



# Conclusion

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Controlling the tobacco epidemic in the Western Pacific requires strategic coordination, resources and political commitment. The WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control provides a global template for the minimum standards for best practice in tobacco control. Ensuring its ratification and entry into force is the first, and critical step, for Member States. Simultaneously, national capacity for tobacco control needs to be reinforced and developed further, to enable countries to implement the provisions of the Convention. The Convention provides the vision, but the Member States must supply the action, to reduce the harm caused by tobacco use and exposure to tobacco smoke.

Tobacco control is an ongoing process. This Regional Plan of Action takes the process a step further than the previous Action Plan. Whereas the 2000-2004 Plan outlined the basic elements for establishing national capacity to deal with the tobacco epidemic, this current plan directs Member States to consider the comprehensiveness of various interventions. Earlier Action Plans relied on external sources of support to fund country activities. However, this Plan encourages countries to seriously consider national mechanisms to ensure sustainability. Finally, this Plan promotes standardized regional mechanisms

and instruments for surveillance, research, evaluation, information dissemination and advocacy.

Member States in the Western Pacific Region bear a disproportionate health and economic burden caused by tobacco use. Heightened advertising and promotion of tobacco products by the tobacco industry within the Region, and increased trade in tobacco products brought about by liberalization of trade agreements as Member States open up their markets to the forces of globalization connote an even higher toll in the future.

This Regional Plan of Action for Tobacco Control comes at an opportune moment, with the adoption of the international Framework Convention on Tobacco Control. The adoption of the Convention presents the Region with a crucial window of opportunity to make significant progress against the tobacco epidemic through the strategic alignment of national and regional efforts with the Convention.





## Continuation of conclusion

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Member States have a chance to strengthen national programmes and interregional collaboration to effectively address what is fast becoming the single most preventable cause of early death and chronic disability. This opportunity should not be wasted. Too many lives in the Region have already been lost, and too many impoverished families are prevented from improving their lives, by tobacco.

Working together, the optimal approach to counter the tobacco epidemic in the Region can be established.

United, the Member States of the Western Pacific can achieve the vision of a tobacco free Region.



This Regional Action Plan is intended as a critical element to guide Member States towards the implementation of the provisions of the WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control. Through the strategic actions outlined in this plan, it is hoped that Member States will be able to join forces and effectively counter the tobacco epidemic.