Knowledge Hubs Info - 27 September 2017

Information on the WHO FCTC Secretariat’s Knowledge Hubs and their ongoing work

The Convention Secretariat would like to provide you with an update on the work of the Knowledge Hubs (KHs), established by the Convention Secretariat as part of its successive work plans adopted by the Conference of the Parties.

The scope of work and the list of current KHs are available at:

http://www.who.int/fctc/implementation/knowledge-management/

In short, the KHs are expected to function as the Secretariat’s extensions in assisting Parties in implementing specific provisions of the Convention. Each KH works in a specific work area, where it has significant knowledge and also capacity to assist other Parties in their implementation work.

The Secretariat established six KHs so far, with the seventh one in process of establishment.

Under the guidance of the Convention Secretariat, the KHs perform the following functions:

- generate and share expertise, knowledge, information, through training and other programmes, as appropriate, regionally and globally;

- promote and facilitate, as appropriate, communication among the Parties, observers to the COP, including IGOs, NGOs, and other interested partners on the specific work area of the KH;

- support the Convention Secretariat in hosting meetings, prepare technical materials and participate in and contribute to technical and subsidiary body meetings, as appropriate and as requested by the Secretariat.

The KHs could also provide assistance to individual Parties in their FCTC implementation work, upon request by Parties addressed to the Secretariat or the KHs. Such assistance is carried out in coordination with the Convention Secretariat, and might involve other partners beyond the KHs, that have the knowledge and expertise in the specific work area. Such partners include WHO regional and country offices, UNDP, other organizations that are Observers to the Conference of the Parties, and so on.

It is expected that the Parties that host the KHs contribute to ensuring their sustainability, including in financial terms.
The KHs develop, maintain and regularly update a website to assist them with sharing knowledge and information among the Parties. The individual KHs websites are available on a joint platform developed by the Convention Secretariat: http://untobaccocontrol.org/kh/

Recent activities of the Knowledge Hubs

In what follows, we would like to provide with some highlights on the activities of the KHs.

The Knowledge Hub on Legal Challenges, hosted by the McCabe Centre for Law and Cancer, Melbourne (Australia) is supported by the Convention Secretariat, the Union for International Cancer Control and Cancer Council Victoria as well as the Government of Australia, and provides technical assistance in relation to legal challenges to implementation of the WHO FCTC. The KH conducts regular training programmes, carries out country missions, participates in relevant WHO FCTC meetings and contributes to the preparation of technical papers in its area of work.

The KH is currently running its 7th Intensive Legal Training Course on law and NCDs prevention. 17 participants from 14 Parties are attending the course, held at Cancer Council Victoria in Melbourne, Australia. Following the training, the participants with legal backgrounds are expected to contribute to developing national legislations, regulations and policies, or to provide legal advice on challenges that countries usually face when implementing strong tobacco control policies, for example those initiated by the tobacco industry.
The KH recently completed a compilation of legal challenges on implementation of the Convention. One can access them via the “Learn about legal challenges” tab on their main webpage: http://untobaccocontrol.org/kh/legal-challenges/.

More information about the work of the KH, including resources related to legal challenges to WHO FCTC implementation are available at: http://untobaccocontrol.org/kh/legal-challenges/. Parties that are interested to the training programme of the KH can write to fctcsecretariat@who.int or directly to the KH to Jonathan Liberman (Jonathan.Liberman@cancervic.org.au).

**The National Institute of Cancer Prevention and Research, Noida, India serves as the WHO FCTC Secretariat’s Knowledge Hub on Smokeless Tobacco.** The primary objective of this hub is to collect/create evidence on different aspects of smokeless tobacco, develop a knowledge base that facilitates policy development and implementation in relation to smokeless tobacco. The hub also contributes to building capacity in the Parties for smokeless tobacco control.

Recently, on 16 – 18 August 2017 the Hub conducted an Inter-Country Meeting on Smokeless Tobacco Policy in New Delhi. This meeting gathered experts on smokeless tobacco (SLT) policy and discussed how the different requirements could be applied to the case of SLT, a discussion with potential global impact. The meeting took into account the policy progress on SLT control under selected Articles of WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control, in comparison with cigarettes and other smoking tobacco products, and highlighted the challenges faced and the opportunities ahead. Representatives from 12 countries including experts, delegates from ministries, representatives from the academia and NGOs participated in the meeting. Experts from WHO Headquarters, WHO SEARO and the WHO India Office participated in the meeting alongside the WHO FCTC Secretariat and some of its tobacco industry observatories.
The KH published a series of factsheets on SLT that are available at: http://untobaccocontrol.org/kh/smokeless-tobacco/background-documents/#factsheets. The presentations given at the recent expert meeting in Delhi are also available at the same webpage: http://untobaccocontrol.org/kh/smokeless-tobacco/background-documents/#factsheets. They present a global overview of SLT policies related to various articles to the Convention.

The Knowledge Hub on Water Pipe Tobacco Smoking, hosted by the American University of Beirut (Lebanon) brings its contribution towards controlling waterpipe tobacco smoking. The main objective of the hub is to raise awareness and promote research on the dangers of waterpipe tobacco smoking, to dispel misconceptions about the safety of this product, and to urge the regulators to undertake effective control measures on the issue.

