



WHO FCTC Global Knowledge Hub on Smokeless Tobacco (KH-SLT)

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

To reduce the menace of smokeless tobacco use, countries need to fully implement the WHO FCTC

Release of first-ever compilation of the global progress made in implementing smokeless tobacco control policies

Wednesday, April 25, 2018, Noida-NCR: The use of smokeless tobacco (SLT) products, which includes *PanMasala, Gutkha* and *Khaini*, is a serious public health issue in India and the region. Globally there are nearly 36 crore SLT users. 80% of these live in South-East Asia and 66% in India. According to the latest Global Adult Tobacco Survey India Report nearly 20 Crore Indians use smokeless tobacco. A 2010 study estimated that more than 368,000 deaths were attributable to smokeless tobacco use in the country. To address the burden of smokeless tobacco, the Government of India joined hands with the WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (FCTC) Secretariat and set up a Global Knowledge Hub on Smokeless Tobacco (KH-SLT) at the ICMR-National Institute of Cancer Prevention and Research (NICPR), Noida, India. The KH-SLT prepared the first-ever compilation of the global progress made in implementing smokeless tobacco control policies in line with the WHO FCTC. This report was released today by **Padma Shri Prof. Balram Bhargava**, Director General of Indian Council of Medical Research and Secretary, Department of Health Research, Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, Govt. of India

Key recommendations in this compilation include applying of all requirements of the WHO FCTC to smokeless tobacco products and where possible, banning of manufacturing, selling and importing of SLT, implementing comprehensive mass media, education, communication, training and awareness programs and on harms of SLT; training and building the capacity of the health professionals to provide behavioral interventions specifically for SLT cessation; taxing SLT products similar to smoking tobacco, preventing sale of SLT products to and by minors.

The book has been edited by **Prof. Ravi Mehrotra**, Director, KH-SLT and ICMR-NICPR, **Dr. Dharendra N. Sinha**, Chairperson, School of Preventive Oncology, Patna and **Dr. Tibor Szilagyi**, Team Leader, WHO FCTC Convention Secretariat and includes contributions and inputs from more than 60 national and international experts working in the field of tobacco control. The WHO FCTC Secretariat initiated and supported the compilation and publication of this report.

Speaking on the occasion, **Prof. Bhargava** highlighted the dual burden of the tobacco especially in India and other neighboring countries in South-East Asia like Bangladesh, Myanmar, Sri Lanka and others. He emphasized that we need to be very innovative for controlling smokeless tobacco for example finding an

out of box idea for SLT cessation, some new drugs that can be developed. Medical colleges need to start tobacco cessation clinic at a war footing. He also proposed legislative action for medical colleges not having tobacco cessation clinics. Regarding the book he said that it will go a long way informing national policy on smokeless tobacco in addition to providing guidance to Parties on how to implement effective SLT control measures within their jurisdictions. Adopting a brand ambassador for anti smokeless tobacco campaign was another important suggestion that he made.

Prof. Ravi Mehrotra, extended his warm welcome and expressed grave concern over the rising number of countries, where SLT is becoming available, however, its regulation and control remains weak when compared to cigarettes. He also assured that the KH-SLT is committed to provide all possible research and contribute to improving capacity needed in the Parties in the field of SLT not only in India but in the region and across the globe.

Dr. Dharendra N Sinha, commented that this is the first baseline global report summarizing, on how countries should update their smokeless tobacco control policies to protect the people of their countries from disease and deaths attributable to SLT use.

Dr. Tibor Szilagyi, representing the WHO FCTC Secretariat, which established and provides support to the Knowledge Hub, noted that “this report on smokeless tobacco provides the unique opportunity to advise on policies that would help more than 350 million smokeless tobacco users worldwide, and also has the potential to prevent future use of SLT, thus contributing to the scaling up of FCTC implementation.”

The WHO FCTC Knowledge Hub on Smokeless Tobacco is hosted by the Indian Council of Medical Research’s National Institute of Cancer Prevention, Noida, Uttar Pradesh, India.

The report will be available online at www.untobaccocontrol.org/kh/smokeless-tobacco

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