



**NHIS** GLOBAL FORUM  
**2025**

# International Tobacco Control Legal and Policy Approaches

Benn McGrady

Public Health Law and Policies Unit | Health Promotion Department  
World Health Organization



**World Health  
Organization**

Public Health Law and Policies Unit  
Health Promotion Department

# International tobacco control framework

## WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (WHO FCTC)

First use of WHO treaty-making power

Framework Convention, supplemented by Protocol and Guidelines

Binding international Commitments

**United Nations** high level meetings establish political commitments

Sustainable Development Goal 3.a on reducing prevalence of tobacco use



# International tobacco control framework

**Cross-cutting** obligations to implement comprehensive national tobacco control strategies, plans and programmes

Specific obligations, with a primary focus on demand reduction, including taxes, labelling measures, comprehensive bans on advertising, promotion and sponsorship, smoke-free area laws, cessation assistance

Guidelines assist in implementation of obligations

Core focus is regulatory (not voluntary), including protecting policies from vested and commercial interests of the tobacco industry



# Role of litigation

**Article 19** of the WHO FCTC governs liability

Parties shall consider taking legislative action or promoting existing laws to deal with industry liability

Parties to cooperate in exchanging information

Liability the subject of expert report to the COP and of an ongoing Expert Group

National lawsuits, particularly in the USA, a foreunner to the global tobacco control movement

# Trends



**About 1.25 billion adult tobacco users**

56 countries on track to reduce prevalence by 30% by 2030

Large declines in countries with comprehensive tobacco control policies

But rapid increase in uptake by children of products such as e-cigarettes

Republic of Korea down from 35.9% in 2000 to projected 17.4% in 2025