



PROTOCOL
TO ELIMINATE
ILLCIT TRADE IN
TOBACCO PRODUCTS

**Meeting of the Parties to the Protocol
to Eliminate Illicit Trade in Tobacco Products
Fourth session**

20 March 2026

**Report of the Fourth session of the
Meeting of the Parties to Eliminate Illicit Trade
in Tobacco Products**

Geneva, Switzerland, 24–26 November 2025

1.	Opening of the session.....	3
1.1	Adoption of the agenda and organization of work.....	3
1.2	Credentials of participants.....	4
2.	Applications for the status of observer to the Meeting of the Parties	5
3.	Global progress in implementation of the Protocol to Eliminate Illicit Trade in Tobacco Products, followed by a general debate	5
4.	Protocol instruments and technical matters	10
4.1	Evidence-based research (Articles 6.5 and 13.2 of the Protocol).....	10
4.2	Global information-sharing focal point (Article 8 of the Protocol).....	11
4.3	Licensing (Article 6 of the Protocol) – proposed by Parties.....	12
4.4	Combating illicit trade of electronic nicotine delivery systems (ENDS) – proposed by Parties...	13
4.5	International cooperation under the Protocol – proposed by Parties	14
5.	Reporting, implementation assistance and international cooperation	16
5.1	Strategy for mechanisms of assistance and mobilization of financial resources to support the implementation of the Protocol to Eliminate Illicit Trade in Tobacco Products	16
6.	Budgetary and institutional matters	17
6.1	Performance and progress reports.....	17
6.2	Proposed Workplan and Budget for the financial period 2026–2027	17
6.3	Payment of Assessed Contributions and measures to reduce Parties in arrears	19
6.4	Review of accreditation of nongovernmental organizations with the status of observer to the Meeting of the Parties.....	20
7.	Date and place of the Fifth session of the Meeting of the Parties	20
8.	Election of the President and Vice-Presidents of the Meeting of the Parties	21
9.	Closure of the session	21
	Annex 1: Agenda.....	22
	Annex 2: List of documents	24
	Annex 3: Decisions	26
FCTC/MOP4(1)	Adoption of the agenda.....	27
FCTC/MOP4(2)	Election of Officers of Committees A and B	27
FCTC/MOP4(3)	Applications for the status of observer to the Meeting of the Parties	28
FCTC/MOP4(4)	Credentials of participants	29
FCTC/MOP4(5)	Licensing (Article 6 of the Protocol)	29
FCTC/MOP4(6)	Evidence-based research (Article 6.5 of the Protocol)	30
FCTC/MOP4(7)	Assistance and cooperation: strengthening implementation of Article 24 of the Protocol.....	31
FCTC/MOP4(8)	Assessed Contributions	34
FCTC/MOP4(9)	Review of accreditation of nongovernmental organizations with the status of observer to the Meeting of the Parties.....	35
FCTC/MOP4(10)	Workplan and Budget for the financial period 2026–2027.....	36
FCTC/MOP4(11)	Information sharing in relation to seizures by individual Parties.....	44
FCTC/MOP4(12)	Date and place of the Fifth session of the Meeting of the Parties.....	45
FCTC/MOP4(13)	Election of the President and Vice-Presidents of the Meeting of the Parties.....	46

1. Opening of the session

1. The Fourth session of the Meeting of the Parties (MOP4) to the Protocol to Eliminate Illicit Trade in Tobacco Products was held at WHO headquarters from 24 to 26 November 2025. Representatives of 60 Parties to the Protocol participated. Also present were representatives of 50 States non-Parties and of one other observer, as well as of four international intergovernmental organizations (IGOs) and nine nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) accredited as observers.¹

2. The session was opened by the President of the Meeting of the Parties (MOP) to the Protocol, Dr Mansour Zafer Alqahtani (Saudi Arabia). The Acting Head of the Secretariat of the WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (WHO FCTC), Mr Andrew Black, welcomed participants and noted that, since the Protocol had entered into force in September 2018, significant strides had been made in building a framework to combat illicit trade in tobacco products. Nonetheless, immense challenges lay ahead. Illicit trade continued to adapt and evolve, threatening the progress that had been achieved, and constituted a barrier to advances across the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Participants were urged to approach MOP4 in a spirit of collaboration, determination and respect, keeping in mind the theme of the high-level segment: “Justice and prosecution: strengthening action to eliminate illicit trade in tobacco products”.

1.1 Adoption of the agenda and organization of work

Documents FCTC/MOP/4/1 and FCTC/MOP/4/1 (annotated)

3. The provisional agenda had been prepared by the Convention Secretariat in consultation with the Bureau of the MOP, in accordance with Rules 6 and 7 of the Rules of Procedure of the MOP. The provisional agenda was contained in document FCTC/MOP/4/1 and further articulated in document FCTC/MOP/4/1 (annotated).

4. At the first plenary meeting of MOP4, the MOP adopted decision FCTC/MOP4(1).

5. In considering the organization of its work for MOP4, at its first plenary meeting, the MOP agreed, following the practice of previous sessions, to establish two committees, A and B, to work in parallel. Committee A would be entrusted with work on Protocol instruments and technical matters under agenda item 4. Committee B would work on reporting, implementation assistance and international cooperation under agenda item 5, and on budgetary and institutional matters under agenda item 6. The remaining agenda items would be dealt with in Plenary.

6. The following representatives were elected to serve as officers of Committees A and B, pursuant to Rule 24quinquies of the Rules of Procedure of the MOP (decision FCTC/MOP4(2), adopted at the first plenary meeting of MOP4):

Committee A

Ali Hajilari (Iran (Islamic Republic of)), Chairperson

Ananda Sarath Rathnayaka (Sri Lanka) and Gert Vorsteveld (Netherlands (Kingdom of the)),
Vice-Chairpersons

¹ For the list of participants at MOP4, see document [FCTC/MOP/4/DIV/1](#).

Committee B

Fatoumata Komma (Gambia), Chairperson

Bernardo Darquea Arias (Ecuador) and Robert Thomsen (Samoa), Vice-Chairpersons

7. As recommended by the Bureau, the MOP agreed that under agenda item 1, the opening would be webcast, whereas the deliberations on agenda items 1.1 and 1.2 would not. The debate on agenda items 3, 7, 8 and 9 would also be webcast. In accordance with Rule 32 of its Rules of Procedure, the MOP also agreed that accredited media could attend the open meetings of MOP4.

1.2 Credentials of participants

Document FCTC/MOP/4/2

8. At the first plenary meeting, the MOP considered the report on the credentials of participants contained in document FCTC/MOP/4/2. In accordance with Rule 19 of the Rules of Procedure of the MOP, the Bureau had examined the credentials submitted to the Convention Secretariat, prior to their submission to the MOP.

9. The President informed the MOP that Vanuatu had deposited its instrument of accession to the Protocol on 26 September 2025, and was participating in the current session of the MOP pending entry into force.

10. Additional credentials had been received from Fiji and had been found to be in conformity with the Rules of Procedure of the MOP. It was therefore proposed that the MOP accept the credentials of that Party.

11. At the third plenary meeting of MOP4, the MOP adopted decision FCTC/MOP4(4).

12. Following the adoption of credentials, a Party speaking on behalf of a regional grouping urged Parties to the Protocol to remain vigilant towards tobacco industry strategies and tactics intended to interfere in the setting and implementation of their public health policies in respect of tobacco control, and encouraged delegates to submit, on a voluntary basis, declarations of interest prior to all meetings of the Conference of the Parties (COP) to the WHO FCTC and meetings of the MOP, in line with decisions FCTC/COP8(12) and FCTC/MOP1(15). Responding to a question from the same Party, a member of the Convention Secretariat confirmed that more than 80% of the 60 Parties whose credentials had been approved for the current session had indicated their adherence to Article 5.3 of the WHO FCTC and recommendations 4.9 and 8.3 of the Guidelines for the implementation of Article 5.3 of the WHO FCTC.

13. Representatives of two NGOs, attending as observers, commended the commitment to transparency demonstrated by two regions through the declaration of interests, and called for closer interregional collaboration to uphold the decisions of the Eighth session of the COP and the First session of the MOP (MOP1) in that regard.

2. Applications for the status of observer to the Meeting of the Parties

Document FCTC/MOP/4/3

14. The MOP considered applications for observer status received by the Secretariat from two IGOs – namely African Capacity Building Foundation and African Tax Administration Forum – and from two international NGOs: Economics for Health and World Heart Federation.

15. One Party noted that, in order to ensure full compliance with Rule 31 of the Rules of Procedure of the MOP, candidate organizations seeking observer status should provide evidence of independent legal personality. It was recommended that the criteria used to review applications for observer status at the MOP should be strengthened and aligned with good practice under other relevant international treaties. It was recommended that the criteria used to review applications for observer status at the Fifth session of the MOP (MOP5) should include the mandatory requirement of legal personality, and that this matter be addressed by the Bureau elected at MOP4 during the intersessional period, with support from the Convention Secretariat. The Party further emphasized the importance of the Secretariat engaging with NGOs that combated illicit trade, including organizations focused on transparency.

16. Representatives of two Parties speaking on behalf of regional groupings expressed support for the Bureau's recommendations and conclusions.

17. The MOP decided to grant observer status to African Capacity Building Foundation, African Tax Administration Forum, Economics for Health, and World Heart Federation, in accordance with Rules 30 and 31 of the Rules of Procedure of the MOP.

18. At the first plenary meeting of MOP4, the MOP adopted decision FCTC/MOP4(3).

3. Global progress in implementation of the Protocol to Eliminate Illicit Trade in Tobacco Products, followed by a general debate

Document FCTC/MOP/4/4

19. The Acting Head of the Convention Secretariat, presenting the report *2025 Global Progress on Implementation of the Protocol to Eliminate Illicit Trade in Tobacco Products*², said that the Convention Secretariat had conducted the 2025 reporting cycle for the Protocol between January and March 2025. Of the 69 Parties obligated to report in that cycle, 46, or 67%, had formally submitted their implementation reports. The 2025 Global Progress Report showed significant progress, particularly in strengthening supply chain controls through improved licensing and tracking and tracing systems.

20. Certain groups of provisions had been implemented more consistently than others, reflecting both the feasibility of implementation and regulatory priorities. Articles 6–13, which focus on supply chain control, had relatively high levels of implementation. A second cluster of articles, typically those where obligations were more complex, resource-intensive or required multi-agency coordination, had had moderate levels of implementation. That cluster included Articles 14–16 and 24–27. Reports from Parties showed only partial implementation for

² [2025 Global Progress Report on Implementation of the Protocol to Eliminate Illicit Trade in Tobacco Products](#). Geneva: Secretariat of the WHO FCTC; 2025 (accessed 15 December 2025).

Articles 20–23, which cover general information sharing, enforcement information sharing, confidentiality and technical assistance. Lastly, Articles 28–32, which cover mutual administrative and legal assistance, extradition, and the reporting and exchange of information, were implemented only in a minority of Parties.

21. Looking ahead, the priority would be not only to close existing implementation gaps but to future-proof the Protocol against emerging risks, including increasingly sophisticated trafficking networks and the rapid evolution of new and emerging tobacco and nicotine products.

22. In national and regional statements, Parties reported a range of initiatives undertaken to implement the Protocol. Many Parties had introduced, reviewed or strengthened legislation aimed at preventing the entry of illicit tobacco products into their national tobacco markets; established licensing systems and registers for authorized manufacturers, importers and distributors of tobacco products to enhance oversight and improve traceability; initiated legislative reforms, working in coordination with customs authorities; and developed tracking and tracing mechanisms to monitor tobacco products throughout the supply chain, with a view to reducing tax evasion, preventing fraudulent declarations and curbing illicit trade. Other measures implemented by Parties included introducing mandatory record-keeping and reporting by all tobacco manufacturers, importers and distributors; applying strong penalties for non-compliance with tobacco control requirements; empowering local officials to conduct raids and seize illicit tobacco products; strengthening training for officials – particularly at the local level – to enhance enforcement and compliance with tobacco control rules; adopting robust fiscal measures, particularly in relation to excise duties; and reinforcing tax, customs and border controls. Several Parties also described the multisectoral approach taken, particularly in enforcing tobacco control measures, which involved health, customs, police and border control agencies.

