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## **WFPHA Resolution Toward an International Health Professionals' Tobacco Petition**

April 2004

Proposed by Professor Theo Abelin

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**The World Federation of Public Health Associations (WFPHA)** at its annual meeting of 19 April, 2004 in Brighton notes with satisfaction that on May 21st, 2003, the 56th World Health Assembly unanimously adopted the Framework Convention on Tobacco Control, and that it did this without adopting any of the weakening changes that had previously been proposed. As of February 2004, 89 countries have signed and 8 ratified the FCTC, whereas 100 have not signed and over 180 have not ratified.

The WFPHA is concerned about the large number of countries, in which the process toward ratification has been slow, and where tobacco industry efforts to prevent governments from acting swiftly on the Convention seem to have been successful. This has often meant that the attention of political decision makers and the public was diverted from the health-related reasons for tobacco control, and that tobacco industry offers to themselves become engaged in questionable tobacco prevention activities were naively accepted by society and government agencies. On the other hand, organizations engaged in tobacco control activities in some of these countries have been lacking sufficient visibility and may not have been sufficiently equipped with the necessary knowledge to counter tobacco industry argumentation.

In order to make the health aspect of the FCTC optimally visible and to contribute to the process of ratification of the FCTC in as many countries as possible, the WFPHA has lined up with other international health professionals' organizations and together with them proposes to launch a worldwide health professionals' petition in support of ratification and subsequent implementation of the FCTC.

The WFPHA calls on its leadership and General Secretariat, to the extent possible in view of available means,

- to pursue this initiative
- to encourage its member associations to join in this effort nationally
- to collaborate closely with the World Medical Associations, The International Council of Nurses and the International Pharmacy Association, and to examine including further organizations of health professionals
- to seek alliances with other international and large national organizations in tobacco control, so as to profit from their experience and possibly, their infrastructure.
- to encourage its member associations to also join together on their national level, with the other health professionals associations
- to prepare suitable documentation informing health professionals of the arguments for ratifying the FCTC and the counter-arguments to those used against it
- to organize signature collection activities through its member associations
- to make available, jointly with volunteering member associations, reporting mechanisms suitable to monitor the number of petition signatures from all participating health professionals' associations, and
- to jointly with the other international federations of health professionals' associations, make the content of the petition and the number of health professionals supporting it known to the international public.
- The WFPHA calls on its member associations



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- to support this initiative by actively working toward ratification of the FCTC and organizing a petition among its members and other public health professionals in their own country
- to collaborate with the national associations of other health professions who will be asked to participate by their own international federations
- to offer to these organizations their public health related knowledge and know-how, so as to optimise the tobacco related knowledge of all health professionals nationally, and to lead to successful petition campaigns,
- to work with the other health professionals' organizations nationally to make the reasons and results of the petition known to the public and to the national opinion leaders and decision makers and
- to collaborate closely with the General Secretariat of the WFPHA and the other WFPHA members in making the results of the national petition efforts available internationally and the pooled results known worldwide.

The WFPHA calls on its member associations in countries where ratification of the FCTC has already taken place or is forthcoming, to make their experience and services available to the joint international effort or by teaming up with individual member associations in need of special support and encouragement, or by providing their services in the organization of the petition and its mechanisms internationally.

The WFPHA calls upon its Executive Board to designate a task force with representation from all Regions as an advisory body to accompany this petition effort. The task force is to report to each Annual General Assembly starting in 2005 and continuing until the General Assembly decides to end the petition effort.