



6-10 MAY
2013

Sierra Leone

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 May 6-10, 2013, by the Convention Secretariat jointly with the Ministry of Health and Sanitation of Sierra Leone. The international team, which came at the government's invitation, included representatives of the World Bank and 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 Sierra Leone



- 2009** The Republic of Sierra Leone ratifies the WHO FCTC.
- 2009** The WHO FCTC enters into force in the Republic of Sierra Leone.
- 2012** The Ministry of Health and Sanitation adopts the National Tobacco Control Strategic Plan 2012-2016.

Cigarette imports in Sierra Leone

This map shows the four leading countries that export tobacco products to Sierra Leone.



Key facts



25.8%

of **adults** aged 25-64 use tobacco.

43.1% of males
10.5% of females



5.8%

of **youths** aged 13-15 use tobacco.

6.6% among boys
5% among girls



2.9%

of **males** and **12.1%**

of **females** aged 25-64 use smokeless tobacco.



US\$ 0.47

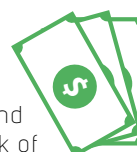
cost of the **least expensive** pack of cigarettes.



60%

of **boys** and **53%**

of **girls** aged 13-15 have been exposed to tobacco smoke in public places.



The total **tax** and **tariff** on a pack of cigarettes is between

2% and **6%**

Tobacco exports declined from a total value of

US\$ 1,584,000

in 1994 to

US\$ 3,200

in 2000, which was the last year earnings were recorded.



46%

of **boys** and **43%**

of **girls** aged 13-15 have been exposed to tobacco smoke at home.

56.6%

of **youths** aged 13-15 are exposed to tobacco smoke in public places.



Main findings and recommendations

● Parties are required to develop, implement, periodically update and review comprehensive multisectoral national tobacco control strategies, plans and programs under the WHO FCTC. The Republic of Sierra Leone has prepared a National Tobacco Control Strategic Plan that is expected to cover 2012-2016, though it has not yet been launched. When it is launched, it is expected to serve as a roadmap for the implantation of the WHO FCTC in the Republic of Sierra Leone.

Recommendation: Complete and implement the National Tobacco Control Strategic Plan.

● The Republic of Sierra Leone has not yet adopted and implemented comprehensive tobacco control legislation. The Ministry of Health and Sanitation, in cooperation with the WHO Country Office and other stakeholders, is in the process of drafting the Republic of Sierra Leone's first tobacco control act. Members of the needs assessment mission have reviewed it and made suggestions.

Recommendation: Complete the legislative process as soon as possible and intensify efforts to raise awareness among stakeholders and mobilize them.

● A national focal point for tobacco control already exists. It works with a wide range of partners, including the WHO Country Office, government ministries and NGOs. There is no specific budget line for tobacco control, though some funds for tobacco control programs come

Tobacco industry representatives are expected to try to influence draft legislation during the public consultation process.

Recommendation: Prepare a code of conduct to govern civil servants' interaction with the tobacco industry and raise awareness about the need to protect public policy from tobacco industry interference.

from the WHO and domestic and international NGOs.

Recommendation: Provide adequate support for the national tobacco control focal point.

● There is no multisectoral coordinating mechanism for tobacco control in the Republic of Sierra Leone.

Recommendation: Establish a multisectoral coordinating mechanism through the draft tobacco control legislation that is currently being considered, and in the meantime issue an executive decree to establish such a mechanism.

● Illicit trade in tobacco products from neighboring countries is a source of concern for the government in the Republic of Sierra Leone. The Republic of Sierra Leone has not yet signed and ratified the Protocol to Eliminate Illicit Trade in Tobacco Products.

Recommendation: Sign and ratify the Protocol to Eliminate Illicit Trade in Tobacco Products and work with neighboring countries to investigate the supply of illicit tobacco products and prosecute those engaging in this trade.

● Time-bound provisions of the WHO FCTC, including those concerning smoke-free environments, packaging and labeling of tobacco products and tobacco advertising, promotion and sponsorship, have not yet been addressed in Sierra Leone.

Recommendation: Give these matters urgent attention in order to comply with the WHO FCTC.

● The Republic of Sierra Leone does not yet have regulations governing the contents and emissions of tobacco products or requiring the testing, measuring and disclosure of the contents and emissions of those products.

Recommendation: Introduce measures governing these items, scale up the Standards Bureau of Sierra Leone to perform tests on imported tobacco products and mandate textual and pictorial warnings on tobacco packages, in line with WHO FCTC requirements.

● Several government agencies and NGOs already have communication and public awareness programs and others have the ability to implement them.

Recommendation: Secure resources for broad and sustained mass media campaigns, especially in relation to the momentum gained through the process of preparing national tobacco control legislation. The Sierra Leone Broadcasting Corporation should allocate free air time for tobacco control messages.

● Tobacco tax rates are very low and have gone down since the former excise tax system ended in 2007. The Republic of Sierra Leone does not have a United Nations development assistance framework (UNDAF), though there are plans to prepare one.

Recommendation: Develop a new tax policy that includes an excise component per pack. Cigarette taxes should be increased regularly to make cigarettes less affordable.

Post needs assessment assistance available from the Convention Secretariat

● Supporting the process of engaging potential partners and identifying internationally available resources for implementation of the WHO FCTC.

● Facilitating a meeting to engage stakeholders on the Draft National Tobacco Control Bill

Outcomes



- 1) Since the needs assessment mission took place, Sierra Leone has been devastated by an Ebola outbreak.
- 2) Now that the epidemic has been controlled, the tobacco control focal points are starting to implement the needs assessment recommendations and activities.
- 3) These will include organizing a meeting with national and international stakeholders in order to discuss the Draft National Tobacco Control Bill, with the support of the Convention Secretariat.