

FCA BULLETIN

Weather outlook:
probably pretty nippy.

INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

<i>Key issues before the COP</i>	2
<i>The money maze</i>	3
<i>FCA in action around the world</i>	4
<i>Measuring engagement</i>	6



Online editions at
www.fctc.org

Don't miss today:

Lunchtime briefing

Key issues before the COP

Full details on page 3

More BAT interference in national policy: this time Uzbekistan

Today's British Medical Journal reveals for the first time how British American Tobacco (BAT) overturned groundbreaking legislation that would have served to protect the health of the Uzbek population.

In 1994, BAT established a production monopoly in a joint venture with the Uzbek government. Having observed just one electronic billboard in the country during a visit in July 1993, BAT noted that Uzbekistan was 'unique in the world in terms of its singularly unexploited advertising and promotional environment', with advertising costs that were 'cheap enough to allow multinationals almost unrestricted market spend'. The company projected a 45% increase in annual cigarette consumption between 1993 and 1999.

This would clearly require freedom to advertise, but Uzbekistan had issued 'Health Decree 30', banning tobacco advertising and smoking in public places, and introducing health warnings. Within 24 hours BAT had co-ordinated arguments to challenge every part of the decree, and depict it as economically damaging. They even asserted that "smoking has not been proven to actually cause" diseases and denied evidence that advertising would increase consumption.

BAT got the amendments they wanted by direct approach to the then President Karimov. The total ban on advertising was replaced with a voluntary code. The ban on smoking in all public places was watered down to cover only institutions dealing with health and children, specifying that elsewhere smoking areas would be provided. Despite BAT's claims that it does not intend to encourage young people to smoke, the original ban on smoking in colleges and universities was specifically removed.

Until now, the only information available on these events was a self-serving report by BAT that failed to mention the original decree, implying instead that BAT had instigated the development of the new code, and presenting the code as an example of 'the company's responsible attitude to its advertising practices'. The real story of the code's development is revealed by analysis

of BAT corporate documents held at BAT's Guildford Depository in the UK. The story is corroborated by individuals who cannot be named for their own safety as tobacco control activists in Uzbekistan have been subject to harassment and torture.

With the proposed legislation blocked, and in the absence of any effective checks, tobacco advertising in Uzbekistan became ubiquitous from the mid-1990s. Tobacco consumption has increased by between 7 and 8% each year, primarily among young people, and cigarette sales rose by 50% between 1990 and 1996. By 1999, BAT had achieved a market share of over 70%.

Dr Anna Gilmore of the London School of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine, the report's leading author, comments:

"The International Monetary Fund needs to reconsider its support for tobacco industry privatisation which is clearly fraught with danger for the population's health. Where privatisation goes ahead, we need action on corruption and lobbying by tobacco interests. It was easy for BAT to influence policy in Uzbekistan, and this must not be allowed to happen elsewhere."



Money talks—tobacco money can deafen

CIVIL SOCIETY'S VIEW ON KEY ISSUES BEFORE THE COP

“Fully funding the Secretariat is probably the best bargain in global public health.”

Today's lunchtime briefing will be an opportunity to discuss our recommendations on structures and processes for the COP. Two of the main themes are Secretariat issues and NGO Participation – Reporting and Funding are discussed in other issues of the Bulletin.

On the Secretariat:

- The Secretariat must be accountable to the COP and protected from control by non-parties. It is inappropriate for WHO to have authority over any aspect of the FCTC-related work done by the Secretariat under Article 24. WHO is an important partner, but it serves a different constituency, including non-Parties who do not support the FCTC's aims.
- Any work done by the Secretariat under Article 24 should be considered “treaty support work” and must not be subject to WHO reporting or World Health Assembly budget approval.
- The COP must reject any proposed rules or definitions beyond those in the FCTC itself that would limit the COP's autonomy or limit the role of the Secretariat.
- The Secretariat must play a major role in treaty implementation – it will need staff with expertise in treaty law and FCTC-related policies and programs. The Secretariat should work with WHO on these matters, but the COP must have its own independent voice. If the Secretariat's role is limited primarily to administrative functions, the COP will have no meaningful role in the central objective of treaty implementation.
- The Secretariat must have an adequate budget. We calculate that it should be funded at approximately US \$10 million per biennium. This funding level represents enormous value for money – fully funding the FCTC Secretariat is probably the best bargain in global public health.

