**Tobacco control at the heart of preventing NCDs: the success story of the WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control**

Side event at the occasion of the 3rd UN High-level Meeting on NCDs

Thursday 27 September 2018

8:00-9:30 am

Room CR11, United Nations Headquarters

**Introduction**

The aim of this side event is to:

- highlight the centrality of tobacco control in the global effort to reduce the burden of Noncommunicable diseases;
- illustrate the WHO FCTC as a powerful tool to curb the tobacco epidemic around the world
- shed light on innovative approaches in tobacco control that are not (yet) included in the FCTC.

So far we have 10 speakers confirmed. They represent WHO (2), national governments (3) and civil society organisations (5).

**Format**

The event will be moderated by Mr Herbert Barnard, director of the department of International Affairs of the Netherlands Ministry of Health, Welfare and Sport (and representing the Netherlands in the WHO Executive Board).

After the opening and introduction by the moderator there will be 4 panels. It is important to inform you that the so called head table in the room has only five seats. So presenters will on sit at the head table only for the durance of the panel they are in. Inevitably there will be a change of people at the head table after each panel (except for the moderator).

**First panel**

After the opening and introduction by the moderator, the first panel will further set the scene.

Panellists:

- Dr Svetlana Akselrod, WHO Assistant Director-General for Noncommunicable Diseases and Mental Health
- Dr Vera da Costa e Silva, Head of the FCTC Convention Secretariat

**Second panel**

In this panel representatives of 2 (or 3-4) Member States will present on tobacco control in their countries, and the role of the WHO FCTC in this context.
Panellists:

- Dr Oleg Salagay, Deputy Minister of Health, Russian Federation
- ....
- Mr Paul Blokhuis, State Secretary for Health, Welfare and Sport, The Netherlands

Third panel

In the FCTC it is explicitly mentioned that civil society ‘is essential in achieving the objective of the Convention and its protocols’. Representatives of two civil society organisations will set out how they contribute to achieving the objective of the FCTC.

Panellists:

- Professor David Wood, President of the World Heart Federation
- Ms Laura Hucks, Senior Programme Manager (International Tobacco Control), Cancer Research UK

Fourth panel

In the last panel three innovative approaches in tobacco control will receive attention: plain packaging, a licensing system for selling tobacco, and tobacco free finance.

Panellists:

- Professor Brendan Murphy, Chief Medical Officer of Australia
- Dr Matti Rautalahti, Secretary-General of the Finnish Medical Society (Duodecim)
- Dr Bronwyn King, CEO of Tobacco Free Portfolios
- Mr Xander den Uyl, Board Member on behalf of pensioners at Dutch pension fund ABP

The moderator will briefly introduce each speaker, as you can see in the following pages. This introduction is included in the speaking time of each presenter (as reflected in the time schedule on page 3).

It is by no means recommended or expected to show slides (PowerPoint presentation). However, a few presenters have asked for the possibility to support their presentations with slides. In view of the limited time available for each presentation, 3-5 slides should be the absolute maximum.

If presenters wish to use slides, they should send them (as PowerPoint Presentations, not as PDF) to pj.d.coninck@minvws.nl as soon as possible (at the latest Wednesday 27 September 22:00 US time).

Only if time permits there will be room for questions from the floor.

Contact persons

- For content related questions: Pieter de Coninck (+31 6 504 768 20 or pj.d.coninck@minvws.nl)
- For logistical questions: Jessie Barentsen (+1 646 492 2221 or jessie.barentsen@minbuza.nl)
Time schedule

At this moment we have 10 presenters confirmed. The duration of the side event is 90 minutes. This already implies limited speaking time for each presenter. Including and closure of the side event and 3 changes of people sitting behind the head table, the following time schedule is foreseen.

