

**Statement delivered by
Ms Carmen Willen
External Relations Officer of the Secretariat to the World Health Organization Framework
Convention on Tobacco Control
on the occasion of the
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Excellencies,
Distinguished Delegates,
Ladies and Gentlemen, Colleagues, Dear Friends,

The WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (FCTC) enshrines a comprehensive range of multisectoral evidence-based measures that aim to reduce tobacco use and exposure to tobacco smoke. At the same time, it also recognizes the need to promote economically viable alternatives to tobacco production as a way to prevent possible adverse social and economic impacts on populations whose livelihoods depend on tobacco production. Moreover, Parties to the Convention agreed to have due regard to the protection of the environment and the health of persons in respect of tobacco cultivation and manufacture.

Many countries derive additional revenue from growing, processing, managing and exporting tobacco. Such revenue must be weighed carefully against the social, health, economic and environmental harms tobacco inflicts upon individuals and societies. It is worth noting, some tobacco-producing countries are shifting crop production away from tobacco toward new sources of revenue. Such shifts can deliver widespread benefits to societies; they can provide workers with higher rates of return, increase food security, improve the health of farmers by reducing their exposure to nicotine and pesticides, reduce industry exploitation of labour, keep children in school, protect the environment and, of course, improve population's health.

Recognizing these cross-SDG benefits can spur attitudinal and policy changes around tobacco production. Tobacco-producing countries must be supported with technical guidance to transition. Alternative sources of financing alternative livelihoods, such as dedicating a portion of domestic tobacco tax revenues or using development impact bonds, should be explored.

The tobacco industry remains the biggest threat to the full implementation of the Convention. There is a fundamental and irreconcilable conflict between the interests of the industry and public health. The tobacco industry produces and promotes a product that has been proven to be addictive, to cause disease and death, and to give rise to a variety of social ills, including increased poverty. Therefore, we would like to stress that policies promoting economically sustainable alternative livelihoods should be protected from commercial and other vested interests of the tobacco industry in accordance with Article 5.3 of the WHO FCTC and its guidelines.

In line with decisions by the Conference of the Parties to the WHO FCTC, the Secretariat looks forward to strengthening its existing collaboration with FAO and other international organizations with expertise in this area in order to facilitate a systematic and comprehensive approach to implementation of Articles 17 and 18 of the WHO FCTC.

To conclude, the Secretariat congratulates the Director-General elect Qu Dongyu and looks forward to future collaboration.

Thank you.