



Introduction

The needs assessment mission for the implementation of the World Health Organization Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (WHO FCTC) was conducted November 2-6, 2015, by the Convention Secretariat jointly with the Ministry of Health of the Republic of Benin. The international team, which came at the government's invitation, included representatives of the WHO Regional Office for Africa (AFRO). The team met with the leaders of government agencies, NGOs and civil society who are involved in implementing the WHO FCTC at country level.

Tobacco control milestones in Benin

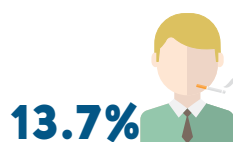


- 2003** Appointment of a focal point at the Ministry of Health.
- 2005** Ratification of the WHO FCTC.
- 2006** Adoption and promulgation of Law 2006-12.
- 2009** Decree for the implementation of the anti-tobacco law.
- 2011** Adoption of ministerial orders 19 and 20.

WHO FCTC ratification and implementation in Benin

Benin signed the WHO FCTC on June 18, 2004, and ratified on it November 3, 2005. The Convention came into force on February 1, 2006. Six months after ratification, Benin voted its first anti-smoking law, Law No. 2006-12, of August 7, 2006, regulating the production, marketing and consumption of cigarettes and other tobacco products in Benin.

Key facts



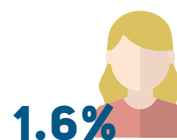
of **men** smoked every day in 2013.



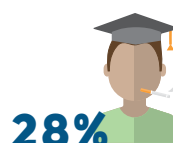
of **women** smoked every day in 2013.



of **boys** smoked daily in 2013.



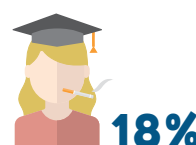
of **girls** smoked daily in 2013.



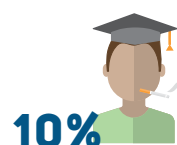
of **students** have tried **cigarettes** in the **Borgou and Alibori departments** of Benin.



of **students** currently **smoke** in the **Borgou and Alibori departments** of Benin.



of **students** have tried **cigarettes** in the **Atlantic and coastal departments** of Benin.



of **students** currently **smoke** in the **Atlantic and coastal departments** of Benin.



people are **killed** by **diseases** caused by **tobacco use** each year.



of **adolescents** are regularly exposed to **tobacco smoke**.

Main findings and recommendations

● Benin has not developed a comprehensive multisectoral national action plan to implement the WHO FCTC. Benin's National Health Development Plan (2009-2018) identifies the prevention of noncommunicable diseases. Benin has a goal of reducing smoking prevalence from 16% to 14% by 2018. Activities have been included in the budget, but funds have not been allocated to implement them. The plan is primarily a health sector plan rather than a multisectoral one.

Recommendation: Develop a multisectoral strategy and action plan, work closely with the WHO and the United Nations country team to include WHO FCTC implementation in the UNDP.

● There is no service or program for tobacco control within the Department of Health, but rather just a tobacco focal point, which has other duties as well. Apart from the focal point, there is no full-time staff or separate budget line for tobacco.

Recommendation: Establish a national multisectoral coordinating group with staff and a budget as soon as possible. Establish a separate budget line for tobacco control at the Ministry of Health.

● Benin adopted a tobacco law in 2006, but it is not fully binding.

Numerous cases of tobacco industry interference with the legislative and implementation process have been reported. The new bill bans tobacco industry interference in the national tobacco control policy-making process. It also contains a code of conduct for government officials, but the code does not fully prevent unnecessary and non-transparent interaction with the tobacco industry.

Recommendation: Pass the new bill banning tobacco industry interference and strengthen and improve the code of conduct governing government agents' interaction with the tobacco industry.

A new anti-smoking bill has been introduced, but not yet passed. This new bill is comprehensive and covers most of the articles in the WHO FCTC. It provides for a prohibition on tobacco industry interference in public health policies, a ban on smoking in public places, introduces packaging and labeling requirements, bans tobacco advertising, promotion and sponsorships and bans the sale of tobacco to and by minors.

Recommendation: Pass this new bill as soon as possible and fully implement it.

● The 2006 tobacco law allows smoking in certain public places. The WHO FCTC requires the prevention of exposure to tobacco smoke in all indoor public places, workplaces and public transportation.

Recommendation: Amend the 2006 tobacco law and regulations so that they fully comply with the WHO FCTC and enforce them strictly.

● Benin recognizes the importance of prices and taxes to control tobacco consumption. Benin applies the regional directive of the UEMOA on taxation. The current ceiling for the ad valorem tax is 45%. The WHO Regional Office for Africa (WHO AFRO) has been working with Benin and the UEMOA on price and tax policies for tobacco in recent years.

Recommendation: Continue working closely with the WHO AFRO to increase tobacco taxes and work to promote policy change at the UEMOA level.

● Benin has not yet developed guidelines and does not yet provide services to help people stop smoking. The program to train experts in smoking cessation has not been completed. Drugs to treat tobacco dependence are not included on the national list of essential drugs.

Recommendation: Fully implement tobacco cessation programs under the WHO FCTC, requesting support from AFRO to help in this process.

● The United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) is a strategic framework to help establish national development priorities. The current UNDAF (2014-2018) includes implementation of noncommunicable disease prevention and control.

Recommendation: Include implementation of the WHO FCTC in the UNDAF program and activities.

● Time-bound requirements under the WHO FCTC have not been fully met.

Recommendation: Work to meet these requirements as soon as possible.

Post needs assessment assistance available from the Convention Secretariat

● Supporting the development of a national action plan and strategy for tobacco control.

● Assisting in organizing and conducting a meeting with stakeholders to discuss the needs assessment and

the national action plan or strategy for tobacco control.

● Helping extend the implementation of an expanded multisectoral tobacco control coordinating mechanism.

Outcomes



1) The needs Assessment was very useful to the Republic of Benin.

2) As a result of it, Benin developed a strategic national plan for the implementation of the WHO FCTC and created a multisectoral committee for tobacco control.

3) The exercise helped the various ministries to understand their role in the implementation of the Convention.

4) After the mission, Benin prepared a meeting with parliamentarians to discuss all the laws related to the health sector, mainly the tobacco control bill, which is waiting to be voted on.