



3-10 JUNE
2013

Georgia

NEEDS ASSESSMENT MISSION



FCTC
WHO FRAMEWORK CONVENTION
ON TOBACCO CONTROL
SECRETARIAT

Introduction

The needs assessment mission for the implementation of the World Health Organization Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (WHO FCTC) was conducted June 3-10, 2013, by the Convention Secretariat jointly with the Ministry of Health, Labour and Social Affairs of Georgia. The international team, which came at the government's invitation, included representatives of United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the World Bank. 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 Georgia



- 2006** Georgia ratifies the WHO FCTC.
- 2006** The WHO FCTC goes into effect in Georgia.
- 2010** Tobacco Control Law passed.
- 2013** State Committee for Strengthening Tobacco Control Measures is established.

National coordinating mechanism

Georgia has a State Committee for Strengthening Tobacco Control Measures. The high-level Committee is headed by the Prime Minister. The Minister of Labour, Health and Social Affairs serves as the vice-chair of the Committee. Other members of the Committee include the Minister of Education and Science, Minister of Justice, Minister of Interior, Minister of Sports and Youth, Minister of Finance, Minister of Economy and Sustainable Development, Minister of Regional Development and Infrastructure and Minister of Agriculture.

Key facts



55.5%
of **males** smoke.



4.8%
of **females** smoke.



2.8%
of **girls** aged 13-15 currently use a **tobacco product**.



15.2%
of **boys** aged 13-15 currently use a **tobacco product**.

14.6%

of students reported owning an object with a **cigarette brand logo** on it.



57.3%
of **youths** reported **buying cigarettes** in a store in 2008.



53%
of **youths** reported **buying cigarettes** in a store in 2002.



Over **half** of students have seen **cigarette ads** on billboards within the last **30** days.



62.7%
of **young people** aged 13-15 live in **homes** where others smoke in their presence.

Main findings and recommendations

● Georgia shows a high level of commitment to tobacco control. It is a priority in its overall health policy and the Noncommunicable Disease Strategy and Action Plan. Georgia has developed and approved a comprehensive multisectoral National Tobacco Control Strategy. Its main objective is to reduce tobacco consumption and exposure to tobacco smoke and to meet WHO FCTC obligations.

Recommendation: Finalize and adopt the Tobacco Control Plan.

● Georgia recognizes the importance of price and tax measures to support WHO FCTC objectives. Excise taxes on imports are unchanged since 2006, despite inflation being well over 5% for much of the period since then. Cigarette taxes for imported and domestic cigarettes have been equalized. A specific tax increases the rate on lower-priced cigarettes more to discourage switching to cheaper brands.

Recommendation: Increase tobacco taxes and continue increasing them on a regular basis to decrease the affordability of tobacco products.

● The United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) is a common strategic planning framework for UN development operations and assistance in Georgia for the period 2011-2015. This UNDAF period coincides

The State Tobacco Control Committee and the working group do not involve the tobacco industry in their policy making process. The tobacco industry continuously attempts to lobby and spread misleading messages.

Recommendation: Include measures to limit interaction and require transparency for contacts between public officials and the tobacco industry in tobacco control legislation and raise awareness among all government agencies of the need to protect public health policies.

with the last five years of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). The current UNDAF document does not include specific outcome areas on noncommunicable diseases (NCDs) and tobacco control, though this work does fall under the broader outcome areas.

Recommendation: Upcoming consultations to develop the next UNDAF should encourage the inclusion of support for Georgia's implementation of the WHO FCTC as a priority. Explicit mention of support for Georgia in implementing the WHO FCTC should also be included in the next UNDAF, including the United Nations' commitment to providing technical assistance to ensure interagency action to support a multi-sectoral approach to tobacco control.

● Current UN agency work in Georgia provides opportunities for addressing noncommunicable diseases and implementing the WHO FCTC. National action plans covering a broad range of health issues based on the Youth Policy are being developed. In 2009, the National Concept on Healthy and Harmonious Education was prepared, covering a broad range of issues related to healthy lifestyles.

Recommendation: Use these activities as entry points and opportunities to support implementation of the WHO FCTC.

● Georgia adopted laws and executive measures on tobacco control even before it ratified the WHO FCTC. The Tobacco Control Law of 2010 was a major step in implementing the WHO FCTC, though numerous provisions need to be amended to fully comply with WHO FCTC guidelines.

Recommendation: Make all indoor public places, indoor workplaces and public transportation 100% smoke-free. Ban all tobacco advertising, promotion and sponsorship. Introduce effective pictorial health warnings on packages. Introduce licenses and regulate the contents and emissions of tobacco products. Clarify the enforcement mechanism.

● Focal points in ministries that are members of the State Committee for Strengthening Tobacco Control Measures have been identified and are fully involved in the development of the National Tobacco Control Strategy, Action Plan and amendment of tobacco control legislation. The National Centre for Disease Control and Public Health (NCDC) is mandated to serve as the secretariat of the Committee.

Recommendation: Continue strengthening the State Committee and allocate sufficient funds to all relevant ministries.

Post needs assessment assistance available from the Convention Secretariat

● Supporting and facilitating a stakeholder workshop to consider the needs assessment report and the National Tobacco Control Action Plan.

● Supporting finalization of the Action Plan and amendments to tobacco control legislation.

● Providing technical support to the national tobacco control focal point, particularly in regard to implementing provisions of the WHO FCTC that have time limits.

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

Outcomes



1) The needs assessment report became an important tool for advocating the necessary improvements in the implementation of the WHO FCTC.

2) After the needs assessment report mission took place, Georgia prepared important amendments to the legislation, for which approval is still pending. Georgia is progressing in implementing a comprehensive media campaign against smoking.

3) Identified gaps and recommendations served as a basis for discussions among different stakeholders on how to improve the implementation of the WHO FCTC.

4) Georgia raised taxes on tobacco products and introduced an ad valorem component to taxation. It also conducted a training of trainers in tobacco cessation.