2018 ANNUAL REPORT
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Message From the Board Chair

As a child and growing up in Burkina Faso, West Africa, one of my uncles would leave me in charge of his shop when he had errands to run. Selling cigarettes, both legal and smuggled brands, was part of my duties. Paradoxically, I was trying to convince his brother, Uncle Joel Rodrigue, to quit smoking. Then I became a high-school teacher. I understood that the consequences of tobacco use went beyond lung health. Students who overstayed the schoolbreaks to smoke were denied access to the classroom. They were made aware of the consequences of tobacco use. Decades later, I am a member of the prevention and tobacco control team of the Norwegian Cancer Society. I participated in preparations for the UN High Level Meetings on the prevention and control of noncommunicable diseases (NCDs). I seek advice from tobacco control and NCDs leaders with unparalleled capacity on policy advocacy. I interact with government officials and policymakers to advocate for more stringent measures and legislations to protect the younger generation from the threats posed by tobacco.

In Norway, the cumulative effect of years of tobacco control efforts and policy changes is a significant reduction in tobacco use prevalence among youths. For example, a recent survey carried out in a Norwegian county shows that only 0.4% of youths aged 13-19 smoke daily - the prevalence was 7.5% ten years ago in this age bracket in the county. Clearly, stricter tobacco control legislation and measures, if well implemented, work. This goes to show that achieving a tobacco-free generation is not beyond reach. The trends are not encouraging in low-income countries. In Burkina Faso, the situation has even noticeably worsened. Uncle Joel is now a heavy/chain smoker. More children and adolescents are taking up the deadly habit. Population growth, illiteracy, weak regulations and tobacco industry interference are major obstacles to fighting the tobacco epidemic in the country. The case of Burkina Faso is not unique. Many low-income countries have difficulties in adopting policies that work. And when they do, the tobacco industry presents stiff resistance and does not obey the law.

2018 was a watershed year for global tobacco control. The eighth session of the Conference of the Parties to the FCTC (COP) took place in October in Geneva. One of the key deliverables of the negotiations was the adoption of the Global Strategy to strengthen and guide the implementation of the Convention.

The Framework Convention Alliance contributed to the development and adoption of the Global Strategy with expertise and sustained advocacy. The Strategy will inform the agenda and work of future COPs. Further, it will serve as a handy tool for FCTC Parties, the Convention Secretariat and many other stakeholders in fulfilling their FCTC obligations. The first meeting of the Parties (MOP1) to the Protocol to Eliminate Illicit Trade of Tobacco Products (ITP) immediately followed COP8. The ITP entered into force after years of advocacy to persuade FCTC Parties to ratify it. Although MOP1 produced modest outcomes, measures are envisioned to make sure all tobacco products are accounted for and the required taxes paid.

Understandably, the tobacco industry will not welcome measures that negatively impact their profit margins and the sustainability of their business. Already, they have developed and introduced novel and emerging tobacco products to counter their declining sales of cigarettes in high-income countries. They even claim that they want to phase out cigarettes altogether and replace them with "less harmful" tobacco products. Yet, they continue promoting and selling the products they acknowledge are deadly in poor and low-income countries. In the fight against the consequences of tobacco use, it is a moral imperative that high-income countries do not go it alone. International cooperation should be strengthened to avail low-income countries with expertise and resources, through official development assistance for example, to counter the assaults of the tobacco industry.
Imagine the world faced a deadly disease that had infected one quarter of the global population and was on track to kill half of those infected. And imagine we had a package of effective low-cost vaccines and treatments that had already been tested over decades in a number of countries. But imagine further that the world’s leaders couldn’t quite muster the political will and the funds to actually roll out that package in a timely way.

That’s a fair analogy with where we are in global tobacco control. The number of deaths from tobacco products – primarily cigarettes – continues to rise and is now more than 7 million per year. The death toll is falling in most rich countries but rising in many developing countries.

The news is not all bad, of course. Global cigarette sales – a good predictor of future deaths – are now falling. And smoking prevalence is falling in most of the world, albeit slowly.

