



GLOBAL LEADERS CALL FOR RAPID IMPLEMENTATION OF FCTC

World leaders meeting in New York at the UN High Level Meeting on Non-Communicable Diseases (NCDs) in mid-September acknowledged that the global burden of NCDs is one of the major challenges for development in the twenty-first century and recognized that “prevention must be the cornerstone of the global response to NCDs.” They unanimously agreed to the Political Declaration on NCDs which commits governments to accelerate implementation of the WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (FCTC) and encourages countries that had not yet done so to consider adopting the treaty. The Declaration also stresses the importance of tobacco price and taxation as “an effective and important means of reducing tobacco consumption.” Crucially, it also echoes the wording of the FCTC, recognizing “the fundamental conflict of interest between the tobacco industry and public health.”

Despite its recognition of the importance of NCDs and the role of tobacco control, the Political Declaration falls short on action. UN member states failed to agree on an overall target on reducing NCDs. Achieving effective global action without global targets or goals presents great difficulty. As WHO Director General Margaret Chan noted at the First Global Ministerial Conference on NCDs held in Moscow in April of this year, “what gets measured gets done.” Instead, WHO has been asked to lead a process to develop a monitoring framework and ‘voluntary global targets’ by the end of 2012. The General Assembly is due to review progress in 2014.

If action is not stepped up, the four main NCDs – coronary heart disease, cancer, respiratory disease and diabetes – will cause economic losses to low

and middle-income countries of \$7 trillion in the period 2011 – 2025, or nearly \$500 billion a year, according to the World Economic Forum. By contrast, a new study by WHO shows the price tag for scaled-up implementation in these same countries of a core set of ‘best buy’ intervention strategies, including tobacco control, would cost \$11.4 billion annually. The return on this investment would be many millions of avoided premature deaths and less illness and disability for many millions more.



UN General Assembly room

WHAT YOU CAN DO

- » Read the ► **Political Declaration** and be sure that your country’s political leaders live up to their commitments;
- » Continue to advocate implementation of the ► **FCTC** and its Guidelines in your own country;
- » Follow the campaign through the ► **NCD Alliance** and the ► **Framework Convention Alliance**



PARTIES TO SPEED UP FCTC IMPLEMENTATION

Following the UN summit, two parties have stepped forward with extra-budgetary contributions to the FCTC. Speaking during the meeting in New York, Australian Health Minister Nicola Roxon announced a grant of AU\$ 700,000 to the FCTC. It has been estimated that a one per cent increase in current tobacco tax rates would generate at least US\$ 1 billion in revenue. Recognizing the importance of this, over half of the grant will be devoted to a working group to produce guidelines on tobacco taxation. Other funds from the Australian grant will go to support use of materials in low income countries, improve reporting by Parties on FCTC implementation and support the development of a FCTC database on best practices.



Australian Health Minister Nicola Roxon with Haik Nikogosian, Head of the FCTC Convention Secretariat

Soon after the summit, the Commission of the European Union announced an extra €5.2 million (US\$7 million) donation to the FCTC over a period of three years to help countries implement effective tobacco control policies. One of the key initiatives funded by the grant will be to assist low- and middle-income countries with needs assessments “to help these countries to fully implement the FCTC and to better integrate tobacco control policies into their national health programmes and strategies,” according to the Commission. Other initiatives include launching regional and sub-regional projects to share knowledge and collaboration on projects and support for the database on best practices.

FOCUS ON WOMEN AND GIRLS

One of the side events during the UN High Level Meeting was the **Global Alliance for Women’s Health (GAWH) symposium on Women, girls and smoking: The need for sex- and gender-specific tobacco control**. INWAT Vice-President, Patricia Lambert, spoke to the meeting in her role as Director of the International Legal Consortium at the Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids. Here is her short report-back:

The symposium recognized the growing understanding of sex and gender differences in health risks and symptom manifestations such as cardiovascular diseases, diabetes, cancers and chronic lung conditions, and highlighted the burden of disease that tobacco use places on the health of women and girls. Dr Adriano Blanco from PAHO addressed the feminization of the tobacco epidemic, emphasizing the ways in which the industry continues to target women and girls through advertising and promotion as well as the physical vulnerability of women and their relative inability to protect themselves from secondhand smoking in their homes. I was able to concentrate on the significant role that the Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (FCTC) and its Guidelines, when properly implemented in domestic law and policy, can play in addressing women’s health through total advertising bans and counter-advertising via pictorial health warnings. I also emphasized the need for governments to involve women’s civil society organizations in setting policy related to tobacco control, and in monitoring its implementation. The symposium called on governments attending the High Level Meeting to take specific and timely action to develop and implement sex- and gender-specific programmes that target women, girls and tobacco use.

RESOURCES FOR ADVOCACY ON NCDs

- » Framework Convention Alliance – briefing paper ► **NCDs, tobacco control and the FCTC plus topic inserts and other resources**
- » World Health Organization / World Economic Forum (2011) ► **From Burden to “Best Buys”: Reducing the Economic Impact of Non-Communicable Disease in Low- and Middle-Income Countries**
- » World Health Organization (2011) ► **Scaling up action against noncommunicable diseases: How much will it cost?**