



Using Global Tools to Achieve a Tobacco-Free California

California is a leader in tobacco control and has set an ambitious goal to end the tobacco epidemic by reducing the influence of the tobacco industry as well as the availability and use of tobacco products. In the United States (U.S.) and globally, the tobacco industry continues to use deceptive marketing tactics to addict new tobacco users and infringe upon human rights, including attainment of the highest standards of health. There are several globally agreed upon United Nations (U.N.) health, development and human rights norms and targets that can serve as tools to accelerate local progress towards eradicating the tobacco industry's influence and ensuring the highest health standards for all citizens achieving this goal. Utilizing these established tools allows for a reframing of tobacco control information in line with the visions of other public health movements. This fact sheet provides an overview of these global tools and how the California public health community can use them to further tobacco Endgame priorities.

GLOBAL TOOLS

The global community has developed several global tools that, although not all specific to tobacco, can be used to advance health and reduce tobacco use.

Framework Convention on Tobacco Control

What is it?

The World Health Organization (WHO) Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (FCTC) is the first treaty negotiated under the auspices of the WHO. The WHO FCTC is an evidence-based treaty that reaffirms the right of all people to the highest standard of health and to protect future generations from tobacco-related harms.¹



How is it relevant to tobacco control?

The WHO FCTC is a global tobacco treaty, which sets the global standard for best practices to reduce tobacco use and exposure.



How does it apply to California?

The FCTC, ratified by 181 countries, represents global best practices and is the recognized standard for mitigating the tobacco epidemic. The U.S. participated in all FCTC negotiations and was among the 193 WHO Member States that unanimously adopted the FCTC in May 2003. The U.S. went on to sign the FCTC in May 2004.



How can it be utilized in campaigns?

The FCTC, and its individual Articles, can be used to reinforce arguments supporting tobacco endgame campaign objectives. For example, a campaign to address tobacco waste can cite Article 18, which says that governments must consider the environmental impact of tobacco growing, manufacturing, distribution, use and post-use when formulating policies.



¹ https://www.who.int/fctc/text_download/en/

Human Rights Council and the Universal Periodic Review

What is it?

The Human Rights Council (HRC) is the U.N. body responsible for the promotion and protection of human rights. A key feature of the council is the Universal Periodic Review (UPR), a review of the human rights records of every country in the world. All countries, including the U. S., are required to submit reports to this U.N. body.

How is it relevant to tobacco control?

The U.S. is bound to the U.N. Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs, see below) and is a member of U.N. HRC. In July 2017, the HRC adopted a U.N. Resolution on the right of everyone to the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health, urging countries to “strengthen the implementation of the FCTC”. Hence, advocates can use this resolution in conjunction with the U.N. SDGs to call for stronger tobacco control measures at the local level to attain the highest standard of physical and mental health for all community members and comply with the standards in the U.N. Resolution.

How does it apply to California?

Californians can use this tool to promote local tobacco control measures aligned with the FCTC to protect their right to health.

How can it be utilized in campaigns?

In order stay in compliance with the UPR reporting requirements, local campaigns can educate stakeholders on tobacco industry interference and the need to accelerate local tobacco control priorities as a way to protect and improve human rights.



International Convention on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination

What is it?

One of the nine major international human rights treaties, Convention on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (CERD) was created with the goal of “speedily eliminating racial discrimination throughout the world in all its forms and manifestations and of securing understanding of and respect for the dignity of the human person.”

How is it relevant to tobacco control?

It recognizes the “right to public health” under which the government has a duty to address wide racial disparities in the use and impact of tobacco products.

How does it apply to California?

The U.S. has ratified CERD, making it binding federal law applicable in all states.

How can it be utilized in campaigns?

U.S. obligations under CERD can provide strong arguments for banning the sale of menthol cigarettes, which are disproportionately marketed to and consumed by African American smokers.

Sustainable Development Goals

What is it?

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, adopted by all U.N. Member States in 2015, provides a shared blueprint for ending poverty and other deprivations, including strategies that improve health and education, reduce inequality, and spur economic growth.²

How is it relevant to tobacco control?

The SDGs call on countries to reduce deaths from non-communicable diseases (NCDs), including those caused by tobacco, by 1/3 between 2015 and 2030 and to “strengthen the implementation of the FCTC.”

How does it apply to California?

The U.S. has adopted the SDGs and will be held accountable for meeting these goals. As the largest state, California must adopt policies to comply with these goals and is vital to its success.

How can it be utilized in campaigns?

Spokespeople for groups that have higher smoking rates, for example, the LGBTQ+ community, could highlight that current tobacco control efforts will not be enough to reduce NCDs by 1/3 in their community, as required by the U.N. SDGs. This information could be used in a public awareness campaign, or in policies addressing issues like retailer licensing in certain neighborhoods.



² <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/sdgs>

Non-Communicable Disease Global Action Plan



What is it?

The WHO Global Action Plan (GAP) is a strategy to strengthen national efforts to address the burden of NCDs, endorsed by the 66th World Health Assembly. The GAP offers a paradigm shift by providing a road map that will attain nine global targets, including that of a 25% relative reduction in premature mortality from NCDs and a 30% relative reduction in prevalence of tobacco use by 2025.³

How is it relevant to tobacco control?

Tobacco use is the leading preventable risk factor for non-communicable diseases such as cancer, heart disease and diabetes, and is the only risk factor shared by all four main categories of non-communicable diseases (NCDs). Tobacco use accounts for nearly one in six deaths from NCDs.⁴

How does it apply to California?

The U.S. has adopted the NCD GAP, including the obligation to reduce tobacco use in the country by 30% between 2010 and 2025.

How can it be utilized in campaigns?

The NCD GAP provides an opportunity to work with local groups that focus on broader NCD goals. For example, an organization working to reduce tobacco use and initiation could partner with a group focused on physical fitness to develop a campaign to highlight the need to address both issues to adequately reduce NCDs and meet expectations outlined in the NCD GAP.

³ https://www.who.int/nmh/events/ncd_action_plan/en/

⁴ https://www.tobaccofreekids.org/assets/global/pdfs/en/Tobacco_and_NCD_en.pdf



HOW CAN THESE TOOLS HELP IN CALIFORNIA'S ENDGAME INITIATIVE, ESPECIALLY AT THE LOCAL LEVEL?



CONVINCE

Some global tools include concrete obligations for the U.S., which the federal government does not always meet. Advocates can and should argue to decisionmakers and the public that Californians deserve the best protections the world can offer.

COLLABORATE



Advocates can expand anti-tobacco coalitions by recruiting groups with overlapping interests.

EXAMPLE IN ACTION

The Surfrider Foundation, which works to protect the world's oceans, has been heavily involved in tobacco control for years in an effort to keep cigarette butts and other tobacco waste out of our oceans. Such actions help protect the environment and also advances commitments the U.S. has made in international fora like the UN SDGs.

MEASURE



Many global tools include quantifiable targets. Tracking progress and achieving tangible goals can be highly motivating.

The California tobacco control community can, and should, take full advantage of these global governance tools to protect Californians from the tobacco industry and to call for the implementation of new and innovative tobacco control measures that will help achieve a tobacco-free California.

Visit endtobacco.ash.org for more information.