



## The special supplement of Tobacco Control Journal on the WHO FCTC impact assessment now published

Press release

18 June 2019

At the Seventh Session of the Conference of the Parties to the World Health Organization Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (WHO FCTC) in India, Parties to the Convention learned about the outcome of the impact assessment exercise of the treaty, carried out by a group of independent experts upon the mandate from the Conference of the Parties. Since then, the progress has by no means slowed down. The most recent data published in the World Health Statistics 2019 shows that between 2000 and 2016, the worldwide age-standardized prevalence of tobacco smoking among persons aged 15 years and older have decreased by 9 percentage points in men and 5 percentage points in women to reach 34% and 6%, respectively. This period covers most of the time range, during which the WHO FCTC has been enforced (the Convention entered into force in February 2005).

As reported by the **Impact Assessment experts**, selected after their international recognition on research and work in the area, the Convention has resulted in significant gains in tobacco control action, notwithstanding variability across countries and policy domains still represents a challenge. The areas where the WHO FCTC has most contributed to significant and rapid progress are protection from exposure to tobacco smoke (Article 8); packaging and labelling of tobacco products (Article 11); education, communication, training and public awareness (Article 12); sales to and by minors (Article 16); and reporting and exchange of information (Article 21). The number of Parties that have introduced strong smoke-free legislations and of those that have strengthened their packaging and labelling legislation, including introducing large pictorial health warnings and requiring plain/standardized packaging, have proliferated, and continue to increase, as thereafter confirmed in the **2018 Global Progress Report on the Implementation of the WHO FCTC**.



Secretariat of the WHO FCTC

The impact assessment exercise also identified major obstacles Parties encounter when implementing the WHO FCTC. Among them and by far the most important is the sustained interference by the tobacco industry with policy making and enforcement. Experts found that awareness of Article 5.3 of the Convention, related to the protection from tobacco industry interference, has increased and several Parties have sought to implement such measures with varying degrees of success. However, the tobacco industry and its front groups continue in many ways to obstruct progress of the WHO FCTC and its Articles, and to oppose, undermine and delay implementation of all measures that may reduce its profits through sales and promotional activities.

Research consistently shows that tobacco control measures implemented by Parties are most effective when they align with comprehensive implementation of the WHO FCTC and its Guidelines. The Convention's text and the guidelines adopted by the Conference of the Parties have been cited explicitly in many countries to support new tobacco control policies, and to defend measures in domestic and international legal challenges.

The [supplement published today](#) supplement published today provides a snapshot of the WHO FCTC implementation status in 2016, and is an overview of the progress and impact of the WHO FCTC in its first 10 years of operation. The current supplement comprises nine papers, covering the analysis of the general impact of the WHO FCTC and the various articles of the Convention, as well as cross-cutting issues on tobacco control. The papers in this special supplement have taken into account practices that have demonstrated the highest impact in the implementation of the Convention, highlighted challenges, needs and gaps to be addressed by its Parties, and made recommendations for future actions at global level.

Despite the progress made and the sustained improvements in tobacco control policy implementation across the WHO FCTC Parties, the

tobacco-related deaths toll is still too high. Tobacco kills more than 8 million people each year. More than 7 million of those deaths are due to direct tobacco use, while around 1.2 million are the result of non-smokers being exposed to second-hand smoke.

Therefore, this is not the time yet to be complacent. The fight continues as we address the challenges identified already in the impact assessment exercise and new ones, including the increased prevalence of novel and emerging tobacco products, and their producers' aggressive marketing and direct lobby and interference on governments decisions to either ban or regulate them. Responding to these new challenges and in an attempt to further strengthen implementation of the Convention and to help reduce unequal implementation among Parties, the Conference of the Parties adopted in October 2018, the **first Global Strategy to Accelerate Tobacco Control: Advancing Sustainable Development through the Implementation of the WHO FCTC 2019-2025 (GS2025)**. The Global Strategy supports the renewed efforts of the Parties to formulate and implement WHO FCTC specific policies, and also calls upon all stakeholders to bring their contributions to tobacco control efforts and support the Parties in their actions against tobacco.

The fact that implementation of the WHO FCTC is also part of the sustainable development framework as **SDG target 3.a (Strengthen the implementation of the WHO FCTC in all countries, as appropriate)** provides a unique opportunity to integrate WHO FCTC implementation with every effort targeted at reaching all other sustainable development goals. Integration of WHO FCTC with other leading international and global health policy measures, including those on noncommunicable diseases, on the control of tuberculosis and HIV/AIDS, on those targeted at gender and disadvantaged populations, as well as other horizontal programmes, must be the focus of our actions to ensure that the positive trends identified in the impact assessment exercise continue.

### About the Convention Secretariat

The Convention is a milestone in the promotion of public health. It is an evidence-based treaty that reaffirms the right of people to the highest standard of health, provides legal dimensions for international health cooperation and sets high standards for compliance.

#### For more information please contact:

Ms Mitchel Lara

Communications web officer

**Contact:** [mediafctc@who.int](mailto:mediafctc@who.int)

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## Links

**Special supplement of  
Tobacco Control Journal on  
the WHO FCTC impact  
assessment**

Impact assessment of the WHO  
FCTC

Supplementary information  
(submitted to COP7)  
Impact assessment Factsheets  
Global Strategy to Accelerate  
Tobacco Control: Advancing  
Sustainable Development  
through the Implementation of  
the WHO FCTC 2019–2025