

Webinar of the Secretariat of the WHO FCTC and the WHO FCTC
Knowledge Hub on Smokeless Tobacco

Smokeless Tobacco Use in the SEA Region: Strategies and Priorities

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**World Health
Organization**

Regional Office for
South-East Asia

Strengthening implementation of MPOWER measures, as applicable in the context of ST, across the countries of the Region

Monitoring of ST use and its various determinants prioritized:

Member States with high prevalence of ST consumption encouraged to monitor usage of these products among their adult as well as youth populations and to integrate relevant questions on AN usage in all tobacco surveys

The Tobacco Questions for Surveys (TQS), including relevant questions on ST and AN usage, increasingly integrated in national health surveys or multiple risk factor surveys, as per country needs and context

Quality data available to proactively inform policy makers

Quality tobacco cessation services, particularly those aimed at ST products and youth, strengthened:

WHO recently launched 'QuitTobacco App' to help people quit tobacco in all forms - including ST products

Supported NRT trainings; all Quitlines across the Region provide cessation services to ST users

The Region ran an intensive social media campaign on WNTD 2021 - Commit to Quit



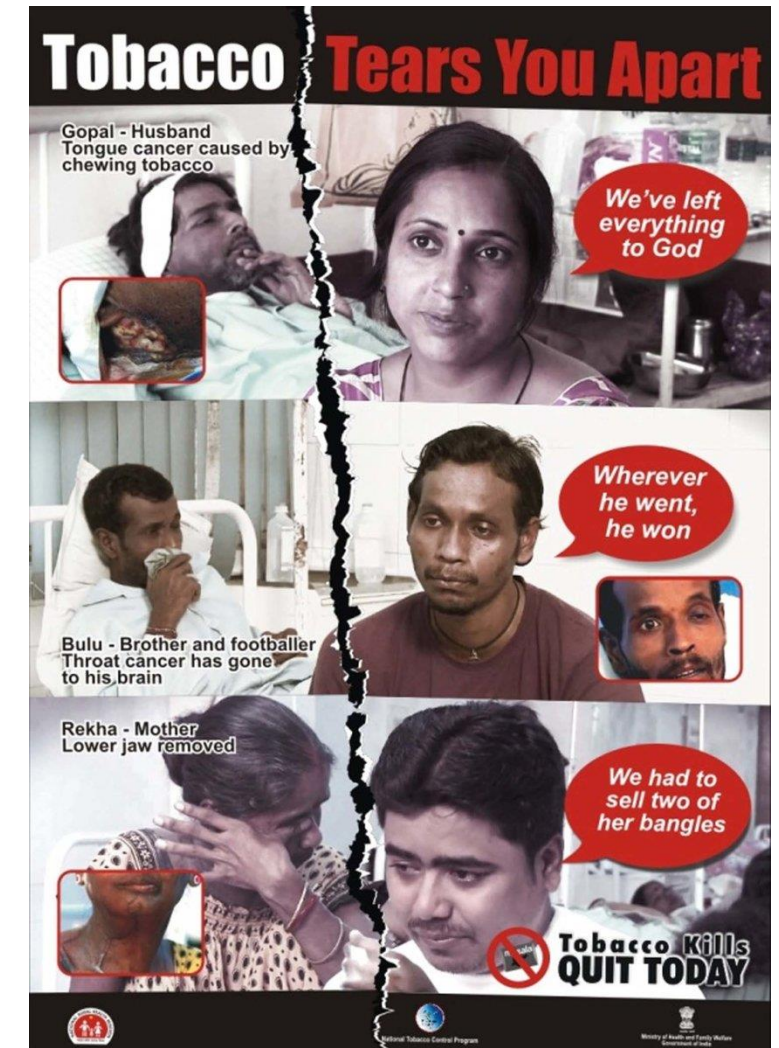
Strengthening implementation of MPOWER measures, as applicable in the context of ST, across the countries of the Region

