

Conference Declaration

4th National Conference on Tobacco or Health

We, the participants of the 4th NCTOH assembled at Tata Memorial Hospital, Mumbai on 8-10 February 2019 hereby make the following declaration:

17% relative reduction in tobacco use showed India's commitment to curb the tobacco epidemic. Despite such a strong and passionate commitment to reducing tobacco use countrywide, some challenges in effective enforcement of FCTC and COTPA 2003 and interference by the tobacco industry still exist.

The 4thNCTOH through its theme '*Tobacco Free Generation*' not only provided us the platform to collectively share the vision for a 'Tobacco Free India' but also helped us to develop a concrete multi-sectoral action plan to move ahead to protect upcoming generations from the menace of tobacco and achieve the ultimate goal of making India "Tobacco Free".

To achieve our goal of a "Tobacco Free India" we recommend the implementation of the following steps:

1. Focus on:

- (a) Comprehensive mass awareness and education on the harms of tobacco use and benefits of quitting; and, Strengthen tobacco cessation delivery countrywide;
- (b) Amendments in COTPA 2003 to plug all its loop-holes; and, ensure its optimal enforcement for all its notified rules uniformly, specifically by amending the clause on accountability of the enforcers for delay or inaction;
- (c) Persuading Central Government to divest from tobacco industry through LIC and other portals;
- (d) Creation of alternate crops and jobs for tobacco cultivators and workers (industry and informal bidi sector) respectively;
- (e) Elimination of tobacco-specific environment pollution; and,
- (f) Preservation of human rights of the users, industry workers and cultivators

2. Augment youth-specific initiatives by:

- (a) Prioritizing control of smokeless tobacco, which is often a gateway to smoking, alcohol and other addictions;
- (b) Strategizing a full-proof control on emerging new products such as various forms of ENDS, Heat not Burn products, etc. including their online and illegal sale;
- (c) Curbing all kinds of tobacco advertisements from the digital media that influence adversely; and,

(d) Deciding on a timeline for Tobacco-Free Generation in India- We propose 1st January 2020 as the cut-off date.

3. Counter tobacco industry interference by:

(a) Developing a policy for compliance with article 5.3 of FCTC that:

- (i) Disallows governmental- and corporate- investments in the tobacco industry
- (ii) Directs use of the Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) funds of the tobacco industry wholly to tobacco control activities;

(b) Raise tobacco taxes to the levels recommended by WHO which is 75% of the retail price of tobacco products;

(c) Control illegal trade practices through the introduction of stringent legal measures.

4. Link Tobacco Control (TC) with NCDs and SDGs

Identify critical opportunities to strengthen tobacco control policies within the ambit of NCDs and SDGs.

Evaluate the strategies of the National Tobacco Control Programme (NTCP) and align them with the other programmes being implemented for the prevention of NCDs