



## **Review of accreditation of nongovernmental organizations with the status of observer to the Conference of the Parties**

### **Report by the Convention Secretariat**

#### **Purpose of the document**

This report provides a summary of the work reported by the nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) that are accredited as observers to the Conference of the Parties (COP) to the WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (WHO FCTC) as part of the review of their accreditation by the COP.

#### **Action by the Conference of the Parties**

The COP is invited to note the present report and consider adopting the annexed draft decision.

Contribution to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs): All SDGs; in particular, SDG 3 and Target 3.a, as well as SDG 17.

Link to Workplan and Budget item: 2.2.1.

Additional financial implications if not included in the Workplan and Budget: None.

Related document(s): Rules of Procedure of the Conference of the Parties to the WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control.

## Background

1. The present report has been prepared with reference to Rule 31.3 of the Rules of Procedure of the Conference of the Parties (COP) to the WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (WHO FCTC), decision FCTC/COP5(22) that adopted a process for future reviews of accreditation of nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) and, in particular, decision FCTC/COP6(23) that adopted the standard reporting questionnaire for use by NGOs for future reviews of accreditation.
2. Decision FCTC/COP5(22) requested the Convention Secretariat to analyse the reports received from NGOs and prepare a report for the Bureau for its review so that the Bureau can make recommendations to the COP at its next regular session on whether to maintain, suspend or discontinue the observer status of accredited NGOs.
3. In accordance with the process adopted by the COP, on 4 February 2025 the Convention Secretariat issued an electronic invitation to the 29 NGOs that are accredited with observer status to the COP to submit reports via an online questionnaire. The deadline for the submission of reports was 28 February 2025.
4. The present report provides an analysis of the reports submitted by NGOs that are accredited as observers to the COP, including examples of the work carried out by them to support Parties with implementation of the WHO FCTC. It contains the recommendations of the Bureau on whether to maintain, suspend or discontinue the observer status of accredited NGOs to the COP.

## Reports received by the Convention Secretariat

5. All 29 NGOs accredited as observers to the COP responded to the online questionnaire:
  - Action on Smoking and Health
  - African Tobacco Control Alliance
  - American Cancer Society
  - Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids
  - Cancer Research UK
  - Coalición América Saludable
  - Corporate Accountability
  - European Network for Smoking and Tobacco Prevention
  - FDI World Dental Federation
  - Global Alliance for Tobacco Control
  - InterAmerican Heart Foundation
  - International Alliance of Women
  - International Council of Nurses
  - International Federation of Medical Students' Associations
  - International Network of Women Against Tobacco
  - International Pharmaceutical Federation
  - International Pharmaceutical Students' Federation

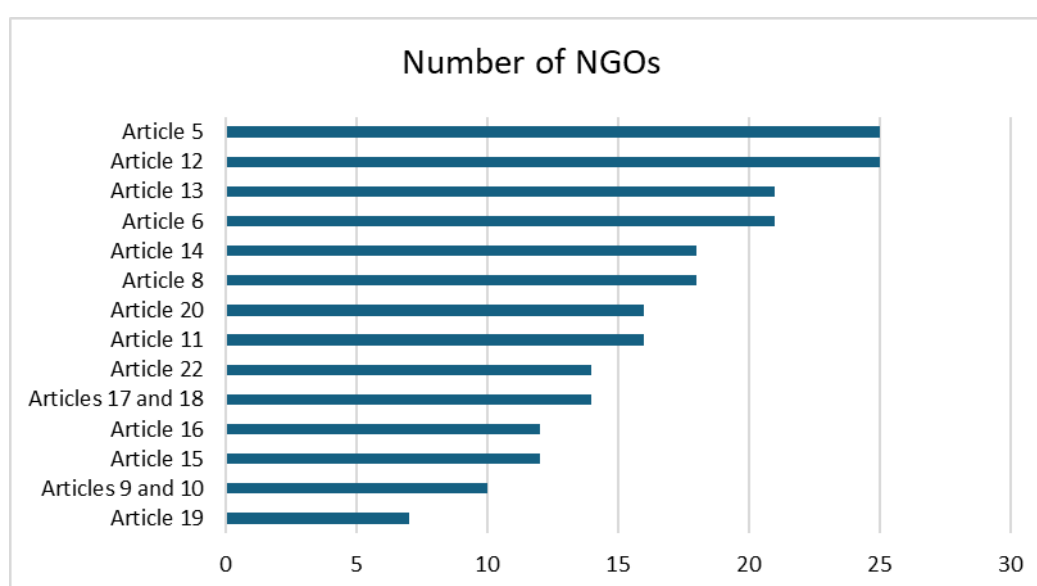
- International Union Against Tuberculosis and Lung Disease
- NCD Alliance
- Smoke Free Partnership
- Southeast Asia Tobacco Control Alliance
- Tobacco Control Research Group
- Tobacco Free Portfolios
- Union for International Cancer Control
- Vision Mondiale de la Santé
- Vital Strategies Inc.
- World Federation of Public Health Associations
- World Heart Federation
- World Medical Association

## Summary of the analysis of reports received and examples of recent work of NGO observers

6. This summary is based on the reports received from the 29 NGOs that are accredited with observer status to the COP, and focuses on:

- (a) the contribution of NGOs to support implementation of the WHO FCTC by the Parties; and
- (b) examples of activities that were reported by the NGOs in their reports.

