

## **NOTE FOR THE RECORD**

### **Third meeting of the Expert Group on Forward-looking Tobacco Control Measures (in relation to Article 2.1 of the WHO FCTC)**

1–2 April 2025

Virtual meeting

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#### **Opening of the meeting**

1. The present report contains a summary of the discussions at the Third meeting of the Expert Group on Forward-looking Tobacco Control Measures, in relation to Article 2.1 of the WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (WHO FCTC), held virtually.

2. Following welcoming remarks from the Head of the Convention Secretariat and the Chairperson of the Expert Group, including an acknowledgment of the work undertaken by the members of the Expert Group, the Expert Group agreed that the objectives of the meeting would be: (a) to provide experts with the opportunity to review, discuss and validate the documentation developed by the Expert Group to be submitted to the Conference of the Parties (COP) to the WHO FCTC, pursuant to decision FCTC/COP10(12); and (b) to allow experts to discuss and agree upon the next steps, including the work distribution and timeline for the development of those reports.

#### **Adoption of the agenda**

3. The provisional agenda was adopted as proposed and is contained in the Annex to the present report.

#### **Progress with development of the briefs on forward-looking tobacco control measures: timeline and process for completion**

4. The meeting began with a discussion on the review process for the information briefs on forward-looking tobacco control measures (FLMs). The FLM briefs were currently at varying stages of a three-tiered review process and due to be finalized in May. Several experts inquired about peer review, as well as the process for resolving issues with edits made during the review process within the Expert Group. The Chairperson stressed that the work of the experts had, in general, been reflected without significant divergence of views on substantive matters. However, it was thought that factual concerns or matters of consistency had been addressed, with most edits relating to style or emphasis to retain consistency across the briefs.

5. After a discussion on possible delays related to the submission of the Expert Group report and accompanying documents to the Convention Secretariat, the Secretariat provided the Expert Group with an overview of a timeline that would allow the processing of documents for timely delivery to the COP.

The Expert Group agreed on a revised timeline to finalize the Expert Group's report to the COP , including annexes with FLM abstracts and a draft decision (main document); the report containing the references of sources used by the Expert Group (information document); the extended report on FLMs (supplementary document); the report by the WHO FCTC Knowledge Hub on Legal Challenges (supplementary document); and the notes for the record of the First, Second and Third meetings of the Expert Group (supplementary documents). The agreed timeline for the finalization of the work would be circulated to the Expert Group by the Chairperson following the meeting.

### **Review and validation of the draft report by the Expert Group**

6. While the draft report was met with positive feedback from the experts, some questions were raised in relation to the level of detail in the description of FLMs in the main Expert Group report for the COP. The Chairperson stressed the need for consistent messaging throughout the report and noted that text would be added to link the main report to the supplementary document, which would contain expanded text on FLM briefs, as well as context and information on the longer list of FLMs initially considered by the Expert Group. Similarly, the main Expert Group report to the COP would contain key conclusions of the report produced by the WHO FCTC Knowledge Hub on Legal Challenges and would reference the full version of that report.

7. After a discussion on the Expert Group's recommendations to the COP, experts were in agreement on the importance of recognizing that work on implementing and developing FLMs should continue. Some experts expressed a wish to see additional information related to the FLM information briefs published. The Chairperson noted that, while the reports to the COP are proposed as a collective effort by the Expert Group, established as a subsidiary body of the COP, individual experts could publish their work independently. The Expert Group agreed that it should recommend that the COP foster dialogue on and promote the work of the Expert Group beyond its upcoming session. The Convention Secretariat noted that it could explore means of promoting the work of the Expert Group, in line with its mandate, including through materials to further disseminate the outcomes of the Expert Group's work, following its consideration by the COP.

### **Information and supplementary documents**

8. The Convention Secretariat clarified that the references to sources used by the Expert Group, which were requested in decision FCTC/COP10(12), would be removed from the main Expert Group report and included in an information document, to ensure that the Expert Group's report was manageable in volume. The corresponding references will also be featured in the supplementary report that will contain extended information on FLMs considered by the Expert Group. In response to a query, the Convention Secretariat stated that the notes for the record of the three meetings of the Expert Group will be published, in accordance with the Rules of Procedure of the COP. The notes for the record of the first two meetings were being translated, while the one for the third meeting would be shared for validation by the Expert Group in upcoming weeks.

### **Next steps**

9. The experts discussed the remaining questions in respect of the draft decision. They agreed that the draft decision should contain language providing impetus for implementation by Parties of FLMs,

mindful of country resources and varying Party experience in implementation of tobacco control measures. In response to a query, the Convention Secretariat clarified that the draft decision annexed to the Expert Group report to the COP should be aligned with the recommendations in the report and, per practice, with previous COP decisions. The Expert Group would refine the draft decision based on comments exchanged during the meeting.

10. In response to queries, the Convention Secretariat clarified that, should the COP consider that the mandate of the Expert Group was fulfilled, the COP may still wish to review the question of FLMS, as necessary, or within a given time frame. The experts generally agreed that, while the matter of FLMS would remain pertinent for the COP, the Expert Group would have completed its mandate provided in decision FCTC/COP10(12).

11. Following a discussion on finalizing the review of the FLM information briefs, prior to submission to the Convention Secretariat of the supplementary document consolidating the briefs, the Chairperson emphasized the importance of consistency across the briefs and noted that any further interactions in the review of briefs would require a swift turnaround. The Chairperson reaffirmed the agreement of the Expert Group that language should be included in the report to explain the broader context of tobacco control approaches around the globe, as well as their evolution prior to and since the adoption of the WHO FCTC.

#### **Any other business**

12. There were no requests for any other business to be discussed.

#### **Closure of the meeting**

13. The Chairperson thanked participants for their contributions and closed the meeting.

## ANNEX

### **Provisional agenda**

1. Opening of the meeting
2. Adoption of the agenda
3. Progress with development of the briefs on forward-looking tobacco control measures: timeline and process for completion
4. Review and validation of the draft report by the Expert Group
5. Information and supplementary documents:
  - (a) report containing the references of sources used by the Expert Group;
  - (b) extended report on forward-looking tobacco control measures and measures that expand or intensify approaches to tobacco control as they apply to tobacco products;
  - (c) report by the WHO FCTC Knowledge Hub on Legal Challenges; and
  - (d) notes for the record of the First, Second and Third meetings of the Expert Group
6. Next steps
7. Any other business
8. Closure of the meeting