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## **PARTIES TO GLOBAL TOBACCO CONTROL TREATY TAKE DECISIVE STEPS TO COMBAT ILLICIT TOBACCO TRADE AND PROMOTE SMOKE-FREE ENVIRONMENTS**

**Bangkok** – The 146 Parties to the World Health Organization Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (WHO FCTC) decided unanimously to begin negotiating a protocol on illicit trade of tobacco products and adopt guidelines that stipulate 100% smoke-free public places and workplaces.

“I congratulate the Parties for accomplishing all major objectives scheduled on the programme of work,” said Conference President Juan Martabit of Chile. “The degree of engagement, respectful discussion and commitment by all to reach these very

productive outcomes remained exemplary throughout the entire Conference.”

The Conference of Parties, the governing body of WHO’s first international Treaty, convened in Bangkok, Thailand to set a work agenda for the coming two years and report on progress since the first session of the Conference in February 2006.

*Cont. on p. 171*

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*Cont. from p. 166*

“It is important that we do not lose precious momentum started by the expert group on the illicit trade issue,” said Dr Haik Nikogosian, Head of the Convention Secretariat. “This transnational phenomenon negatively affects national security and economics, as well as public and personal health in many countries,” he continued. “This Treaty enables countries to combat the complex threats tobacco poses to human health, such as illicit trade of tobacco products, through international law, including through negotiation of a special protocol like the one launched during this session.”

In another key resolution, the Parties adopted guidelines on protection from exposure to second-hand tobacco smoke. The guidelines, which were adopted unanimously on the Conference’s second day, give national and local governments clear direction to establish smoke-free environments.

“Sound science proves there is no safe level of exposure to second-hand tobacco smoke,” said Dr Douglas Bettcher, Head of the WHO Tobacco Free Initiative. “We are working harder than ever with governments, civil society and other public health experts to denormalize tobacco, and smoke-free environments are one of the key measures to bring about this major shift in social norms to save millions of lives in coming decades.”

Among other decisions, the Conference resolved to begin work on guidelines related to packaging and labelling of tobacco

products and tobacco advertising, promotion and sponsorship between now and the third session, scheduled for next year in South Africa. The Conference also decided to strengthen support to Parties in need, to develop projects for financial assistance in implementing the Framework Convention.

Since its entry into force on 27 February 2005, the Framework Convention has become one of the most widely embraced treaties in the history of the United Nations. Delegates from 129 of the eligible 146 Parties attended the session. Other states – including signatories to the treaty – as well as non-governmental organizations in official relations with WHO and intergovernmental organizations participated as observers.

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**For more information:** Documents of the Second Session of the Conference of Parties to the WHO FCTC: <http://www.who.int/gb/fctc>

All press releases, fact sheets and other WHO media material may be found at: [www.who.int](http://www.who.int).

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