



FCTC

WHO FRAMEWORK CONVENTION
ON TOBACCO CONTROL

**CONFERENCE OF THE PARTIES TO THE
WHO FRAMEWORK CONVENTION ON TOBACCO CONTROL**

**FCTC/COP10(14)
10 February 2024**

**Tenth session (resumed)
Panama City, Panama, 5–10 February 2024**

DECISION

FCTC/COP10(14) Implementation of Article 18 of the WHO FCTC

The Conference of the Parties (COP),

Considering Article 18 of the WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (WHO FCTC), whereby the Parties agreed to have due regard to the protection of the environment and the health of persons in relation to the environment in respect of tobacco cultivation and manufacture within their respective territories;

Recalling decision FCTC/COP6(11), in which the COP adopted the *Policy options and recommendations on economically sustainable alternatives for tobacco growing (in relation to Articles 17 and 18 of the WHO FCTC)*;

Aware that these policy options and recommendations did not address environmental, and human health protections in respect of tobacco manufacturing;

Wishing to clarify any link between Article 18 of the WHO FCTC and potential environmental damage caused by tobacco waste, such as plastic used in tobacco product packaging;

Recognizing that plastic cigarette filters are unnecessary, avoidable and problematic, single-use plastics that are widely spread in the environment, killing microorganisms and marine life, as well as polluting oceans;

Noting with concern that cigarette butts are the most commonly discarded waste item worldwide, at approximately 766.6 million kilograms per year;

Considering the pollution of soil and water resources by waste from tobacco products and related electronic devices, including filters of cigarettes as well as batteries, plastic cartridges and metals;

Noting that tobacco workers are exposed to various health risks, including green tobacco sickness, pesticide poisoning and exposure to tobacco dust, and that women and children are often exposed to health risks from handling green tobacco leaves and heavy chemicals, as well as exposure to tobacco smoke during the curing process;

Considering the World Health Organization (WHO) World No Tobacco Day 2022 campaign, whose key message was that tobacco throughout its life cycle contaminates the planet, causing deforestation, contamination of water sources and soil degradation, and also harms human health;

Highlighting the *2023 Global Progress Report on Implementation of the WHO FCTC*, which shows that Article 18 is one of the least successfully implemented articles by Parties and that tobacco industry interference remains a significant barrier to its implementation;

Noting with concern that the tobacco industry is increasingly using actions related to environmental and sustainability claims to mask the damage it causes and to promote itself through extended producer responsibility systems;

Recalling decision FCTC/COP8(18) which encourages Parties to promote national and international cooperation to improve the implementation of Article 5.3 of the WHO FCTC in relation to Articles 17, 18 and 19 of the WHO FCTC to reduce tobacco industry interference in tobacco control policies;

Recalling also decision FCTC/COP8(19) which invites Parties to strengthen the implementation of Article 18 of the WHO FCTC to safeguard the livelihoods and health of tobacco growers and to collaborate across sectors to mitigate the environmental damage caused by tobacco;

Considering that the implementation of Article 18 of the WHO FCTC can contribute to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the *2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development*, namely SDG 2 (Zero hunger), SDG 3 (Good health and well-being), SDG 6 (Clean water and sanitation), SDG 8 (Decent work and economic growth), SDG 12 (Responsible consumption and production), SDG 13 (Climate action), SDG 14 (Life below water) and SDG 15 (Life on land);

Considering also the work of the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee on Plastic Pollution, the issue of microplastic pollution caused by plastic cigarette filters, ongoing global efforts in the development of standards for hazardous waste management under environmental laws, and the fact that the WHO FCTC has been officially referenced during the United Nations plastics treaty negotiations;

Reinforcing that this decision aims at aligning the WHO FCTC work with the principles, objectives and commitments of other international agreements, without interfering with their implementation, as well as without precluding the results of ongoing negotiations within international environmental fora, including but not limited to the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee on Plastic Pollution;

