

UNDP poised for role supporting accelerated FCTC implementation

Idioma Undefined



From the [FCA website](#): [1]

The UN Development Programme (UNDP) is poised to support a strengthened inter-agency approach to implementation of the WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (FCTC), says Doug Webb of the UNDP's Bureau for Development Policy.

On 23 July, the UN Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) will consider a report from the Secretary-General on the UN's role in implementing the global tobacco control treaty. It calls for a division of labour as well as a more structured approach, with UNDP playing a coordinating role among UN agencies.

"If the report is approved as is, it will give us plenty of room to move the current UN approach from that of a 'patchwork of projects' to a more coordinated response," Dr. Webb told FCA.

With 176 Parties, the FCTC is considered one of the most widely-supported international treaties; however, turning international commitments into national tobacco control policies remains a challenge for many countries.

Twenty-two UN agencies participate in the UN Inter-agency Task Force. One of UNDP's primary roles is to help stimulate demand from FCTC Parties for assistance in putting the treaty's measures into place. "We can't just say 'Doug in NY wants to do something'," added Dr. Webb. "It's a matter of creating awareness and creating demand, then making sure that the demand is defined and articulated [by member states]."

And this is where the UNDP's other key role comes into play, added Dr. Webb, who is leader of the agency's Mainstreaming, Gender and MDGs cluster in the HIV/AIDS Group. The UNDP will also take a greater role among UN agencies for supporting implementation of FCTC Article 5.3, which addresses tobacco industry interference.

"We have to make sure that a demand for assistance is not being suppressed by the industry," he says. By providing technical back-up, such as capacity assessment and development tools that have been pioneered by UNDP in relation to the education and health sectors, the agency will attempt to instil a degree of confidence in FCTC Parties so that they feel comfortable putting measures into place, even in the face of opposition from the industry. "Until we're tackling the lack of confidence at all levels, we're not going to go much further," adds Dr. Webb.

Another key challenge will be ensuring that the FCTC is included in the broader development agenda, particularly that it is seen as key to countries' response to the epidemic of non-communicable diseases (NCDs). (Tobacco is the one risk factor common to four main groups of NCDs). Getting FCTC implementation included in the UN Development Assistance Frameworks (UNDAFs) at country level, which the UN uses to support governments' implementation of their national five-year development plans, will be essential.

Dr. Webb has some advice for FCTC advocates working at the country level: understand that the UN is accountable to help member states fulfil various commitments and decisions. These include implementing the Political Declaration of the 2011 UN High-level Meeting on NCDs, which called for accelerated implementation of the FCTC, and the outcome document of the Rio+20 Conference, which for the first time put NCDs and communicable diseases on the same footing. These follow a letter to UN resident coordinators and WHO resident representatives, co-signed by UNDP Administrator Helen Clark and WHO Director-General Margaret Chan, requesting that UN agencies plan together on NCDs, including by giving attention to FCTC implementation.

"Rearticulating these commitments at the country level is powerful," adds Dr. Webb, "you're reinforcing that they need to be acted upon".

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