On NGO Participation:

NGOs play a leading role in tobacco control, have extensive expertise, work with governments in FCTC implementation, and have assisted and promoted the FCTC process from the beginning. It is common practice for treaties to have specific criteria and procedures for accreditation. The rules for COP accreditation must only be decided by Parties, not non-Parties or WHO.

We recommend that the COP should accredit those NGOs whose purposes and activities are consistent with the objectives of the Convention and who have no affiliation with the tobacco industry.

Accredited NGOs should then be able to:

- make timely interventions
- have their documents distributed to Parties
- attend all sessions and meetings of the Parties
- request additional agenda items
- have access to official documents and appropriate facilities such as rooms to hold meetings and computer facilities.

We look forward to discussing these and other issues with you at today's briefing and during the rest of the COP.



THOSE ELUSIVE FUNDING SOURCES

Six rounds of negotiations and two Working Groups down the line, the 122 Parties to the Framework Convention on Tobacco Control seem to be in limbo about the much needed finances for meeting the treaty obligations. The treaty obligates Parties to undertake measures on reporting, research, surveillance, cessation, public awareness, curbing illicit trade, testing tobacco products and product regulation, all of which have resource implications.

Yesterday, the donor nations were heard repeatedly referring to the use of existing sources of assistance. Yet the Secretariat paper on Existing and Potential Sources and Mechanisms of Assistance identifies few of them to have made available any specific funding for tobacco control initiatives in the last five years. The picture gets more dismal as one glances over possibilities of new funding in the next two years. With the exception of Canada and New Zealand, the donor countries listed in the paper seem reluctant to articulate even future possibilities of funding.

Sectoral funds have often been referred for the use of developing countries to enhance their tobacco control efforts. In the developing country reality of scarce health budgets and relatively lower awareness of the need to address non-communicable diseases and tobacco control, accessing sectoral funds for tobacco control would be an uphill task.

To break the stalemate, it is crucial that without further ado, the donor nations clearly express the sum of funding available to support developing countries in treaty implementation and clarify the mechanisms to access these resources.

Developing countries could match the move by making rapid efforts in prioritizing tobacco control nationally, developing national plans for the implementation of the treaty and by raising tobacco taxes that would provide internal and sustainable sources of funding. In this effort, no one needs to wait for the other. It is an opportunity for all to "walk the talk"!

Shoba John
PATH Canada, India.



A map often helps

Key issues before the COP: a lunchtime briefing

Salle 4

1:-2:30pm

Friday, 10 February 2006

Come join us for a discussion of some of the key issues before the COP

Lunch provided!

Moderator:

Mary Assunta, Chair, Framework Convention Alliance, Malaysia

Speakers:

John Bloom, American Cancer Society, USA

What should the COP secretariat look like?

Paula Johns, Human Development Network, Brazil

Why NGO participation in the COP is vital

Olcott Gunasekera, Alcohol & Drug Information Centre, Sri Lanka

The importance of a robust reporting system for the FCTC

FCA IN ACTION AROUND THE WORLD

ILE MAURICE et RODRIGUES

L'association ViSa offre "un visa pour une meilleure qualité de vie" aux Îles Maurice et Rodrigues.

Les membres du comité de ViSa sont infirmier des prisons, facilitateur du Plan de Cinq Jours pour le sevrage tabagique, travailleur social, journaliste, photographe et peintre.

Cette équipe gagnante a enregistré de grands succès dans la lutte contre le tabac en exerçant une force de pression auprès du gouvernement, des entreprises et des autres Organisations Non Gouvernementales.