23. Implementation of the Protocol had been further strengthened through needs assessments undertaken by several Parties, which had led to concrete follow-up actions such as the establishment of a national body for products requiring special registration, including tobacco and nicotine products, and the initiation of comprehensive legislative reforms. The support received from the Convention Secretariat and the World Health Organization (WHO) in that regard was appreciated.

24. Despite progress, many Parties highlighted persistent challenges, including limited technical capacities, gaps in legislation and enforcement, porous borders, underdeveloped information-sharing systems, limited international cooperation, the sophisticated tactics of smuggling networks and criminal gangs, tobacco industry interference, the rise in the use of tobacco products among young people, and technical and financial barriers to establishing or implementing tracking and tracing systems. There was also a need to improve waste management practices for seized products and machinery.

25. Many Parties called for enhanced regional and international cooperation, technical assistance and the sharing of intelligence, expertise and other information to strengthen enforcement – particularly between neighbouring countries. There was also a need to protect policies from tobacco industry interference, increase capacity-building, and support developing countries with practical tools and technology. Moreover, the Convention Secretariat and WHO were urged to continue providing technical, resource mobilization and capacity-building support to Parties, including by developing policy guidance, equipping enforcement authorities with the practical tools needed to implement the Protocol and providing training on the use of the online reporting platform. One Party requested specific support to build essential forensic and legal capacity, to enhance intelligence-sharing on cross-border smuggling routes and the activities of

transnational organized crime groups, along with support to adopt and maintain cost-effective, regionally appropriate tracking and tracing systems. Another Party emphasized the need for stronger legislation and tougher penalties, robust traceability systems, increased tax revenues from tobacco products, strong cross-border cooperation on legal and security matters, and better protection of young people and of policies to combat tobacco industry interference. Another Party emphasized that information-sharing practices must take account of the need to protect sensitive data, in order to avoid compromising investigations related to cross-border crime and terrorism, and called for the establishment of regional risk analysis units capable of linking seizures to the financial and logistical movements of criminal networks.

26. Many Parties reaffirmed their strong commitment to implementing the Protocol, emphasizing that combating illicit trade was not only a public health issue but also one of national security, economic stability and sovereignty. They expressed appreciation to the Convention Secretariat for its technical support, capacity-building and guidance, and reiterated their readiness to cooperate with one another to strengthen coordinated responses.

27. Eliminating illicit trade was also recognized as a transnational challenge that required collective commitment, political courage, international cooperation, transparency, global solidarity, timely information exchange, and balanced fiscal and regulatory measures. Parties were urged to advance implementation of the Protocol and to ensure timely submission of their implementation reports for the next reporting cycle in 2027.

28. A number of States non-Parties expressed support for the re-establishment of the Working Group on Assistance and Cooperation and the inclusion of States non-Parties in its work. Another State non-Party called for targeted technical support, technology transfer and appropriate grace periods to enable current and prospective Parties to comply fully with the Protocol. Several States non-Parties also indicated that they were making progress towards ratification of the Protocol.

29. One NGO observer speaking on behalf of a number of others noted that legal, political, technical and financial barriers continued to impede implementation of the Protocol, and encouraged Parties to approach discussions at the MOP with the principles of the MOP3 Panama Declaration (decision FCTC/MOP3(20)) in mind.

30. Consideration of a draft decision entitled “Information sharing in relation to seizures by individual Parties” proposed by a Party under the agenda item (document FCTC/MOP4/P/CONF./3) was transferred to Committee B. Introducing the draft decision in Committee B, the proposing Party said that the aim of the proposed draft decision was for the Convention Secretariat to invite the World Customs Organization (WCO) and the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) to explore the feasibility of establishing a database containing information on individual seizure data related to tobacco, tobacco products, manufacturing equipment, and electronic nicotine delivery systems (ENDS) and electronic non-nicotine delivery systems (ENNDS), given that Parties to the Protocol were required only to provide aggregated data through the reporting instrument and that several countries already provided individual seizure data to WCO and UNODC.

31. Three Parties, all speaking on behalf of regional groupings, expressed their support for the draft decision, which would help to strengthen interagency coordination in the fight against illicit trade in tobacco products by taking advantage of existing international data-sharing platforms and expertise in order to avoid duplication of efforts and improve the quality, coherence and transparency of information available to Parties for more effective monitoring, analysis and policy-making. It would also enable Parties to benefit from global intelligence and trend analysis,

and would facilitate multisectoral coordination at the national level, thereby strengthening domestic enforcement and control mechanisms.

32. However, one Party speaking on behalf of a regional economic integration organization opposed the draft decision, noting that it was unclear whether the mandate proposed in the draft decision for the Convention Secretariat was already addressed, in full or in part, by WCO through its Illicit Trade Report. In addition, all Parties to the Protocol were WCO Members and therefore had access to the information provided in the Customs Enforcement Network (CEN) database. Moreover, the Convention Secretariat already collected some data from Parties through the Protocol and WHO FCTC reporting instruments, which, it should be noted, now also required Parties to submit information on seizures relating to ENDS, ENNDS and novel tobacco products. The Party also expressed serious concern about the legal basis for information sharing between organizations, noting that it may not be possible for those organizations to share data that States had submitted to them voluntarily.

33. Another Party, agreeing that there was a lack of certainty as to the legal basis for information sharing, expressed concern about the inclusion of ENDS and ENNDS in the draft decision. Although a precedent for the inclusion of reporting on seizures of ENDS and ENNDS in the Protocol reporting instrument had been set at the Third session of the MOP (MOP3), the Party was of the view that Article 20 of the Protocol referred specifically to seizures of tobacco, tobacco products and manufacturing equipment.

34. The WCO observer said that any request for coordination with WCO should be submitted to the WCO Secretary-General by the Convention Secretariat, adding that WCO Members contributed to the CEN database on a voluntary basis, and that the database was an integral part of the WCO Illicit Trade Report, the 2024 version of which would be published shortly.

35. The UNODC observer, underscoring the need for global data to monitor global trends in illicit tobacco trade, said that the WCO CEN database only contained information on seizures made by customs authorities, and that individual seizure data from a wider range of legal authorities would provide insight into how traffickers operated. Nonetheless, such data sources needed to be interpreted carefully and responsibly, and UNODC stood ready to provide assistance to the Convention Secretariat in that respect, including by hosting a public or limited access database and drawing up periodic analytical reports. In addition, when previous information sharing between WCO and UNODC had been undertaken, the only requirement had been to obtain the agreement of the WCO Secretary-General.

36. One NGO observer, expressing support for the draft decision, encouraged Parties to work to make any relevant data on illicit trade, within domestic legal limitations, available to other Parties, the Convention Secretariat and other relevant, responsible organizations, and to use every available channel to turn data into action. Parties should examine any current regional or global data-sharing mechanisms in place in order to take advantage of existing structures and avoid duplication.

37. Responding to the concerns raised, the Party proposing the draft decision highlighted that its aim was to find ways to make progress while avoiding the duplication of existing data or information on seizures by taking advantage of work already carried out by other organizations. As existing databases did not necessarily cover all products involved in illicit trade – particularly novel tobacco and nicotine products – or all countries and regions, there was a need to discuss means of improving the variety of information collected. The draft decision only called for exploration of a

new mechanism by the Convention Secretariat in cooperation with WCO and UNODC, and would not entail any additional resources or expenditure at present.

38. The Convention Secretariat clarified that it currently collected only aggregated data on seizures by Parties through the revised reporting instruments under the WHO FCTC and the Protocol, and that those data were analysed both quantitatively and qualitatively. In the 2025 reporting cycle, 14 Parties to the WHO FCTC (which are not Parties to the Protocol) had provided aggregated seizure data to the Convention Secretariat, and 29 Parties to the Protocol had provided such data through the Protocol reporting instrument, which included two questions in that area. Among the latter, only eight Parties to the Protocol had provided individual seizure data. As such, the seizure data available to the Convention Secretariat could not currently be considered complete. The adoption of the draft decision would not alter the reporting obligations of Parties, and it was noted that, as shown in the 2025 Global Progress Report, the Convention Secretariat had already engaged in discussions with WCO and UNODC, accessed data from external sources and incorporated its analysis in the Report.

39. The Legal Team of the Convention Secretariat added that, under the revised reporting instrument of the Protocol approved at MOP3, Parties were required to provide seizure data relating to ENDS and ENNDS; that, through decision FCTC/MOP3(17), the Convention Secretariat had been mandated to continue reviewing official external sources of data that were relevant to illicit trade in tobacco products, with a view to exploring how such data may best inform the assessment of global progress in implementation of the Protocol by the Parties; and that WCO and UNODC were recognized in the Protocol as partners with which the Convention Secretariat should build enhanced cooperation. If Parties chose to adopt the draft decision, the legal basis for information sharing would be determined during discussions between the Convention Secretariat, WCO and UNODC to explore the feasibility of an information-sharing mechanism, and any proposal would be made to the next session of the MOP within the limits of that legal basis.

40. One Party speaking on behalf of a regional economic integration organization reiterated the organization's concerns about the legal basis for information sharing, and queried the need to explore a new mechanism – particularly in view of the low response rate of the existing reporting instrument.

41. At the third meeting of Committee B, the Chairperson presented an amended version of the draft decision following extensive informal discussions.

42. Responding to a comment from the floor, the Legal Team of the Convention Secretariat said that the language in the amended text was not prescriptive, and took into account that Parties would have different needs and take action at different paces when implementing the Protocol.

43. One Party, while willing to join the consensus to approve the draft decision, as amended, expressed concern that references to ENDS and ENNDS had been removed from the amended text.

44. Following discussion, Committee B approved the draft decision, as amended, and transmitted it to the MOP for adoption.

45. At the fourth plenary meeting of MOP4, the MOP adopted decision FCTC/MOP4(11).

4. Protocol instruments and technical matters

4.1 Evidence-based research (Articles 6.5 and 13.2 of the Protocol)

Document FCTC/MOP/4/5

46. Committee A had before it document FCTC/MOP/4/5, which described the activities undertaken by the Convention Secretariat to implement the road map to conduct evidence-based research in accordance with Articles 6.5 and 13.2 of the Protocol, as well as the related outcomes and recommendations, pursuant to decision FCTC/MOP3(16). It also had before it a draft decision entitled “Evidence-based research (Articles 6.5 and 13.2 of the Protocol)” (document FCTC/MOP/4/P/CONF./2), proposed by a Party and aimed at establishing a working group on Articles 6.5 and 13.2 to develop recommendations and report to MOP5.

47. Parties, delivering statements on behalf of regional groupings and in their individual capacities, welcomed the reported findings on the key inputs essential to the manufacture of tobacco products and on the contribution of duty free sales to illicit trade in tobacco products. They underscored that capacity-building; improved tracking and tracing; optimal use of credible data for sound policy-making; stronger interagency, regional and international cooperation; and enhanced information exchange, including through the global information-sharing focal point, were crucial to effective tackling of illicit trade. Measures on illicit trade should respect national sovereignty, allow for adaptability to differing national contexts and avoid duplication.

48. Some Parties, including three speaking on behalf of regional groupings, expressed their full support for the draft decision and the proposed working group on Articles 6.5 and 13.2. The working group would provide an inclusive platform for Parties to exchange experiences and good practices, gather solid and objective data, and produce practical and context-appropriate recommendations and guidance to address persistent gaps and disparities in capacities, knowledge and enforcement, thus promoting a harmonized and effective response to illicit trade.

