

WHO Regional Office for South-East Asia (SEARO) in collaboration with the WHO Country Office in Dhaka and the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, Government of Bangladesh organized a **Regional workshop on MPOWER Policy Package for Strengthening Tobacco Control Efforts from 13 – 16 April 2009** in Dhaka. The workshop was aimed among other things, at;

- a) Sharing the MPOWER Policy Package and to identify appropriate ways for adoption of policies for effective implementation of the WHO FCTC and overall tobacco control programme.
- b) Identifying strategies and appropriate activities to translate the MPOWER policy package into action in the Region.
- c) Suggesting appropriate mechanism for multi-sectoral collaboration at the national level in six areas of MPOWER Policy package.

Delegations comprising policy level officers from Ministries / Departments of Health, Finance, Tax and Revenue, Law and Enforcement of nine of the Regional countries and global partners in tobacco control including Partners of Bloomberg Global initiative for Tobacco Control participated in and contributed to the workshop.

During the workshop, country delegates were apprised about the six MPOWER policies in detail by WHO participants and Bloomberg Initiative partners and each country team made a presentation on the status of implementation of the six policies through a SWOT analysis. In addition, general strategies for effective action in each MPOWER policy were discussed in group. Following the presentation of strategies for each policy were shared with the plenary, each country team drafted one-year plan in accordance with their country plans.

Recommendations and way forward

Through the discussions, review and analysis of the elements of the MPOWER against the status of tobacco control both in the countries and in the Region, the delegates unanimously agree and adopt the following recommendations;

- 1- To Utilize the MPOWER policy package as an important strategic tool for implementation of FCTC, and strengthening of tobacco control activities in general
- 2- To Develop and implement country plans of action in accordance with MPOWER policy package
- 3- To establish national coordination mechanisms for the implementation of country Plans of Action
- 4- To establish in-country coordination between Government and partners in all matters relating to tobacco control.
- 5- To Share material resources and expertise among Member countries to complement the locally available capacity and resources.
- 6- To establish comprehensive and easily accessible cessation services, through the PHC and other settings as applicable and providing necessary training.
- 7- To review current taxation regimes and reformulate to the extent possible within the limits of national laws and enforce a taxation structure for the optimal impact on reduction of prevalence of tobacco consumption.
- 8- To establish a mechanism for regular monitoring, evaluation and reporting of implementation of country Plan of action.

- 9- To institutionalize, where possible, the regular collection, maintenance and dissemination of data on tobacco control activities by integrating monitoring with the national health information system.
- 10- WHO should continue to provide strong support to Member States in developing and implementing their national tobacco control program, through organizing, among other things, national awareness-raising and training workshops on implementation of MPOWER policy package.