

Report of the WFPHA Tobacco Control Program

In terms of tobacco control activities, 2007 can be characterized as a year of re-orientation, after the phase of creating and promoting the Framework Convention on Tobacco Control had successfully been completed. As of this writing, 168 countries have signed and as many as 154 countries have ratified the Convention. But many of them have not yet introduced the strong prevention measures demanded by the Convention, while the multinational tobacco companies have continued to adapt their production and marketing strategies so as to maintain or increase their sales.

As a recent WHO-Report¹ ("MPOWER Report"²) shows,

More than half of countries do not have minimum monitoring information

Only 5% of the world's population is covered by comprehensive smoke-free laws

Few tobacco users get the help they need to quit

Few countries have comprehensive pack warnings

Few countries enforce bans on tobacco advertising, promotion and sponsorship, and

Countries can save lives by raising tobacco taxes

This means that development and ratification of the FCTC was only the beginning of a promising strategy, while implementation of the Convention both internationally and nationally will be a long term process, which has again to be supported and organized. Governments and Parliaments will have to be continually reminded to be serious about the measures stipulated by the FCTC and supported in implementing them. At the same time, effective international instruments need to be established in support of the FCTC including special protocols on illicit trade and on trans-border tobacco advertising, promotion and sponsorship.

The purpose of the WFPHA Tobacco Control Program (WFPHA-TCP) is to encourage Public Health Associations to engage themselves in providing leadership in tobacco control. This may be through information, coordination of efforts, exchange of experiences, or specific suggestions. Success should not primarily be measured in terms of activities originating from the TCP leadership, but rather by activities of member associations. A good example was a workshop on Leadership in Tobacco Control for Public Health Associations in East and Southern Africa, conducted on May 29 and 30, 2007, in Maputo, Mozambique, by the Mozambique Public Health Association and the Canadian Public Health Association, in which representatives from 6 national Public Health Associations participated.

As a response to the new challenges two activities are proposed for the WFPHA -TCP in 2008: (a) to make optimal use of the new WHO country profiles¹ to help the WFPHA member associations in focusing on their countries' most needed tobacco control measures; and (b) to organize a workshop on global tobacco control, to be held at the 12th World Congress on Public Health in Istanbul, Turkey, in 2009. The idea is to collect country experiences and make them make available on-line in advance, so that enough time will be available at the workshop for in-depth discussion. Creation of a working group toward this purpose might start at the time of the General Assembly in May, 2008.

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¹ http://www.who.int/tobacco/mpower/mpower_report_full_2008.pdf

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- **M**onitor tobacco use and prevention policies,
- **P**rotect people from tobacco smoke,
- **O**ffer help to quit tobacco use,
- **W**arn about the dangers of tobacco,
- **E**nforce bans on tobacco advertising, promotion and sponsorship, and
- **R**aise taxes on tobacco.