



POLICY BRIEFING

This document relates to item 7.1 of the provisional agenda and corresponds to document FCTC/COP/8/11

Eighth session of the Conference of the Parties to the WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control,
1 -6 October 2018, Geneva, Switzerland

A Global Strategy to Accelerate FCTC Implementation

Key Recommendations

- At COP8, Parties should endorse the Global Strategy to Accelerate Tobacco Control as proposed in Annex 1 of document FCTC/COP/8/11.
- The Strategy is a plan for the COP as a whole, which can help to enable better FCTC implementation and progress towards SDG target 3a in a number of ways, including by:
 - Keeping discussions at COP and work between COP sessions focused on priority issues agreed by Parties
 - Enhancing and streamlining international cooperation on tobacco control
 - Raising the international visibility of the FCTC
 - Helping to raise money at the domestic and global level
- FCA supports the recommendation of the Expert Group on Reporting Arrangements to establish a peer-led mechanism to improve implementation of the Convention and facilitate provision of focused support to Parties. If the Strategy is adopted, the Convention Secretariat should commence work to begin a pilot project demonstration of the IRM, as recommended by the Working Group.
- COP8 should also consider how to translate the Strategy into action, including what kind of follow-up support will be provided to Parties to implement the Strategy.
- In particular, it will be necessary to adapt the Workplan and Budget for the 2020-2021 biennium so that it reflects the priorities outlined in the Global Strategy, should the Strategy be adopted. FCA's specific recommendations on the Workplan and Budget are outlined in a separate policy briefing.

Why this is important

The FCTC and its guidelines provide a framework for global action on the tobacco epidemic. Over the first decade since its entry into force, the FCTC has led to the increased uptake of tobacco control policies in countries around the world,¹ which together have had a significant impact on decreasing smoking prevalence.²

¹ Chung-Hall et al. *Tob Control*. Published Online: 07 June 2018. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1136/tobaccocontrol-2018-054389>

² Gravely et al. *Lancet Pub Health* 2017;2(4):e166-174. <https://www.thelancet.com/action/showPdf?pii=S2468-2667%2817%2930045-2>.



However, much work remains to be done. According to the most recent FCTC Global Progress Report, over 60% of Parties reported specific gaps in FCTC implementation, and large portions of the world's population are still unprotected by the best-practice tobacco control measures prescribed by the FCTC³.

Governments also continue to report that they face significant obstacles in translating their treaty commitments into action. Commonly cited challenges to FCTC implementation include interference by the tobacco industry, difficulties engaging sectors beyond health in the policy development and implementation process, and a lack of sustainable funding for tobacco control activities⁴.

Data from the World Health Organization suggests that the amount of funding allocated in many national budgets does not meet recommended levels of expenditure⁵. Additionally, while several governments^{6,7} and major philanthropies^{8,9} have in recent years made substantial investments in international tobacco control, these contributions represent just a small fraction of the estimated level of resources required to scale-up tobacco control to recommended levels in low- and middle-income countries¹⁰. The reliance of tobacco control programs on philanthropic funding is, in the long-term, unsustainable. Governments must step up to generate predictable, steady funding of their own. In the short-to-medium term, more financial and technical assistance from high-income countries is a priority.

The result of this slow and uneven progress and the persistence of these obstacles is that the world is not on track to meet the globally agreed-upon and COP-endorsed target to achieve a 30% relative reduction in tobacco use prevalence by 2025¹¹. In fact, it is predicted that tobacco use will increase in some parts of the world¹².

Unless urgent action is taken to change current trends, many countries will be faced with a growing tobacco epidemic, and will be saddled with the enormous burden that this places on their health systems and economies.

The COP needs a plan to address this, one that will ensure that Parties receive the support that they need to turn the FCTC into action on the ground.

A Medium Term Strategic Framework is a plan for the COP that will help to enable better implementation of the FCTC

At the seventh session of the COP in November 2016 Parties agreed on the urgent need for a plan to provide strategic direction for the COP's work and to make sure that progress on global tobacco

³ World Health Organization 2017. WHO Report on the Global Tobacco Epidemic
http://www.who.int/tobacco/global_report/en/

⁴ Global Progress in implementation of the WHO FCTC see: FCTC/COP/8/4
http://www.who.int/entity/fctc/cop/sessions/cop8/FCTC_COP_8_4.pdf?ua=1

⁵ WHO 2011. Scaling up action against noncommunicable diseases: how much will it cost? Geneva, WHO. Available at:
http://apps.who.int/iris/bitstream/handle/10665/44706/9789241502313_eng.pdf