So what is the package of vaccines and treatments, in our analogy? The WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (FCTC), an international treaty that covers the overwhelming majority of the world’s countries (181 Parties). Since it came into effect in 2005, it has been supplemented by detailed policy guidance in the form of formal Guidelines for implementation of key articles. In 2018, the first Protocol (sub-treaty) to the FCTC came into effect: a Protocol on Illicit Trade in Tobacco Products, designed to make it easier to raise tobacco taxes more rapidly.

Tobacco is the only global health threat that has its own international treaty, and the FCTC is one of only three treaties of any kind that is mentioned in the world’s development to-do list, the Sustainable Development Goals.

But public (i.e. government) investment in tobacco control lags scandalously behind other global health issues, particularly in the lower-income countries where death rates from tobacco are still rising. Per capita spending in low-income countries is less than half a US cent per person per year, according to WHO (compared to $1.14 in high-income countries). Implementation of the FCTC is accordingly patchy.

FCA’s focus for the last several years has been on closing this implementation and funding gap. In 2018, we made substantial progress at the FCTC Conference of the Parties (see our message on COP8), via the adoption of a new Global Strategy.

It will take an ongoing effort by FCA staff and the hundreds of FCA member organizations to ensure the benefits of the FCTC reach the potential future victims of tobacco in time.
FCA's work is overseen by an elected and geographically representative Board of Directors.

FCA Board members in 2018, from left to right:

Nonguebzanga Maxime Compaoré, European Region and Chairperson
Ulysses Dorotheo, Western Pacific Region and Vice Chairperson
Kylie Lindorff, At-Large and Secretary
Judith Watt, At-Large and Treasurer
Issah Ali, African Region
Alejandro Ramos, Americas Region
Mawya Al Zahawi, Eastern Mediterranean Region
Amit Yadav, South-East Asia Region
Maria Carmona, At-Large
A small core team and secretariat is based in Ottawa, Canada. Regional coordinators are located in Africa, Europe, the Americas, the Western Pacific and ASEAN region, the Pacific Islands and the Eastern Mediterranean region.

Francis Thompson  
Executive Director

Leslie Rae Ferat  
Program Manager

Kelly Jean Frisby  
Program Officer

Ryan Forrest  
Policy and Research Advisor

Mischa Terzyk  
Policy and Advocacy Officer

Cassandra Morris  
Policy and Advocacy Officer

Mafoya Dossoumon  
Communications Manager

Laurent Huber  
FCA Ambassador, Washington DC

Tih Ntiabang  
Regional Coordinator, Africa

Dr. Eduardo Bianco  
Regional Coordinator, Americas

Dr. Hani Al Couhmani  
Regional Coordinator, Eastern Mediterranean

Anca Toma Friedlaender  
Regional Coordinator, Europe

Dr. Domilyn Villarreiz  
Regional Coordinator, Western Pacific-Asia

Annabel Lyman  
Regional Coordinator, Pacific Island Countries

Thank you to the entire FCA delegation at the Eighth Session of the Conference of the Parties to the WHO FCTC for its admirable dedication to a world free from the preventable diseases and death caused by tobacco.

Photo: Geoffrey Fong
Over 280 FCA members attended the eighth session of the Conference of the Parties to the WHO FCTC and the first Meeting of the Parties to the Protocol to Eliminate Illicit Trade in Tobacco Products.

FCA sponsored more than 40 members in low and middle income countries to attend the eighth session of the Conference of the Parties. 21 stayed on for the first Meeting of the Parties.

FCA produced over 30 publications including policy briefings, bulletins and case studies for the eighth session of the Conference of the Parties and the first Meeting of the Parties.

More than 20 news articles mentioned the FCA during the eighth session of the Conference of the Parties and the first Meeting of the Parties.
700 members are subscribed to over 20 tobacco control mailing lists. This year, members exchanged over 2000 messages to discuss and coordinate advocacy positions and strategies.

FCA works in more than 100 nations. Our network of international and national nongovernmental organisations plays a central role in helping drive FCTC implementation.

GET INVOLVED

FCA has a strong tradition of collaboration and a dedicated membership. This is the powerful combination which equips our alliance to face the challenges of tobacco control work.