49. However, one Party speaking on behalf of a regional economic integration organization was of the view that further research on Articles 6.5 and 13.2 was unnecessary, especially given that most stakeholders interviewed had not perceived duty free sales as a significant channel for illicit trade in tobacco products; nor did they have the data to suggest it. While several Parties agreed that there were insufficient grounds for further studies under Article 13.2, they considered that there remained scope to improve control of key inputs, and were therefore willing to consider an amended draft decision regarding a working group on Article 6.5 only. One Party suggested coordinating the work on key inputs with the closely related work on licensing under agenda item 4.3.

50. Responding to concerns raised, the proposer of the draft decision clarified that the working group, rather than producing new research, would gather and share existing evidence and good practices in relation not only to Article 13.2 but to the entire supply chain; it stood ready to find acceptable wording to express that purpose.

51. Several Parties expressed support for the draft decision, with one Party noting that a working group would ensure that Parties could obtain access to independent and reliable evidence that could guide policy action.

52. Several States non-Parties expressed support for shifting focus from duty free sales of tobacco products to the key inputs essential to tobacco product production, with some recommending the inclusion of licensing under the working group’s mandate. Any further consideration of duty free sales should be research-based and data-driven, and Parties should note the impact of any related policies on tourism-dependent economies. The working group should engage in broad consultations with economic actors and enforcement agencies to ensure balanced recommendations that took into account diverse realities, priorities and socioeconomic contexts. There should also be increased engagement with States non-Parties, in order to encourage accession to the Protocol.

53. Addressing points made by a number of Parties on the question of controlling duty free sales of tobacco products, the Convention Secretariat recalled the research methodology adopted by the MOP, which consisted of volunteer stakeholder interviews. The draft decision under consideration did not propose the conduct of further research; instead, it proposed the development of a set of recommendations by the working group that would subsequently be presented to the MOP for discussion and negotiation.

54. A representative of an NGO observer stressed the non-empirical nature of the research and conclusions, and emphasized that there was more to be learned. The representative strongly supported a working group to carry out further work on Article 6.5, using virtual means. Important new evidence could come to light, and dynamics could evolve. The tobacco industry’s influence should be excluded from that work.

55. After a further exchange of views, in which the Party proposing the draft decision clarified that the working group would not make decisions but would instead assess and build on evidence in order to produce recommendations, and that it would focus on the supply chain of tobacco products rather than duty free sales channels, the Chairperson of Committee A convened an informal drafting group to consider the proposal further.

56. At a subsequent meeting, the Chairperson of the drafting group, introducing the consensus text of the draft decision as amended by the drafting group, explained that the reference to Article 13.2 in relation to the working group had been removed.

57. Referring to the mandate of the Working Group, one Party speaking on behalf of a regional economic integration organization, proposed alternative text in relation to conclusions and recommendations to be presented to the MOP. Following a brief exchange with the proposer of the draft decision, agreement was reached on the final amendments.

58. At its second meeting, Committee A approved the draft decision, as amended. The draft decision was transmitted to the MOP for adoption in the First report of Committee A (document (draft) FCTC/MOP/4/A/R/1).

59. At the fourth plenary meeting of MOP4, the MOP adopted decision FCTC/MOP4(6).

4.2 Global information-sharing focal point (Article 8 of the Protocol)

Document FCTC/MOP/4/6

60. At its first meeting, Committee A considered a report prepared by the Convention Secretariat, contained in document FCTC/MOP/4/6, which outlined the activities that it had carried out concerning the global information-sharing focal point, in accordance with decisions

FCTC/MOP2(6) and FCTC/MOP3(15). The Legal Team of the Convention Secretariat recalled that no draft decision was annexed to the document as the usage statistics and qualitative data necessary to facilitate a decision had not been available.

61. While one Party expressed concern at the gaps in nominating relevant authorities by some States, several Parties described national efforts to identify focal points, in addition to other efforts made in a spirit of collaboration and willingness to implement the Protocol.

62. One Party noted the significant challenges that it was facing, including an extensive border, various criminal networks involved in trafficking activities, and limited capacity to analyse and transmit data in a harmonized way. Exchanging technical information would create momentum towards a truly operational system that responded to the specific needs of States most exposed to trafficking. The Party encouraged action to be taken in four priority areas: harmonization of data, and operationalization of definitions and procedures to ensure cooperation between Parties; supporting the establishment of a secure platform for rapid sharing of sensitive data; building capacity in African States; and creating regional groups to relay the information received. Several Parties endorsed the need for regional cooperation.

63. The Convention Secretariat clarified that a web browser and an Internet connection were the only tools needed to access the global information-sharing focal point. The system, in addition to being translated into six languages, was fully encrypted in such a way that not even the Convention Secretariat could access information exchanged between Parties. The system was open to Parties, including Parties without a national tracking and tracing system. The Convention Secretariat was available to support Parties, and would work with them to ensure nomination of their administrators.

64. A representative of an NGO observer noted that Parties with a tracking and tracing system in place could support the Protocol by sharing information to help other Parties to identify good practices. The engagement of relevant law enforcement authorities, sustained technical support and systems free from tobacco industry interference were crucial to the implementation of Article 8 and the Protocol in general.

65. At its first meeting, Committee A noted the report contained in document FCTC/MOP/4/6.

4.3 Licensing (Article 6 of the Protocol) – proposed by Parties

Document FCTC/MOP/4/7

66. At its first meeting, Committee A considered a report prepared by the Convention Secretariat (document FCTC/MOP/4/7), which provided context for work that could be undertaken to strengthen the implementation of Article 6 of the Protocol in relation to licensing.

67. Several Parties reported that they were operating licensing schemes covering the manufacture, import, export, wholesaling, warehousing and handling of tobacco products and related machinery. One Party viewed licensing not only as a core obligation under Article 6 of the Protocol but also as a practical tool to ensure a secure tobacco supply chain; the granting of licences was a valuable tool in the fight against illicit trade. The Party suggested that a dedicated working group should be established to develop clear and practical guidelines that would assist Parties in implementing licensing requirements. Such an approach would allow for inclusive consultations, technical analysis and sharing of good practices. Licensing models advocated should

be proportionate, adaptable to national circumstances and responsive to real-world challenges and realities.

68. A Party introduced a draft decision entitled “Licensing (Article 6 of the Protocol)” (document FCTC/MOP4/P/CONF./4) that drew attention, inter alia, to the importance of licensing systems and of international cooperation, with a view to supporting the effective implementation of the Protocol. Several Parties speaking on behalf of regional groupings expressed support for the draft decision.

69. One Party speaking on behalf of a regional economic integration organization noted that, according to the *2025 Global Progress Report on Implementation of the Protocol to Eliminate Illicit Trade in Tobacco Products*, about 80% of reporting Parties had indicated that they required licences for the import and manufacturing of tobacco products. There was no explanation in the draft decision of the reason for focusing on licence fees, while cooperation on training and technical assistance was covered in Article 23 of the Protocol. Another Party suggested that the draft decision should include language on capacity-building, exchange of good practices and regional cooperation to strengthen licensing systems across all elements of the supply chain.

70. One Party suggested changes to the operative paragraphs of the draft decision, so that reference was made first to the provision of training, technical assistance and cooperation in the implementation of licensing-related measures, and second to efforts to monitor and collect licence fees.

71. Committee A approved the draft decision, as amended, and transmitted it to the MOP for adoption in the First report of Committee A (document (Draft) FCTC/MOP/4/A/R/1).

72. At the fourth plenary meeting of MOP4, the MOP adopted decision FCTC/MOP4(5).

4.4 Combating illicit trade of electronic nicotine delivery systems (ENDS) – proposed by Parties

Documents FCTC/MOP/4/8

73. Committee A considered document FCTC/MOP/4/8, which had been prepared by the Convention Secretariat in order to provide context for work that could be undertaken to support Parties to the Protocol in their efforts to address the issue of illicit trade of ENDS.

74. Parties expressed concern regarding the growing problem of illicit trade of ENDS, which were the subject of smuggling and often distributed through online platforms. They welcomed the opportunity to share experience and benefit from technical cooperation. One Party speaking on behalf of a regional grouping reported that many countries had imposed a total ban on ENDS and ENNDS. Parties that have not banned ENDS/ENNDS were urged to classify such systems as tobacco products in national laws, for ease of regulation. It was recommended that the Convention Secretariat and WHO should develop guidance on ENDS classification, component lists and minimum data for market surveillance and traceability across borders, and that bilateral and multilateral cooperation should be strengthened. Some Parties called for an expert group to work on possible regulatory approaches and for the provision of more capacity-building measures for low- and middle-income countries. Others recommended strengthening cooperation among customs, health and law enforcement agencies, including sharing intelligence on illegal routes and the establishment of an international database on ENDS seizures.

75. One Party speaking on behalf of a regional economic integration organization expressed the view that an amendment to the Protocol would be needed if Parties wished to ensure that Protocol obligations that currently applied only to tobacco products were to apply to a broader category of products, such as ENDS and ENNDS. In particular, the Party suggested that an amendment would be needed to extend the obligations under Part III of the Protocol on supply chain control, Part IV on offences and Part V on international cooperation to new categories of products. Representatives of some regional groupings and of individual Parties supported that position. One Party expressed particular concern about the possible diversion of existing funding for the implementation of articles on illicit tobacco control towards work on ENDS.

76. Another Party expressed the view that any future action must be grounded in robust scientific evidence and comprehensive global data. Premature decisions on the matter could create legal uncertainty and impose obligations that were neither practical nor evidence-based. Should Parties wish to continue examining the matter, future discussions should focus exclusively on voluntary data collection and exchange of information regarding ENDS-related seizures. Those findings could then be analysed and presented at a future session of the MOP. Regional statements and Party interventions were made in favour of discussing the matter considered under this agenda item in the future.

77. Committee A took note of the report contained in document FCTC/MOP/4/8.

4.5 International cooperation under the Protocol – proposed by Parties

Document FCTC/MOP/4/9

78. Committee A considered the report on international cooperation under the Protocol contained in document FCTC/MOP/4/9 and a draft decision entitled “Assistance and cooperation: strengthening implementation of Article 24 of the Protocol” (document FCTC/MOP4/P/CONF./1), proposed by several Parties.

79. A Party speaking on behalf of a regional grouping highlighted national efforts under Articles 20 and 21. Parties acknowledged that the implementation of, and reporting on, Part V of the Protocol must be strengthened to address common challenges in tackling illicit trade in tobacco products and to enable coordinated and proactive action within and across borders and informed decision-making by the MOP. That applied in particular to the obligations regarding general and enforcement information sharing (Articles 20 and 21, respectively), investigation and prosecution of offences (Article 24), mutual administrative and mutual legal assistance (Articles 28 and 29, respectively) and extradition (Article 30). More active engagement with international organizations such as WCO and UNODC was also essential.

80. In a regional statement, one Party suggested developing a road map on implementation, which should include: (a) the development of a seizure notification form and funding, through the Strategy for mechanisms of assistance and mobilization of financial resources to support the implementation of the Protocol to Eliminate Illicit Trade in Tobacco Products, for training on forensic analysis and determination of the geographical origin of seized products; (b) support to strengthen communication and coordination among designated central authorities for mutual administrative and legal assistance, which all Parties should identify promptly; and (c) a thorough comparative legal analysis, by the Convention Secretariat, of national obstacles to extradition, with a view to developing a targeted legal assistance programme for amending domestic law in order to recognize the Protocol explicitly as a legal basis for extradition.

