



FCTC

WHO FRAMEWORK CONVENTION
ON TOBACCO CONTROL

**CONFERENCE OF THE PARTIES TO THE
WHO FRAMEWORK CONVENTION ON TOBACCO CONTROL**

**FCTC/COP9(10)
12 November 2021**

**Ninth session
Geneva, Switzerland, 8–13 November 2021**

DECISION

FCTC/COP9(10) Declaration on WHO FCTC and recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic

The Conference of the Parties to the WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control,

Emphasizing that governments, in the context of the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic, face a heavier, more sustained toll from the tobacco epidemic, which already claims 8 million lives every year,

Mindful that tobacco use is a major risk factor for noncommunicable diseases (NCDs) and that both tobacco consumption and NCDs contribute to developing severe COVID-19-related illness, placing an additional burden on health systems,

Noting with concern the increased reports of tobacco industry interference that serve as a barrier to effective implementation of the WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (WHO FCTC) and emphasizing in particular that against the backdrop of the COVID-19 pandemic, unsubstantiated and inappropriate information had been disseminated with regard to the positive impact of tobacco and nicotine consumption, creating among consumers an illusion of protection and decreased risk of developing COVID-19 and undermining the efforts of national responses to combat the pandemic,

Emphasizing the inherent and irreconcilable conflict between the tobacco industry's interests and public health policy interests, and the need to protect public health policy from the commercial and vested interests of the tobacco industry,

Noticing with increasing concern the recent acquisitions by tobacco transnational corporations of pharmaceutical companies that could complicate and hinder tobacco control implementation,

Expressing concern that, as a consequence of the pandemic, there may be funding shortages and a diversion of resources away from tobacco control initiatives, including those that facilitate implementation of the WHO FCTC,

Expressing also concern that access to and availability of tobacco dependence and cessation services, consistent with Article 14 of the WHO FCTC, have been impacted by public health orders, the diversion of resources, and the potential risk of COVID-19 transmission associated with in-person services,

Acknowledging that the WHO FCTC is an accelerator for the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and that comprehensive implementation of the WHO FCTC will play a crucial role in supporting efforts by Parties towards recovery from the global COVID-19 pandemic,

Noting paragraph 33 of the report by the Convention Secretariat entitled the Global Progress Report in implementation of the WHO FCTC, contained in document FCTC/COP9/5, where it is noted that the COVID-19 pandemic has financially impacted the ability of Parties to follow the Global Strategy to Accelerate Tobacco Control: Advancing Sustainable Development through the Implementation of the WHO FCTC 2019–2025, adding to frequently mentioned barriers, such as interference by the tobacco industry, and recognizing the progress made by the Parties to the WHO FCTC despite the challenges posed by the pandemic,

The Conference of the Parties to the WHO FCTC,

1. RESOLVES to strengthen action to accelerate implementation of the WHO FCTC, including an emphasis on tax measures and the elimination of illicit trade in tobacco products as these efforts can reduce the severity of the pandemic, as well as increase resources required for economic recovery;
2. DECLARES a commitment to demand-reduction measures for tobacco dependence and to increase the availability of cessation measures, consistent with Article 14 of the WHO FCTC, as a means to address risk factors for NCDs, which increase the risk of developing serious illness from the SARS-CoV-2 infection and create worse outcomes from COVID-19, and to protect these public health efforts from the commercial and vested interests of the tobacco industry;
3. EXPRESSES concern that the tobacco industry and those furthering its interests are increasing marketing and public relations efforts to promote novel and emerging tobacco products and are interfering in national public health, fiscal and regulatory policies, including by influencing decision-making processes in regional and international forums;
4. REAFFIRMS its determination to prevent tobacco industry interference from slowing or impeding the development and implementation of tobacco control measures in the interests of public health, in accordance with the WHO FCTC, consistent with its Article 5.3 and its Guidelines for implementation, as well as in line with the *Global Strategy to Accelerate Tobacco Control: Advancing Sustainable Development through the Implementation of the WHO FCTC 2019–2025*;
5. REITERATES the need for cooperation among Parties, directly or through competent international bodies, consistent with Article 22 of the WHO FCTC, and with the support of the Convention Secretariat and the WHO FCTC Knowledge Hubs, to strengthen their capacity to fulfil the obligations arising from the WHO FCTC and in efforts to counteract tobacco industry interference;
6. CALLS ON the Parties:
 - (a) to take appropriate measures to prevent tobacco industry interference and involvement in COVID-19-related public health policies and actions, in accordance with Article 5.3 of the WHO FCTC and its Guidelines for implementation;
 - (b) to include actions to achieve SDG Target 3.a on implementation of WHO FCTC and SDG Target 3.4 on NCDs as an integral component of national recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic, including in national SDG plans;

(c) to the extent possible, explore health system adaptations to support alternative service delivery options, such as e-health and telemedicine consultations, for tobacco dependence and cessation services consistent with Article 14 of the WHO FCTC;

7. REQUESTS the Convention Secretariat to promote awareness and circulate further evidence regarding this Declaration among the Parties and at relevant international forums, and to support Parties in taking action in achieving the implementation of the goals of this Declaration.

(Seventh Plenary meeting, 12 November 2021)

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