



WORLD HEALTH ORGANIZATION

NOTE FOR THE PRESS

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TOBACCO TREATY DRAWS 41 SIGNATURES IN FIRST WEEK

NORWAY FIRST COUNTRY TO ACCEPT TREATY

The World Health Organization Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (FCTC) was signed by 40 countries and the European Community during the first week it opened for signature. Norway became the first country to accept the treaty.

"The fact that so many countries signed the Framework Convention on Tobacco Control in its first week demonstrates how strongly it is supported and how meaningful it is to diverse populations and situations," said Dr Gro Harlem Brundtland, Director-General, World Health Organization. "This group of early signatories is exemplary and others are encouraged to follow suit in the shortest possible time frame. It is only through a concerted worldwide effort that we can make global tobacco control happen. The benefits for health will be immense," she added.

The FCTC's demand and supply reduction measures will protect billions in present and future generations worldwide from the devastating impact of tobacco consumption and exposure to tobacco smoke. Tobacco kills nearly 5 million people per year. Unless strong action is taken, the global escalation in smoking, including amongst children, adolescents and women, will impose an even larger burden of disease, disability and death, particularly on developing countries.

The countries that have signed the FCTC to date are: Algeria, Bangladesh, Botswana, Brazil, Burundi, Czech Republic, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Denmark, Egypt, Finland, France, Gambia, Ghana, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Islamic Republic of Iran, Israel, Italy, Kuwait, Luxembourg, Malta, Marshall Islands, Mauritius, Mongolia, Mozambique, Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Palau, Paraguay, Qatar, Senegal, South Africa, Spain, Sweden, Thailand, the United Kingdom, Uruguay and Yemen. The European Community signed the FCTC as a regional economic integration organization.

High level officials, including a vice president and ministers, from 28 countries, plus the European Community, signed the Convention at a formal ceremony at WHO's Geneva headquarters on 16 June, the first day the treaty opened for signature.

In addition to signing the FCTC, Norway accepted it on 16 June. Ratification, acceptance, approval and accession are international acts by which states that have already signed the FCTC establish

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