



WHO FRAMEWORK CONVENTION  
ON TOBACCO CONTROL

## GOVERNMENTS CELEBRATE FIVE YEARS OF ANTI-TOBACCO CONVENTION

**Geneva, February 26** - A ceremony marking the fifth anniversary of the entry into force of the WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control was held today in Geneva headquarters of the World Health Organization.

"With 168 Parties to date, the WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control is one of the most widely embraced treaties in the history of the United Nations," said Dr Thamsanqa Dennis Mseleku, President of the Conference of the Parties. "Recent years have seen rapid progress in establishing the treaty tools and institutions, and putting its implementation in place."

According to recent analysis of 117 national implementation reports, 85% of the Parties have established inter-ministerial coordination teams for tobacco control or have nominated a focal point, and nearly 80% prohibited the sales of tobacco products to minors, 70% have introduced large, clear and visible health warnings on the packages of tobacco products.

The Convention aims to protect people from the consequences of tobacco consumption by reducing the demand for and supply of tobacco. It calls for:

- stronger tax and price measures, regulation of tobacco advertisements and the introduction of strong health messages on tobacco packages;
- parties to adopt protective measures against exposure to tobacco smoke, to ban sales to minors and to support tobacco growers in making the transition to alternative livelihoods;
- protecting public health policies from commercial and other vested interests of the tobacco industry.

Tobacco use is one of the biggest public health threats and one of the main risk factors for a number of chronic diseases, including cancer, lung diseases and cardiovascular diseases.

"It is estimated that tobacco use kills more than 5 million people per year – an average of one person every 6 seconds – and accounts for 1 in 10 adult deaths worldwide," said Dr. Margaret Chan, the Director-General of the World Health Organization. "The Convention demonstrates that health can indeed persuade

other sectors to take action, through taxes, graphic health warnings, legislation, and marketing bans. "

As the first international treaty negotiated under the auspices of WHO, the Convention provides a new legal dimension for international health cooperation. Several key guidelines have been adopted and the first protocol to the Convention, which aims to combat illicit tobacco trade, is being negotiated.

"However, the insufficient resources and technical capacity in some countries as well as the tactics of the tobacco industry continue to pose a challenge to worldwide efforts to fight the tobacco epidemic," says Dr. Haik Nikogosian, Head of the FCTC Secretariat. "Several provisions of the Convention provide the basis for strong international cooperation and for supporting countries lacking resources, in order to boost concerted global action against tobacco."

The WHO-based Convention Secretariat, in cooperation with partners, is facilitating support to countries in meeting their obligations under the Convention, through the dissemination of implementation guidelines, assistance in reporting, convening of needs assessments, provision of advice on legislation, support to the transfer of expertise and technologies, and facilitation of access to internationally available resources.

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All documents relating to the WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control are available at: <http://www.who.int/fctc>

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