8:00 – 8:05 Opening and introduction by Moderator
8:05 – 8:12 Dr Svetlana Akselrod
8:12 – 8:19 Dr Vera da Costa e Silva
8:19 – 8:20 change of panels
8:21 – 8:28 Dr Oleg Salagay
8:28 – 8:35 Mr Paul Blokhuis
8:35 – 8:36 change of panels
8:37 – 8:44 Professor David Wood
8:44 – 8:51 Ms Laura Hucks
8:51 - 8:52 change of panels
8:53 – 9:00 Professor Brendan Murphy
9:00 – 9:07 Dr Matti Rautalahti
9:07 – 9:14 Dr Bronwyn King
9:14 – 9:21 Mr Xander den Uyl
9:21 – 9:23 Closing by Moderator

If one or more speakers will be added to panel 2 the time schedule will be revised. We trust that confirmed speakers will be flexible and be able to shorten the duration of their contribution.
Opening and introduction by Mr Herbert Barnard, Moderator

Mr Herbert Barnard

Ladies and gentlemen,

It is my pleasure to welcome you all to this side event on the WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (FCTC). The Netherlands and the Convention Secretariat are happy to organize this event just before the opening of the 3rd UN High-level Meeting on NCDs. We are equally happy that Australia, Cancer Research UK and the World Heart Federation are cosponsors.

In the title of this side event the FCTC is called a success story. I am convinced that the presentations today will illustrate why. Tobacco control at the heart of preventing NCDs. We will also hear about this.

The presentations today will mainly focus around two themes. One is how the FCTC has strengthened and inspired national tobacco control policies. In spite of the many successful examples, when it comes to the implementation this first global public health treaty at national level there still is room for improvement.

The FCTC was negotiated in the early years of this century and millennium and has not been amended since then. The most effective and evidence based interventions, such as pricing and a ban on tobacco advertising and sponsorship, are included in the FCTC. But since the adoption of the FCTC in 2003 we have also witnessed new, innovative approaches in tobacco control, such as regulation of the retail channel and tobacco free finance. We thought it would be good to pay attention to some of these innovative approaches.

The presenters in this side event represent Governments and civil society organisations. The active participation of civil society in this event is fully in line with the FCTC. In Article 2 of the Convention it stipulated that “The participation of civil society is essential in achieving the objective of the Convention and its protocols”.

This side event will consist of four panels.
First panel

The first panel consists of two representative of WHO. Our first speaker will be Dr Svetlana Akselrod, to be followed by Dr Vera da Costa e Silva. Both presentations will set the scene for what comes after.

Dr Svetlana Akselrod is the WHO Assistant Director-General for Noncommunicable Diseases and Mental Health. She was trained as a paediatrician and has worked in the Russian Government and the WHO Regional Office for Europe before being appointed in her current position in 2017.

Dr Akselrod, this must be a heyday for you, your area of work being the subject of a UN High-level Meeting.

We invited you to touch upon the centrality of tobacco control in the fight against NCDs: Tobacco control at the heart of preventing NCDs.

Dr Akselrod … [give the floor to Dr Akselrod]

Dr Svetlana Akselrod

We now move to Dr Vera da Costa da Silva, Head of the FCTC Convention Secretariat.

Dr Da Costa e Silva, could you please give us a brief overview of the development of the FCTC since its entry into force in January 2005, and share with us your views on how the treaty should further develop in the near future? [give the floor to Dr Da Costa e Silva]
Second panel

In this panel representatives of 2 Member States will present on tobacco control in their countries, and the role of the WHO FCTC in this context.

**Dr Oleg Salagay** is the first presenter in this second panel. He is Deputy Minister of Health of the Russian Federation. Dr Salagay has degrees in Medicines and Law and extensive experience in international health policy. In 2016 he was President of the seventh Conference of the Parties of the FCTC, taking place in Moscow.

Dr Salagay, in recent years smoking has been drastically reduced in your country. We are curious to hear about the role of the FCTC in this.

[give the floor to Dr Salagay]

Dr Oleg Salagay

**Mr Paul Blokhuis**, State Secretary for Health, Welfare and Sport in the Netherlands. He holds this position since October 2017 when a new Coalition Government took office. The current government of the Netherlands is very ambitious on tobacco control and wants to work towards a smoke free generation.

Mr Blokhuis: would you please share with us your goal of a smoke free generation in the Netherlands and address the role of the FCTC in this context.

[give the floor to Mr Blokhuis]

Mr Paul Blokhuis
**Third panel**

In the FCTC it is explicitly mentioned that civil society ‘is essential in achieving the objective of the Convention and its protocols’. In this panel representatives of two civil society organisations set out how they contribute to achieving the objective of the FCTC.

