



Ministry of Health, Nutrition  
and Indigenous Medicine



**FCTC**  
WHO FRAMEWORK CONVENTION  
ON TOBACCO CONTROL  
S E C R E T A R I A T



**World Health  
Organization**  
Sri Lanka

## Sri Lanka to receive new international support on tobacco control

**Colombo, 28 September 2017**

Sri Lanka has been selected to receive dedicated international support through the United Nations to take action to reduce tobacco use.

Tobacco use is extremely harmful for health and is one of the world's leading causes of premature death. Tobacco use is a cause of many life-threatening diseases including cancer, heart and lung diseases.

Tobacco can also present a significant barrier to national development, as it causes significant economic and environmental impacts. Tobacco control will contribute to Sri Lanka's efforts to achieve the 2030 sustainable development agenda.

The World Health Organization Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (WHO FCTC) is the world's only health treaty, and is dedicated to ending the global tobacco epidemic. The WHO FCTC is a comprehensive blueprint for governments to stop tobacco use in their countries, and 181 countries have ratified the treaty. In November 2003, Sri Lanka became the fourth country in the world to ratify the WHO FCTC.

Through the "FCTC 2030" project, Sri Lanka will receive assistance to undertake a government-wide programme of work to strengthen tobacco control. The project, to run for five-years, will bring international support to Sri Lanka from the WHO FCTC Secretariat, United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and WHO. This will include expert advice, technical assistance and peer support to strengthen tobacco control action.

In welcoming the project to Sri Lanka, the Honorable Minister of Health, Dr Rajitha Senarathne said "Sri Lanka is committed to the WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control and is very grateful to be selected to receive this new support to strengthen our tobacco control efforts. The Government is committed to further reducing smoking rates as well as supporting tobacco farmers to transition to healthier and more productive livelihoods."

The Government of the United Kingdom has generously provided funds under a new project to promote the accelerated implementation of the WHO FCTC in low- and middle-income countries. Sri Lanka is one of 15 countries that will receive dedicated assistance to strengthen tobacco control.

"The United Kingdom is pleased to be supporting Sri Lanka to implement strong tobacco control policies that will promote public health and national development. Sri Lanka was selected to receive this new support in recognition of the political commitment in the country to tackling tobacco use," said the British High Commissioner, Mr James Dauris.

"While Sri Lanka has been able to make strong progress already on tobacco, almost one in two men still use tobacco which puts the health and wellbeing of themselves and their families at risk. Tobacco continues to place a heavy burden on Sri Lanka's health system," said Dr Razia Pendse, WHO Representative to Sri Lanka.

Dr Palitha Abeykoon, the Chairman of the National Authority on Tobacco and Alcohol (NATA) said "Strengthening tobacco taxation, banning the sale of single cigarettes and plain packaging for tobacco are measures that would help significantly reduce tobacco use in Sri Lanka."

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