



TOBACCO CONTROL: SIGNING OF A MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING BETWEEN THE SECRETARIAT OF THE WHO FRAMEWORK CONVENTION ON TOBACCO CONTROL AND SANTE PUBLIQUE FRANCE

Santé publique France and the Secretariat of the WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (WHO FCTC) signed today a memorandum of understanding for collaboration in key areas of work. This agreement concretizes France's commitment with the creation of the first WHO FCTC Knowledge Hub on education, communication, training and public awareness, areas addressed in Article 12 of the WHO FCTC. This Knowledge Hub platform is the first with bilingual French-English content. Santé publique France, designated by the French Ministry of Health, will contribute its expertise to the 182 Parties of the FCTC in order to promote the sharing of knowledge and skills in the areas mentioned.

Tobacco control, a global public health issue

The WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control and its protocols aim to protect present and future generations from the health, social, environmental and economic consequences of tobacco consumption and exposure to tobacco smoke. It provides a framework for the implementation of tobacco control measures by Parties at the national, regional and international levels. The WHO FCTC currently has 182 Parties. Since 2014, the Secretariat of the WHO FCTC has coordinated the establishment of eight Knowledge Hubs in different regions of the world to support Parties in addressing different tobacco control issues.

Long involved in the development, implementation and promotion of tobacco control policies, France is now strengthening its action at the national and international level through the creation of a 9th Knowledge Hub entrusted to Santé publique France.

A 5-year project to strengthen tobacco control actions

In the fight against tobacco, Santé publique France's action is carried out at three levels: surveillance of tobacco-related diseases and estimation of its burden; analysis of smokers' behaviors and production of indicators essential to tobacco control strategies; and implementation and evaluation of prevention actions, such as the social marketing action "Mois Sans Tabac". Based on this expertise, the Agency is committed to creating this first knowledge platform, which aims to promote the transmission of knowledge and skills between Parties to the WHO FCTC and to strengthen the implementation of effective tobacco control actions in these countries.

Planned for 2023, the Knowledge Hub will take stock of the various existing measures, i.e., information, prevention and social marketing measures that have already been implemented and have demonstrated their effectiveness. It will also propose methodological contents to implement and evaluate such information, prevention, behavioral change and evaluation actions in Parties to the WHO FCTC: the agency will gradually deploy training, seminars and other methodological tools to support the increase in skills of Parties that wish to do so.

Speaking at a signing ceremony held today in Paris, Dr Adriana Blanco Marquizo, Head of Secretariat of the WHO FCTC said: *"We are delighted to welcome Santé publique France to the family of WHO FCTC Knowledge Hubs. There is no doubt that France has a wealth of expertise to offer in this area. Ultimately, we want to collectively strengthen our support to Parties to the Convention to tap into the breadth of available communication tools to promote and strengthen public awareness of tobacco-control issues."*

Santé publique France wishes to put all its scientific and operational expertise at the service of this knowledge sharing.

Professor Geneviève Chêne, Chief Executive of Santé publique France, said : *"The signing of this partnership agreement with WHO further anchors the commitment of France and Santé publique France in the fight against tobacco at the international level. The proactive policy led by our country in the fight against tobacco with strong measures such as the increase in tobacco prices and the implementation of plain packaging, combined with proven actions in terms of prevention has shown its effectiveness with a historic decrease in the number of smokers between 2014 and 2019 (1.9 million fewer smokers). By entrusting us with the creation of this platform, it is our expertise from knowledge to action that we wish to share with all the countries involved, in a mutual exchange, to change behaviors and achieve a tobacco-free generation."*

About Santé publique France

As the French national public health institute, Santé publique France responds to the need for a reference and expertise center in public health in France. Based on the continuum between knowledge and intervention, our mission is to improve and protect the health of populations. Our action integrates in the long term the major public health issues, in the fields of protection against threats (notably infectious risks and environmental risks) on the one hand and health improvement (health determinants, prevention, health promotion and reduction of the burden of chronic diseases and social and territorial inequalities) on the other hand. Santé publique France is a public institution under the supervision of the Ministry of Health and Prevention.

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About the Secretariat of the WHO FCTC

Established in 2007, the Convention Secretariat serves as Secretariat of both the WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (WHO FCTC) and the Protocol to Eliminate Illicit Trade in Tobacco Products (the Protocol). The Convention Secretariat is hosted by the World Health Organization (WHO) in Geneva, however, it has a distinct mandate, function and governance from WHO. The Convention Secretariat implements, and reports on, workplans and budgets adopted by the governing bodies of the two treaties, namely, the Conference of the Parties to the WHO FCTC and the Meeting of the Parties to the Protocol. The functions of the Convention Secretariat are to support the governing and subsidiary bodies of the treaties, to provide assistance to Parties to the WHO FCTC, and to Parties to the Protocol, and to promote the two treaties, through cooperation with international organizations and bodies, non-governmental organizations and external stakeholders.