

2015 has been a landmark year in the fight to end the global tobacco epidemic.

It is fifteen years since formal negotiations began for the World Health Organization (WHO) Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (FCTC) and ten years since the treaty entered into force. The 180 Parties (i.e. governments) that are now bound by the treaty represent nearly 90 percent of the world's people – a phenomenal achievement.

Significant progress has been made over the past decade; however, implementation of the treaty has been uneven – both within countries and globally. This patchy implementation of proven measures to reduce tobacco use is failing to prevent countless early deaths from cancer, heart disease, and other non-communicable diseases (NCDs).

In this document, we set out a clear and focused global-level strategy to maximize the ability of the FCTC treaty architecture to achieve full and accelerated FCTC implementation worldwide over the next five to fifteen years. This strategy is both essential for, and complementary to, driving national-level FCTC implementation, and it is entirely doable with the collaborative support and active participation of the global tobacco control community.

Tobacco, the FCTC, and Global Development

Tobacco is projected to kill one billion people this century. Tobacco is the only major cause of disease that is the subject of an international treaty, the FCTC. In its Articles, the Convention lays out a set of evidence-based policies that Parties are obligated to use to attain the Convention goal – to reduce tobacco use and save lives. Over the past decade, to supplement the Convention itself, Parties have negotiated and unanimously adopted detailed guidelines on implementation of individual key Articles – the last major set of guidelines, on tobacco taxation, was adopted in 2014.

These negotiations have taken place at multiple sessions of the Conference of the Parties (COP). The COP is the governing body of the FCTC and is comprised of all Parties to the Convention. The COP meets every two years: its seventh session will be in New Delhi, in early November 2016.

As a result of all this work, there is now:

- » A detailed and legally binding global consensus on what governments need to do to fight the tobacco epidemic.
- » A forum – the COP – where governments gather every two years to discuss their collective response to tobacco.
- » A legal obligation for every Party to report in detail every two years on its implementation of the FCTC.

In the last five years, in parallel to FCTC development and implementation, there has been an effort to better integrate tobacco control into broader discussions about global health and development. In particular:

- » In 2011, the United Nations General Assembly held a special session and adopted a political declaration on NCDs. This recognised tobacco as one of four main risk factors of NCDs and committed governments to “accelerated implementation” of the FCTC.
- » In 2013, the World Health Assembly adopted voluntary global targets on NCDs – including a 25% decrease in premature mortality from NCDs and a 30% reduction in tobacco use by 2025. The tobacco target was also agreed to by the COP in 2014.
- » In 2015, world leaders agreed to an ambitious set of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The health goal includes a target of reducing premature mortality from NCDs by 33% – as well as a target specific to strengthening FCTC implementation.
- » Also in 2015, leaders agreed to the Addis Ababa Action Agenda on how to finance work on the SDGs, putting a strong emphasis on developing countries increasing their own revenue-raising capacity. The declaration enshrined tobacco taxation as a good health measure in itself, and also as a way to finance development efforts.

The Way Ahead: Connecting the Dots

FCTC implementation has made tremendous strides in the last decade, with national-level advocacy and technical support helping to accelerate the adoption of key policy measures in many countries. Now that treaty negotiations over the policies and guidelines are largely complete, the COP must fully focus on supporting and accelerating effective implementation of the treaty. As the global body with jurisdiction over tobacco issues, the COP has a number of unique features that offer great, but so far, untapped potential.

First: the governments of the world have agreed to a tobacco use prevalence target, and WHO and the FCTC Secretariat are mandated to report to each COP session on progress towards this target. But targets only have a political effect if there are consequences to meeting them (or failing to meet them). More must be done to ensure political leaders and the media are aware of the target and the ambitious action required to achieve it. Critically, there must be political benefit to achieving it, and political embarrassment for missing it.

Second: Parties to the FCTC are legally bound by its provisions and are already obliged to provide detailed reports every two years on FCTC implementation. However, to date, the practical and political consequences of failure to comply are small. What is needed now is an organised system to review and follow up on the reports – an effective compliance mechanism – as has been created for many other treaties at about this stage in their development.

