



Framework Convention on Tobacco Control

INB 5 Joint NGO

25th October 2002 Intervention

We speak on behalf of the International Union Against Cancer, the World Heart Federation, the International Non-governmental Coalition Against Tobacco, the Commonwealth Medical Association, INFACT, Consumers International, and the International Union Against Tuberculosis and Lung Disease.

The non-government organisations are united in their desire for a strong FCTC that will reduce the enormous toll of human suffering and premature death caused by tobacco.

Member States have a clear public health obligation to lend their support to the development of a robust, and meaningful Framework Convention on Tobacco Control.

Tobacco is not an article of taste for adults. Tobacco is a deadly and addictive poison. It destroys lives, the environment and economies. It affects the health of smokers and non-smokers. It is the only legally available consumer product, which kills when used as intended.

Tobacco can not and should not be treated like other consumer products.

The FCTC can and should set a world-wide standard for tobacco control that is evidence based and protects public health above the interests of trade

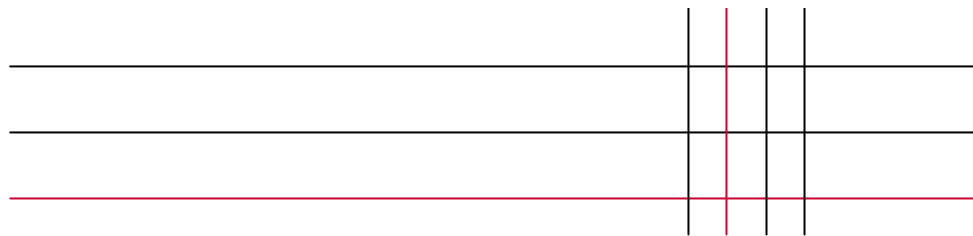
It is of deep concern to the non-government organisations that the achievement of this goal is being frustrated by a small minority of Member States that put profit and the interests of the tobacco multinationals before the health and wellbeing of the world community.

Member States have and will continue to have legitimate differences over how to craft a treaty that promotes public health and advances the cause of tobacco control.

However, clearly some States do not wish to see a meaningful treaty, and any 'consensus' that includes these parties will have a limited effect in promoting public health.

As the Chair stated so eloquently during INB-4, the goal of consensus is a good one, but it should not come at the expense of public health.

One of the most important and encouraging features of the Chair's text is the proposed entry into force rule, which requires only a small number of parties to ratify the treaty.



The new draft texts that we have seen for the first time this morning are cause for further concern among the non-government organisations. In some cases such as tobacco and trade there are starkly contrasting alternative provisions where the delegates at INB-6 will have to choose between the interests of public health and the tobacco industry. In other provisions, particularly the text on packaging and labelling, the new text provided represents a backward step no longer including bans on descriptors like 'low tar', 'light' and 'mild' or requirements for pictures or pictograms.

In some instances, such as for liability and compensation, the provisions are unnecessarily timid and qualified. On the other hand, the advertising and smuggling texts have clearly moved in encouraging directions.

At the commencement of INB-5, the non-government organisations joined Dr Gro-Harlem Brundtland, Director-General of the World Health Organisation, in a moving ceremony commemorating the lives of the millions of men, women and children who have been lost to tobacco. The FCTC provides an important and historic opportunity to put an end to the carnage caused by tobacco.

We, the non-government organisations, are firmly of the view that the FCTC should include strong language on compensation and liability.

We urge the large number of progressive states that want a strong and meaningful FCTC to use their greater numbers to secure the treaty they want, and bring it into force.

And we urge also that Member States remain vigilant against the influence of the tobacco industry in frustrating international efforts to progress tobacco control.

Thank you Mr Chairman for the opportunity to address the INB today.

