EXECUTIVE SUMMARY


A Collaborative Project between Norwegian Cancer Society (NCS) & The Framework Convention Alliance (FCA)
PROJECT OVERVIEW

Accelerating sustainable development requires boosting progress in global health, including making significant investments in the implementation of the World Health Organization (WHO) Framework Convention for Tobacco Control (FCTC). Tobacco control has much to offer as a key component of sustainable development and advancing the FCTC will increase momentum towards the United Nations’ Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). For example, reducing demand for tobacco products can have positive health outcomes (SDG 3). More positive health outcomes can lead to a reduction in health care costs, and can improve a country’s productivity through less time lost due to tobacco-related disease and disability. As a result, household finances are often improved as well as country-level economic growth patterns (SDG 8). The connection between tobacco control and the SDGs are quite numerous and complementary, although not always immediately obvious.

Despite the fact that FCTC implementation can help accelerate sustainable development in many countries in Africa, few in the region perceive tobacco control as a development issue. As a result, only a few have included FCTC implementation in national development plans and in areas where they have, there is still much work to be done. Integrating tobacco control policies in national development plans can help set the stage for more sustained and consistent funding for tobacco control programmes, which is critical for ensuring long-term success.

The Framework Convention Alliance for Tobacco Control (FCA) recognises the particular challenge that countries face in translating commitments under the FCTC into action at the national level. With support from the Norwegian Cancer Society, FCA carried out a three-year long project titled “Supporting National Action for WHO FCTC Implementation in Sub Saharan Africa.” The aim of project was to build support for FCTC implementation through education and advocacy with the goal of improving the alignment of tobacco control measures with the SDGs. One of the primary ways this was achieved through the project was focusing on the importance of tobacco taxation as a finance solution for health investment and development.
Five organisations were selected to participate in the project from the following countries:

- CHAD
- GHANA
- NIGERIA
- SENEGAL
- UGANDA

Each organisation focused on increasing awareness of the need to include accelerated implementation of the WHO FCTC via integration of tobacco control programmes in national development plans. The projects leveraged a number of tactics to achieve their outcomes. The tactics generally focused on, building the capacity of government officials, civil society and development agencies to understand and advocate for tobacco taxation as a financing tool to help achieve the SDGs.

Although the organisations shared a common overarching goal, each organisation and country adopted a unique approach to achieve success in their respective regions. Below is a summary of some of the key outcomes generated in each country.
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IN CHAD, the Association pour la Defenses des Consommateurs (ADC) has made significant progress in mobilising decision-makers to recognise tobacco taxation as a solution to address sustainable development. As a result of sustained efforts, the taxation of tobacco products is now included in the government’s multi-sectorial strategic plan for tobacco control.

Over the course of the grant period, ADC was able to build upon their past successes and achievements. Through the project, ADC effectively advocated for the allocation of a specific percentage of tobacco taxes that were collected under the 2019 finance law for the National Tobacco Control Programme, the National Committee Against Smoking, the NCDs control/prevention programme and for Universal Health Coverage (UHC). As part of their efforts, ADC advocated for the creation of a special committee for the dispersion and allocation of funds. Over the past three years, we have seen Chad achieve a number of policy wins as part of this project including:

→ The Ministry of Health sent a letter to the President of Chad requesting that the tax allocation of XAF$100 (approximately US$0.18) per pack of cigarettes be used to fund UHC in 2018.

→ In 2019, ADC was invited to participate in a budget meeting for the first time. During the meeting The Ministries of Health and Finance reached a consensus that allowed for the allocation of a specific percentage of tobacco taxes to the National Tobacco Control Programme, the National Committee Against Smoking, the non-communicable diseases (NCDs) control/prevention programme and UHC.

→ During the 2020 Budget Framework Sessions, a five percent increase of the excise duty tax was approved. Under this agreement a tax of XAF$100 (approximately US$0.18) per packet of cigarettes was also approved and specifically earmarked for financing UHC. Members of the National Assembly of Chad unanimously adopted a new law establishing the National Health Insurance Fund (CNAS). CNAS will allow the distribution of the funds from tobacco taxes to be used to finance UHC programmes including the National Programme for Tobacco, Alcohol, and Drug Control.
IN GHANA, Vision for Alternative Development (VALD) has been working for years to help better position tobacco control as a development priority in the country. As part of the project VALD worked to engage key decision-makers by developing a tax campaign that was aired on one of the most widely listened to television stations in Ghana with the aim to increase tax revenues in the 2020 Budget Statement. This ignited interest from various media sources and called for further discussions from the Ministry of Finance and Tax Policy Unit. Though VALD did not get the end result that they hoped due to it being an election year in Ghana, VALD has made significant inroads on the issue and is well recognised and respected as a leading advocate in the context of the SDGs and NCD Prevention and Control. Despite facing a number of challenges, VALD continues to work toward:

→ Further mobilising national NCDs stakeholders, tobacco control advocates and government officials.

→ Increasing the engagement and involvement of stakeholders in developing tobacco control advocacy strategies.