Third: lack of money and technical assistance are obstacles to FCTC implementation in many (particularly low-income) countries. The COP discusses these problems, but so far has played a very limited role in finding solutions. However, a working group of Parties, created in 2012 to analyse and suggest improved mechanisms to deliver assistance for the Convention, will report back to COP7 in 2016, providing an opportunity to give the COP a stronger role in mobilising global resources and commitments.

Fourth: in order for the new recognition of the FCTC and tobacco control in global development documents (SDGs and Addis Ababa Action Agenda) to have a real-life impact, tobacco control partners inside and outside government need to work with bilateral and multilateral funders and the various national agencies who formulate national

development priorities to ensure tobacco is fully integrated into development efforts. This will require substantial and coordinated advocacy efforts in both rich and poor countries, in particular to raise the profile of the FCTC in development circles.

The Role of Civil Society: Framework Convention Alliance

Civil society participation is fully recognised in the FCTC. Early in the FCTC negotiating process, non-governmental organisations came together to coordinate their efforts to inform the treaty. In 1999, they formed the Framework Convention Alliance (FCA) and later incorporated it as an NGO under Swiss law. The FCA is in official relations with WHO, has formal observer status at the COP, and since 2011 has had consultative status at the United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC).

The FCA has played a central role throughout the process of negotiating the FCTC itself and all guidelines on key Articles of the Convention. The FCA researches and discusses all policy issues on the COP agenda, aiming to reach evidence-based, consensus positions in order to provide informed guidance to Parties. FCA members brief official delegates ahead of and during COP sessions, encouraging them to support strong policy positions. The FCA also sends representatives to various preparatory meetings, such as the working group meetings that draft guidelines and other policy documents for the COP.

As a civil society network that includes all the major international and national NGOs that are active in tobacco control – about 500 member organisations – the FCA collectively has greater access to research and policy analysis than all but the largest Parties. As such, it has established itself as a source of reliable information and trusted guidance for many governments during FCTC-related negotiations.

FCA's work is overseen by an elected and geographically representative Board of Directors. A small core team and secretariat is based in Canada, and regional coordinators are located in Africa, the ASEAN region, Latin America and the Pacific Islands.

More recently, the FCA has expanded its reach into the broader development community in order to further drive FCTC implementation. The expertise and influence of the FCA is evident as demonstrated by the inclusion of strengthened FCTC implementation as a key target of the SDGs.

A New Focus for the FCA

This document presents a new strategic direction for the FCA. It represents an important shift in focus for the Alliance as we move to addressing the gap between what governments are legally obliged to do under the FCTC and what their actual tobacco control policies and programmes are delivering on the ground.

In refining the FCA's future direction, we have focused on the two major obstacles to our mission: lack of political will and lack of investment in tobacco control, particularly in low- and middle-income countries. We focus heavily on how collectively we can structure and resource the COP to take on a new and focused role in systematically promoting FCTC implementation, including by mobilising new sources of funding and technical assistance.

The 2020 Strategy

Our 2020 strategy is built on four inter-related pillars:

- (1) building political pressure in and between countries for swift action, making political necessities of national and global tobacco prevalence targets
- (2) holding governments accountable, through the development and implementation of an effective FCTC compliance mechanism
- (3) embedding support and cooperation in the FCTC within the mechanisms of assistance currently under development
- (4) deepening FCTC integration into international systems, with a focus on development priorities.

Framework Convention Alliance: 2020 Strategy



THE FOUR PILLARS OF THE 2020 STRATEGY

With its core team, knowledge of COP processes and network of members around the world, the FCA is uniquely placed to press for effective action via the FCTC and other multilateral mechanisms, as affiliated NGOs continue to press for FCTC implementation at the national level.

FIRST PILLAR: Build political pressure

FCA aims to galvanise political leaders to step up their own governments' efforts on tobacco control and also to engage directly with their peers in other countries in order to achieve the global target of reducing the prevalence of tobacco use by 30% by 2025. The COP should become a forum for supportive competition between governments, focused on stronger action and increased investment.

