WHO Public Hearings on the Framework Convention on Tobacco Control
12-13 October 2000 in Geneva

Submission from SWEDISH NURSES AGAINST TOBACCO.

Nurses Against Tobacco is a Swedish non-governmental organization founded in 1992. Its main aims are to strengthen and enhance the role of nurses and midwives working on tobacco control issues by setting up a strong and active network all around Sweden, to raise the awareness in our own professions, to support local tobacco prevention work, to increase and improve information, to influence decision-makers on all levels, to encourage nurses world-wide to start organisations against tobacco.

Nurses Against Tobacco has a network of contact-persons over entire Sweden and they continuously get information on the latest discoveries in tobacco related issues, information about activities etc. Once a year they are invited to a conference in Stockholm for getting more knowledge about tobacco, planning activities, sharing experience etc. All members gets an information letter at least four time a year. Four times a year the members also get the membership magazine “Tobaksfronten”.

Nurses Against Tobacco try to inspire colleagues to react and to put tobacco control activities on the agenda. Nurses Against Tobacco offer smoking cessation support to colleagues.

A secretariat was established in 1994 in Stockholm together with four other professional Swedish networks, doctors, dentistry, teachers and pharmacists – professional Swedish networks in cooperation. The secretariat supports and helps the members.

Nurses Against Tobacco also collaborate with the Swedish Health Professional Association.

Nurses Against Tobacco is financed by membership fees, Swedish National Institute of Public Health, Swedish Cancer Society and Swedish Heart and Lung Foundation who they also co-operate with.

Our interest in the Framework Convention (FC) is based upon our belief that a global threat like the tobacco epidemic needs to be met by a strong global strategy.

NEEDS OF COORDINATED INTERNATIONAL CO-OPERATION

The tobacco epidemic is a global problem that calls for the widest possible international cooperation by all countries and their participation in an effective, appropriate and coordinated international response.

Nurses Against Tobacco are seriously concerned about the global spread of the tobacco epidemic and the increase in the worldwide consumption and production of cigarettes and other tobacco products, particularly in developing countries.

Nurses Against Tobacco are also concerning of the international community about the devastating worldwide health, social and economic consequences of the tobacco epidemic.

TOBACCO SMUGGLING

Nurses Against Tobacco are deeply concerned about the illegal transboundary traffic in cigarettes and other tobacco products and believes that coordinated action is necessary to eradicate illicit traffic. Smuggling of cigarettes into Sweden is taking place in large quantities.
TOBACCO ADDICTION
Cigarettes are among the most highly engineered consumer products, designed to create and maintain addiction, that many of the compounds they contain are pharmacologically active, toxic, mutagenic and carcinogenic, and that tobacco use is separately classified as a disorder in the International Classification of Diseases (ICD-10).
In Sweden the use of moist snuff is widely spread and still increasing. Snuff has traditionally been regarded as masculine but Swedish Match, the producer has recently put on the market varieties of snuff with taste and packaging appealing to young women.

SCIENTIFIC EVIDENCE
For nurses and midwives the scientific evidence are the “base” in the tobacco control work. The scientific evidence has unequivocally established that tobacco consumption and exposure to tobacco smoke are causally linked to numerous causes of death, disease and disability
Nurses Against Tobacco (specially the profession of midwives) acknowledge that there is also clear scientific evidence that prenatal exposure to tobacco smoke causes adverse health and developmental condition.
The tobacco industry tries all the time to refute the scientific evidence and they do it, not always in a “clean” way. We have “good examples” in Sweden.

FUTURE SMOKERS
Nurses Against Tobacco are deeply concerned about the escalation in smoking and other forms of tobacco consumption by indigenous populations and other minority groups worldwide
In Sweden for example smoking has become a low income class behaviour.

INTERNATIONAL CO-ORDINATORS
Nurses Against Tobacco acknowledging the competence of the World Health Organization and its leadership role within the United Nations system in the field of tobacco control and calling on international organizations also concerned with such control to coordinate efforts with that Organization.
Nurses Against Tobacco recalling the resolutions of the World Health Assembly on "Tobacco or health" and taking into account the relevant treaties, recommendations, declarations, and other instruments on or relevant to tobacco control issues adopted within the United Nations system and by other international and regional organizations,
Nurses Against Tobacco recalling the preamble to the Constitution of the World Health Organization, which affirms that "the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of health is one of the fundamental rights of every human being without distinction of race, religion, political belief, economic or social condition",

WOMEN AND TOBACCO
As an organization including many women but also in the profession meeting a lot of women and young girls Nurses Against Tobacco recalls to the pertinent provisions of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women adopted by the United Nations General Assembly on 18 December 1979, and deeply concerned about the escalation in smoking and other forms of tobacco use by women and young girls worldwide, which requires the implementation of gender-specific tobacco control strategies,

Nursing and midwifering are predominantly a female profession and nurses and midwives as professionals are role-models for other women. Only in Sweden there are 90,000 nurses and midwives who can stand on the barricades against tobacco of all levels of policy-making and implementation. We think it is important to recognize the vital leadership role that women provide in
tobacco control efforts and affirming the need for the full participation of women in tobacco control at all levels of policy-making and implementation. Nurses need to be prepared to participate in tobacco control activities at local, regional national, and international levels. It is also important that nurses take an active role in initiating and supporting national and international tobacco control policy and legislation.

**TOBACCO CONTROL UNDER-FUNDED**

In force of nurses and midwives professionalism, working with people from the first phase of life to the last, they have to take care of an increasing number of tobacco victims. But there is very small resources to take care of the victims, to train nurses in tobacco cessation, to work with tobacco prevention etc. Tobacco control at all levels is seriously under-funded, all over the world compared to the burden of disease it causes, and that new and additional financial and technical resources can be expected to make a substantial difference in the world's capacity to address the tobacco epidemic.

**NGO**

*Nurses Against Tobacco* emphasizing the special contribution of nongovernmental organizations, including health professional bodies, women's, youth and environmental groups, academic institutions, private industry, hospitals and other stakeholders in civil society to tobacco control efforts nationally and internationally and the vital importance of their participation in national and international tobacco control efforts.

**SUMMARY**

Tobacco is responsible for one in 10 adult deaths; by 2030 the figure is expected to be one in six, or 10 million deaths per year - more than any other cause of premature death. If current trends persist, about 500 million people alive in 2000 will eventually be killed by tobacco, half of them in productive middle age, losing 20 to 25 years of life. See Curbing the epidemic: governments and the economics of tobacco control, Washington, D.C., the World Bank, 1999, pp. 22-23.

*SWEDISH NURSES AGAINST TOBACCO will see a Framework Convention strong enough to put an end to the suffering caused by the tobacco industry! Strong enough to allow national governments to make decisions in favour of public health. Strong enough to protect children from passive smoking. Strong enough to protect people from diseases and death caused by tobacco products. Strong enough to start the end of the tobacco epidemic!*

We would like to make an oral statement at the Hearings.

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