

- Framework
Convention on
Tobacco Control

UPDATE

A WORLDLY POINT OF VIEW

EVERY 11 MINUTES

EVERY 11 MINUTES, A CANADIAN DIES FROM TOBACCO USE. Every 10 minutes, two Canadian teenagers start smoking cigarettes; one of them will lose her life because of it. Yearly, more than a thousand Canadians who never even smoked die — from exposure to tobacco smoke. Thousands more are diagnosed with illnesses related to tobacco use. Year in and year out, more than 45,000 Canadians perish — because of tobacco.

It doesn't have to be that way. Tobacco use is the single most preventable cause of premature death and disease in Canada.

In April of 2001, the Government of Canada stepped up its efforts to ensure that Canada ultimately will be smoke-free — with the launch of the Federal Tobacco Control Strategy. This Strategy, representing the most significant effort Canada has ever undertaken to fight the tobacco epidemic, brings a comprehensive, integrated and sustained approach to tobacco control.

These communiqués detail some of the initiatives connected to the Federal Tobacco Control Strategy.

initiatives

A Worldly Point of View

Canada was the first industrialized country to adopt a comprehensive national strategic approach, including a legislative and regulatory framework, to reducing tobacco use. Canada implemented pertinent tobacco control measures (blended with elements borrowed from other countries such as Norway, New Zealand and the United States) to derive a robust strategy which ultimately has earned Canada a reputation as a world leader in tobacco control.

Recognizing that millions of people around the world die or are disabled each year from tobacco use and exposure, and that those most impacted are increasingly from developing countries, Canada has also moved to support capacity-building internationally. Yearly Health

Canada donates grant monies to the World Health Organization (WHO) in connection with its Tobacco Free Initiative, as well as to the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO) in connection with programmes that focus on reducing smoking. Canada also frequently presents at internationally — oriented symposia and conferences on tobacco control.

The Framework Convention on Tobacco Control

Since 2000, Canada has assumed a leadership role in the development of the first international public health treaty, the Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (FCTC). This

treaty addresses the fact that, globally, tobacco use is a leading cause of preventable illness, disability and premature death which, if left unchecked, will kill about 500 million people (70% of them in developing regions) by the year 2030. The FCTC will commit signatory countries to collective action and co-operation in tobacco control, across a variety of issues — from tobacco packaging, labelling, advertising and sponsorship, to illicit trade, taxes, sales to youth, surveillance and research.

Canada was very active throughout the three years of negotiations that led to the adoption by WHO of the FCTC. So were Canadian non-governmental organizations (NGOs), as well as NGOs from developing countries (whose presence at the negotiations was made possible in part by Canada's support for NGO participation in

the negotiating process, and by sponsorship of their travel costs). Many of the provisions of the FCTC were modelled on Canadian legislation or programming, and the Canadian delegation was particularly instrumental in obtaining agreement upon strong provisions for health warning labels on tobacco packaging.

This is an excellent example of how Canada, working closely with others through the multilateral system, can share its expertise and leadership to curb a global health threat. Canada is proud to sign this important treaty.

— *The Honourable Bill Graham, Minister of Foreign Affairs, 2003*