Background

The WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (WHO FCTC) is the legally binding public health treaty with 180 Parties up to date. Tobacco use contributes to one third of the burden of NCDs. The sixth session of the Conference of the Parties (COP6), the governing body of the WHO FCTC, adopted a decision towards a strong contribution of the COP to achieving the NCD global target on reduction of tobacco use and the COP7 (7 to 12 November 2016, New Delhi, India) will report on the progress made in the implementation of this decision.

The first meeting of National NCD Programme Directors and Managers provides a great opportunity to discuss three hot topics related to tobacco control, and what can be done to meet the challenges they present. These hot topics are all greatly due to the tobacco industry attempts to undermine tobacco control. Addressing the emerging hot topics, which prompt governments’ response and shared experience in tobacco control, especially in tackling the tobacco industry will contribute to accelerating the implementation of the Convention.

Objectives

To encourage the participants to fully utilize the Convention and use it as an effective legal instrument to prevent and control NCDs, and to share, challenges and experiences of countries in the successful implementation of the WHO FCTC.

The session will specifically:

- Discuss hot topic 1: Pictorial health warnings and plain packaging
- Discuss hot topic 2: Emerging problem of E-cigarettes and experience of control and regulation
- Discuss hot topic 3: Illicit trade in tobacco products and the Protocol
- Integrate the discussion on tobacco industry interference as an underlining challenge in each of the above hot topics
- Discuss the implementation challenges and constraints, and how to overcome them
- Highlight the importance of prioritizing or accelerating the implementation of the WHO FCTC including treaty measures promoted as best buys in the WHO MPOWER package, at the highest level of achievement to prevent and control NCDs, making full use of the Convention.

**Expected outcome**

This session will be jointly organized by the Convention Secretariat of the WHO FCTC and WHO. Experience from countries will be shared. Interactive discussion among countries and with the Convention Secretariat and WHO will be encouraged.

**Key messages**

- Time bound provisions of the WHO FCTC need special attention, including treaty measures promoted as best buys in WHO MPOWER package such as packaging and labelling of tobacco products. Implementing large size pictorial health warnings and plain packaging is a win-win policy for the governments.

- The use of e-cigarettes is getting more prevalent in most countries that allow the sale of these products. Urgent actions are needed for the countries to control and regulate e-cigarettes.

- The illicit trade of tobacco products, often linked to organized crime and corruption, is a major global concern, impacting on health, public finance, legal and economic governance. Ratification of the Protocol to Eliminate Illicit Trade in Tobacco Products to the WHO FCTC is necessary to respond to the financial, legal and health impacts of illicit trade in tobacco products.

- Full compliance with Article 5.3 and its guidelines to prevent interference from tobacco industry is crucial if the industry’s power to counteract tobacco control measures is to be broken.

- With the inclusion of the implementation of the WHO FCTC as one of the means of implementation targets in the Sustainable Development Goals, it is important that the national NCD and tobacco control programmes are able to develop and implement national actions for tobacco control, through multisectoral coordination and ensure its inclusion into the national development and health agenda.

- More Parties legally bound to the treaty increases the effective use of this international instrument to curb the tobacco epidemic. Member States that are not Parties to the WHO FCTC are encouraged to consider ratifying or acceding to the Convention.

- The experience gathered in implementing the evidence-based provisions contained in the WHO FCTC with emphasis on multisectoral approaches provide solid examples to strategize actions to curb NCDs risk factors epidemic and to address strategies from other industries such as soda, processed foods and alcohol transnationals to oppose, weaken or delay public health measures.

**Relevant instruments under the WHO FCTC**

- WHO FCTC
- The Protocol to Eliminate Illicit Trade in Tobacco Products
- Article 5.3 and Article 11 guidelines

http://www.who.int/fctc/publications/en