⁶ <http://www.who.int/fctc/about/donorspartners/en/>

⁷ http://www.who.int/fctc/eu_grant/en/

⁸ Since 2007, Bloomberg Philanthropies has committed US\$1B to tobacco control. See: WHO 2018. Saving Lives: Spending less. Available at: <http://apps.who.int/iris/bitstream/handle/10665/272534/WHO-NMH-NVI-18.8-eng.pdf>

⁹ Since 2008, the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation has also invested \$210m in global tobacco control. See more at:
<https://www.gatesfoundation.org/What-We-Do/Global-Policy/Tobacco-Control>

¹⁰ WHO 2011. Scaling up action against noncommunicable diseases: how much will it cost? Geneva, WHO. Available at:
http://apps.who.int/iris/bitstream/handle/10665/44706/9789241502313_eng.pdf

¹¹ Bilano *et al.* 2015. *Lancet*:385(9972):966-76. [https://doi.org/10.1016/S0140-6736\(15\)60264-1](https://doi.org/10.1016/S0140-6736(15)60264-1)

¹² *Ibid*

control takes place at a much faster pace over the next several years. It was agreed that a Working group composed of Parties, the Convention Secretariat, WHO, and other relevant intergovernmental and non-governmental observers to the COP should develop a *Medium Term Strategic Framework* for the Convention.

The results of the Group's work are presented in Annex 1 of document FCTC/COP/8/11 in the form of a *Global Strategy to Accelerate Tobacco Control*. At COP8, Parties are invited to endorse this Strategy. **FCA fully supports this recommendation and calls on COP8 to adopt the Strategy as presented by the Working Group in annex 1 of document FCTC/COP/8/11.**

The Strategy will deliver benefits for the COP and for Parties

Over the past decade, it has become increasingly common for international treaties to develop and implement strategic plans. Based on a study of how these types of plans have been developed and used by other treaties¹³, there is strong evidence to suggest that, if adopted, the Global Strategy presented in Annex 1 of FCTC/COP/8/11 will help to improve FCTC implementation and bolster the support available to Parties to implement the FCTC. This can happen in a number of ways.

1. The Strategy can help to **organize, manage, and harmonize** the efforts of the Convention Secretariat, national governments, and intergovernmental and non-governmental observers to the COP towards a shared set of goals in order to maximize effectiveness.
2. It can also help to **build cooperation and raise the visibility of the treaty** among external stakeholders. This is a clear objective of the proposed FCTC Strategy. Objective 2.1, for example, calls for more UN agencies and other relevant intergovernmental organizations to include FCTC implementation in their own plans and programmes.
3. Evidence also suggests that strategic documents like this can help both Parties and the Convention Secretariat **to raise new funds**, which can help to address a critical challenge facing global tobacco control. The proposed FCTC Strategy includes an entire operational objective related to 'Sustainable Funding' (p. 10). It calls on the Convention Secretariat to "mobilize additional technical and financial resources" including, possibly, through the creation of dedicated fundraising plans.

The Strategic Plan itself can help to mobilise new, additional funds by making a better case to potential donors – like development agencies and philanthropies – for why funding is needed and how it will help to make real change happen.

For one thing, the plan is outcome-oriented, and helps to make it clear to potential donors what the FCTC is trying to achieve in concrete terms: a reduction in tobacco use and the many harms it causes. The Strategy also outlines a clear plan for how the COP will achieve this: by focusing on a small number of high-impact, priority interventions. An estimate of the level of resources that would be required to achieve the goals and objectives in the Strategy would also aid these efforts. Development of this figure is suggested as an indicator for Strategic Objective 3.1 of the Strategy.

What's more, the Strategy can also help to communicate results to donors by showing them how funding has helped to achieve progress. In the case of an FCTC strategic plan, donors

¹³ McInerney, T. 2015. *Strategic Treaty Management*. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press.

will be able to see how their funding helps through changes in the indicators included in the plan, and also the overall target to reduce tobacco use prevalence by 30% by 2025.

In terms of how the Strategy can help Parties to raise new funds, the case is much the same. Parties can use the Global Strategy to inform the development of their own national tobacco control strategies and plans (the Strategy also calls for the Secretariat to provide targeted assistance to Parties for this¹⁴), which can help to garner necessary resources in national budgeting processes.

4. The Strategy can also help the Secretariat to **manage existing funds**. The Working Group makes it clear that, once adopted, the Strategy should also be used as the basis for making choices about how to allocate existing funds.