Noting that WHO has recommended an immediate ban on cigarette filters and vaporizers in its submission to the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee on Plastic Pollution;

Recognizing the sovereign right of the Parties, in accordance with their capabilities, to determine, develop, establish and implement their respective national laws and regulations concerning tobacco control;

Taking into account the interaction between climate change and human health and well-being, considering further that the 28th meeting of the Conference of the Parties (COP28) to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) hosted the first-ever Health Day to be observed in the process of the United Nations climate change conferences,

1. DECIDES:

- (a) to urge Parties to take into account the environmental impacts from cultivation, manufacture, consumption and waste disposal of tobacco products and related electronic devices, and to strengthen the implementation of Article 18 of the WHO FCTC, including through national policies related to tobacco and/or protection of the environment;
- (b) to invite all Parties to strengthen the implementation of Article 17 of the WHO FCTC in accordance with the Policy options and recommendations on economically sustainable alternatives to tobacco growing (in relation to Articles 17 and 18 of the WHO FCTC), as contained in decision FCTC/COP6(11), giving particular attention to strengthening national laws that protect the environment and the health of persons in respect of tobacco cultivation and manufacture, within their respective territories;
- (c) to invite Parties, under Article 19 of the WHO FCTC, to hold the tobacco industry accountable for the damage it causes to the environment and the adverse health effects on workers involved in the cultivation and manufacture of tobacco products, and the disposal and treatment of waste resulting from their manufacture and consumption;
- (d) to call on Parties to include a sustainable and holistic approach in the international cooperation agenda to help countries promote alternative agro-ecological crops and sustainable agriculture;
- (e) to urge Parties to coordinate their efforts to address plastic waste of tobacco products and related electronic devices with the objectives of the WHO FCTC in relation to national policies and international treaties and fora dealing with plastics and hazardous waste, as appropriate;
- (f) to urge Parties to adopt measures to protect the rights of workers exposed to occupational hazards in tobacco cultivation and manufacture, in line with international labour standards, as expressed in the ILO Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work, as amended in 2022, as appropriate;
- (g) to encourage Parties to consider comprehensive regulatory options regarding filters in cigarettes and in other tobacco and related products, and their related electronic devices, taking into consideration their public health impacts and in accordance with national law;
- (h) to urge Parties, in accordance with Article 5.3 of the WHO FCTC, to protect tobacco-related environmental policies from the commercial and vested interests of the tobacco industry and those working to further its interests;
- (i) to urge Parties to counter the so-called corporate social responsibility activities of the tobacco industry, and to ensure that WHO FCTC objectives are not undermined through the industry's implementation of extended producer responsibility systems;

2. REQUESTS the Convention Secretariat:

- (a) to continue to engage and support the Parties in the implementation of Article 18 of the WHO FCTC;
- (b) to promote international cooperation and exchange of information on the implementation of Article 18 of the WHO FCTC, especially with the WHO FCTC Knowledge Hub for Articles 17 and 18;
- (c) to examine regulatory options regarding the prevention and management of waste generated by the tobacco industry and its products, including a ban on plastic cigarette filters and the management of hazardous waste from cigarettes, based on scientific evidence, and prepare a report on the above matters to be submitted to the Eleventh session of the COP;
- (d) to call attention to the environmental damage caused by tobacco and its products (throughout its life cycle);
- (e) to identify, in consultation with the WHO FCTC Knowledge Hub for Articles 17 and 18, and WHO:
 - (i) the various plastics used in the manufacture of tobacco products and their packaging, and how, as waste, they harm the environment;
 - (ii) the extent to which protection of the environment from harm arising from tobacco product waste and packaging, such as plastics in tobacco products and their packaging, contributes to the implementation of Article 18 of the WHO FCTC;
 - (iii) the options that Parties may have to curb or prevent such harm;
- (f) to prepare a report on the matters outlined in paragraph (e), to be submitted to the Eleventh session of the COP.

(Seventh plenary meeting, 10 February 2024)

= = =