

New measures to strengthen tobacco control

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UN News, Punta de Este, Uruguay, 22 November 2010—Parties to a United Nations convention on tobacco have adopted a number of new measures to strengthen the control of tobacco use worldwide, including regulating flavouring ingredients that increase attractiveness of tobacco products.

Parties to the UN World Health Organization Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (WHO FCTC) unanimously adopted the measures at the 4th session of the conference of the parties to the convention which ended yesterday in Punta Del Este, Uruguay.

State parties to the convention also agreed that services aimed at enabling people to stop smoking should be integrated into national health systems to make them easily available for more smokers who wish to quit.

They also decided that there should be mechanisms to build capacity to support education, communication and training with a view to raising public awareness and promoting social change on tobacco use.

A report on price and taxation policy of tobacco products was discussed and delegates agreed to establish a working group tasked with examining the issue further and, if possible, prepare guidelines for implementation.

Parties to the convention also decided that work on economically sustainable alternatives to tobacco growing will be extended in order to find appropriate policy options and recommendations.

Negotiations on a protocol to combat illicit trade in tobacco products should continue with the aim of concluding it in 2012, it was decided.

Delegates also adopted decisions on promoting the treaty's implementation and strengthening assistance to developing countries to meet their obligations under the convention.

They also decided that further work is required on the control and prevention of smokeless tobacco products and 'electronic cigarettes'; liability with regard to the health effects of tobacco consumption and cross-border advertisement.

The conference is the governing body of the WHO FCTC and, as of this month, is comprised of 171 parties to the convention. The WHO FCTC is the first international treaty negotiated under the auspices of WHO and provides a new

legal dimension for international health cooperation.