81. There was broad support for the draft decision among Parties speaking both in their individual capacities and on behalf of regions. The proposed working group on Article 24 offered an inclusive, Party-led, pragmatic and evidence-based approach that would yield tangible results in strengthening assistance and cooperation on investigation and prosecution of offences. Certainty of effective criminal prosecution and sanctions was critical to reduce illicit trade in tobacco products. A Party speaking in a regional capacity underscored the importance of fully safeguarding assistance and cooperation platforms from the influence of the tobacco industry and its front groups.

82. One Party speaking on behalf of a regional economic integration organization, however, was of the view that there was no need for further discussions on international cooperation or a working group on Article 24. The Working Group on Assistance and Cooperation, established at MOP1 by decision FCTC/MOP1(10), had completed its extensive analysis of the issue, including on investigation and prosecution. Further, the MOP, through decision FCTC/MOP2(7), had invited Parties to strengthen cooperation between law enforcement authorities at the national level, to develop regional cooperation instruments addressing cross-border illicit trade, and to engage and foster cooperation with the WCO and international and regional law enforcement organizations.

83. Several Parties voiced their support for the draft decision. One Party emphasized the importance of multilateralism and international cooperation in the successful implementation of the Protocol, reminding the Parties that no country could confront issues of that size alone.

84. A representative of an NGO observer noted the limitations of certain tools of international cooperation, including information exchange. Greater priority should be given to other instruments of assistance, such as customs and law enforcement authorities and legal assistance networks, which could enhance cooperation without imposing any additional administrative or financial burdens. The Convention Secretariat was encouraged to develop toolkits and training materials that built on the work of the Working Group on Assistance and Cooperation.

85. In response to the Chairperson's request for comments on the draft decision, one Party speaking on behalf of a regional economic integration organization asked whether the establishment of a second working group would impact Assessed Contributions or Extra-budgetary Contributions intended to finance technical cooperation and capacity-building. The Convention Secretariat clarified that there would be no effect on Assessed Contributions, because working groups would be funded by Extra-budgetary Contributions. Technical support offered to Parties was fully funded by official development assistance funds, which could only be used to support implementation of the Protocol at the country level.

86. After discussion, the Parties agreed to accept some of the amendments to the draft decision proposed by one Party speaking on behalf of a regional economic integration organization, as well as some amendments proposed by the Chairperson. In response to questions and remarks from Parties on its proposed amendments, the Party speaking on behalf of a regional economic integration organization clarified that its amendments were intended to maintain consistency, using already agreed language from decision FCTC/MOP1(10), and to provide the MOP with the flexibility to decide how to use the report of the working group.

87. Committee A approved the draft decision, as amended, and transmitted it to the MOP for adoption in the Second report of Committee A (document (Draft) FCTC/MOP/4/A/R/2).

88. At the fourth plenary meeting of MOP4, the MOP adopted decision FCTC/MOP4(7).

5. Reporting, implementation assistance and international cooperation

5.1 Strategy for mechanisms of assistance and mobilization of financial resources to support the implementation of the Protocol to Eliminate Illicit Trade in Tobacco Products

Document FCTC/MOP/4/10

89. Committee B considered document FCTC/MOP/4/10, containing a report by the Convention Secretariat, which described the activities it had undertaken to support the review of the Strategy for mechanisms of assistance and mobilization of financial resources to support the implementation of the Protocol to Eliminate Illicit Trade in Tobacco Products, and its related findings and recommendations, pursuant to decision FCTC/MOP2(11). The Committee was invited to note the report and provide further guidance.

90. Parties, in regional and national statements, welcomed the report and expressed appreciation for the Convention Secretariat's ongoing efforts to support Parties under the Strategy. Several Parties highlighted limited expertise and human and financial resources as key challenges hindering implementation of the Protocol. The surveillance and control of illicit tobacco products was also a challenge, and technical assistance for tracking and tracing was needed. Continued support from the Secretariat was welcomed, including practical assistance following needs assessments and opportunities to exchange good practices and explore how to best apply them to countries' unique circumstances.

91. One Party noted that Protocol implementation in many countries in the African region was constrained by technical, financial and security challenges, particularly as illicit tobacco trade continued to evolve and intersect with other cross-border criminal activities in the Sahel region. Priority should be given to strengthening international cooperation mechanisms – particularly technical assistance, specialized training and access to tracking and tracing technologies; accelerating the establishment of specific, predictable financial support measures – especially for States most affected by illicit trade networks; establishing regional mechanisms for analysis, early warning and operational coordination; and ensuring full protection of public policies from any interference by the tobacco industry, including in initiatives related to traceability, data management and logistical support.

92. The Acting Head of the Convention Secretariat said that the Convention Secretariat would continue its efforts to engage with Parties, observers and partners to support implementation of the Protocol, and was gaining substantial experience in conducting Protocol needs assessments and in raising the profile of the Protocol at the country level. Assistance to Parties could be provided through the FCTC 2030 project and upon the request of Parties. Partnerships with organizations such as WHO, UNODC, the World Bank and the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development were essential in ensuring that Protocol-related support was integrated into the workplans of other organizations.

93. Committee B noted the report contained in document FCTC/MOP/4/10.

6. Budgetary and institutional matters

6.1 Performance and progress reports

Document FCTC/MOP/4/11

- (a) Performance report for the 2022–2023 Workplan and Budget
- (b) Interim performance report for the 2024–2025 Workplan and Budget

94. Committee B considered the performance and progress reports contained in document FCTC/MOP/4/11. The Committee was invited to note the reports.

95. Parties, speaking on behalf of regional groupings and in their individual capacities, welcomed the Convention Secretariat's efforts in supporting implementation of the Protocol. The new Protocol Coordination Platform was commended for increasing transparency and facilitating access, and the Convention Secretariat was encouraged to continue providing the support necessary for resource mobilization and for strengthening national capacities to ensure effective implementation of the Protocol.

96. One Party, thanking the Secretariat for the needs assessment exercise under the Protocol, encouraged other Parties to consider undergoing the assessment. The Convention Secretariat was requested to consider establishing WHO FCTC Knowledge Hubs to support implementation of Protocol measures, as well as further actions to promote information exchange and regional and international cooperation. It was also important for the MOP to take into consideration countries that were major producers of tobacco leaf, and the factors that contributed to illicit trade, related to the stages between cultivation and manufacturing of tobacco products.

97. The Acting Head of the Convention Secretariat underscored the importance of attracting additional observers to the MOP in order to enrich discussions and broaden engagement beyond the health sector, affirming that the Convention Secretariat would continue to seek out other IGOs and NGOs that would support the Protocol. With regard to WHO FCTC Knowledge Hubs, he emphasized that those hubs provided valuable technical assistance to Parties and constituted an additional mechanism for support. He also noted that several NGO observers to the MOP could be called upon to assist Parties.

98. Committee B noted the report contained in document FCTC/MOP/4/11.

6.2 Proposed Workplan and Budget for the financial period 2026–2027

Documents FCTC/MOP/4/12 and FCTC/MOP/4/INF.DOC./1

99. Committee B considered the proposed Workplan and Budget for the financial period 2026–2027 contained in Annexes 1, 2 and 3 of document FCTC/MOP/4/12, which provided a detailed description of activities and budget, the composition of the Convention Secretariat team and staff costs, the rationale and assumptions made in calculating the cost of various activities, and efforts by the Convention Secretariat to achieve greater efficiency and savings. An explanatory note contained in document FCTC/MOP/4/INF.DOC./1 providing further details was also considered. The Committee was requested to approve a draft decision by which the proposed Workplan and Budget for the financial period 2026–2027 would be adopted by the MOP.

100. In regional and national statements, Parties expressed support for the adoption of the proposed Workplan and Budget 2026–2027, and praised the preparatory work undertaken by the Convention Secretariat, which had enabled early review of the Workplan’s details and its alignment with the proposed Budget. Continuing that practice would allow for more efficient consideration of the agenda item. The focus on capacity-building, technical assistance for tracking and tracing systems, support for regional cooperation, and targeted assistance to low- and middle-income countries was particularly appreciated, as was the transparency of the report and its link to sustainable development priorities.

101. One Party pointed out that some draft decisions being discussed by the MOP would entail the establishment of working groups, which, even if meetings were held virtually, might require Extra-budgetary Contributions in the biennium 2026–2027. In addition, it would be important for the MOP to consider funding arrangements going forward, given that, as the number of Parties to the Protocol expanded, it would be increasingly difficult to maintain the same level of technical and financial support to Parties without a larger budget (both from Assessed Contributions and also Extrabudgetary Contributions). Another Party speaking on behalf of a regional grouping encouraged the Convention Secretariat to keep the increase in staff costs to a minimum.

102. An NGO observer urged Parties in a position to do so to provide Extra-budgetary Contributions and expressed concern about the high level of outstanding Assessed Contributions. It was further noted with concern that the Investment Fund for the Protocol – approved as a financial mechanism at the Second session of the MOP – had still not become operational.

103. Responding to a question regarding the increase in staff costs, the Convention Secretariat said that the salary figures used in the proposed Budget were those provided by the host organization, WHO, and followed the United Nations common system of salaries. The Convention Secretariat remained attentive to salary increases, which were unavoidable due to inflation, and continued to work actively to fundraise and mobilize additional resources. Regarding the costs associated with working groups, the Convention Secretariat clarified that the proposed Workplan and Budget for the financial period 2026–2027 included an Extra-budgetary line reflecting the estimated resources that may be required for such working groups, although the full amount would not necessarily be used. It was further noted that Parties could provide support for subsidiary bodies, including by offering funding or hosting in-person meetings.

104. In response to a query concerning the Investment Fund for the Protocol, the Convention Secretariat said that identifying investors remained challenging under the prevailing economic conditions, but that it continued to actively seek investors for the mechanism.

105. At the third meeting of Committee B, the Convention Secretariat introduced an amended version of the draft decision that took account of the outcomes of all work of Committees A and B at MOP4. As the decisions adopted entailed the creation of two working groups, the amount of Extra-budgetary Contributions under budget line 4.1.4 would be increased by US\$ 50 000 to a total of US\$ 200 000. The additional amount would be sufficient to cover at least one in-person meeting of the working groups with interpretation. The total proposed costs covered by Extra-budgetary Contributions and the total overall costs contained in Annex 3 of the draft decision had been amended accordingly, increasing to US\$ 4 415 249 and US\$ 9 414 968, respectively.

106. Responding to questions from the floor, the Convention Secretariat confirmed that there would be no increase in Assessed Contributions or any change to the funds allocated for technical assistance for implementation of the Protocol. The proposed increase in Extra-budgetary Contributions provided transparency as to the likely costs of an in-person meeting per working

group based on previous experience, and an opportunity for the additional funds needed to be raised. If the additional Extra-budgetary Contributions were not received, hybrid or virtual meetings would be prioritized. Language to that effect had been incorporated into the decisions adopted by Committee A.

107. The Legal Team of the Convention Secretariat added that the draft decision contained a provision requesting the Convention Secretariat to explore a better and more efficient utilization of virtual means and resources for the work of the working groups.

108. Committee B approved the draft decision, as amended, and transmitted it to the MOP for adoption, in the Second report of Committee B (document (Draft) FCTC/MOP/4/B/R/2).

109. At the fourth plenary meeting of MOP4, the MOP adopted decision FCTC/MOP4(10).

6.3 Payment of Assessed Contributions and measures to reduce Parties in arrears

Document FCTC/MOP/4/13

110. Committee B was invited to note the report providing information on the progress made in the payment of Assessed Contributions and the status of Parties in arrears contained in document FCTC/MOP/4/13 Rev.1, and to consider approving the draft decision contained in the Annex to the document. The Convention Secretariat said that, since the publication of document FCTC/MOP/4/13 Rev.1, Pakistan had made payments and should no longer be considered in arrears.