50

FCA led or participated in over 50 tobacco control events, initiatives and campaigns during 2018.
Supporting health systems in Africa

When Tih, our coordinator for Africa, wandered into his first tobacco control meeting over 10 years ago, this is one of the messages he got: "Between 2002 and 2030, tobacco-attributable deaths are projected to double in low and middle-income countries, including in Africa." He was impressed with the commitment of the group of health advocates who attended the side meeting for African journalists at the Third session of the Conference of Parties to the FCTC in Durban, South Africa. They were determined to fight the intensive efforts of the tobacco companies to increase their market share in Africa. He wondered about the continent's ability to deal with the high burden of life-threatening communicable diseases and the increasing rates of noncommunicable diseases. The speaker spoke with much eloquence. But in a context where there are many hindrances to accessing health care and where the poorest people proportionally pay the most for health care, a clear picture did not emerge of how Africa could cope with an epidemic of tobacco caused diseases.

At the time, Tih did not have many answers but he understood that tobacco use is a major risk factor for noncommunicable diseases. And, he knew that he needed to help prevent the rapid escalation of cases of ill health, disability and premature deaths caused by tobacco use in Africa. As a teen he dreamed of working for British American Tobacco because he wanted to be financially successful. The company was portrayed as an example of "success" in all its forms. Like most of his friends, he thought working for BAT meant being amongst the "lucky few." But when he researched the tobacco industry after that first encounter with tobacco control advocates, he learned that people were dying in great numbers because of the increasing rate of tobacco use in African countries. That was a turning point. Tih decided at that moment to leave his well-paid job for a renowned international development organisation to become a tobacco control advocate. Tih is now proud to be amongst the "lucky few" who continue to prioritise investments in health over self-aggrandisement.

At the end of the eighth session of the Conference of Parties to the FCTC, a Tobacco Control Focal Point of an African country, said: "Tih, thank you for your support." Acknowledgements such as these may seem ordinary but they energise Tih to continue to strengthen the fragile health systems in many African countries by working in tobacco control.
20 years of excellence in the Americas

Latin America was one of the regions with the highest tobacco use prevalence, the worst tobacco control policies, a weak network of nongovernmental organisations and strong tobacco industry influence over governments in the early 2000s. Working together with key government officials, FCA and civil society partners helped improve the situation. Uruguay was the model used to promote a “domino effect”. In 2003, the goal was for Uruguay to become the first smoke-free country in the region. By March 1, 2006, this target was achieved. Many countries followed suit. A similar trend was observed with health warning labels and advertising bans. Within 10 years, the region pushed WHO FCTC implementation significantly and tobacco use prevalence continues to decrease.

Eduardo has been our coordinator for the Americas since 2001. He is a cardiologist from Uruguay. From 1984 to 2002, he worked on a Pre-Hospital Medical Emergency Ambulance System. From 1987 to 2015, he worked in an Intensive Treatment Coronary Care Unit in Montevideo. His patients faced severe cardiovascular conditions - many died. This led him to start working on how to prevent these premature deaths. He noticed that most cardiologists were experts on addressing hypertension but no one specialised in tobacco-caused diseases. He also noticed that no health institution, public or private, had a smoking cessation programme. This is why he initiated a small smoking cessation project based on support groups with a psychologist in 1994. He initiated the first smoking cessation programme in Uruguay’s health care system in 1997.

In 1999 when Eduardo attended the 2nd Ibero-American Tobacco or Health Congress, in Spain, he met key tobacco control advocates and learnt about the tobacco industry influence on tobacco control. He decided that year to support the WHO FCTC process in his country and work in tobacco control. He returned to Uruguay and challenged the National Medical Association to lead and support FCTC advocacy in Uruguay. They responded by asking him to chair a new Tobacco Control Commission. Since then, Eduardo has progressively devoted more time to working on the FCTC at regional level.
Raising a united voice in the Eastern Mediterranean region

Hani is a smoking cessation specialist and trainer. He worked in the tobacco control program of the Ministry of Health of Saudi Arabia as a consultant trainer and head of cessation clinics.

