By Hana Ross; November 18, 2017

Seven more parties are still needed to ratify/accede to the Protocol for the Protocol to become a treaty. It seems likely that there will be at least 40 parties before the deadline of June 2, 2018, so that the MOP (meeting of parties) will occur in Geneva in October 2018 right after COP 8.

To date, the following 34 Parties to the WHO FCTC have ratified/acceded to the Protocol:

1. Austria  
2. Burkina Faso  
3. Comoros  
4. Congo  
5. Costa Rica  
6. Côte d'Ivoire  
7. Cyprus  
8. Ecuador  
9. European Union  
10. France  
11. Gabon  
12. Gambia  
13. Germany  
14. Guinea  
15. Iraq  
16. Latvia  
17. Lithuania  
18. Madagascar  
19. Mali  
20. Mongolia  
21. Montenegro  
22. Nicaragua  
23. Niger  
24. Panama  
25. Portugal  
26. Saudi Arabia  
27. Senegal  
28. Serbia  
29. Slovakia  
30. Spain  
31. Sri Lanka  
32. Swaziland  
33. Turkmenistan  
34. Uruguay

Parties that have initiated the process at country level: Benin, Brazil, Chad, Chile, Egypt, Fiji, Finland, Iran, Norway, Samoa, Tunisia, Turkey, Togo.
COP 7 instructed the Secretariat to engage more intensively with the Expert Panel to prepare for the Meeting of Parties (MOP) to the Illicit Trade Protocol (ITP).

The Panel of Experts held its first meeting in Geneva, Switzerland, from 8 to 9 June 2017, and assigned a small technical group to work on Tracking and Tracing during this November meeting (see Annex 1 for the agenda). We focused on designing the minimum requirements for the track and trace (T&T) system.

The objectives of the meeting were:
- Clearly defining what does and does not qualify as a Tracking and Tracing system;
- Identifying beneficial outcomes of the Tracking and Tracing system;
- Identifying key technical elements in the Protocol that identify the Tracking and Tracing system.

Two invited external experts motivated the discussion with their presentations.
The group (see Appendix 2 for the list of participants) generated a document describing the vital T&T components. This document will be further developed via online collaboration in the following month.

The next meeting of the Expert Panel will be in March 2018 at UCT following the WCTOH 2018.

Annex 1

Programme
Day 1
Thursday, 16 November 2017

9:00 - 9:30 Registration

9:30 - 11:00 Session 1

1. Welcome remarks

2. Election of the Co-Chairs

3. Adoption of the agenda and method of work

4. Introduction of the members of the Panel of Expert and invited experts, including areas of expertise

5. Outcomes of the First Meeting of the Panel of Experts on the follow-up of COP7 Decisions: updates by the Convention Secretariat

11:00 – 11:15 Coffee break

11:15 - 12:45 Session 2

6. Basics of Tracking and Tracing (requirement of Art 8 of the Protocol) – Michael Eads
7. Mapping of the emerging traceability system and Interoperability of different systems – Carlos Acevedo

8. Benefits and costs of a tracking and tracing system – Michael Eads

9. Container control programme and illicit trade in tobacco products – Ian Munro, UNODC

12:45 - 14:15       Lunch break

14:15 - 15:30       Session 3

10. Discussions to clarify the costs and requirements needed for a Tracking and Tracing system to comply with the Protocol

15:30 – 15:45       Coffee break

15:45 – 17:00       Session 4

11. Discussions to clarify the costs and requirements needed for a Tracking and Tracing system to comply with the Protocol (continued)

Day 2
Friday, 17 November 2017

9:00 - 10:30       Session 5

12. Briefing on scenario for Tracking and Tracing - Austin Rowan

13. Development of a scenario-based Tracking and Tracing tool that sets out the technical specifications that are required under the Protocol for different countries with different tobacco production and consumption patterns.

10:30 – 10:45       Coffee break

10:45 - 12:30       Session 6

14. Adoption of a scenario-based Tracking and Tracing tool that sets out the technical specifications that are required under the Protocol for different countries with different tobacco production and consumption patterns.

12:30 - 14:00       Lunch break

14:00 - 15:30       Session 7

15. Next steps

16. Any other business

17. Closure of the meeting