111. Parties expressed their support for the draft decision and their concern about the large number of Parties in arrears. They welcomed the Convention Secretariat's efforts to ensure the timely payment of Assessed Contributions, including the involvement of the Bureau of the MOP and Regional Coordinators in those efforts. Parties were urged to settle all outstanding contributions promptly, and those in arrears were encouraged to agree to structured payment plans; predictable and timely payment of Assessed Contributions – the backbone of the Protocol – was a shared responsibility and essential to ensure its effective implementation. One Party speaking on behalf of a regional grouping called for the establishment of a regional mechanism to share practices and ensure payment of current outstanding and future contributions, and for communication and technical assistance to be strengthened to that end. Another Party said that the imposition of unilateral coercive measures meant that some Parties faced challenges in making payments.

112. The Acting Head of the Convention Secretariat, responding to queries concerning the Investment Fund for the Protocol and concerns raised about funding constraints, said that the total budget for Assessed Contributions would be discussed by the incoming Bureau, and that the Convention Secretariat was taking steps to identify potential investors for the Investment Fund. High-net-worth individuals and philanthropic organizations may also be interested in investing in the Fund. Regarding Assessed Contributions, while the large amount of outstanding contributions was a concern, the Convention Secretariat was working with Parties to seek solutions. Noting the difficulties encountered by certain Parties in making payments, he said that the issue had been taken up with the WHO Comptroller. The possibility of establishing a regional administrative mechanism for collecting arrears could be considered by the Bureau.

113. The Legal Team of the Convention Secretariat recalled that Parties could submit payment plans if they were facing challenges in meeting their financial obligations under the Protocol.

114. Committee B approved the draft decision, as proposed, and transmitted it to the MOP for adoption in the First report of Committee B (document (Draft) FCTC/MOP/4/B/R/1).

115. At the fourth plenary meeting of MOP4, the MOP adopted decision FCTC/MOP4(8).

6.4 Review of accreditation of nongovernmental organizations with the status of observer to the Meeting of the Parties

Document FCTC/MOP/4/14

116. Committee B was invited to note the report reviewing the accreditation of NGOs with the status of observer to the MOP contained in document FCTC/MOP/4/14, which noted that all 11 NGOs wished to retain their observer status to the MOP, and that no conflicts of interest had been declared. It was also invited to consider the proposed process to facilitate the review of accreditations of NGOs with observer status to the MOP and the proposed standard reporting questionnaire for use by NGOs for future reviews of accreditation, which the Convention Secretariat had developed, as requested in decision FCTC/MOP3(11). In that regard, the Committee was invited to consider approving the draft decision contained in Annex 2 to the report, in order to maintain the observer status of the reviewed NGOs and approve the proposed process and standard reporting questionnaire for use by NGOs.

117. Parties recognized the valuable contributions that NGOs made to the implementation of the Protocol by providing technical support, advocacy, capacity-building and monitoring assistance. Maintaining the observer status of the reviewed NGOs would strengthen Parties' collective efforts and improve transparency and accountability, as would the proposed process and standard reporting questionnaire for use by NGOs. One Party called for NGOs with observer status to make efforts to identify and monitor tobacco industry interference in policies to combat illicit trade, including the industry's participation in such activities.

118. Committee B approved the draft decision, as proposed, and transmitted it to the MOP for adoption in the First report of Committee B (document (Draft) FCTC/MOP/4/B/R/1).

119. At the fourth plenary meeting of MOP4, the MOP adopted decision FCTC/MOP4(9).

7. Date and place of the Fifth session of the Meeting of the Parties

Document FCTC/MOP/4/15

120. At its fourth and final plenary meeting, the MOP was invited to consider the draft decision contained in the Annex to document FCTC/MOP/4/15, recalling decision FCTC/MOP1(11), establishing as a formal requirement for Parties hosting a regular session of the COP to the WHO FCTC to also host a session of the MOP, immediately following the COP, at the same geographical location and under the same circumstances, regardless of whether the host Party is also a Party to the Protocol, and decision FCTC/COP11(13), in which it had been decided that the Twelfth session of the COP (COP12) would be held in Armenia.

121. The representative of Armenia conveyed the invitation from her Government to host MOP5 immediately following COP12, with the exact dates to be confirmed.

122. At the fourth plenary meeting of MOP4, the MOP accepted the generous offer of Armenia, expressing its appreciation, and adopted decision FCTC/MOP4(12).

8. Election of the President and Vice-Presidents of the Meeting of the Parties

Document FCTC/MOP/4/16

123. The MOP elected the following officers to constitute the Bureau of the MOP for the period between the closure of MOP4 and the closure of MOP5:

President: Eliza Fantidou (Cyprus)

Vice-Presidents: Marcos Dotta (Uruguay)
Leimapokpam Swasticharan (India)
Ahmad Al Mulla (Qatar)
Robert Thomsen (Samoa)
Omar Badjie (Gambia)

124. In accordance with Rule 24 of the Rules of Procedure of the MOP, lots were drawn to determine the order in which the Vice-Presidents would serve in the event that the President was unable to do so. The order presented in the above list is the order in which the lots were drawn.

125. A lot was also drawn to determine which Vice-President would act as Rapporteur. Marcos Dotta (Uruguay) was selected to act as Rapporteur.

126. At the fourth plenary meeting of MOP4, the MOP adopted decision FCTC/MOP4(13).

127. After regional consultations, the following Parties were designated to act as Regional Coordinators:

Ghana for the African Region
Brazil for the Region of the Americas
Iran (Islamic Republic of) for the Eastern Mediterranean Region
Greece for the European Region
Sri Lanka for the South-East Asia Region
Fiji for the Western Pacific Region

9. Closure of the session

128. On 26 November, following the customary exchange of courtesies, the President declared MOP4 closed.

Annex 1

Agenda

1. Opening of the session

1.1 Adoption of the agenda and organization of work

Documents FCTC/MOP/4/1 and FCTC/MOP/4/1 (annotated)

1.2 Credentials of participants

Document FCTC/MOP/4/2

2. Applications for the status of observer to the Meeting of the Parties

Document FCTC/MOP/4/3

3. Global progress in implementation of the Protocol to Eliminate Illicit Trade in Tobacco Products, followed by a general debate

Document FCTC/MOP/4/4

4. Protocol instruments and technical matters

4.1 Evidence-based research (Articles 6.5 and 13.2 of the Protocol)

Document FCTC/MOP/4/5

4.2 Global information-sharing focal point (Article 8 of the Protocol)

Document FCTC/MOP/4/6

4.3 Licensing (Article 6 of the Protocol) – proposed by Parties

Document FCTC/MOP/4/7

4.4 Combating illicit trade of electronic nicotine delivery systems (ENDS) – proposed by Parties

Document FCTC/MOP/4/8

4.5 International cooperation under the Protocol – proposed by Parties

Document FCTC/MOP/4/9

5. Reporting, implementation assistance and international cooperation

- 5.1 Strategy for mechanisms of assistance and mobilization of financial resources to support the implementation of the Protocol to Eliminate Illicit Trade in Tobacco Products

Document FCTC/MOP/4/10

6. Budgetary and institutional matters

- 6.1 Performance and progress reports

Document FCTC/MOP/4/11

- (a) Performance report for the 2022–2023 Workplan and Budget
(b) Interim performance report for the 2024–2025 Workplan and Budget

- 6.2 Proposed Workplan and Budget for the financial period 2026–2027

Documents FCTC/MOP/4/12 and FCTC/MOP/4/INF.DOC./1

- 6.3 Payment of Assessed Contributions and measures to reduce Parties in arrears

Document FCTC/MOP/4/13

- 6.4 Review of accreditation of nongovernmental organizations with the status of observer to the Meeting of the Parties

Document FCTC/MOP/4/14

7. Date and place of the Fifth session of the Meeting of the Parties

Document FCTC/MOP/4/15

8. Election of the President and Vice-Presidents of the Meeting of the Parties

Document FCTC/MOP/4/16

9. Closure of the session

Annex 2

List of documents

Main documents

FCTC/MOP/4/1	Provisional agenda
FCTC/MOP/4/1 (annotated)	Provisional agenda annotated
FCTC/MOP/4/2	Credentials of participants
FCTC/MOP/4/3	Applications for the status of observer to the Meeting of the Parties
FCTC/MOP/4/4	Global progress in implementation of the Protocol to Eliminate Illicit Trade in Tobacco Products
FCTC/MOP/4/5	Evidence-based research (Articles 6.5 and 13.2 of the Protocol)
FCTC/MOP/4/6	Global information-sharing focal point (Article 8 of the Protocol)
FCTC/MOP/4/7	Licensing (Article 6 of the Protocol)
FCTC/MOP/4/8	Combating illicit trade of electronic nicotine delivery systems (ENDS)
FCTC/MOP/4/9	International cooperation under the Protocol
FCTC/MOP/4/10	Strategy for mechanisms of assistance and mobilization of financial resources to support the implementation of the Protocol to Eliminate Illicit Trade in Tobacco Products
FCTC/MOP/4/11	Performance and progress reports
FCTC/MOP/4/12	Proposed Workplan and Budget for the financial period 2026–2027
FCTC/MOP/4/13 Rev.1	Payment of Assessed Contributions and measures to reduce Parties in arrears
FCTC/MOP/4/14	Review of accreditation of nongovernmental organizations with the status of observer to the Meeting of the Parties
FCTC/MOP/4/15	Date and place of the Fifth session of the Meeting of the Parties
FCTC/MOP/4/16	Election of the President and Vice-Presidents of the Meeting of the Parties

Information documents

FCTC/MOP/4/INF.DOC./1 Proposed Workplan and Budget for the financial period
2026–2027 – Explanatory Note

Diverse documents

FCTC/MOP/4/DIV/1 List of Participants

FCTC/MOP/4/DIV/2 Practical Guide for Participants

FCTC/MOP/4/ DIV/3 Conduct of business and procedural matters

Annex 3

Decisions

FCTC/MOP4(1)	Adoption of the agenda
FCTC/MOP4(2)	Election of Officers of Committees A and B
FCTC/MOP4(3)	Applications for the status of observer to the Meeting of the Parties
FCTC/MOP4(4)	Credentials of participants
FCTC/MOP4(5)	Licensing (Article 6 of the Protocol)
FCTC/MOP4(6)	Evidence-based research (Article 6.5 of the Protocol)
FCTC/MOP4(7)	Assistance and cooperation: strengthening implementation of Article 24 of the Protocol
FCTC/MOP4(8)	Assessed Contributions
FCTC/MOP4(9)	Review of accreditation of nongovernmental organizations with the status of observer to the Meeting of the Parties
FCTC/MOP4(10)	Workplan and Budget for the financial period 2026–2027
FCTC/MOP4(11)	Information sharing in relation to seizures by individual Parties
FCTC/MOP4(12)	Date and place of the Fifth session of the Meeting of the Parties
FCTC/MOP4(13)	Election of the President and Vice-Presidents of the Meeting of the Parties

FCTC/MOP4(1) Adoption of the agenda

The Meeting of the Parties (MOP),

Noting the provisional agenda contained in documents FCTC/MOP/4/1 and FCTC/MOP/4/1 (annotated) prepared by the Convention Secretariat in consultation with the Bureau of the MOP, in accordance with Rules 6 and 7 of the Rules of Procedure of the MOP,

DECIDES to adopt the provisional agenda as proposed.

(First plenary meeting, 24 November 2025)

FCTC/MOP4(2) Election of Officers of Committees A and B

The following officers were elected to Committees A and B, pursuant to Rule 24quinquies of the Rules of Procedure of the Meeting of the Parties:

Committee A:	Chairperson	Ali Hajilari (Iran (Islamic Republic of))
	Vice-Chairpersons	Ananda Sarath Rathnayaka (Sri Lanka) Gert Vorsteveld (Netherlands (Kingdom of the))
Committee B:	Chairperson	Fatoumata Komma (Gambia)
	Vice-Chairpersons	Bernardo Darquea Arias (Ecuador) Robert Thomsen (Samoa)

(First plenary meeting, 24 November 2025)

FCTC/MOP4(3) Applications for the status of observer to the Meeting of the Parties

The Meeting of the Parties (MOP),

Having considered the applications for observer status submitted and contained in document FCTC/MOP/4/3,

DECIDES, in accordance with Rules 30 and 31 of its Rules of Procedure and pursuant to decision FCTC/MOP3(7), to grant observer status to:

- (i) African Capacity Building Foundation (ACBF)
- (ii) African Tax Administration Forum (ATAF)
- (iii) Economics for Health
- (iv) World Heart Federation (WHF).