The year after Hani became our regional coordinator for the Eastern Mediterranean Region in 2006, he attended his first FCTC meeting in Bangkok. COP2 was an opportunity for him to gain more knowledge. There were many experts attending the event. The same year, Hani moved to Cairo, Egypt to establish the FCA regional office.

In 2007, the Eastern Mediterranean region did not have a good track record with tobacco control policies. The region had high tobacco use prevalence rates and most nongovernmental organisations were not even aware of the FCTC. Civil society did not communicate with government on the importance of the treaty. Nongovernmental organisations focused on raising awareness of tobacco use harm but did little on policy change and legislation.

To accelerate FCTC implementation and improve the situation, Hani worked with the WHO / EMR Tobacco Free Initiative, the WHO Representatives in countries of the region and key government officials. He also built a strong network of regional nongovernmental organisations and international partners.

In his role as regional coordinator, Hani supported many groups to draft new tobacco control legislation and policies based on the FCTC. He also supported the setting up of national tobacco control alliances by researching various tobacco topics and providing guidance on moving tobacco control forward.

Today, thanks to the contributions of Parties, Tobacco Control Focal Points, WHO / EMR Tobacco Free Initiative, WHO Representatives, and Hani’s efforts, the Eastern Mediterranean region now has a united voice during WHO FCTC meetings.
Tobacco control at the heart of European health policy

Europe continues to have the highest tobacco consumption overall and sees large inequalities in WHO FCTC implementation. In addition to limiting the tobacco industry’s ability to interfere in health policy making, priorities include the Illicit Trade Protocol, tobacco taxation, packaging and labelling, advertising, promotion and sponsorship.

It was a tumultuous time for tobacco control practitioners when Anca joined the Smoke Free Partnership in 2012, ahead of the legislative process for the revision of the European Union Tobacco Products Directive. For two years, she was part of a massive collective effort by the entire European public health community to promote the adoption of strong policies. The Tobacco Products Directive was achieved against fierce tobacco industry opposition and has been recognised for several years as the most lobbied file in EU health policy. This year, Anca was appointed Smoke Free Partnership Director, with a mandate to lead the organisation into the next policy battles for FCTC implementation.

A euro-optimist, Anca is a Romanian-born political science graduate. She worked as part of her country’s accession negotiations team in the midst of one of the most interesting and fast-developing policy environments. She has been working in policy and advocacy at a European level since 2002. When she joined a large public affairs firm, her first assignment in 2006 was to research the FCTC for a client. She continued working on tobacco control and smoking cessation for her entire tenure at the firm. Other clients included companies, non-governmental organisations, and public agencies working in the field of health. During that time, she was part of a small team that convinced the firm to adopt a tobacco-free policy, and a statement that it would not work with tobacco clients.

Anca has been FCA coordinator for Europe since 2017.
Campaigning for a smoke-free Western Pacific-Asia region

In the Western Pacific Region, the tobacco industry tries to lure young people into the tobacco trap by introducing novel products. The industry also hinders efforts to regulate the use and sale of deadly products. Two people die per minute in the region from tobacco-caused diseases. In response, ASEAN (Association of Southeast Asian Nations) countries are primarily working on the implementation of the WHO FCTC articles and their guidelines. All Western Pacific Member States are Parties to the FCTC. However, one ASEAN country, Indonesia is not yet a Party.

Domz, our coordinator for the region works with all 10 countries of the ASEAN and coordinates activities with Japan, Korea and China. Three countries in the region have responded to the challenges posed by the tobacco industry by protecting their policies from tobacco industry interference through a code of conduct or guidelines. Four countries have put in place processes for regular adjustment or periodic reevaluation of tobacco tax levels. All ten ASEAN countries have laws on smoke-free public places and pictorial health warnings. Thailand and Singapore are working towards plain packaging.

In addition to her role as our coordinator for the Western Pacific-Asia region since 2010, Domz works as the Smoke-free Program Manager of the Southeast Asia Tobacco Control Alliance (SEATCA), where she provides technical assistance and organises workshops for cities and countries in the preparation and enforcement of their smoke-free policies. She is also the convenor for the Smoke-free Cities Asia Pacific Network, the Smoke-free Heritage Sites & Cities Alliance and the Smoke-free Universities Network which were organized in 2011.

