



## WHO - CTCA SUPPORTED THE DEVELOPMENT AND VALIDATION OF THE TOBACCO CONTROL BILL DURING WNTD COMMEMORATION IN MAURITANIA

by Patrick Musavuli



The World Health Organization (WHO) selects "tobacco industry interference" as the theme of the World No Tobacco Day 2012.

Mauritania commemorated World No Tobacco Day 2012 with several activities between 3 and 6 June, 2012, to raise public awareness about the harmful effects of tobacco and also to develop and validate the Tobacco Control Bill.

*Picture 1: WNTD poster in French and Arabic developed by WHO country office Mauritania*

Four highlights marked the WNTD in Nouakchott, capital city of Mauritania:

### **1. Statements of the WHO Country Representative and the Minister of sanitation:**

In his statement, Dr Jean Pierre Baptiste, WHO Country Representative in Mauritania said: "The validation of the Tobacco Control Bill is an important step in the implementation of WHO FCTC in Mauritania, but the next step which is the adoption of the Tobacco Control Bill at the Parliament will require more attention in order to counter any tobacco industry's efforts to undermine the process and weaken the tobacco control law."



The Minister of Sanitation thanked WHO and CTCA for having supported the celebration of the WNTD 2012 and most importantly for the organization of the stakeholder's workshop that aimed to develop and validate the Tobacco Control Bill of Mauritania. He added that "Mauritania is willing to implement the WHO FCTC that has been ratified on 5<sup>th</sup> September 2005 by the Country".

*Picture 2: from left to right - Dr Jean Pierre Baptiste (WR), the Minister of Sanitation and Secretary General of Health of Mauritania during the launch of WNTD activities.*



## 2. The release of the Tobacco Industry Mapping findings

CTCA provided a technical and financial support to all its partners in the 5 target countries including Mauritania to conduct a rapid assessment on the activities and tactics of the tobacco industry at national level.



The findings of the study were disseminated by Dr. Nacer Dine MOHAMED BABA of the « Association Mauritanienne de Lutte Contre le Cancer » who said: “Although Mauritania

does not have any tobacco Manufacture, the country has become the hub of cigarettes smuggling in the sub region. In 2008, Mauritania (whose population is only 3 million), has imported about 175 million cigarettes, which is exactly the same import volume as Algeria, a country whose population is 15 times bigger than Mauritanian population!” He added: “Cigarettes with mention <<to be sold in Mauritania>> are circulating in the market of the neighbor countries.”

## 3. The visit of the NGO's booths



After the statements of the authorities and the release of the findings on tobacco industry activities in Mauritania, all the participants and journalists guided by Dr. Abdallahi Ould Bouhabib (Tobacco Control Focal Person and National Tobacco Control Program Coordinator), visited different booths where NGOs presented their activities and raised awareness about the harmful effects of tobacco, urging policy makers to accelerate the process of WHO FCTC implementation in order to save lives.

**Picture 4: The WHO Country representative and the Minister of sanitation visiting booths.**





**Picture 5 and 6: Dr Patrick Musavuli (CTCA), Dr Souleymane Ly (ACONTA) and Mr Medellah Ould bellal (HIP WHO) visiting some booths of NGOs.**

#### **4. The National stakeholder's workshop on tobacco Control Bill**

One of the key and urgent recommendations of the capacity assessment conducted in Mauritania by the Ministry of Health in collaboration with WHO and CTCA early in May 2012, was the organization of ***“the National stakeholder's workshop to validate the tobacco Control Bill”***.

CTCA has provided technical and financial support to Ministry of Health of Mauritania for the organization of the workshop that held between 3 and 6 June, 2012 at IMAN Hotel, Nouakchott-Mauritania.



Participants from different sectors (Government, Parliament, NGOs and Academics) have been trained during two days (3 - 4 June 2012) on Tobacco Control and WHO FCTC in order to better understand of the treaty and its guidelines before the discussion on the national tobacco control bill in plenary (5 - 6 June).

The Tobacco Control Bill has been prepared and presented to the participants for amendments and validation by a lawyer of the Ministry of Justice, Professor Haimoud Ramdan.



The Tobacco Control Bill developed and validated has 11 chapters and 62 articles; It includes provisions on:

- National coordinating mechanisms;
- Protection of public health policies with respect to tobacco control from the interests of the tobacco industry;
- Price and tax measures;
- Protection from exposure to tobacco smoke;
- Regulation of the contents of tobacco products and of tobacco product disclosures;
- Packaging and labelling of tobacco products;
- Education, communication, training and public awareness;
- Tobacco advertising, promotion and sponsorship;
- Measures concerning tobacco dependence and cessation;
- Illicit trade in tobacco products;
- sales to and by minors;
- Support for economically viable alternative activities;
- Protection of the environment.

WHO and CTCA sent Dr Patrick Musavuli and Dr Souleymane Ly in Nouakchott to support the workshop well organized by Dr Dr. Abdallahi Ould Bouhabib, tobacco control focal person and National tobacco control Program Coordinator.



*Picture 10: Family photo of participants*

The next step is the presentation of the Tobacco Control Bill at the Parliament for debate and adoption by the Minister of Health.

WHO and CTCA will continue to provide support to the Government of Mauritania to get a comprehensive Tobacco Control Legislation.

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