The KH recently launched an inventory of resources on water pipes, which is available at: http://untobaccocontrol.org/kh/waterpipes/references/
The KH’s next event, the 3rd International Conference on Water pipe Tobacco Smoking Research (Beirut, 9 -11 November 2017, [http://untobaccocontrol.org/kh/waterpipes/third-international-conference-on-waterpipe-tobacco-smoking-research/](http://untobaccocontrol.org/kh/waterpipes/third-international-conference-on-waterpipe-tobacco-smoking-research/)) will gather experts to discuss the research needs in the area of water pipe tobacco smoking and how to inform the scientific audience as well as policymakers about good regulation practices on water pipe tobacco use.

Parties that wish to receive more information or assistance on water pipe related matters should contact Prof Zaatari through the KH website’s platform at: [http://untobaccocontrol.org/kh/waterpipes/contact-us/](http://untobaccocontrol.org/kh/waterpipes/contact-us/) or contact Jessica Najm at jn44@aub.edu.lb.

**The Knowledge Hub on Taxation at the University of Cape Town (South Africa)** operates under the Economics of Tobacco Control Project. It is envisaged that this hub will become the Secretariat’s resource on questions related to tobacco taxation and research on illicit tobacco trade. The KH is currently developing its internal capacity to address requests by the Parties. The Hub already carried out projects in FCTC Parties and assisted them either on-site or remotely.

A representative of the Hub assisted a project coordinated by the COP-Observer NGO SEATCA in Myanmar and Cambodia. Hana Ross, representing the Hub conducted a 3-day workshop in Yangon attended by young economists, and a 2-day workshop for the General Department of Taxation of Cambodia. Both countries are considering changing the tax system and substantial tax increases.

The hub will soon start its series of capacity building trainings to scale up Parties work in the implementation of Article 6. Their planned activities are described in their regularly updated website at: [http://untobaccocontrol.org/kh/taxation/what-we-do/](http://untobaccocontrol.org/kh/taxation/what-we-do/).
In a recent interview, Professor Corne van Walbeek, the director and focal point for the taxation KH, talks about illicit trade in South Africa and the reasons behind. The interview is available at the following link (the interview starts at 01h25:21) https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jUZ2Pw1Bwu8.

Parties that wish to receive assistance in tobacco taxation or research related to illicit trade should write to Prof van Walbeek through the KH website’s platform at: http://untobaccocontrol.org/kh/taxation/contact-us/ or to the Convention Secretariat at: fctcsecretariat@who.int.

The Knowledge Hub on International Cooperation at the Center for International Cooperation on Tobacco Control (Uruguay) assists the Convention Secretariat in promoting South-South and Triangular Cooperation as a mechanism of country assistance. The hub also promotes the implementation of policies on tobacco-free environments, pictorial health warnings and tobacco dependence treatment in the region of the Americas and beyond, through participating in south-south and triangular projects and organizing meetings.

The Hub hosted two meetings of all KHS (one in October 2015 and another one in May 2017), providing a platform for strengthening information exchange and collaboration between the KHS. As a result, the hubs help each other in establishing their operation, facilitating exchange of information related to their operation, through site visits and other means. These meetings were organized on the sidelines of the Secretariat’s South-South and Triangular cooperation meetings.
The KH will organize, together with the Convention Secretariat, the launching of a new, joint Secretariat-UNDP publication “Achieving Policy Coherence for Tobacco Control and Development” on the sidelines of the WHO Global Conference on NCDs. The launching will take place at the seat of the KH, on 20 October 2017.


The hub plans to organize an expert meeting on tobacco surveillance with main objective to discuss how to strengthen implementation of Article 20 of the Convention globally, including the type of assistance that Parties to the Convention need to scale up their implementation of this Article. The meeting will also contribute to the identification of stakeholders that could provide support to Parties in this work. This includes identification of possible areas of work of the Knowledge Hub on Surveillance, including the types of demands from the Parties’ which could be addressed by the Knowledge Hub. The meeting will be held on 11–13 December 2017 in Helsinki.

More details about the KH can be found at: http://untobaccocontrol.org/kh/surveillance/.
As mentioned above, a new hub is in the process of the establishment at the Global Center for Good Governance in Tobacco Control (GGTC) at the Thammasat University in Bangkok, Thailand, as mandated by decision FCTC/COP7(8). The KH will be launched with the signing of the memorandum of understanding between the Convention Secretariat and the hosting university on 1 November 2017.

In addition to the mandate given to the KH by the COP (http://www.who.int/fctc/cop/cop7/FCTC_COP7(8)_EN.pdf?ua=1), the hub should also coordinate the work of tobacco industry monitoring centres that are operational in three FCTC Parties (Brazil, South Africa, Sri Lanka).

The Secretariat will inform you regularly on the work of the KHS.

Should you wish to receive assistance on any of the areas of work of the KHS, please contact the Secretariat: Andrii Skipalskyi at skipalskyia@who.int or Dr Tibor Szilagyi at szilagyit@who.int.