(First plenary meeting, 24 November 2025)

FCTC/MOP4(4) Credentials of participants

The Meeting of the Parties (MOP),

RECOGNIZES the validity of the credentials of the representatives of the following Parties:

Austria, Belgium, Benin, Brazil, Burkina Faso, Cabo Verde, Chad, Comoros, Congo, Costa Rica, Côte d'Ivoire, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Ecuador, Egypt, Eswatini, European Union, Fiji, France, Gabon, Gambia, Ghana, Greece, Hungary, India, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Iraq, Jordan, Kenya, Lithuania, Madagascar, Mali, Malta, Mauritius, Montenegro, Netherlands (Kingdom of the), Nicaragua, Niger, Nigeria, North Macedonia, Norway, Pakistan, Panama, Poland, Portugal, Qatar, Republic of Moldova, Rwanda, Samoa, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Seychelles, Slovakia, Spain, Sri Lanka, Sweden, Togo, Türkiye, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, and Uruguay.

(Third plenary meeting, 25 November 2025)

FCTC/MOP4(5) Licensing (Article 6 of the Protocol)

The Meeting of the Parties (MOP),

Recalling Article 6 of the Protocol to Eliminate Illicit Trade in Tobacco Products;

Recognizing that implementation of licensing-related measures constitutes an integral part of the effective implementation of the Protocol;

Noting that Article 6 establishes obligations for Parties to regulate licensing systems appropriately to ensure effective administration and enforcement – including through measures related to monitoring, maintenance, supervision and accountability;

Recalling decision FCTC/MOP3(20), which urged Parties to accelerate action in fulfilling their obligations under Article 6 and Article 8 of the Protocol;

Noting the report of the Convention Secretariat contained in document FCTC/MOP/4/7;

Noting also the technical documentation prepared by the Panel of Experts on the Protocol to Eliminate Illicit Trade in Tobacco Products, pursuant to decision FCTC/COP7(6), as outlined in document FCTC/MOP/4/7,

1. URGES Parties to strengthen and prioritize, as appropriate, the implementation of Article 6 on licensing as a fundamental component for the full and effective implementation of the Protocol;
2. INVITES Parties:
 - (a) to cooperate with each other and/or through competent international and regional organizations to provide training, technical assistance and cooperation in the implementation of licensing-related measures, in accordance with Article 23 of the Protocol; and
 - (b) to continue efforts to monitor and collect, where applicable, any licence fees that may be levied and used to support the effective administration and enforcement of the licensing system, or for public health or other related activities, in accordance with national law, as provided in Article 6 of the Protocol;

3. REQUESTS the Convention Secretariat to continue supporting Parties in their implementation of Article 6, including by facilitating the transfer of expertise among Parties to the Protocol, and to report on the implementation of this decision at the Fifth session of the MOP.

(Fourth plenary meeting, 26 November 2025)

FCTC/MOP4(6) Evidence-based research (Article 6.5 of the Protocol)

The Meeting of the Parties (MOP),

Recognizing that the Protocol to Eliminate Illicit Trade in Tobacco Products requires that the MOP, five years after entry into force of the Protocol, shall ensure that evidence-based research is conducted according to Article 6.5 on key inputs essential to the manufacture of tobacco products that can be subject to an effective control mechanism, and according to Article 13.2 on the extent of illicit trade in tobacco products related to duty free sales of such products;

Recalling decision FCTC/MOP3(16), in which the MOP adopted the road map to conduct evidence-based research in accordance with Articles 6.5 and 13.2 of the Protocol;

Noting the report of the Convention Secretariat contained in document FCTC/MOP/4/5;

Noting that report FCTC/MOP/4/5 states that, with regard to Article 13.2, most of the Parties consulted for the case studies did not identify duty free sales channels as a significant channel for the illicit trade in tobacco products;

Taking into account that most of the Parties have implemented measures to control the sale of duty free tobacco products and prevent their diversion into illicit trade channels;

Considering the experience of Parties to the WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (WHO FCTC) in implementing control measures for key inputs essential to the manufacture of tobacco products,

1. DECIDES:

(a) to establish a Working Group on Article 6.5 of the Protocol;

(b) to mandate the Working Group to present conclusions, including, where appropriate, to propose recommendations on appropriate actions for the MOP to consider in relation to Article 6.5 of the Protocol and to promote the exchange of experiences in relation to control measures, best practices, related case studies, technology and capacity-building – including, but not limited to, those outlined in document FCTC/MOP/4/5;

(c) to adopt the draft terms of reference for the Working Group on Article 6.5 of the Protocol, as set out in the Annex to this decision; and

(d) to request the Working Group to report on the outcome of its work at the Fifth session of the MOP;

2. REQUESTS the Convention Secretariat to make the necessary arrangements, in consultation with the Bureau, including budgetary arrangements for the Working Group to complete its work, in accordance with the terms of reference annexed to this decision and using electronic means of communication to as great an extent as possible.

Annex

Terms of reference for the Working Group on Article 6.5 of the Protocol

Background

1. Article 6.5 of the Protocol to Eliminate Illicit Trade in Tobacco Products requires that five years following the entry into force of this Protocol, the Meeting of the Parties (MOP) shall ensure at its next session that evidence-based research is conducted to ascertain whether any key inputs exist that are essential to the manufacture of tobacco products, are identifiable and can be subject to an effective control mechanism. On the basis of such research, the MOP shall consider appropriate action.
2. The MOP decided to establish a Working Group on Article 6.5 of the Protocol.

Objectives

3. In accordance with the mandate articulated in the decision establishing the Working Group, the Working Group will:
 - (a) present conclusions, including, where appropriate, to propose recommendations on appropriate actions for the MOP to consider in relation to Article 6.5 of the Protocol, with the aim of further strengthening control over the identified key inputs that are essential to the manufacture of tobacco products; and
 - (b) promote the exchange of good practices, technology and capacity building in relation to control measures for the key inputs that are essential to the manufacture of tobacco products.

Composition and selection of members of the Working Group

4. The provisions of Article 4.2 of the Protocol and Article 5.3 of the WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (WHO FCTC) shall apply fully to the Working Group.
5. All Parties to the Protocol wishing to participate may join the Working Group and take part in its deliberations at their own expense.
6. Each region shall nominate up to two members representing the Parties in their respective regions through their regional coordinators. These nominees may benefit from assistance in accordance with the travel policy established in the Workplan and Budget adopted by the MOP subject to the availability of funding.
7. The Working Group shall welcome Parties to the WHO FCTC that are not Parties to the Protocol to participate as observers. No travel support would be made available to these WHO FCTC Parties, in line with previous practice.

8. Additionally, the Convention Secretariat, in consultation with the members of the Working Group, may invite as observers up to three representatives of nongovernmental organizations that are observers to the MOP, and up to three representatives of intergovernmental organizations, based on relevant expertise and sound knowledge of matters considered by authorities working to combat illicit trade in tobacco, tobacco products or manufacturing equipment. No travel support would be made available to these observers, in line with previous practice.

9. Parties willing to act as key facilitators should identify themselves at any time during the process.

Assistance from the Convention Secretariat

10. The Working Group shall endeavour to use web-based technologies or hybrid modalities for communicating when conducting its work. Notwithstanding, subject to the availability of funds, at least one in-person meeting of the Working Group is envisaged between the Fourth and Fifth sessions of the MOP.

11. The Working Group's key facilitator(s) should assist the Convention Secretariat in organizing these meetings.

(Fourth plenary meeting, 26 November 2025)

FCTC/MOP4(7) Assistance and cooperation: strengthening implementation of Article 24 of the Protocol

The Meeting of the Parties (MOP),

Recalling Articles 20 to 31 under Part V of the Protocol to Eliminate Illicit Trade in Tobacco Products, containing Party obligations in relation to international cooperation, and recognizing that international cooperation – including measures on information sharing, technical and law enforcement cooperation, protection of sovereignty, jurisdiction, mutual legal and administrative assistance, and extradition – is key to the successful implementation of the Protocol;

Recalling also Article 24 of the Protocol, which provides that “Parties shall, in accordance with their domestic law, take all necessary measures, where appropriate, to strengthen cooperation for the prevention, detection, investigation, prosecution and punishment of natural or legal persons engaged in illicit trade in tobacco, tobacco products or manufacturing equipment”;

Reiterating the critical role that assistance and cooperation, in accordance with Articles 12, 23, 24 and 29 of the Protocol, can play in strengthening implementation of the Protocol among all Parties, as highlighted in decision FCTC/MOP1(10);

Recalling decision FCTC/MOP2(7), which noted the report prepared by the Working Group on Assistance and Cooperation, established in decision FCTC/MOP1(10); reminded Parties of their obligations in the context of Article 21; and invited Parties to undertake specific measures in the context of Articles 21, 23, 24, 28 and 29, including through the use of the information and resources contained in the Working Group report (document FCTC/MOP/2/7);

Considering that while Parties have made progress in implementing provisions related to international cooperation under the Protocol, as noted in document FCTC/MOP/4/4, significant challenges remain;

Concerned by the persistence of legal, technical, financial and political barriers – often compounded by interference from the tobacco industry and limited international cooperation – which continues to hinder full implementation of the Protocol, as also noted in document FCTC/MOP/4/4;

Noting the report of the Convention Secretariat contained in document FCTC/MOP/4/9,

1. REMINDS Parties of their obligations contained in Articles 20 to 31 in relation to international cooperation under the Protocol, and the importance of strengthening their implementation in order to achieve the objectives of the Protocol;

2. URGES Parties:

(a) to implement measures such as those outlined in decision FCTC/MOP2(7), and to continue providing the Convention Secretariat with updated information on designated competent national authorities, as provided for in Article 22, and with updated information on the contact points to implement mutual administrative assistance and on central authorities designated for mutual legal assistance, for the purposes of implementation of Articles 28 and 29; and

(b) to strengthen cooperation with each other and/or through competent international and regional organizations in the provision of training, technical assistance, and collaboration on scientific, technical and technological matters, in order to achieve the objectives of the Protocol, as mutually agreed, and as provided for in Article 23;

3. DECIDES:

(a) to establish a Working Group on Article 24 of the Protocol, taking into account the work completed by the Working Group on Assistance and Cooperation, established in decision FCTC/MOP1(10), whose mandate was completed per decision FCTC/MOP2(7);

(b) to mandate the Working Group to identify good practice for the implementation of Article 24 of the Protocol, as well as barriers thereto, and to prepare a report on effective mechanisms for strengthening assistance and cooperation on investigation and prosecution of offences; and

(c) to adopt the draft terms of reference for the Working Group on Article 24 of the Protocol, as set out in the Annex to this decision;

4. REQUESTS the Convention Secretariat to make the necessary arrangements, including budgetary arrangements for the Working Group to complete its work, in accordance with the terms of reference annexed to this decision and using electronic means of communication to as great an extent as possible.

