United Nations (UN) system pro-actively facilitates transfer of specific expertise among interested low-resource countries through its Special Unit on South-South cooperation (SU/SSC). Regional and sub-regional blocks in the southern hemisphere also play a crucial role in facilitating South-South cooperation.

¹ COP1 decision FCTC/COP1(13).

Triangular cooperation brings together benefits of South-South cooperation and elements of traditional North-South development assistance. It involves donors that provide funding to allow southern countries with available expertise and skills to share those with other countries in the global South. This type of cooperation focuses mainly on capacity building.

FCTC: South-South and triangular cooperation

The tobacco epidemic disproportionately affects populations in developing countries. Consequently, the critical role of South-South cooperation in advancing FCTC implementation has been repeatedly reinforced by decisions of past sessions of the COP². At COP4, Parties agreed on several activities in 2012 and 2013 to facilitate technological, scientific and economic cooperation on tobacco control among developing countries³.

FCA welcomes the conclusions of the expert meeting held in June 2012 and its recommendations on further actions in the area of South-South cooperation. Outcomes of the meeting are described in detail in report FCTC/COP/5/16. FCA also welcomes the extrabudgetary contribution of the European Union, which made it possible for this meeting to take place and also for the Convention Secretariat to implement the meeting's recommendations⁴.

Several recent reports have identified that low-resource countries face multiple obstacles when implementing the FCTC. Not only are their domestic resources limited, but they are increasingly becoming targets of legal challenges filed directly or indirectly by the tobacco industry^{5 6}. While South-South or triangular cooperation does not address inadequate resources in a direct way, it provides an excellent opportunity to share skills and expertise on how to establish and enforce tobacco control measures or how to strengthen tobacco control policies despite industry interference.

Expected outcomes in 2013

Several activities to encourage South-South cooperation will be pursued by the Convention Secretariat next year. Thanks to EU extrabudgetary contributions, resources for six demonstration projects are now available. Parties should take full advantage of this opportunity. In order to maximize the potential benefits for the Parties, the six pilot projects should not be implemented in isolation, but rather be designed with clear common objectives in mind.

Parties and the COP5 should agree on the key expected outcomes of the six pilot projects. In FCA's view, these outcomes may include⁷:

- Development and implementation of tailored strategies to increase public and governmental awareness of the burden posed by non-communicable diseases, tobacco use and of the importance of the Convention for global public health;

² COP1 decision FCTC/COP1(13); COP3 decision FCTC/COP3(19).

³ COP4 decision FCTC/COP/4/18.

⁴ 2011 Annual Action Programme covered by the 2007-2013 Strategy Paper for the Thematic Programme 'Investing in People' under the Development Cooperation Instrument (Decision C(2011) 4163 of 16/06/2011) available at: http://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/documents/aap/2011/af_aap_2011_dci-people.pdf (p.21-29).

⁵ COP5 report FCTC/COP/5/15 and FCTC/COP/5/17.

⁶ Document E/2012/70 – 2012 Report of the Secretary General: Ad Hoc Inter-Agency Task Force on Tobacco Control.

⁷ Formulation of all three outcomes comes from the COP5 report on South-South Cooperation (FCTC/COP/5/17) – lack of progress on these outcomes is noted as a major barrier to FCTC implementation in developing countries (para 5).

- Increased prioritization of tobacco control within national health and development plans;
- Increased knowledge or skills to develop, implement, and enforce tobacco control measures.

While each project may take a different form, their common objectives should also be accompanied by similar outputs, such as:

- Countries from the global South having best practices in FCTC implementation are identified and provided with sufficient resources to facilitate transfer of knowledge;
- At least two countries per region are identified to participate in South-South cooperation and become beneficiaries of one of the six demonstration projects;
- Transfer of knowledge, skills or expertise is facilitated between at least two, but preferably three or more, countries;
- Lessons learned through the delivery of the South-South cooperation pilot projects are documented and shared among Parties.

It is important that countries from all regions in the South benefit from the pilot projects and that the projects facilitate regional and inter-regional cooperation. Proposals for the six pilot projects should be driven by Parties and selections based on their potential to achieve the agreed outcomes. In this respect, COP5 should invite Parties to submit their proposals. Finally, all interested stakeholders, including inter-governmental and non-governmental organizations, should be informed about the opportunities to be involved in the pilot projects.

Updates on progress and outcomes of the projects should be regularly disseminated by the Convention Secretariat, as well as by the Parties themselves, through established South-South informal channels, regional workshops, regional or sub-regional blocks and in coordination with the WHO and the Tobacco Free Initiative.

Work in 2014-2015

It is envisioned that results achieved through the six demonstration projects undertaken in 2013 will be actively disseminated in the next biennium (2014-2015) and will lead to further South-South cooperation on FCTC implementation. Three or more additional projects to encourage South-South cooperation are also expected to take place.

FCA welcomes the proposed activities to facilitate South-South cooperation and encourages Parties to further discuss possible dissemination strategies of lessons expected to be learned in 2013. Activities to disseminate acquired knowledge and skills should be cost-effective and should reach as many Parties and stakeholders as possible. For example, Parties may consider taking advantage of various regional or global events scheduled to discuss South-South cooperation⁸ or other regional or sub-regional meetings related to health, development or international cooperation. The UN Special Unit on South-South cooperation should also be invited to actively disseminate the results of these activities.

In terms of additional projects, lessons learned through the 2013 demonstration stage should be fully projected into the delivery of future activities to stimulate cooperation among Parties in the global South. In FCA's view, a report on activities and achievements in facilitating South-South cooperation should be submitted to COP6. This report should list achieved outcomes and outputs of

⁸ All events related to South-South cooperation are listed on the UN SU/SSC website: <http://ssc.undp.org/content/ssc/news/events.html>.

each project, and recommendations should be drawn from these achievements to support cooperation on FCTC implementation.

Conclusions

South-South cooperation provides the international community with additional opportunities to share knowledge, capacity and best practices. The global tobacco control will benefit immensely from a flourishing cooperation among developing countries on FCTC implementation. FCA congratulates the Convention Secretariat for securing sufficient resources for the current biennium to promote such cooperation, and encourages Parties and COP5 to agree on the key expected outcomes of these activities.