



# Congo

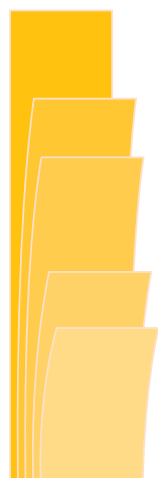
18-22 AUGUST  
2014

## NEEDS ASSESSMENT MISSION

## Introduction

The needs assessment mission for the implementation of the World Health Organization Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (WHO FCTC) was conducted August 18-22, 2014, by the Convention Secretariat jointly with the Ministry of Health and Population of the Republic of Congo. The international team, which came at the government's invitation, included representatives of the WHO Country Office in Congo. The team met with the leaders of government agencies, NGOs and civil society who are involved in implementing the WHO FCTC at country level.

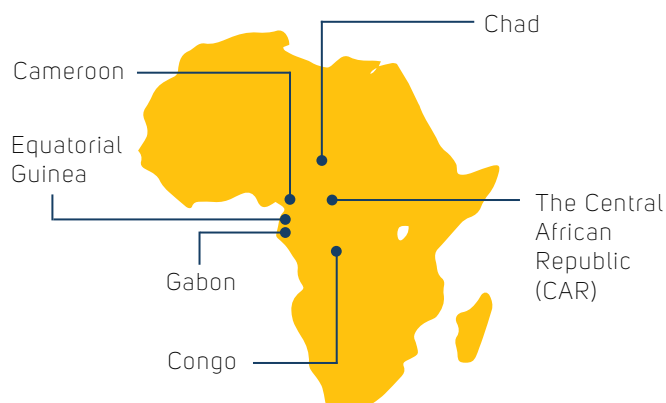
## Tobacco control milestones in Congo



- 2005** Congo designated a national tobacco control focal point.
- 2007** Congo ratified the WHO FCTC.
- 2010** An Inter-ministerial Technical Committee on Tobacco Control was established.
- 2012** Congo adopted Tobacco Control Act.
- 2013** The Minister of Health and Population set up an integrated Noncommunicable Diseases Plan (PMNT) for 2013-2017, which includes tobacco control.

## CEMAC Countries

All of the CEMAC countries have signed anti-drug agreements.



## Key facts

All **tobacco products** are subject to a **24%** **ad valorem tax**.



The action plan target was to **reduce tobacco consumption** by **50%**

for youth and adult by **2014**.



In 2013, there was a **specific tax** of **50 FCFA** per pack of 20 **cigarettes**. The **specific tax** was **reduced** to **40 FCFA** per pack in 2014.



Congo has **duty-free** allowance of **2 packages** of **cigarettes** for each international traveler.

**Domestic cigarettes** cost **600 FCFA** per pack of 20.



**Imported cigarettes** cost **1000 FCFA** per pack of 20.

**44.4%**

of **young** people aged 13-15 were exposed to second-hand **smoke** in **public places**.

**22.3%**

of **young** people aged 13-15 were exposed to second-hand **smoke** in their **homes**.



**13.4%**

of **young** people aged 13-15 have one or more **parents** who **smoke**.



**47.6%** current smokers who **bought cigarettes** in a store were **not refused** because of **their age**.



Smoking prevalence among **adults** is **6.6%**  
**13%** for males  
**1.3%** for females

## Main findings and recommendations

● The National Development Plan (2012-2016) does not identify WHO FCTC implementation as a priority. Congo has a National Strategic Plan for Tobacco Control (2011-2015), which includes expected results, activities, indicators, a timeline and budget, but it has not yet been implemented. The action plan aimed to reduce tobacco consumption by 50% for youths and adults by 2014.

**Recommendation:** While working to implement the existing strategic plan, Congo should develop a multisectoral action plan to implement the WHO FCTC. This plan should include a clear timeline and expected outcomes and indicate those responsible for implementing it.

● The ministry of Health and Population led the development of the current Action Plan, in cooperation with the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education and Literacy and municipal health authorities. It remains primarily a health sector action plan and other stakeholders and government agencies have not been broadly involved in developing and implementing it.

**Recommendation:** The new multisectoral action plan should assign responsibilities to various ministries and departments for implementation. Resources for implementing the plan should also be clearly identified, including with a designated budget line.

The tobacco industry has tried to influence the government and legislators. The MHOP has trained representatives of national institutions, media and civil society to deal with such attempts.

**Recommendation:** Develop a code of conduct for civil servants to govern interaction with the tobacco industry and raise awareness of the need to protect public policy.

● A national tobacco control focal point was designated in 2005. An Interministerial Technical Committee on Tobacco Control was established in 2010. This Committee was not functioning in 2014 because of a lack of budget and funds, though the government had committed to funding it from 2015 onwards.

**Recommendation:** A decree to establish the ministerial multisectoral Committee should be approved without delay and funds should be allocated to make it fully functional.

● Congo passed a Tobacco Control Act in 2012. It has strong provisions to ban smoking in public places and at work. It also bans tobacco advertising, promotion and sponsorship and deals with illicit trade in tobacco products.

**Recommendation:** The provisions of the Tobacco Control Act should be implemented and fully enforced.

● The Tobacco Control Act's provisions related to tobacco packaging and labeling are not fully compliant with the WHO FCTC. The Act does not have provisions related to tobacco packaging and labeling. Decrees on pictorial health warnings have been developed and are now waiting for approval from the Council of Ministers.

**Recommendation:** Fully implement tobacco packaging, labeling and warning requirements.

● The Tobacco Control Act states that 40% of the fines and other proceeds from its enforcement will be allocated to tobacco control.

**Recommendation:** Fully allocate these funds for tobacco control purposes.

● Congo recognizes price and tax measures as effective and important ways to reduce tobacco consumption.

**Recommendation:** Congo should continue to increase tobacco taxes to progressively higher levels, taking inflation into account. Part of the funds raised should be earmarked for WHO FCTC implementation.

● The current United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) does not include WHO FCTC implementation.

**Recommendation:** WHO FCTC implementation should be included in the UNDAF.

● Illicit trade in tobacco products remains a problem in Congo.

**Recommendation:** Congo should speed up the procedure for acceding to the Protocol on Illicit Trade in Tobacco Products.

## Post needs assessment assistance available from the Convention Secretariat

● Supporting and facilitating a national multisectoral stakeholder workshop to develop a multisectoral National Tobacco Control Strategic/Action Plan.

● Providing immediate support for any priorities identified by the Ministry of Health and Population, or any other relevant ministries.

● Providing an expert to support tobacco taxation policy development.

● Providing expert technical assistance to develop a media strategy and audiovisual materials for state radio and television.

## Outcomes



1) The needs assessment mission was essential to raise awareness of the connections between tobacco control and development in Congo.

2) A number of activities are being undertaken in order to support the development of a National Tobacco Control Strategic Plan.

3) The government has committed to fund the national multisector coordinating mechanism.

4) Congo is working on the enforcement of smoke-free policies and on the implementation of pictorial health warnings.