
Recommended national level Actions to tackle issues related to Tobacco and trade

Tobacco Free Initiative

WHO EMRO



**World Health
Organization**

Regional Office for the Eastern Mediterranean

FCTC is 'Government's responsibility'

- 'Whole of government approach' is needed to effectively translate the mandate of FCTC at national level.
- Formal multisectoral collaborations and forums need to be established and effectively used for inter-ministerial dialogue on tobacco control
- Various departments/ministries need to clarify confusions about the mandate of WHO FCTC



Protection of 'right to health'

- 'Protection of the right to health' is core principle in any constitution of the world
- This principle has to be upheld in all national and international obligations/ commitments
- Especially for policies related to tobacco, the governments need to carefully analyse any potential of deviation from this principle.



Specific actions by Ministry of Health

- Establish inter-ministerial forum on tobacco control; and effectively use the forum to inform non-health sectors about the provisions of WHO FCTC
- Develop formally agreed mechanisms/rules to be officially engaged with ministries in respect to sector specific policies, e.g.
 - With Ministry of Trade for tobacco trade/importation policies
 - With Ministry of Finance for tobacco tax policies
 - With Ministry of Customs for importation and illicit trade policies
 - With Ministry of Commerce/industry for packaging and labeling policies
 - With Ministry of food/tourism for smoke free policies



Specific Actions by MoH (Contd)

- Continually coordinate with trade authorities to minimize the risk of any potential challenges that existing trade and investment commitments pose.
- The guidelines of FCTC Article 5.3 (interaction with tobacco industry) need to be officially shared with all relevant ministries; and interagency/interministerial meetings should be arranged to clarify the needed steps to be taken by every Ministry.



Specific Actions by MoH (Contd)

- Australia's plain packaging case has created a best practice example; The MoH should use this moral and legal precedence set forth by the High court of Australia to implement stricter tobacco control policies.
- The MS need to scale-up their response in tobacco control by implement stronger measures, including stronger and larger health warnings and moving towards plain packaging.



Specific Actions by Ministry of Trade

- Establish information exchange mechanisms between health and trade sectors to ensure that the tobacco trade and investment policies are matched well with market needs and consumption trends; and are consistent with the FCTC and nationally specified objectives of reducing tobacco use in the longer term.
- The coordination between health and trade sectors needs to be ensured when new investment or trade agreements are being negotiated.
- Ensure that tobacco industry/investors are not allowed to register trademarks that undermine the provisions of FCTC (such as misleading labeling) to avoid any potential conflicts that may arise under intellectual property rights claims.



Specific national considerations at multilateral forums/bodies

- The governments are recommended to take immediate steps to sign and ratify the **International Protocol to curb Illicit Tobacco Trade**.
- The governments need to understand the potential of tobacco industry lobbying and manipulation at multilateral non-health forums; to undermine tobacco control.
- Governments need to carefully examine the ongoing international disputes brought up or lobbied by the tobacco industry; to be aware of industry tactics and to plan their possible response at national level.
- The governments may consider engaging as third Parties



SUMMARY OF ACTIONS

- ONLY **coordinated approach** will lead to win win situation for various involved sectors; and to avoid fraudulent tactics of the tobacco industry and other sponsors of illicit tobacco trade.
- **Critical information sharing and exchange** at all levels of multisectoral coordination.
- **Transparency** in sharing information; especially in issues of national and international importance