Extensive and sustained media campaigns implemented in high prevalence countries to warn people about the harmful effects of ST

The Region is performing exceptionally well in implementation of large graphic health warnings on packages of tobacco products, including ST products

The Laws are in place in most Member States to counter TAPS in respect of ST products

All Member States are continuously sensitized to increase tax on tobacco products, including ST products



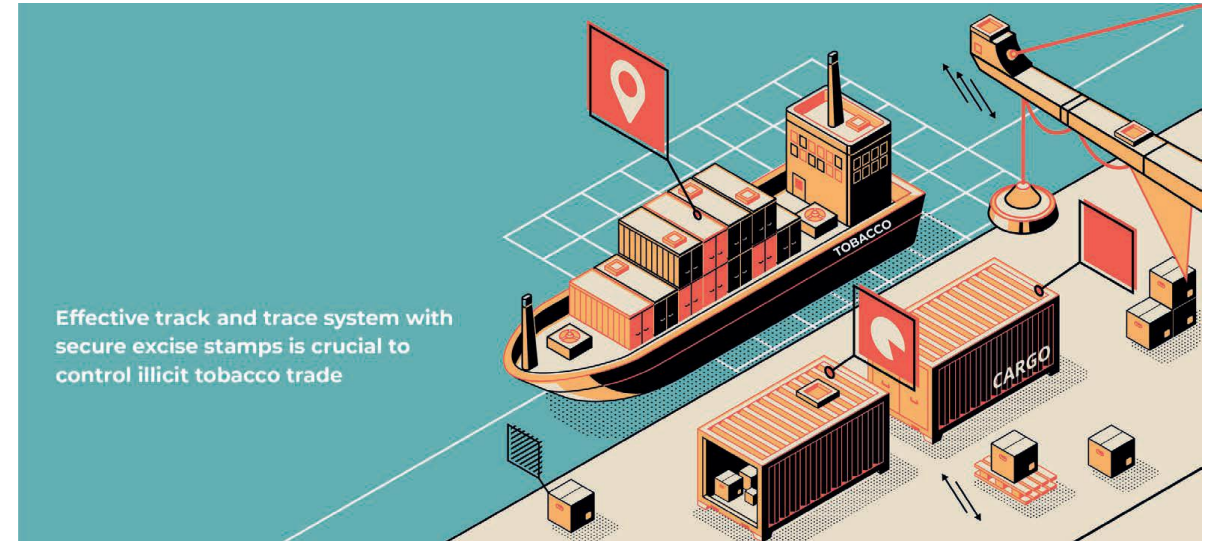
Prioritizing supply side issues in respect of ST products in the Region

Demand-side measures of tobacco control can be effective only if supply-side aspects are simultaneously addressed

Member States are looking beyond MPOWER and increasingly implementing interventions aimed at:

- **restricting access of tobacco products to minors;**
- **addressing illicit trade in tobacco products; and**
- **providing viable alternative livelihood options for tobacco growers and workers**

This is important for the Region given the huge implications of supply-side issues on tobacco control both regionally as well as globally