- » Provide support before and throughout COP sessions to political leaders, delegates and tobacco control partners to champion stronger FCTC implementation (for example, via peer-to-peer advocacy and private briefings).
- » Provide guidance for expert reports and events developed to inform and influence the COP to achieve maximum impact.
- » Facilitate the coordination of media communications before, during and after COP sessions, to create an environment conducive to strong policy implementation.
- » Maintain a website with up-to-date information on FCTC processes and FCA guidance materials for FCA members to use in educating and lobbying national governments about COP processes and products.

SECOND PILLAR: Hold governments accountable

FCA aims to sharply increase the ability of the COP to track and drive FCTC implementation through improvements in the COP's existing compliance mechanisms and effective tracking of progress towards the global target to reduce the prevalence of tobacco use by 30% by 2025. The FCA will push for a forward-looking approach: not just a description of past accomplishments, but a clear analysis of whether countries are on track to hit the 2025 target, and if not, what support and action is needed to get them on track.

- » Advocate for and provide technical support to establish an effective FCTC compliance mechanism.
- » At the COP, support and reinforce the FCTC compliance mechanism once established.
- » Press for focused discussions at each COP session on progress towards the 30% target, on corrective action needed and on ways to overcome political, financial and technical obstacles.
- » At the national level, support civil society to use monitoring reports to inform political leaders and push for progress.

THIRD PILLAR: Embed support and cooperation in the FCTC process

FCA aims to leave no country behind. Governments have varying levels of knowledge, expertise and resources to deliver on their FCTC commitments. The COP working group on mechanisms of assistance is analysing barriers to strengthening FCTC implementation and potential strategies to overcome them. It has already recommended establishing an “FCTC Coordination Platform” as a mechanism for Parties to pool their technical assistance needs, and for funders and potential funders to discuss meeting them. The working group will make further recommendations to COP7 in 2016, including details on the Coordination Platform.

- » Analyse how other treaty bodies identify and prioritise technical assistance needs, and on how they mobilise funders.
- » Support and assist the COP working group to develop and promote a FCTC-specific model for an effective Coordination Platform.
- » Advocate for establishment of the Platform at COP7, with requisite funding.
- » Recruit development agencies/potential funders to help shape and participate in the Coordination Platform.

FOURTH PILLAR: Deepen integration into the international system

FCA aims to maintain the momentum established through the inclusion of the FCTC in the sustainable development debate, and turn the global commitments into meaningful national action. To achieve this, the tobacco control movement needs to be actively engaged in driving the debate, advocating action and securing commitments.

- » In collaboration with the NCD Alliance and other partners, sustain routine, senior-level advocacy with UN Missions and UN agencies in New York and Geneva to ensure tobacco control remains high on the development agenda.
- » Participate in ongoing strategic discussions with WHO and the FCTC Secretariat on ensuring SDG and Addis Financing for Development commitments on tobacco control are translated into action.
- » Play an active role in UN reviews of NCDs in 2017 and the SDGs in 2018.
- » Support FCA members in selected high-income countries to develop and execute a coordinated strategy targeting decision makers controlling development assistance to increase investment in tobacco control.

A Unique Opportunity

Tobacco control has the enormous advantage over other health issues of having a codified, detailed global consensus on what needs to be done.

As of 2015, governments of the world have made clear commitments on the need to reduce tobacco, the means to do so, and the speed with which they seek to drive down tobacco use prevalence.

What is critically needed is substantial investment by governments in political, financial and technical assistance for tobacco control, especially in low- and middle-income countries. At present, such assistance comes primarily from philanthropic sources. Experience with other global health issues, such as HIV/AIDS and malaria, shows that philanthropies can be highly effective at initiating scaled-up investments in LMICs and acting as technical innovators; and that their impact can be magnified and made more sustainable with government commitments to policy implementation and sustainable funding.

Tobacco control is at the point where this diversification is politically and practically feasible – if we seize the opportunity offered by the maturing of the FCTC and political commitments at the United Nations.

Our collective responsibility is to hold governments to their tobacco control commitments, via ongoing national advocacy but also through strategic use of multilateral mechanisms, and in particular the FCTC Conference of the Parties.