

WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control

The World Health Organization Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (FCTC) entered into force on February 27, 2005 and is one of the most widely adopted treaties in the United Nations system.

The FCTC is a legally binding treaty that requires countries bound by the treaty — or Parties — to implement evidence-based measures to reduce tobacco use and exposure to tobacco smoke. There are 181 Parties to the FCTC as of August 2017. When effectively implemented, the FCTC is a powerful tool to reduce the devastating global consequences of tobacco products on health, lives and economies.

Required Actions to Reduce Tobacco Use and Exposure to Tobacco Smoke

The FCTC provides a broad framework of obligations and rights for Parties to implement various tobacco control measures. Parties to the FCTC have adopted various implementing guidelines to provide effective implementation of the treaty. The implementing guidelines to the FCTC contain principles, definitions, and key legislative elements that the Parties adopt by consensus to assist them in meeting their FCTC legal obligations. The FCTC and its implementing guidelines commit Parties to:

- Protect their public health measures from the commercial and other vested interests of the tobacco industry;
- Protect all people from tobacco smoke exposure in all indoor public places, indoor workplaces, on all means of public transport, and, as appropriate, other places;
- Ban or restrict all forms of tobacco advertising, promotion and sponsorship;
- Place large graphic health warnings on tobacco products and prohibit the use of false and misleading labeling and packaging that may imply that one tobacco product is less harmful than another;
- Consider price and tax measures to reduce the demand for tobacco, which may include prohibiting or restricting sales to or importations of duty-free tobacco products;
- Eliminate the illicit trade of tobacco products;
- Regulate the content of tobacco products and require disclosure of ingredients;
- Provide cessation assistance and treatment for tobacco dependence;
- Provide for education, communication, training and public awareness measures about the harms of the tobacco products and the tactics used by the tobacco industry to undermine the public health;

- Consider taking action to deal with criminal and civil liability related to tobacco harms, including compensation where appropriate; and
- Take other action aimed at reducing tobacco use and exposure to tobacco smoke.

Progress in Protecting the Public Health

- Since 2005, more than 50 countries have enacted or implemented comprehensive smoke-free legislation across the globe, including all subnational jurisdictions in Australia and Canada.
- In Latin America and the Caribbean, 19 countries have passed strong smoke-free legislation, including Brazil, the most populous country in the world to enact comprehensive smoke-free legislation.
- Since 2005, more than 115 countries and jurisdictions have enacted or implemented pictorial warning labels that cover at least 30% of tobacco packaging.
- At least 38 countries have passed comprehensive tobacco advertising, promotion and sponsorship bans.

Role of Civil Society

The Parties to the FCTC recognize that the participation of civil society is essential to achieve the objectives of the FCTC and its implementing guidelines and to counter tobacco industry efforts to stop, delay or dilute effective tobacco control measures. Now comprising of nearly 500 groups from more than 100 countries, the Framework Convention Alliance (FCA) plays a key role in educating policymakers and strengthening cooperation across borders. The Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids works with partners in the Bloomberg Initiative to Reduce Tobacco Use to help civil society organizations in low- and middle-income countries advocate for FCTC-compliant legislation.