Ainsi, la loi sur le tabac a été modifiée pour y inclure une interdiction totale de publicité pour le tabac, suite à une pétition et à une manifestation de ViSa à cet effet. Suite à de nombreuses lettres et interventions de ViSa auprès des responsables, l'aéroport international de Maurice est devenu non fumeur, ainsi que des centres commerciaux.

ViSa est membre du Comité National de la Lutte Contre le Tabac sous l'égide du Ministère de la Santé pour la mise en œuvre de la Convention Cadre pour la Lutte Anti Tabac que Maurice a ratifiée.



Protesters from Mauritius tell Big Tobacco what they think

DOWN MEMORY LANE IN BRAZIL

Brazil's rocky path to ratification sheds light on what serious commitment to public health means. The tobacco industry, knowing that civil society was pushing the government to ratify, held six public gatherings.

Negotiations were tough, and industry-funded buses filled with farmers waving posters declaring "Cigarettes are bad for your health, but hunger kills!" and "Smoking is a free choice!" set the tone for the gatherings.

An anti-ratification Senator who "moderated" one of the hearings positioned himself against ratification before the hearing. When asked later about his impartiality he predicted that the FCTC would not pass through the senate. Fortunately he was wrong.

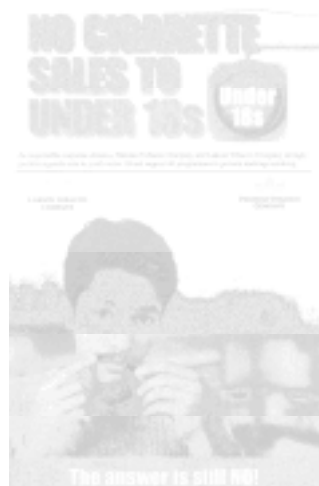
Another Senator's position was: "What more do you want?" People know cigarettes are unhealthy and smoke because they want to!"

Brazil's chairing of the COP and subsequent commitment to start research to support the implementation of the FCTC is enough to say that some stories do have happy endings... that includes the story to rid the world of tobacco. We all have high hopes for Brazil.

"WE DON'T WANT KIDS TO SMOKE" - THAT OLD CHESTNUT POPS UP IN PAKISTAN

Faced with increasing restrictions on its promotional activities, the tobacco industry has been directing funds towards its 'Corporate Social Responsibility' drive. As usual, the target is mainly the governments of developing countries who are chronically short of funds for health-care programs. Although 'funding' from the tobacco companies is most probably readily available, governments should realize that the tobacco industry is in the business of selling cigarettes which may well be legal substances but kill when used exactly as directed.

Take the example of Pakistan, a country of 160 million people with almost half the population using tobacco in one form or another. As there is only a partial ban on tobacco promotion in Pakistan, the tobacco industry uses all kinds of dodges to carry on promoting its products.



Every kid wants to look older—that's the appeal of smoking

Under the banner of 'Corporate Social Responsibility', the tobacco industry launched a campaign to promote the fact that it does not sell cigarettes to minors. Advertisements appeared everywhere, but the real messages were clear: it is alright to smoke when you are eighteen; smoking is for grown-ups. Though the ads were taken off air after a barrage of protests including from the Ministry of Health, the problem goes on as the industry finds ever-new avenues to get its message across to the vulnerable population of youngsters.

The Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (FCTC) under article 13 calls for a comprehensive ban on all kinds of tobacco promotion and sponsorship. Partial restrictions are only allowed if there is a genuine constitutional impediment to a ban. This concession should not be used as a means to lower the bar. Comprehensive bans don't just reduce tobacco consumption among existing smokers, they are also crucial in stopping young people from starting.

Ehsan Latif
Framework Convention Alliance, Pakistan

BARBADOS WARNS ON COMPLACENCY

Barbados ratified the FCTC in November 2005. It has no tobacco growers, and manufacture is limited to a small cigar-rolling factory employing a handful of people. British American Tobacco (BAT) is the main tobacco company operating in the region, with about 94% of market share. BAT cigarettes sold in Barbados are produced by the West Indies Tobacco Company (WITCO) in Trinidad and Tobago— also of course an FCTC Party.