→ Improving engagement with the Deputy Minister of Health, who recently gave an official statement to continue considering tax increases for health promotion and the National Health Insurance during the National Meeting on NCDs.

→ Meeting with the National Development Planning Commission to discuss their proposal to mainstream tobacco taxes in the next 4-year development plan.
IN NIGERIA, a nation-wide advocacy campaign was developed by The Nigerian Tobacco Control Alliance (NTCA) that led to a better understanding of the alignment between tobacco control and the SDGs. The campaign resulted in significant progress in terms of policy reform that recognised tobacco control as a development issue. The campaign's success was largely the result of efforts to improve the capacity of development-based organisations and networks in Nigeria to promote tobacco tax increases in the context of the SDGs. The NTCA capacity building efforts and tax advocacy campaign resulted in:

→ Tobacco control being integrated in the government’s SDG plan in 2018 and 2019 and subsequently fostering relationships between NTCA, the WHO and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP).

→ The approval of the National Tobacco Control Regulations by the National Assembly in 2019 which stipulate that licensing fees for tobacco are to be paid into a National Tobacco Control Fund. Within the Fund, the fees will be used for the implementation of tobacco control related activities by the Nigerian Government.

→ A commitment from the National Tobacco Control Committee to integrate tobacco control into their SDG work. This was achieved through engaging members of NTCA during the country's National Tobacco Control committee meeting. Committee engagement was deemed a top priority as members of the Committee hold influential positions across various ministries, departments, and agencies.
IN SENEGAL, Ligue Sénégalaise de lutte contre le tabac (LISTAB) played a vital role in engaging the government to ensure tobacco control was prioritised within the SDGs. The organisation focused on building the capacity of the Senegalese Government and members of the Senegalese Parliament to better understand the link between tobacco control and sustainable development. This was achieved by:

→ Meeting with key officials from Government and the UNDP to discuss key strategies that encourage investment in sustainable funding mechanisms for tobacco control and NCDs.

→ Conducting a capacity building workshop on tobacco taxation outlining how it can be an innovative financing tool for tobacco control and NCDs prevention work.

→ LISTAB also advocated for the increase of tobacco taxes to generate funds for tobacco control and NCD programmes.

As a result of these initiatives, for the first time:

• Key government officials, UNDP representatives and civil society agreed to discuss strategies to encourage investment in sustainable funding mechanisms for tobacco control and NCDs.

• The technical advisor at the Ministry of Health committed to being both a champion and advocate for increasing tobacco taxation.

• The Secretary General of the Government agreed to explore how to position tobacco control as a national priority, including various types of tobacco taxation mechanisms that could be enacted.
UNDER THE LEADERSHIP of Uganda National Health Users/Consumers (UNHCO), a group of civil society advocates came together and carried out a budget advocacy campaign in Uganda. The campaign called on Uganda’s leaders (ministries, departments and agencies) to increase tobacco taxes and earmark the tax revenue generated to help finance UHC. By creating a coalition around the issue, the organisations were able to achieve:

The campaign called on Uganda’s leaders to increase tobacco taxes and earmark the tax revenue generated to help finance UHC

→ An amendment to Uganda’s 2020 Tobacco control Act that includes provisions for a tobacco taxation mechanism. The new mechanism taxes processed and unprocessed tobacco leaves exported out of Uganda at $US0.8 dollars (approximately UGX$3000) per kilogram.

→ The Ministry of Finance and Planning and Economic Development (MFPED) adopted UNHCO recommendations that tobacco control be established as a priority.

→ MFPED also agreed to help advocate for tobacco tax increases for health programmes under the countries Domestic Revenue Mobilisation Strategy, the National Development Authority, and the National Development Plan III.
FINAL THOUGHTS

Each of the five countries has made significant progress when it comes to policy, legislative advances and including tobacco control in national development plans. The projects have touched on a number of policy areas, including tobacco taxation, tobacco tax increases, licensing fees being paid into national tobacco control funds, and generally, better aligning FCTC implementation with the SDGs. In most cases, civil society organisations were successful in positioning themselves as credible sources of information and as leading stakeholders in taxation and budgetary issues. They also established themselves as ‘players’ who can help fostering inter-sectoral dialogue on tobacco control measures, especially when it comes to aligning tobacco control with the SDGs.

Data on the costs of tobacco use and the costs and benefits of scaled-up FCTC implementation remain a critical component for building a case for investment in tobacco control measures in these countries. Its importance for increasing the receptivity of stakeholders within economic sectors of the government to take action on tobacco control cannot be understated.

Despite the numerous successes across the project groups, more work remains around engaging and educating governments to help better align FCTC implementation with the SDGs. Achieving success in this area is a long-term process that requires systemic change and sustained investment to achieve optimal outcomes. Through the efforts of the project teams and the civil society organisation involved, the groundwork has been laid for future progress.
The Framework Convention Alliance (FCA) would like to acknowledge and thank the Norwegian Cancer Society (NCS) for their generous funding contribution toward supporting national action for World Health Organization (WHO) Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (FCTC) implementation in Sub Saharan Africa.