Domz has been known as the Anti-Smoking Czar of Davao City since 2002. She started a smoke-free campaign in Davao City, Philippines and worked with the then Mayor, now President of the Philippines, Rodrigo Duterte, in enforcing smoke-free legislation, which is considered a landmark legislation of Davao. She organized the Association of Smoke-free Davao Advocates with more than 1,000 members who were responsible for conducting lectures in schools, workplaces and communities, and monitoring the implementation of the Tobacco Control Ordinance. Davao City has been recognised for its leadership and has become a destination for smoke-free study visits since 2007.
The Pacific region has made steady progress on many aspects of the treaty. Vanuatu is one of the top two countries in the world with the largest graphic health warnings on tobacco packaging.

At least three countries in the region have increased the legal age of sale of tobacco products to 21 years and several have banned the sale of single (loose) cigarettes. In late 2018, Niue enacted comprehensive tobacco control legislation, which includes some of the strongest measures to prevent tobacco industry interference in the Pacific.

Pacific Island country FCA members such as the Global Youth Leadership Nexus in the Solomon Islands, the Samoa Cancer Society, the Marshall Island Epidemiological Programs Initiative and the Coalition for a Tobacco Free Palau have been vocal and influential at sessions of the Conference of the Parties to the WHO FCTC as well as at various in-country consultations.

Annabel Lyman, our coordinator in the region, works closely with members and partners to ensure a cohesive approach to tobacco control. She is originally from Canada and moved to Palau in 1992 after completing her Master’s in Public Health at the University of Hawaii with a focus on administration and planning. She worked at the Palau Ministry of Health where she administered mental health, alcohol, tobacco and other substance control programs for many years. She has also served as Palau’s Tobacco Control Focal Point.
Eighth Session of the Conference of the Parties

Reflecting on progress and future challenges

In October, FCA members gathered in Geneva to push for progress on FCTC implementation at the eighth session of the Conference of the Parties. As the world’s only intergovernmental body dedicated to tobacco control, the FCTC COP is a critical venue for governments to come together to discuss progress and to commit to further action to combat the tobacco epidemic.

Until recently, COP sessions have focused largely on negotiating policy consensus on what needs to be done to combat the epidemic (i.e. the text and guidelines of the Convention). With much of this technical work now complete, FCA’s work in the past two years has focused on addressing the question of why this policy consensus has not been implemented quickly and completely around the world. The latest figures suggest that just 13% of Parties are likely to achieve the target agreed at COP6 in 2014 to reduce tobacco use prevalence by 30% by 2025. In the past two years, 9% of Parties actually saw increases in tobacco use in their countries, and 60% identified specific gaps in implementation of the treaty.

COP8 provided the venue to question this lack of progress and to discuss ways forward for the treaty. FCA is happy to report that, thanks in part to the coordinated efforts of its members around the world, the COP now has a plan for how it will ramp up implementation, support Parties to overcome gaps and obstacles, and enhance progress towards the 30% target and contribute to the Sustainable Development Goals.

Over the course of 2017 and 2018, members supported the development of this plan, titled the Global Strategy to Accelerate Tobacco Control and Sustainable Development, contributing to the text by participating in a multi-stakeholder drafting group and working closely with national governments to ensure that the plan reflects their priority needs for support. The FCA delegation to COP8 was successful in supporting the adoption of an effective implementation strategy for the COP and played a critical role in countering opposition from a small number of industry-influenced delegates.

There were a number of other important milestones achieved at COP8, including decisions to enhance the transparency of COP sessions and reduce the ability of tobacco industry-influenced delegates to interfere with the negotiations, as has been witnessed at recent COP sessions. In future, media may be granted better access to the discussions, and all participants will be required to disclose affiliations with the industry.

The adoption of the Global Strategy is an important step forward in addressing the slow pace of FCTC implementation over the past 15 years. However, a number of additional challenges remain. Parties committed to exploring the scope and feasibility of a Party-led Implementation Review Mechanism, similar to the mechanisms that exist under other treaties. An IRM would be an important tool to review Parties’ progress, pinpoint challenges and obstacles, and would provide an opportunity for sharing lessons and best practices among Parties at the COP. FCA plans to support the so-called IRM “pilot” as it progresses over the coming months.