Annex

Terms of reference for the Working Group on Article 24 of the Protocol

Background

1. Article 24 of the Protocol to Eliminate Illicit Trade in Tobacco Products requires Parties, in accordance with their domestic law, to take all necessary measures, where appropriate, to strengthen cooperation by multilateral, regional or bilateral arrangements for the prevention, detection, investigation, prosecution and punishment of natural or legal persons engaged in illicit trade in tobacco, tobacco products or manufacturing equipment.
2. Article 24 of the Protocol further requires Parties to ensure that administrative, regulatory, law enforcement and other authorities dedicated to combating illicit trade in tobacco, tobacco products or manufacturing equipment (including, where permitted under domestic law, judicial authorities) cooperate and exchange relevant information at national and international levels within the conditions prescribed by its domestic law.
3. The Meeting of the Parties (MOP) to the Protocol decided to establish a Working Group on Article 24 of the Protocol.

Objectives

4. In accordance with the mandate articulated in the decision establishing the Working Group, the Working Group will:
 - (a) conduct a comparison of the existing legal – including law enforcement and cooperation – frameworks among the Parties to the Protocol, in respect of Article 24 of the Protocol;
 - (b) identify good practice for and barriers to the implementation of Article 24 of the Protocol;
 - (c) prepare a report on effective mechanisms for strengthening assistance and cooperation on investigation and prosecution of offences; and
 - (d) present the report with its conclusions at the Fifth session of the MOP.

Composition and selection of members of the Working Group

5. The provisions of Article 4.2 of the Protocol and Article 5.3 of the WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (WHO FCTC) shall fully apply to the Working Group.
6. All Parties to the Protocol wishing to participate may join the Working Group and take part in its deliberations at their own expense.
7. Each region shall nominate up to two members representing the Parties in their respective regions through their regional coordinators. These regional nominees may benefit from assistance in accordance with the travel policy established in the Workplan and Budget adopted by the MOP, subject to the availability of funding.

8. The Working Group shall welcome Parties to the WHO FCTC that are not Parties to the Protocol to participate as observers. No travel support will be provided to these Parties, in line with previous practice.

9. Additionally, the Convention Secretariat, in consultation with the members of the Working Group, may invite as observers up to three representatives of nongovernmental organizations that are observers to the MOP, and up to three representatives of intergovernmental organizations, based on relevant expertise and sound knowledge of matters considered by authorities working to combat illicit trade in tobacco, tobacco products or manufacturing equipment. No travel support will be made available to these observers, in line with previous practice.

10. Parties willing to act as key facilitators should identify themselves at any time during the process.

Assistance from the Convention Secretariat

11. The Working Group shall endeavour to use web-based technologies or hybrid modalities for communicating when conducting its work. Notwithstanding, subject to the availability of funds, at least one in-person meeting of the Working Group is envisaged between the Fourth and Fifth sessions of the MOP.

12. The Working Group's key facilitator(s) should assist the Convention Secretariat in organizing these meetings.

(Fourth plenary meeting, 26 November 2025)

FCTC/MOP4(8) Assessed Contributions

The Meeting of the Parties (MOP),

Reaffirming decisions FCTC/COP7(23), FCTC/MOP2(12) and FCTC/MOP1(18), recalling decision FCTC/MOP3(9) and noting the report by the Convention Secretariat contained in document FCTC/MOP/4/13;

Reiterating the process and methodology established in decision FCTC/COP7(23), adopted in decision FCTC/MOP1(18);

Noting with concern that 17 Parties to the Protocol to Eliminate Illicit Trade in Tobacco Products were in arrears as of 30 April 2025, including some Parties registering arrears for one biennium or more;

Welcoming with appreciation the overall spirit of commitment by Parties to meet their financial obligations to support the implementation of the Protocol;

Emphasizing that Assessed Contributions are the mandatory financial contribution of each Party to the Protocol in accordance with the agreed scale of assessment;

Noting the Convention Secretariat's notes verbales CS/NV/24/16 and CS/NV/24/17 through which, in accordance with decision FCTC/COP7(23), Parties in arrears of payment of Assessed Contributions were invited to pay their Assessed Contributions or to submit their plan for making payments to clear their arrears,

1. URGES the Parties to pay their Assessed Contributions in accordance with decision FCTC/MOP2(12), in order to ensure adequate resources to implement the Workplan and Budget adopted by the MOP;
2. DECIDES, in accordance with decisions FCTC/COP7(23) and FCTC/MOP1(18), and following the recommendation of the Bureau of the MOP, to apply the following measures, with immediate effect to the Parties in arrears that have failed to submit, within the deadline established by the Head of the Convention Secretariat and communicated to the relevant Parties, their plan for making payments to clear their arrears:
 - (a) the Party shall not be eligible to become or nominate a member of the Bureau of the MOP; and
 - (b) the Party shall not be eligible to chair any subsidiary body or working group;
3. DECIDES, in accordance with decision FCTC/COP7(23), to apply paragraph 3(d) of the said decision, with effect at the close of the Fourth session of the MOP, to those Parties that are in the situation described in the aforementioned paragraph;
4. DECIDES, in accordance with decision FCTC/COP7(23), that the measures imposed under paragraphs 2 and 3 shall immediately lapse for any Party once that Party pays its arrears in full;
5. REQUESTS the Convention Secretariat:
 - (a) to communicate this decision to all Parties in arrears in the payment of their Assessed Contributions, as shown in the table of document FCTC/MOP/4/13;
 - (b) to report at each MOP session the status of Assessed Contributions and to the Fifth session of the MOP on actions in accordance with the measures adopted in paragraphs 2 and 3 above; and
 - (c) to continue to actively engage Parties in finding ways to make payments, including providing individual invoices and receipts for each Party, as well as clear payment information on the WHO FCTC website, and in enhancing coordination with regional and country offices of the World Health Organization, as well as assisting in the formulation of plans of payment.

(Fourth plenary meeting, 26 November 2025)

FCTC/MOP4(9) Review of accreditation of nongovernmental organizations with the status of observer to the Meeting of the Parties

The Meeting of the Parties (MOP),

Recalling the 17th and 18th preambular paragraphs and Article 5.3 of the WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control, as well as the 15th and 16th preambular paragraphs and Article 4.2 of the Protocol to Eliminate Illicit Trade in Tobacco Products;

Having considered document FCTC/MOP/4/14,

1. DECIDES, in accordance with Rule 31.2 of its Rules of Procedure, to maintain the observer status of the following 11 nongovernmental organizations (NGOs):

- African Tobacco Control Alliance
- Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids
- Corporate Accountability
- European Network for Smoking and Tobacco Prevention
- Global Alliance for Tobacco Control
- InterAmerican Heart Foundation
- Smoke Free Partnership
- International Union Against Tuberculosis and Lung Disease
- Tobacco Control Research Group
- Tobacco Free Portfolios
- Union for International Cancer Control

2. ADOPTS the process to facilitate the review of accreditation of NGOs with observer status to the MOP as described in paragraphs 22 and 23 of document FCTC/MOP/4/14 and the standard reporting questionnaire for use by NGOs for future reviews of accreditation contained in Annex 2 of document FCTC/MOP/4/14.

(Fourth plenary meeting, 26 November 2025)

FCTC/MOP4(10) Workplan and Budget for the financial period 2026–2027

The Meeting of the Parties (MOP),

Taking into consideration decision FCTC/MOP1(1) by which the Parties to the Protocol to Eliminate Illicit Trade in Tobacco Products decided to use the Financial Rules and Regulations of the World Health Organization (WHO) as the financial rules referred in Article 33.4 of the Protocol;

Recalling decision FCTC/MOP3(13) on the Workplan and Budget for the financial period 2024–2025;

Having considered the Workplan and Budget for the financial period 2026–2027 submitted by the Convention Secretariat, as contained in document FCTC/MOP/4/12;

Having considered also the performance and progress reports contained in document FCTC/MOP/4/11,

DECIDES:

- (a) to adopt the Workplan and Budget for the financial period 2026–2027, as contained in Annexes 1, 2 and 3 of the present decision;
- (b) to establish the total amount of Assessed Contributions of Parties for the financial period 2026–2027 at US\$ 4 999 719;

-
- (c) to finance the travel and per diem of least-developed countries from Assessed Contributions until and including the Fifth session of the MOP (MOP5);
 - (d) to finance, moreover, travel for low- and lower-middle-income countries from Assessed Contributions and to cover the cost of the corresponding per diem with resources available in the Extra-budgetary Contributions until and including MOP5;
 - (e) to authorize the Convention Secretariat to request the payment of Assessed Contributions, including from countries that may become a Party to the Protocol between the Fourth session of the MOP and MOP5, in line with the scale of assessment as indicated in paragraph (b) of the present decision;
 - (f) to request the Head of the Convention Secretariat to implement the workplan and budget adopted by the MOP and to report on implementation as part of the performance reports to MOP5;
 - (g) to authorize the Convention Secretariat to seek and receive voluntary Extra-budgetary Contributions for activities in line with the workplan;
 - (h) to request the Convention Secretariat to explore, in consultation with the Parties, as appropriate, a better and more efficient utilization of virtual means and resources, including by taking into consideration the environmental impact of in-person meetings;
 - (i) to call on the Head of the Convention Secretariat to regularly update the Bureau on the status of workplans and budgets adopted by the MOP;
 - (j) to encourage Parties to provide Extra-budgetary Contributions for meeting the objectives of the workplan;
 - (k) to invite the Conference of the Parties (COP) to the WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control to cover the proportion of the shared core staff costs, including those of the Head of the Convention Secretariat, in its workplan and budget; and
 - (l) to request the COP to consider adopting a workplan and budget consistent with the shared staff costs as identified in the Workplan and Budget of the MOP for the financial period 2026–2027.

Annex 1

Workplan and Budget for the financial period 2026–2027: activity costs Protocol to Eliminate Illicit Trade in Tobacco Products

Strategic Goals

Strategic Goal	Strategic Objective	Activity	Indicator	Target By the end of 2027, unless otherwise stated	Activity cost (in US\$) from Assessed Contributions	Activity cost (in US\$) from Extra-budgetary Contributions	Total
1. Understanding the problem and context of illicit trade in tobacco products	1.1 Undertaking Party situation analyses	1.1.1 Run the 2027 reporting cycle	Number of reports from Parties	Increased number of reports received (compared with 2025)	0	15 000	15 000
		1.1.2 Regularly update the Protocol implementation database	Number of reports available in the database	All reports received published in the database	0	5 000	5 000
		1.1.3 Produce the 2027 Global Progress Report	Number of reports	One report published	0	55 000	55 000
		1.1.4 Organize training or webinars on reporting	Number of Parties that attended the workshops	At least 30 Parties attending a workshop	0	30 000	30 000
		1.1.5 Assist Parties to undertake needs assessments with regard to the implementation of the Protocol, and develop country-focused action plans	Number of Parties assisted	At least 10 Parties assisted	0	400 000	400 000
	1.2 Linking illicit tobacco trade to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development	1.2.1 Pilot the methodology for conducting investment cases relating to Protocol implementation	Number of investment cases piloted	At least five investment cases piloted	0	200 000	200 000
	1.3 Generating research	1.3.1 Organize a meeting of international intergovernmental organizations (IGOs) to identify what research they have undertaken in the field of illicit tobacco trade, and assist in making relevant evidence available to Parties	Number of reports developed	One report developed describing the research that IGOs have undertaken	0	10 000	10 000
					Total for Goal 1	0	715 000