Excellent news, right? Well, not really.

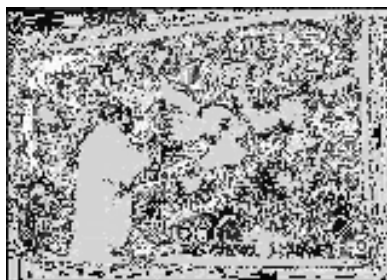
There is a danger that the tobacco industry will try to look for safer zones like Barbados to entrench themselves — non-ratified countries can also look like even safer havens.

The factors that create the perception that tobacco use is not a big problem in Barbados — low prevalence of smoking, many public places that are voluntarily smoke-free, and the absence of local tobacco growing and manufacturing — are the very measures that need to be consolidated with strong tobacco control policies.

Groups like the Heart Foundation of Barbados are lobbying for the government to implement

the FCTC with strong measures before something goes wrong, as has happened in many other countries before and even after the signing of this treaty.

One urgent issue is to ensure that the 2007 Cricket World Cup in the Caribbean will be tobacco-free. To this end the Heart Foundation of Barbados is leading the calling on the managing bodies of this major sporting event to put measures in place to prohibit smoking and the sale of cigarettes in cricket grounds and other venues associated with the matches.



This kind of advertising needs to stop worldwide

FOCUS ON FCA MEMBERS: PATH CANADA IN VIETNAM

Programme for Appropriate Technology in Health (PATH Canada) aims to improve health, especially that of women and children, in developing regions of the world. Our mission is to increase the effectiveness, availability and appropriateness of practices and technologies used in primary healthcare. PATH Canada's definition of "technology" includes:

- the systems and practices through which health care is delivered
- the equipment and devices used in primary health care
- the information and skills that must accompany each technology.

Since 1995, PATH Canada has worked to increase national and donor support and raise awareness of the tobacco epidemic in Vietnam through research; capacity building; interventions on tobacco economics, smuggling, media and public education; advocacy and smoke free policies.

In support of the FCTC, PATH Canada has worked actively together with the Vietnam National Committee for Health and Smoking (VINACOSH) and other local and international organisations for FCTC ratification and implementation process, especially in advocacy for tax raising, health warnings, and smoke free policy implementation.

Vietnam Tobacco Control Working Group (TCWG) is a roundtable for tobacco control initiated by PATH Canada and the WHO in April 2002. It brings together government agencies, NGOs and UN agencies to share information and coordinate tobacco control efforts.

Partnership working characterizes our approach. PATH Canada works closely with VINACOSH for all advocacy activities and has provided helpful input to many important tobacco control workshops and programs. We also cooperate with the Vietnam Public Health Association to increase their commitment to an involvement in tobacco control.

One important aspect of our work is developing an alliance with the media and engaging journalists in tobacco control issues. We have developed a nationwide media network, and produce regular fact sheets on tobacco control.

PATH Canada Vietnam is a member of the Southeast Asian Tobacco Control Alliance and is supported by the Rockefeller Foundation.

Tran Thi Kieu Thanh Ha
PATH Canada Vietnam office



One of PATH Canada's influential publications, on tobacco and development issues

ORCHIDS AND ASHTRAYS

Orchids are presented to all the countries in Committee A, which spoke out in favour of a protocol on illicit trade.



Austria is today's ashtray recipient, for wasting valuable time trying to give the Parties a lesson in diplomacy they didn't need, while continuing to hold up proceedings because they still have to coordinate the EU position on just about everything.



Clock watching

Is anyone counting?

During a typical day's COP discussions, another 3600 people are killed by tobacco. While we are sleeping, eating and enjoying ourselves, another 7200 lives are taken.

Let's not take our eyes off that clock.

MONITORING ENGAGEMENT AND PARTICIPATION: A MODEL