Specific objective 1.3 (p. 10) calls on the Convention Secretariat to develop its budgets and workplans in line with the Strategy and to conduct results-based budgeting accordingly. This means that Parties Assessed Contributions to the FCTC may go further towards achieving the global 30% target to reduce tobacco use prevalence, and may result in cost-efficiencies within the Secretariat.

5. Once adopted, the Strategy will also **help to assess results and review the effectiveness of the Convention** to continuously improve implementation over time. Indicators have been included for each of the Strategic objectives. These will allow the COP to concretely measure progress in implementing the Strategy and achieving its vision and mission over time.

The Working Group notes that it will be the task of the Convention Secretariat to collect the corresponding data for the indicators and to produce the biannual global progress report (para 15), which would provide the COP with an update on progress implementing the Strategy.

Although the budget and workplan notes in line item 2.1 (p. 5 of FCTC/COP/8/16) that “there needs to be a body that monitors the implementation of the Medium-Term Strategic Framework”, COP should be clear that it is, in fact, the task of the Convention Secretariat and the COP as a whole. The Strategy will inform every aspect of the work of the COP and the Secretariat, and should not be relegated to a separate body.

What’s more, as noted in the Working Group report, the Strategy is also intended to guide the discussions of the COP and to keep them focused on how to improve implementation of the treaty (para 7). If the Strategy is adopted, one can imagine how COP sessions might change. The COP week might begin with a review of progress towards each of the Strategic Goals, supported by the data collected and presented by the Convention Secretariat, and then might move on to a discussion about what further action is needed to achieve even more progress, and what kind of additional support Parties need to accelerate progress.

An FCTC Implementation Review Mechanism can help to identify barriers to progress and provide a focus for follow-up assistance.

One final important aspect of the Strategy is objective 3.1.2, which calls for the establishment of an FCTC Implementation Review Mechanism (IRM) by 2020. This mechanism was first proposed at

¹⁴ See FCTC/COP/8/11, p. 10, specific objective 1.2

COP7. According to the terms of reference (TOR) proposed at COP7¹⁵, an FCTC IRM would involve peer-review of Parties' biannual implementation reports, with an eye to identifying and sharing good practices, helping Parties to understand where they might improve their tobacco control policy formulation, implementation or enforcement, and to provide a focus for follow-up assistance.

If the Strategy is adopted, the Convention Secretariat should commence work to begin a pilot project demonstration of the IRM, as recommended by the Working Group (para 13). This pilot project will provide an important opportunity for Parties to become familiar with how this mechanism works, as well as for Parties to fine-tune the TOR so that they optimally suit their needs and objectives. A decision to establish a more permanent mechanism with updated TOR would be revisited at COP9 in 2020.

Parties interested in participating in an initial review of their implementation reports as part of a pilot project should signify their interest in doing so during discussions at COP8.

If adopted, the COP must consider a number of essential next steps to implement the Strategy

The strategic plan has identified areas for improvement and set goals and targets for FCTC implementation. This is a necessary first step but by itself will not improve performance. The next step is to translate this strategy into action. This requires prioritising activities that will actually help close the gap between the current position and the desired future. A strategic plan points out what is missing but action must be taken that drives the process of improving performance.

The COP may wish to consider how this should happen. What kinds of actions will contribute most to achieving a 30% reduction in tobacco use prevalence? What kind of support should be provided to Parties to implement the Strategy at the national level? These are important considerations that the COP may wish to spend some time discussing.

One key consideration for the implementation of the Strategy will be the need to ensure that the priorities outlined in the Strategy are reflected in the proposed 2020-2021 workplan and budget that will be discussed at COP8 under agenda item 8.3 (corresponding to documents FCTC/COP/8/16 and FCTC/COP/8/INF.DOC./2). As noted by the Working Group's mandate from COP7, the Global Strategy is intended to inform the budgets and workplans of the COP. This intention is also repeated at several points throughout the proposed Strategy.

These documents may need to be re-worked by Parties in Committee B to ensure that the budget and workplan support the priorities agreed by Parties in the Strategy. This will also require a discussion about what should happen to activities included in the workplan and budget that are not identified as priorities in the Strategy.

Parties should refer to FCA's briefing paper on the proposed Workplan and Budget for the 2020-2021 biennium for specific recommendations.

¹⁵ Report of the Expert Group on Reporting Arrangements to COP7 (FCTC/COP/7/15). Available at: http://www.who.int/entity/fctc/cop/cop7/FCTC_COP_7_15_EN.pdf?ua=1