**Professor David Wood**, President of the World Heart Federation, is our next speaker. Professor Wood has a long academic career in cardiovascular medicine. In January 2017 he became President of the World Heart Federation, which is evolving into an influential and effective global advocacy organization for the fight against cardiovascular disease.

I would like to invite Professor Wood to share with us how the World Heart Federation under his leadership is supporting the global fight against smoking.

Professor Wood... [give the floor to Professor Wood]

![Professor David Wood](image)

**Ms Laura Hucks**, representing Cancer Research UK (CRUK), is our next speaker. She has a master’s degree from the London School of Economics, and has worked for various organisations before joining Cancer Research UK in 2017. Here she is Senior Programme Manager, in the area of International Tobacco Control.

Cancer Research UK, a cancer research and awareness charity in the United Kingdom, is not only active at national level. Ms Hucks will present on the work to support tax reform in low and middle income countries, funded by Cancer Research UK.

Ms Hucks ... [give the floor to Ms Hucks]

![Ms Laura Hucks](image)
Fourth panel

In the last panel some innovative approaches in tobacco control will receive attention: plain packaging, a licensing system for selling tobacco and tobacco free finance.

Professor Brendan Murphy is our next speaker. Professor Murphy is Australia’s Chief Medical Officer.

Australia is a country with a solid track record in tobacco control, both at the national and international level. In recent years the eyes of the world were on Australia because it was the first country to introduce so called plain packaging for tobacco products. As such plain packaging is not an obligation under the FCTC. Plain packaging is mentioned in the Guidelines on Article 11, adopted in 2012, as something to be considered by Parties to the Convention.

I think we all are aware that Australia’s decision was followed by massive legal action by the tobacco industry. However, Professor Murphy will focus his presentation on the impact of this measure on smoking rates and the perception of smoking in Australia.

Professor Murphy... [give the floor to Professor Murphy] 

Professor Brendan Murphy

Our next speaker is Dr Matti Rautalahti. He is the Secretary General of the Finnish Medical Society Duodecim. He is also a ministerial advisor.

Finland is a very advanced country in the domain of tobacco control. Smoking prevalence in Finland is among the lowest in the world. A tobacco and nicotine free Finland by the year 2030 is now the official target of Finland’s Government. To this end a wide range of measures is being employed.

Dr Rautalahti will inform us about one intervention: In 2009 Finland introduced a licensing system for selling tobacco.
Dr Rautalahti, please tell us about this. [give the floor to Dr Rautalahti]

Dr Matti Rautalahti

**Dr Bronwyn King** is our next speaker. She is an Australian oncologist and founder and CEO of Tobacco Free Portfolios, a not-for-profit organisation that collaborates with the world’s largest financial organisations to drive global change towards tobacco free finance.

Dr King and her colleagues have already achieved substantial success. Pension funds, insurance companies, banks and other financial organisations are increasingly divesting tobacco and cutting their financial links with the tobacco industry.

Dr King will explain how her mission for tobacco free finance contributes to achieve the objective of the FCTC. And: is the tobacco industry getting nervous?

Dr King... [give the floor to Dr King]

Dr Bronwyn King

The presentation of our last speaker, **Mr Xander den Uyl**, dovetails particularly well with that of Dr King. Mr Den Uyl studied economy, and specialised in pensions. In his professional life he has worked for several organisations in the public sector. Dutch pension fund ABP was one of them. Currently he is representing pensioners in the board of ABP.
In January this year ABP announced it will sell all its tobacco assets. Mr Den Uyl, could you please share with us the process leading to this decision. What were the arguments for and against? Why did the arguments in favour of ABPs divestment from tobacco prevail in the end?

[give the floor to Mr Den Uyl]

Mr Xander den Uyl

Closing remarks by Moderator

- Thank all presenters for their excellent contributions
- Thank the audience for joining us here today.
- I will not try to summarize what we have heard today, by make two remarks.
- One: hope that all present here agree that the title of this side event was well chosen and by no means an exaggeration
- Two: better and stronger implementation of the FCTC at country level remains necessary, but let us also be open to innovative approaches. As it is stipulated in the FCTC: “Parties are encouraged to implement measures beyond those required by this Convention.”

Wishing you all a beautiful day.