Another major challenge for the COP will be to address the severe resource constraints that hamper progress, both at the level of the COP budget and at the level of national governments. FCA is supporting efforts to clearly communicate with development agencies and other potential donors about the need to provide funding for the implementation of the COP’s new plan.

Finally, FCA sees a need for the COP to build political pressure among governments to step up their efforts on tobacco control. Ideally, the COP should become a forum for supportive competition between governments, focused on stronger action and increased investment. The high-level segment that was held for the first time at COP8 was a step in the right direction. In future, another segment with greater attendance by heads of state and other high-level policymakers, with a discussion that leads to concrete commitments to action would make a difference.
The Protocol to Eliminate Illicit Trade in Tobacco Products is now in force, but will it work?

On 25 September 2018 it finally happened. The Protocol to Eliminate the Illicit Trade in Tobacco Products came into force just in time for a Meeting of the Parties to the Protocol to be held after the Conference of the Parties to the FCTC had concluded their eighth session.

Unlike the WHO FCTC, the Protocol was not ratified at record pace and counts 50 Parties at the time of writing. This is enough to begin the work on establishing structures such as agreeing on a budget, a workplan, and hiring specialised staff. However, in order for the Protocol to truly be relevant, the number of Parties will need to grow.

As things stand now, the Protocol brings a series of opportunities and challenges for the FCA. The clock has begun to tick for the delivery of the provisions enshrined in the Protocol.

A global tracking and tracing regime for cigarettes is due to be in place in 2023. Effective controls on manufacturing and transactions in tobacco products in free zones are supposed to be finalised by 2021. If done right, the Protocol can become a powerful tool in curbing the global illicit tobacco trade.

How do we ensure that the Protocol is successful?

Besides needing more Parties, the Protocol faces two additional challenges. First, Parties need to secure a budget to ensure that the main provisions of the Protocol are adequately funded. This is unfortunately not yet the case. Second, the Protocol will require support of governmental departments that go beyond Ministries of Health. In order for the Protocol to properly function, it needs to bring together experts from the fields of tax administration, customs and law enforcement.

The ability to ensure funding and bring all necessary services together to play their role in the enforcement of the Protocol, will eventually determine its level of success. In 2019, working groups will begin to explore the question of what global standards for a tracking and tracing system look like and how Parties can cooperate most efficiently.

A functional Protocol could make the FCTC more effective, while a dysfunctional Protocol may drain it of valuable resources. FCA and its members have an opportunity to help facilitate the process of bringing the people with the right expertise together. As usual, a watchful eye will have to be kept on the tobacco industry; one can expect that the industry or its proxies will try to insert themselves in this process.

Photo: Briefing FCA members on Day 3 of the Meeting of the Parties
MEMBERS IN ACTION
Through research, analysis and evidence-based discussion, FCA members provide informed guidance to Parties, encouraging them to support strong policy positions. FCA sends representatives to various international negotiations to brief government officials and policymakers.

Photos: FCA members in action during the eighth session of the Conference of the Parties and the first session of the Meeting of the Parties.
FCA's 2020 Strategy maximises the ability of the FCTC to ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages. The Strategy is built on four inter-related pillars:

**Building political pressure**
in and between countries for swift action, making political necessities of national and global tobacco prevalence targets

**Holding governments accountable**
through the development and implementation of an effective FCTC compliance mechanism

**Embedding support and cooperation**
in the FCTC within the mechanisms of assistance currently under development

**Deepening FCTC integration**
into international systems, with a focus on development priorities

Photo: FCA members debrief during first session of the Meeting of the Parties
FCA experienced a year of progress in 2018. Thanks to clear strategic direction and effective execution, the Alliance and its partners ensured major success on two important pillars of the 2020 Strategy.

Holding governments accountable

An Implementation Review Mechanism

Parties to the WHO FCTC are legally bound by its provisions. However, to date, we lack an effective compliance mechanism. Many international treaties have strengthened their implementation by adopting a strategic plan and an implementation review mechanism. This is why for many years, FCA has advocated for an organised system to review and follow up on FCTC implementation reports.

