

Thematic Working Group on Tobacco Control

Terms of Reference

1. The Thematic Working Group on Tobacco Control was established at the Ninth Meeting of the United Nations Interagency Task Force on Noncommunicable Diseases (November 2017) as a voluntary group of UN entities that are involved in fostering UN-system wide cooperation and coordination in promoting the implementation of the WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (WHO FCTC). This entails supporting the implementation of the SDG 2030 agenda, in particular Target 3.a and promoting the implementation of the Protocol to Eliminate Illicit Trade in Tobacco Products (the Protocol). This includes encouraging internal policy coherence in the UN system by establishing UN smoke free campus and adhering to and implementing the Model Policy to prevent interference from tobacco industry in all UN Agencies.
2. The Thematic Working Group will work largely through web-based and other informal mechanisms. Participation in the thematic working group does not require financial commitment but it is expected that members of the thematic groups engage in joint projects involving awareness raising, advocacy and fundraising activities. The thematic Working Group will report to the UN Inter-Agency Task Force on the Prevention and Control of NCDs and is coordinated by the Secretariat of the WHO FCTC.

Background

3. The United Nations Inter-Agency Task Force on the Prevention and Control of Noncommunicable Diseases was established in 2013 by the Secretary General by expanding the mandate of the Ad Hoc United Nations Inter-Agency Task Force on Tobacco Control. The Task Force's terms of reference were adopted by ECOSOC in July 2014 with a special focus on the implementation of the WHO FCTC. The Protocol to Eliminate Illicit Trade in Tobacco Products entered into force on 25 September 2018. The new treaty aims at eliminating all forms of illicit trade in tobacco products. It provides tools for preventing illicit trade by securing the supply chain, including by establishing an international tracking and tracing system, by countering illicit trade through dissuasive law enforcement measures and a suite of measures to enable international cooperation.
4. Joint activities included in the work plan of the Task Force are individual efforts undertaken by UN agencies to prevent and control NCDs. These joint activities offer important opportunities to address cross-cutting issues and to advance capacity building efforts in supporting countries. The Task Force works through a biennial work plan and to support its work, a number of global joint programmes, thematic groups and initiatives have been established.
5. The purpose of the Task Force is to coordinate the activities of the relevant United Nations funds, programmes and specialized agencies and other intergovernmental organizations to support the realization of the commitments made by Heads of State and Government in the Political Declaration of the High level Meeting of the General Assembly on the Prevention and Control of Non-communicable Diseases (NCDs), in particular through the implementation of the World Health Organization Global Action Plan for the Prevention and Control of NCDs 2013-2020 and the target on tobacco use. In June 2016, ECOSOC adopted a resolution encouraging the Task Force to support governments to implement new NCD-related targets in the

2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development such as SDG Target 3.a on strengthening the implementation of the WHO FCTC as appropriate.

6. The sixth, seventh and eighth sessions of the Conference of the Parties (COP)¹ gave due consideration of COP's contribution to achieving the NCD target on tobacco use. Of relevance was the adoption by COP8 of the Mid Term Strategic Framework (MTSF) also known as the Global Strategy to Accelerate Tobacco Control. The Global Strategy seeks to meaningfully contribute to reaching the overall health goal of SDG 3 and target 3.4 (to reduce by one-third pre-mature mortality from non-communicable diseases (NCDs) through prevention and treatment, and promote mental health and wellbeing). It promotes the development of mutually reinforcing approaches to implementing the *Global Action Plan for the Prevention and Control of Noncommunicable Diseases 2013–2020* through cooperation with members of the Task Force, the Global Coordination Mechanism on NCDs and other relevant initiatives and serves as a roadmap to guide the work of the 181 Parties to the WHO FCTC of which 46 are Parties to the Protocol up to date, the Convention Secretariat and other stakeholders with regards to tobacco control from 2019 to 2025.

7. Supporting the implementation of the WHO FCTC requires a multisectoral approach – a whole-of-government and a whole-of-society response. It also requires policy coherence and relies on examples and the joint efforts of all UN system. As the United Nations is supporting the Member States to promote the SDGs, it is crucial for the UN itself to set an example to promote the spirit of the UN tobacco control treaty by having smoke free UN campus and implementing the Model Policy including effectively separating the funds from the tobacco industry and not accepting such fund for its activities.

Overarching objectives

8. The overarching objectives of the Thematic Working Group are:

- To promote through joint projects, in line with the Terms of Reference of the Task Force, and support within the specific mandates and competences of individual agencies the implementation of the WHO FCTC, its Guidelines and the Protocol at all levels
- To promote the FCTC MTSF as a roadmap to guide the work of the UNIATF with regards to tobacco control from 2019 to 2025
- To promote and support more effective implementation of the SDGs Goals 3 on health and wellbeing (specially the target 3.a on strengthening implementation of the WHO FCTC and contribute to the target 3.4 Reduce premature mortality from NCDs through reducing tobacco use as one of the four main risk factors to the NCDs) by increasing awareness, fostering inter-agency collaboration and cooperation, particularly through the members of the UNIATF and promoting the Addis Ababa Action Agenda of the Third International Conference on Financing for Development. (Addis Ababa Action Agenda).
- To engage and promote the exemplary role of the UN system in adhering to the spirit of the WHO FCTC and implementing its provisions, Guidelines and subsequent protocols.

¹ The Conference of the Parties (COP) is the governing body of the WHO FCTC which meets every two years to give policy directions on global implementation of the WHO FCTC.

Specific objectives

9. The specific objectives of the Thematic Working Group are:
- To promote the participation of the members of the UNIATF to the Conference of the Parties and to the Protocol Meeting of the Parties (MOP).
 - To avail information on regular basis to the members of the Thematic Group on the main decisions and outcomes of the COPs and MOPs and on the main results of the implementation of the FCTC MTSF.
 - To enhance the coordination of the UN Country Team (UNCT) to support countries to include implementation of Target 3.a into the national SDG action plan.
 - To guide and facilitate the implementation of the UN Model Policy to prevent the interference of the tobacco industry in fostering tobacco control and treaty implementation activities.
 - To promote and facilitate the implementation of UN smoke free campus.
 - To engage in joint projects after agreeing to priorities defined by the thematic group.
 - To provide information from the Thematic Group to contribute to the development of the ECOSOC Task Force reports on tobacco control and treaty implementation activities.

Coordination and ways of working

10. The Thematic Group will be chaired by Dr Vera Luiza da Costa e Silva, Head of the Convention Secretariat, WHO FCTC. The alternate will be Ms Guangyuan Liu, Team Leader, Governance and International Cooperation, Convention Secretariat, WHO FCTC.

11. Meetings will primarily take place remotely or face to face on occasion of the specific events where most participants were meeting face to face for other purposes. A member of the working group is expected to actively engage and cooperate to jointly implement the priorities and areas of work agreed.

12. Members will agree a plan of work each year.

Members of the Thematic Working Group on Tobacco Control

13. The Thematic Working Group on Tobacco Control is open for membership of interested UN agencies who are members to the UNIATF by simple expression of interest.

14. Current members of the Group are: (i) Convention Secretariat, WHO FCTC; (ii) Task Force Secretariat; (iii) FAO; (iv) ILO; (v) Secretariat of the UN Climate Change Convention; (vi) UNDP; (vii) UNICEF; (viii) UNEP; and (ix) WHO

*Terms of Reference adopted: November 2017
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