7. The graph below shows how many NGO observers, out of the total of 29, indicated that they had worked on various articles of the WHO FCTC.



8. The articles that received the most attention from the NGO observers reflect the trends observed in previous reports on the matter submitted to the COP: the top four have remained unchanged since the previous report. Article 5 (General obligations), Article 12 (Education, communication, training and public awareness), Article 13 (Tobacco advertising, promotion and sponsorship) and Article 6 (Price and tax measures to reduce the demand for tobacco) received most attention from NGO observers, followed by Article 14 (Demand reduction measures concerning tobacco dependence and cessation) and Article 8 (Protection from exposure to tobacco smoke).
9. At the other end of the list are Article 19 (Liability), Articles 9 and 10 (Regulation of the contents of tobacco products and of tobacco product disclosures, respectively), Article 15 (Illicit trade in tobacco products) and Article 16 (Sales to and by minors), as fewer NGOs reported that they had carried out activities related to these.
10. The following paragraphs outline some examples of the work reported by NGO observers. For more detailed information on these activities, and for information on all the activities reported by NGO observers, the individual reports are available on the Convention Secretariat's website.<sup>1</sup>
- (a) Many NGOs reported working on Article 5 (General obligations) – specifically on Article 5.3 (Protection of public health policies from commercial and other vested interests of the tobacco industry) – by raising awareness of and denouncing tobacco industry interference. For example, the Smoke Free Partnership (SFP) reported that it engaged with policy-makers at the European Union to remind them of the requirements of Article 5.3 of the WHO FCTC, particularly regarding transparency of their interactions with the tobacco industry. SFP also reported publishing the European Regional Tobacco Industry Interference Index biennially. The Southeast Asia Tobacco Control Alliance produced the Asian and ASEAN Tobacco Industry Interference Indices again in 2023, documenting the tobacco industry's efforts to undermine public health, and exposing policy gaps where governments can make improvements to prevent these tactics succeeding. In the African Region, the African Tobacco Control Alliance contributed to the monitoring of the tobacco industry and to the production of the Africa Tobacco Industry Interference Index. The World Federation of Public Health Associations published a casebook entitled *Big tobacco's dirty tricks*, highlighting tobacco industry tactics and emphasizing the importance of Article 5.3 of the WHO FCTC in countering these.
- (b) Examples of the work of NGOs on Article 6 (Price and tax measures to reduce the demand for tobacco) include the contribution of Cancer Research UK to funding programmes on the economics of tobacco control in several Parties through its global International Cancer Prevention programme; as part of this programme, Cancer Research UK is also funding the WHO FCTC Knowledge Hub on Tobacco Taxation based at the University of Cape Town. SFP has been conducting a review of the European Union's Tobacco Taxation Directive (Council Directive 2011/64/EU). In September 2024, the NCD Alliance published a policy report entitled *Getting fiscal policies right*, which also includes reference to tobacco industry tactics to interfere with these policies. The Tobacco Control Research Group (TCRG) reported that it submitted evidence to the Vaping Products Duty consultation held by the government of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland in relation to taxation for nicotine products. The Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids reported that in 2023–2024 it provided technical and financial support (through grants) for work related to

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<sup>1</sup> See [Nongovernmental organizations reports](#) (accessed 26 June 2025).

tobacco taxation to a number of Parties, including Bangladesh, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Brazil, Cambodia, India, Mexico, Pakistan, the Philippines, Senegal, Ukraine, Uzbekistan, Viet Nam and several South American Parties. In the Region of the Americas, Coalición América Saludable contributed to the policy brief on health taxes for finance ministers entitled *Fiscal policies and noncommunicable diseases*, published in 2023. This policy brief was a collaborative effort between Coalición América Saludable, Universidad Icesi (Cali, Colombia) and the Pan American Health Organization.

(c) With regard to Article 8 (Protection from exposure to tobacco smoke), Vision Mondiale de la Santé reported having mobilized civil society and government actors for protection against exposure to tobacco smoke. The actions were carried out in France at train stations, on school routes and in cinemas.

(d) Many NGOs reported working on Article 12 (Education, communication, training and public awareness). For example, the InterAmerican Heart Foundation contributed to the development of and supported communication campaigns for regional acceleration of implementation of the WHO FCTC by Parties in South America and the Caribbean. During 2023–2024, the Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids launched the Emerging Product Resource Hub to provide legal, communications and research tools to educate policy-makers and the media about the dangers of new and emerging tobacco and nicotine products, and of the need for strong regulations on these products.