This year was no different. One of our top advocacy priorities included pushing for an Implementation Review Mechanism (IRM) as a key component of the Global Strategy to accelerate tobacco control and advance sustainable development, which Parties unanimously endorsed. An important aspect of our work on the IRM revolved around on-site advocacy at the eighth session of the FCTC Conference of the Parties.

The new Global Strategy includes a commitment to establish, by 2020, an FCTC IRM, and to conduct a number of pilot projects in up to twelve countries in order to decide how an IRM might best support Parties in improving their implementation of the treaty.

Embedding support and cooperation in the FCTC process

A Global Strategy

At COP7 in 2016, governments reflected on the many gaps in knowledge, expertise and resources among countries working to deliver on their FCTC commitments, and agreed that the COP needs a longer-term plan for implementation of the treaty.

It was also agreed that an intergovernmental working group should be set up to draft such a plan, and that it would be presented to Parties for their endorsement at COP8.

A majority of FCA’s work over the course of 2018 focused on supporting Parties to develop an effective FCTC Global Strategy – one that identified clear priorities for work under the Convention, reflected Parties’ most pressing needs for implementation support, and one that would be fit-for-purpose as a tool to communicate to donors about Parties’ needs for financial and technical assistance.

FCA members contributed directly to the text of the Strategy through participation in a multi-stakeholder drafting group that met twice between COP7 and COP8. Members also worked closely with national governments to raise awareness of the Global Strategy, why it was important, and how it could accelerate action on FCTC implementation.

FCA members and regional staff worked, in particular, to encourage national governments to identify their priority needs for implementation support, and to provide this input during the development of the Strategy.

As part of these on-going efforts, we held webinars for governments and civil society advocates, hosted a workshop on the sidelines of the World Conference on Tobacco or Health in March 2018, and developed a number of advocacy materials including videos, factsheets, and policy briefings.

In September 2018, we also co-organised an informal workshop with the African Capacity Building Foundation – a specialised agency of the African Union. At the workshop, we prepared representatives of governments and civil society organisations to be champions for the Global Strategy during the official regional preparatory meeting for COP8 in Brazzaville, Congo and during discussions at the COP itself.

FCA was also represented at all of the regional pre-COP preparatory events that took place in the months leading up to COP8. Our advocacy efforts bore fruit when governments adopted the Global Strategy at COP8. The Strategy provides a clear roadmap to reach the COP-endorsed target to reduce tobacco use prevalence by 30% by 2025.
Rebuffing tobacco industry interference at the ILO

FCA continued its global campaign for the International Labour Organization (ILO) to no longer accept funding from the tobacco industry (including corporations profiting from tobacco and ancillary groups that receive tobacco industry funds) in line with the United Nations model policy and WHO FCTC Article 5.3. FCA collaborated with more than 100 public health and sustainable development organisations around the world and called on the ILO Governing Body to finally eliminate any undue influence of the tobacco industry over child labour-related policies. FCA’s global coalition aimed to help shield the ILO and all UN agencies from any present and future tobacco industry interference. Ahead of the 334th Session of the ILO Governing Body, FCA released a policy paper with key recommendations. FCA circulated open letters to outline the reasons why members of the ILO Governing Body should end public private partnerships with the tobacco industry and its collaborators. FCA published op-eds in the media and its campaign was extensively covered in media outlets around the globe.

At the end of the year and after many delays, the ILO Governing Body opted ‘to continue efforts to mobilize various sustainable sources of funding from the public and private sector with appropriate safeguards’ and no longer relies on funding from tobacco companies and affiliated organisations.

Smoke-free environments

In Japan, FCA member Japan Society on Tobacco Control is working with the Tokyo local government and the Ministry of Health and Welfare to establish a Revised Health Promotion Act and a Tokyo Metropolitan Government Smoking Prevention Ordinance. JSTC has gathered 2.64 million signatures to support this campaign. In the Philippines, FCA member Southeast Asia Tobacco Control Alliance (SEATCA) supported the City of Balanga in two court cases filed by Philippine Tobacco Institute to challenge the city’s comprehensive smoke-free ordinance. With support from Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids, FCA promoted tobacco control and the ratification of the WHO FCTC in the Dominican Republic. In Europe, Ukraine adopted smoke-free legislation but a setback in Austria saw smoke-free legislation reversed months before its implementation target date, despite a vigorous advocacy campaign supported by tens of European tobacco organisations and over 800,000 citizen signatures in favour of the smoking ban.

