

**Knowledge Sharing Workshop on
Tobacco Control Policies for OIC Member States**

Concept Paper

14-16 December 2016

İstanbul

Introduction

Tobacco is one of the biggest threats to public health, in that, not only damaging the quality of human life but also increasing the healthcare cost attributable to smoking. According to the latest figures by the World Health Organization (WHO), the prevalence is sharply increasing in developing countries particularly in Eastern Mediterranean and African countries, though there has been an apparent decline in prevalence in several countries.

Tobacco use still remains the most preventable risk factor of non-communicable diseases, yet it increasingly continues to damage more people than ever. With an aim to reduce the growing effects of tobacco use through strengthening tobacco control policies, WHO implemented the Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (FCTC) as a binding global treaty which provides a strategic framework on the implementation of tobacco control policies. After it was opened for signatures in 2003, it reached 180 signatories who pledged political commitment to the treaty. In that sense, it is a widely acknowledged treaty which obliges the parties to prioritize public health issues while developing tobacco control policies.

Following FCTC obligations, MPOWER package consisting of six tobacco control measures was introduced in 2008 to assist countries to fully accomplish FCTC obligations in reducing demand for tobacco. It covers different issues so as to design a multidimensional effective tobacco policy developed in response to specific conditions of the countries. MPOWER helps developed countries to strengthen their policy implementations while contributing to design a whole policy process in developing countries in which the tobacco industry seeks for new markets and opportunities.

According to OIC Strategic Health Program of Action 2014-2023, Global Youth Tobacco Survey have shown that the prevalence of tobacco among youth was more than 20% in the half of OIC countries. Although all OIC countries ratified WHO FCTC, tobacco prevalence is remarkably increasing and leading to other health problems.

As opposed to the essential value of leading a healthy life in Islam, majority of Muslims do not hesitate to inhale tobacco products whose negative impacts have already proven to be harmful. Although the Qur'an does not specifically prohibit smoking, it says "And do not be cast into ruin by your own hands" (Surat al-Baqarah, 2:195), and warns about its harms to society and individuals. Likewise, it encourages to promote and maintain healthy life in society.

The global epidemic of smoking is striking most of the Islamic countries due to the cruel strategies of tobacco industry. The studies indicate that Islamic countries, where the percentage of young population is high, are the targets of growing tobacco industry.

Among the Islamic countries, Turkey has notably strived to endorse smoke-free law immediately after signing FCTC in 2004. Thanks to the continuous commitment of both the government and civil society to FCTC, and so MPOWER, smoking prevalence drastically declined from 31.2% to 27.1% between 2008 and 2012. This comprehensive national initiative not only covers smoking cessation interventions but also free treatment and rehabilitation services for those who want to quit.

Turkey owns its success mainly to increasing tobacco awareness gradually through public education campaigns, which is followed by adopting 100% smoke-free law covering all indoor places such as restaurants, workplaces, and teahouses as well as public transport vehicles. While doing so, tobacco control legislation system imposed restrictive bans on tobacco advertising, promotion, and sponsorship.

In this regard and in order to constitute a common ground on tobacco control policy with the examples of Turkish evidence-based experiences, SESRIC (Statistical, Economic and Social Research and Training for Islamic Countries), Ministry of Health (MoH) of Turkey and Turkish Green Crescent Society will jointly organize the Knowledge Sharing Workshop on Tobacco Control Policies" on 14-16 December 2016 in İstanbul. This three day program will cover the essentials of comprehensive tobacco control policies, and it will encourage cooperation and sharing expertise in tobacco-related problems among OIC Member States.

The workshop will be followed by another long term expert training project in which SESRIC, MoH Turkey and Turkish Green Crescent experts will hold workshops for tobacco experts at the Ministries of Health's of selected OIC Member Countries and organize study visits to the selected OIC Member Countries. A preliminary study will be carried out in the selection of the countries in reference to priorities and thematic areas to be determined in this

capacity building program. In the framework of comprehensive and effective tobacco control policies, these workshops will facilitate further contribution and expertise, which will eventually create an international collaboration against undesired consequences of tobacco epidemic.

Objectives

The objectives of the program are as follows:

- Enlarge the understanding of effective tobacco control policies in compliance with WHO FCTC and MPOWER components;
- Increase the capacity of professionals in the areas of tobacco epidemic, interventions, and taxation in the selected ministries of OIC Member Countries;
- Exchange knowledge and experiences on tobacco control policy implementations;
- Discuss and evaluate the current national capacities of OIC Member States in adopting MPOWER measures;
- Share the best practices and challenges of Turkey in developing and implementing the tobacco legislation system;
- Improve technical capacity on dealing with the fiscal issues such as taxation and trade control;
- Strengthen the monitoring and surveillance systems in the control of tobacco epidemic;
- Recognize communication approaches to educate and inform the public about tobacco use, and see effective mass media campaigns in practice;
- Observe the actual implementation of Turkish tobacco control system in real environments such as Tobacco and Alcohol Market Regulatory Authority and MoH Turkey smoking cessation centers.

Participants Profile

The participants will be officials from the Ministries of Health and Ministries of Finance in OIC Member States, who are responsible for evaluating, drafting, enforcing, and implementing tobacco control policies. It is expected to have two representatives from each country, for the Knowledge Sharing Workshop.

Expected Outcomes

This capacity building program is intended to provide assistance in building and developing strategies on tobacco control policy implementations for OIC Member States. At the end of this three day program, the participants are expected to:

- Be able to discuss and assess the challenges on building and maintaining effective tobacco control measures;
- Enhance the knowledge and expertise on fiscal policy, restrictions on smoking, and bans on advertising;
- Learn best practices for comprehensive tobacco policy implementations.

Date & Venue

The Knowledge Sharing Workshop will be held on 14-16 December 2016 in Turkish Green Crescent Society Headquarters, İstanbul, Turkey.

Supporting Organizations

Ministry of Health of Turkey

Ministry of Finance of Turkey

Tobacco and Alcohol Market Regulatory Authority

TurkStat (Turkish Statistical Institute)

Contact

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