Strategic Goal	Strategic Objective	Activity	Indicator	Target By the end of 2027, unless otherwise stated	Activity cost (in US\$) from Assessed Contributions	Activity cost (in US\$) from Extra-budgetary Contributions	Total
2. Full and sustainable implementation of the Protocol	2.1 Building capacity and providing technical assistance	2.1.1 Assist countries eligible to receive official development assistance in the implementation of national/regional tracking and tracing systems	Number of Parties assisted	At least 20 Parties assisted to implement tracking and tracing systems	50 000	150 000	200 000
		2.1.2 Operate the Protocol Coordination Platform to facilitate the dissemination and exchange of information	Number of page views of the Platform	Increased number of page views compared with the previous biennium	0	50 000	50 000
		2.1.3 Organize multisectoral workshops to address challenges in the implementation of the Protocol according to priority areas identified in the Global Progress Report	Number of Parties that attended the workshops	At least 30% of Parties attending a workshop	0	300 000	300 000
	2.2 Encouraging multisectoral action	2.2.1 Develop case studies with country practices regarding the implementation of different provisions of the Protocol	Number of country practices developed	At least 10 country practices developed	0	50 000	50 000
	2.3 Mobilizing support from intergovernmental organizations (IGOs) and nongovernmental organizations (NGOs)	2.3.1 Engage with relevant IGOs and NGOs to invite them to become observers to the MOP	Number of new observers to the MOP	At least two new relevant IGOs and two new relevant NGOs to become observers	0	5 000	5 000
		2.3.2 Develop joint projects or participate and organize side events during meetings of relevant IGOs	Number of joint projects implemented with relevant IGOs	At least two joint projects implemented	0	24 000	24 000
		2.3.3 Organize an annual meeting with relevant NGOs that are observers to the MOP to discuss plans of cooperation	Number of annual plans and reports submitted by NGOs that are observers to the MOP	All NGOs that are observers to the MOP submitting annual plans and reports	0	5 000	5 000
		2.3.4 Co-organize or invite relevant IGOs and NGOs to contribute to workshops or awareness-raising events	Number of relevant IGOs and NGOs that co-organized or were involved in workshops or awareness-raising events	At least four relevant IGOs or NGOs co-organizing or being involved in workshops or awareness-raising events	0	10 000	10 000
	2.4 Supporting Parties to secure financial assistance for Protocol implementation	2.4.1 Hold high-level meetings of the Head of the Secretariat with senior officials to build political support for the implementation of the Protocol	Number of high-level meetings of the Head of Secretariat	At least 20 high-level meetings held	0	30 000	30 000
			Total for Goal 2			50 000	624 000

Strategic Goal	Strategic Objective	Activity	Indicator	Target By the end of 2027, unless otherwise stated	Activity cost (in US\$) from Assessed Contributions	Activity cost (in US\$) from Extra-budgetary Contributions	Total
3. Encouraging regional and international cooperation to support implementation of the Protocol	3.1 Facilitating regional and international cooperation	3.1.1 Assist and facilitate international cooperation between Parties to the Protocol	Number of Parties cooperating with each other	At least 20 Parties cooperating with each other to implement the Protocol	0	200 000	200 000
		3.1.2 Maintain the interim solution of the global information-sharing focal point	Number of reports prepared	One report prepared for the Fifth session of the MOP with quantitative and qualitative information on the usage of the global information-sharing focal point	75 000	75 000	150 000
	3.2 Utilizing the Protocol to promote the rule of law and sharing best practices in controlling other forms of illicit trade	3.2.1 Develop social communication materials on the relationship between illicit trade in tobacco products and other types of international crimes	Number of social communication materials produced	At least four new social communications materials produced	0	70 000	70 000
		Total for Goal 3				75 000	345 000

Operational Goals

Operational Goal	Operational Objective	Activity		Activity cost (in US\$) from Assessed Contributions	Activity cost (in US\$) from Extra- budgetary Contributions	Total
4. Ensuring that the governing and subsidiary bodies can take the necessary decisions	4.1 Providing for the optimal operation of the MOP, the Bureau of the MOP, and working groups or expert groups established by the MOP	4.1.1 Organize the Fifth session of the MOP		320 000	362 000	682 000
		4.1.2 Organize regional preparatory meetings for the MOP (pre-MOP meetings), including through virtual means		0	150 000	150 000
		4.1.3 Prepare and support the work of the Bureau, and convene meetings – including through virtual means		100 000	90 000	190 000
		4.1.4 Make the necessary arrangements for intersessional subsidiary bodies as decided by the Fourth session of the MOP, including through virtual means		0	200 000	200 000
		Total for Goal 4		420 000	802 000	1 222 000
5. Ensuring the capacity and ability of the Convention Secretariat to perform its duties	5.1 Providing adequate staff and financial management	5.1.1 Provide general administration and management to the Convention Secretariat		16 122	5 000	21 122
		5.2 Mobilizing resources to support the implementation of the Protocol		5 000	0	5 000
		5.2.2 Implement a fundraising plan		0	15 000	15 000
	Total for Goal 5		21 122	20 000	41 122	
		Total activity cost for all Goals		566 122	2 506 000	3 072 122

Annex 2

Gross staff costs breakdown (US\$)^a

Funded with Assessed Contributions (AC)	AC	EB	Total
D2 30% MOP AC/70% COP AC (1 post)	256 932	0	256 932
P5 30% MOP AC/70% COP AC (4 posts)	837 216	0	837 216
P4 100% MOP AC (1 post)	586 440	0	586 440
P3 100% MOP AC (2 posts)	976 320	0	976 320
P2 100% MOP AC (1 post)	387 720	0	387 720
P2 50% MOP AC/50% COP AC (1 post)	193 860	0	193 860
G5 100% MOP AC (1 post)	375 840	0	375 840
Funded with AC and Extra-budgetary Contributions (EB)	AC	EB	Total
P3 50% MOP AC/50% MOP EB (1 post)	244 080	244 080	488 160
P2 50% MOP EB/50% COP AC (1 post)	0	193 860	193 860
Funded with EB	AC	EB	Total
P2 100% MOP EB (2 posts)	0	775 440	775 440
G5 100% MOP EB (1 post – 12 months only)	0	187 920	187 920
Total staff costs	3 858 408	1 401 300	5 259 708

^a Indicative costs for core Convention Secretariat staff based on WHO's latest available standard gross salary costs for 2024–2025 with an 8% increase; possible changes in 2026–2027 will be reflected once they become available. The fulfilment of the staff plan, and possible adjustments, will depend on the actual availability of funds and the evolving workload. The staff plan does not include possible short-term assignments that would be based on actual needs and resources available.

Annex 3

Total proposed budget 2026–2027 (US\$)^a

Cost category	Covered by Assessed Contributions (AC)	Covered by Extra-budgetary Contributions (EB)	Total
1. Activity costs	566 122	2 506 000	3 072 122
2. Staff costs	3 858 408	1 401 300	5 259 708
3. Total direct costs	4 424 530	3 907 300	8 331 830
4. Recovery costs	575 189	507 949	1 083 138
5. Grand total	4 999 719	4 415 249	9 414 968

^a Total for AC (activities, salaries and recovery costs): US\$ 4 999 719.

(Fourth plenary meeting, 26 November 2025)

FCTC/MOP4(11) Information sharing in relation to seizures by individual Parties

The Meeting of the Parties (MOP),

Noting the global progress in implementation of the Protocol to Eliminate Illicit Trade in Tobacco Products contained in document FCTC/MOP/4/4, submitted to the MOP pursuant to Article 32 of the Protocol;

Recalling Article 20 of the Protocol, and recognizing that collecting and exchanging information is key to the successful implementation of the Protocol;

Recalling also that Article 20 requires Parties to report, in aggregate form, details of seizures of tobacco, tobacco products or manufacturing equipment, quantity, value of seizures, product descriptions, dates and places of manufacture; and taxes evaded;

Recalling further Article 21 of the Protocol, which provides that Parties shall, subject to domestic law or any applicable international treaties, where appropriate, exchange with each other, among other types of information, details of seizures of tobacco, tobacco products or manufacturing equipment (including case reference information where appropriate, quantity, value of seizure, product description, entities involved, date and place of manufacture) and *modi operandi* (including means of transport, concealment, routing and detection);

Reiterating that information sharing, in accordance with Articles 20, 21 and 22 of the Protocol, will contribute to the strengthening of implementation of the Protocol by its Parties, as outlined in decision FCTC/MOP1(10);

Noting that in decision FCTC/MOP1(10) the MOP also recognized the need to further advance the utilization of information received through the Parties' reports for, among other things, establishing implementation trends and promoting the implementation of the Protocol by individual Parties;

Recalling decision FCTC/MOP3(20), urging Parties to enhance cooperation among the Parties and with relevant regional and international intergovernmental organizations, to facilitate the exchange of information, best practices and lessons learned, as relevant to the implementation of the Protocol;

Noting that other types of illicit trade, such as the trade in drugs and illicit wildlife products, are subject to dedicated international data-sharing mechanisms and periodic analytical reports developed on the basis of these data, such as the World Drug Report and the World Wildlife Crime Report, produced by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) to inform international policy development and interventions;

Noting further that the World Customs Organization (WCO) manages the Customs Enforcement Network Communication Platform (CENcomm) and the closed virtual ExciseNET Experts' Group focused on tobacco and alcohol fraud;

Reiterating decision FCTC/MOP3(17), requesting the Convention Secretariat to take into consideration the collection of meaningful information;

Recognizing the limited availability of Party resources, and the need to avoid duplication and to ensure synergies in Party reporting through various databases,

REQUESTS the Convention Secretariat:

- (a) to undertake, with a view to enhancing continued information sharing among the Parties and in full respect of applicable confidentiality rules, in coordination with the WCO and UNODC, a mapping of existing non-nominal data on seizures of tobacco, tobacco products or manufacturing equipment and *modi operandi* available in the WCO and UNODC databases, as well as in the Party responses to the reporting instrument on the implementation of the Protocol under Article 20.1; such data should include, where appropriate:
 - (i) the authority involved, date, location, description of the material seized, weight, and estimated value of the seizure;
 - (ii) for goods seized in international transit, the country of origin and destination of the shipment and, where possible, the port of departure and destination;
 - (iii) for branded tobacco products, the brand and product details of the seized material, along with any information on safety warnings or tax stamps present;
- (b) to undertake a mapping on existing capacity-building and Party support initiatives on data collection and reporting of seizures data;
- (c) to report on progress to the Fifth session of the MOP.

(Fourth plenary meeting, 26 November 2025)

FCTC/MOP4(12) Date and place of the Fifth session of the Meeting of the Parties

The Meeting of the Parties (MOP),

Taking into account Rule 3 of its Rules of Procedure, which provides that the sessions of the MOP shall be held at the seat of the Secretariat, unless the MOP decides otherwise;

Recalling decision FCTC/MOP1(11), establishing as a formal requirement for Parties hosting a regular session of the Conference of the Parties (COP) to the WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (WHO FCTC) to also host a session of the MOP, immediately following the COP, at the same geographic location and under the same circumstances, regardless of whether the host Party is also a Party to the Protocol;

Thanking Parties for expressing interest in the call to host the Twelfth session of the Conference of the Parties to the WHO FCTC and the Fifth session of the Meeting of the Parties (MOP5) to the Protocol to Eliminate Illicit Trade in Tobacco Products;

Considering that the following option has been proposed for convening MOP5,

DECIDES that MOP5 will be held in Armenia, with dates to be confirmed after agreement between the host country and the incoming Bureau, in consultation with the COP Bureau, and with the support of the Convention Secretariat.

(Fourth plenary meeting, 26 November 2025)

FCTC/MOP4(13) Election of the President and Vice-Presidents of the Meeting of the Parties

The Meeting of the Parties (MOP), pursuant to Rule 21 of its Rules of Procedure,

1. ELECTS the following officers to constitute the Bureau of the MOP:

President: Eliza Fantidou from Cyprus, for the European Region

Vice-Presidents: Marcos Dotta from Uruguay, for the Region of the Americas

Leimapokpam Swasticharan from India, for the South-East Asia Region

Ahmad Al Mulla from Qatar, for the Eastern Mediterranean Region

Robert Thomsen from Samoa, for the Western Pacific Region

Omar Badjie from Gambia, for the African Region

2. DECIDES that, of the five Vice-Presidents, the following should act as Rapporteur:

Rapporteur: Marcos Dotta from Uruguay, for the Region of the Americas

(Fourth plenary meeting, 26 November 2025)