"FCA is the most impressive advocacy organisation I’ve ever been a part of. We’ve been a catalyst for the development and implementation of the most effective treaty measures possible. Parties I talk to tell me that they always want to hear what the FCA has to say and they find our documents essential reading. We speak with one voice and when you speak on behalf of the FCA, you are always listened to."

Deborah Amott, Chief Executive Action on Smoking & Health UK
Supporting comprehensive national tobacco control laws

FCA member Nigeria Tobacco Control Alliance trained 25 officers of the Consumer Protection Council and 20 officers of the Nigeria Security and Civil Defence Corps on the National Tobacco Control Act of 2015. In addition, NTCA collaborated with the Consumer Protection Council to develop advocacy material aimed at educating retailers and the general public before any action by the authorities to enforce the tobacco control law in 2019.

FCA signed a letter along with 105 nongovernmental organisations from around the world, to respectfully request that Switzerland ratify the WHO FCTC and the Illicit Trade Protocol without delay. The organisations also urged the country to “enact tobacco control legislation compliant with FCTC obligations and model its relationship with tobacco companies based on the guidelines of FCTC Article 5.3.”

Packaging and labelling of tobacco products

The Oriental Republic of Uruguay became the first country in Latin America to require plain packaging. FCA members visited the National House of Representatives to engage Parliamentarians on this topic. In the South-East Asia region, FCA member SEATCA supported the governments of Singapore and Thailand towards shifting to plain packaging. In Europe, plain packaging entered into force in Norway. Turkey passed an amendment to adopt plain packaging. Belgium and The Netherlands committed to the adoption of plain packaging.

"I've been involved with the FCA since the very beginning, in the 2000s, during the negotiations. The FCA is an incredible, really influential advocacy coalition. The strength of the FCTC provisions themselves as a result of negotiations was because of the FCA. It would have been a lot weaker had it not been for this highly effective lobbying."  

Rob Cunningham  
Senior Policy Analyst,  
Canadian Cancer Society

United Nations High-Level Meeting on NCDs

Ghana participated in the UN High-Level Meeting on NCDs, for the first time. FCA member Vision for Alternative Development (VALD) prepared for this significant event by helping promote tobacco control as a key component of any strategy designed to prevent and control NCDs. To call on government to support efforts to accelerate the implementation of the WHO FCTC, VALD met with officials including the Special Advisor to the President on SDGs, the Special Advisor to the Minister of Health, the Minister of Planning / Chairperson of the Inter-Ministerial Committee on SDGs, leadership of the Parliamentary Select Committee on Health, the Food and Drugs Authority and the Ghana Health Service.

Ahead of the UN High-Level Meeting, FCA member Association pour la Défense des Droits des Consommateurs (ADC Tchad) issued a letter to the Office of the President urging the President of the Republic to recognise and commit to action on NCD control and prevention. FCA’s ongoing efforts in the Republic of Chad culminated in the passing of a specific tobacco tax on each tobacco package in the 2019 finance law.
FCA gratefully acknowledges the in-kind and financial support of the following organisations.

Action on Smoking & Health USA
Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation
Bloomberg Philanthropies
Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids
Canadian Cancer Society
Cancer Council Australia
Cancer Research UK
New Venture Fund
Norwegian Cancer Society
Smoke Free Partnership
Southeast Asia Tobacco Control Alliance
Vital Strategies
WHO Regional Office for the Western Pacific
FCA’s accounts are audited annually by the independent Swiss accounting firm, BDO Ltd, which expressed an unqualified or "clean" opinion of FCA’s 2017 financial statements.

The audited financial statements for 2018 will be available in mid-2019. BDO Ltd has declared itself free of all links to the tobacco industry. Copies of audited financial statements are available upon written request to the FCA Secretariat (fca@fctc.org).