11. The submitted reports suggest that there are areas where less support was provided by NGO observers to the Parties. As indicated in paragraph 8 of the present report, such articles include Article 19 (Liability) followed by Articles 9 and 10 (Regulation of the contents of tobacco products and of tobacco product disclosures, respectively), Article 15 (Illicit trade in tobacco products) and Article 16 (Sales to and by minors). Some examples of support for the implementation of these articles include the following.

(a) Corporate Accountability reported that it continued its Make Big Tobacco Pay campaign, in which Parties (governments and public health officials) are encouraged to strengthen their implementation of the Convention in general, and to use the WHO FCTC Article 19 Civil Liability Toolkit. Corporate Accountability also produced media items, articles and campaign materials related to Article 19 of the WHO FCTC, and provided technical advice for its in-country implementation.

(b) In 2024, SFP published a position paper on the revision of the European Union's Tobacco Products Directive (2014/40/EU), with recommendations related to the regulation of tobacco product contents (Article 9) and tobacco product disclosures (Article 10). The paper calls for an extension of the ban on characterizing flavours, ensuring that all flavours are prohibited in all tobacco and related products, including electronic cigarettes.

(c) In relation to Article 16 (Sales to and by minors), the International Pharmaceutical Students' Federation reported that it has actively championed youth inclusion in tobacco control processes. This advocacy was demonstrated by the organization's hosting of a side event during the Tenth session of the Conference of the Parties to the WHO FCTC, with the theme of "Guardians of Tomorrow: Rise Against Tobacco for a Healthier Future", which talked about young people's access to tobacco products. The African Tobacco Control Alliance conducted a survey entitled "Big Tobacco Tiny Targets", which was carried out in nine African countries to highlight the strategies used by the tobacco industry to market and

sell its products to children around schools, playgrounds and places frequented by young people.

12. In relation to Article 18 (Protection of the environment and the health of persons), TCRG mapped the tobacco industry global supply chain to assist researchers, advocates and journalists with assessing and countering the harmful environmental impact of the industry. TCRG published a paper on this matter in which it highlighted the tobacco industry's motivations to engage in "corporate social responsibility" activities.

13. In summary, the reports submitted by the NGO observers indicate that civil society continues to make important contributions to the implementation of the WHO FCTC by the Parties, in line with Article 4.7 of the Convention. Specifically, the submitted reports indicate that NGO observers have increased their support in the areas of education (Article 12), tobacco taxation (Article 6), and sales to and by minors (Article 16) compared to the last cycle of reporting.

## **Declarations by NGO observers**

### **Retaining observer status**

14. All 29 NGOs expressed the wish to retain their observer status to the COP in their submitted reports.

### **Conflicts of interest**

15. No conflicts of interest were declared in any of the NGO reports.

## **Action by the Conference of the Parties**

16. The COP is invited to note the present report, and, following the recommendation of the Bureau to maintain observer status of the 29 NGOs accredited as observers to the COP, to consider adopting the annexed draft decision.

## **Annex**

### **Draft decision: Review of accreditation of nongovernmental organizations with the status of observer to the Conference of the Parties**

The Conference of the Parties (COP),

Recalling the 17th and 18th preambular paragraphs and Article 5.3 of the WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control;

Recalling also decisions FCTC/COP2(6), FCTC/COP4(23), FCTC/COP5(22), FCTC/COP6(23), FCTC/COP7(16), FCTC/COP8(3), FCTC/COP9(6) and FCTC/COP10(18);

Having considered document FCTC/COP/11/15,

DECIDES, in accordance with Rule 31.3 of its Rules of Procedure, to maintain observer status of the following 29 nongovernmental organizations:

- Action on Smoking and Health
- African Tobacco Control Alliance
- American Cancer Society
- Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids
- Cancer Research UK
- Coalición América Saludable
- Corporate Accountability
- European Network for Smoking and Tobacco Prevention
- FDI World Dental Federation
- Global Alliance for Tobacco Control
- InterAmerican Heart Foundation
- International Alliance of Women
- International Council of Nurses
- International Federation of Medical Students' Associations
- International Network of Women Against Tobacco
- International Pharmaceutical Federation
- International Pharmaceutical Students' Federation
- International Union Against Tuberculosis and Lung Disease
- NCD Alliance
- Smoke Free Partnership
- Southeast Asia Tobacco Control Alliance

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- Tobacco Control Research Group
  - Tobacco Free Portfolios
  - Union for International Cancer Control
  - Vision Mondiale de la Santé
  - Vital Strategies Inc.
  - World Federation of Public Health Associations
  - World Heart Federation
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XXX plenary meeting, XX November 2025

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