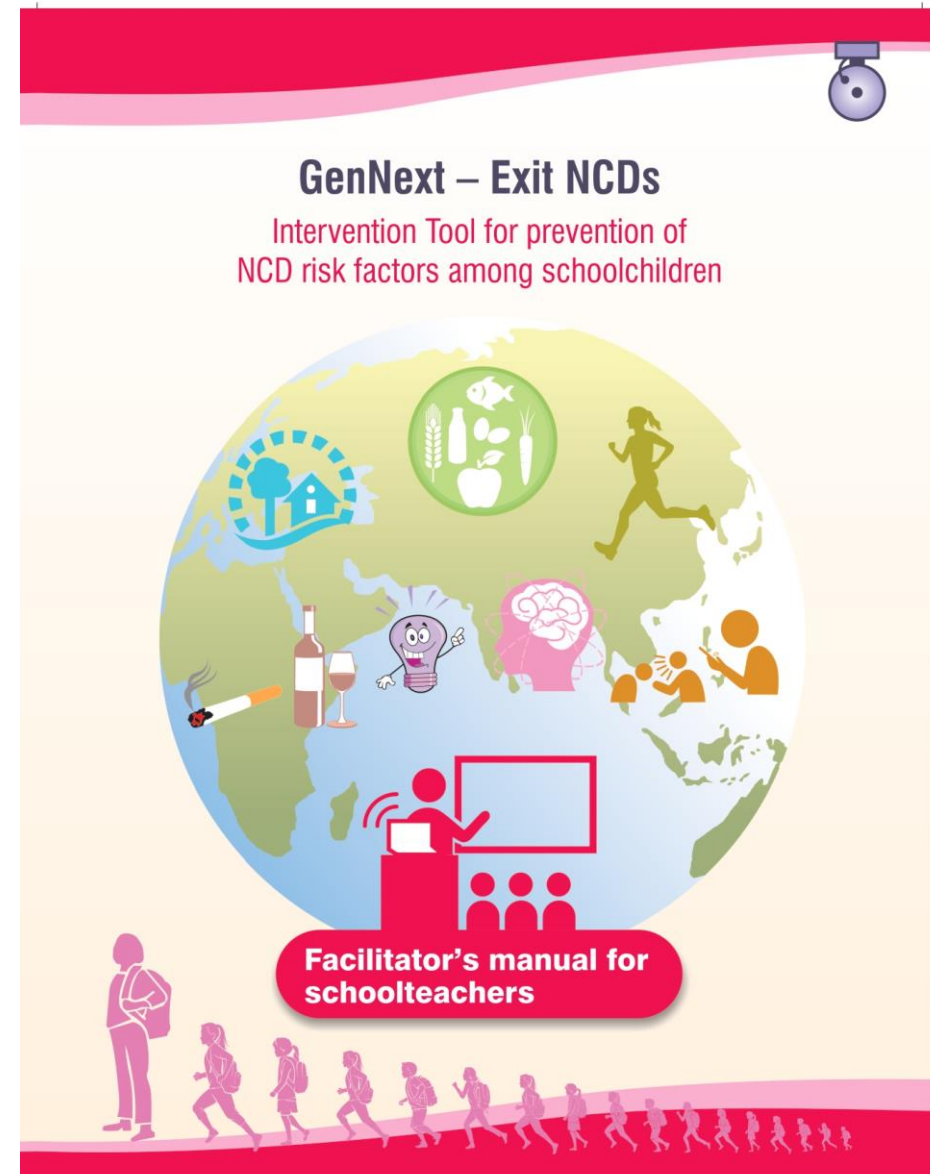
Creating an enabling environment across the Region to support implementation of policies aimed at curbing ST use

WHO SEARO supported National Institute of Mental Health and Neurosciences (NIMHANS) Bengaluru, India to establish an additional tobacco testing lab to focus on testing of ST and flavors; this lab is also a member of the WHO Tobacco Laboratory Network (TobLabNet)

During COVID-19 lockdown in India, spitting bans (an act associated with chewing tobacco) were imposed in many parts of the country

The Regional office is supporting research work on ST across the Member States to ensure formulation of evidence-informed policies

The Regional office convened expert group consultation on ST and developed intervention tool for prevention of NCD risk factors (including ST use) among schoolchildren



Challenges Galore, So Do Opportunities

Increased focus on “best buys”, specifically raising taxes on ST products, enforcing bans on ST advertising, promotion and sponsorship, along with expanding support for interventions on quitting ST use

Tobacco Industry Interference in context of ST needs to be effectively tackled across the Region

Supply side issues in respect of ST need more focus and commitment:

Only India and Sri Lanka are Parties to the Protocol

Region is home to millions of tobacco farmers and workers; ST industry uses them to rally against tobacco control implementation

Easy access of youth to ST products remains a concern

