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Nations meet to give strength to global treaty to combat illicit tobacco trade

One billion tobacco related deaths projected this century if urgent action is not taken

GENEVA, SWITZERLAND – On October 20, government representatives will meet to negotiate a protocol which recognizes the serious threat posed to public health by the illicit trade in tobacco products – primarily through the undermining of tax policy – and the cross-border nature of illicit trade, which means that no state can effectively address the problem on its own.

From October 20-25, Parties to the Framework Convention on Tobacco Control will meet for the second session of the Intergovernmental Negotiating Body on a Protocol on Illicit Trade in Tobacco Products (INB-2). The illicit trade protocol is the first FCTC protocol to be negotiated.

“It is the very cross border nature of the illicit trade problem which means that the only solution can be international action, and a strong protocol will enable just that,” said Laurent Huber, Director of the Framework Convention Alliance. “Individual countries can not do this alone.”

The Framework Convention Alliance (FCA), an international alliance of more than 350 tobacco control organizations, urges countries to negotiate a strong treaty that can help reduce tobacco use and its devastating health and financial consequences around the world.

FCA considers that an effective protocol on illicit trade should contain strong measures relating to:

- **Control of the supply chain**, including: licensing; customer identification and verification requirements; tracking and tracing; record-keeping; security and preventive measures; a ban on the sale of tobacco products to consumers via the internet and other telecommunication-based modes of sale; and a ban on tax-free and tax-reduced sales of tobacco products to international travelers;
- **Enforcement**, including: the creation of offences, including criminal offences; the application of effective sanctions; and the use of a range of effective enforcement tools; and
- **International cooperation**, including: sharing of information; assistance and cooperation in training and in scientific, technical and technological matters; and cooperation in law enforcement.

To remind Government representatives at the meeting of the impact of their work at the opening of the negotiations FCA will unveil a clock which counts the number of tobacco-related deaths since the negotiations began on October 25, 1999. At 9am, October 20, the number will reach 39,776,437 lives lost.

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