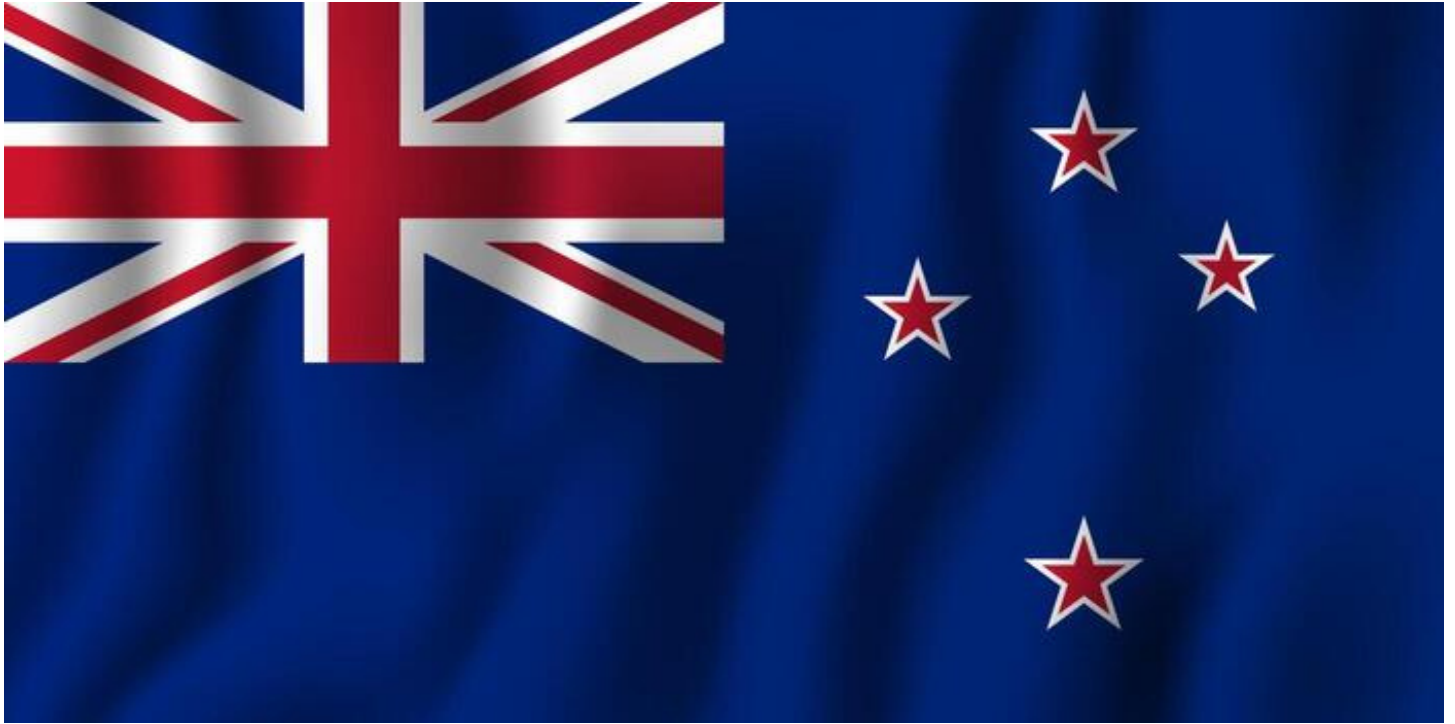


Position Paper



Committee: World Health Organization (WHO)

Country: New Zealand (Aotearoa)

Topic: Strengthening Implementation of the WHO **Framework Convention on Tobacco Control** (FCTC)

The global tobacco epidemic remains one of the most pressing public health crises of the 21st century, claiming over 8 million lives annually. While traditional combustible **tobacco consumption** has seen a **steady, hard-fought decline globally**, the **landscape of nicotine addiction** has fundamentally transformed. The contemporary crisis is defined by a dual-front battle: the persistent, **deep-seated systemic inequities of smoked tobacco** and the **explosive rise of novel nicotine products**.

In New Zealand (Aotearoa), the social burden of tobacco is sharply inequitable. While our national daily **smoking rate has dropped** significantly to **6.8%**, smoking-related diseases **disproportionately impact our indigenous Māori (at 14.7%) and Pacific communities**. This imbalance drives severe health disparities, making tobacco control an **urgent issue of systemic justice and constitutional duty** under *Te Tiriti o Waitangi* (The Treaty of Waitangi). Concurrently, the global emergence of Electronic Nicotine Delivery Systems (ENDS), or e-cigarettes, has triggered a new epidemic: **youth vaping**. Driven by **unregulated black markets, aggressive marketing, and illicit supply networks**, youth nicotine addiction threatens to **undo decades of progress under the FCTC**, requiring member states to adapt their regulatory frameworks immediately.

Since its entry into force in **2005**, the WHO FCTC has served as the bedrock of global tobacco governance, establishing legally binding obligations under key measures like the **MPOWER** package:

- **Demand Reduction (Articles 6–14):** The UN has consistently advocated for **aggressive price and tax** measures, **comprehensive bans** on tobacco advertising, promotion, and sponsorship (**TAPS**), and the standardization of plain packaging.
- **Supply Reduction & Illicit Trade (Article 15):** The adoption of the Protocol to **Eliminate Illicit Trade in Tobacco** products marked a major milestone in securing supply chains and combating the shadow economies that fund organized crime.
- **Industry Interference (Article 5.3):** Recognizing that the tobacco industry is the primary vector of the epidemic, successive Conferences of the Parties (COP) have emphasized **shielding public health policies** from commercial and vested interests.
- **Modern Challenges (COP9 & COP10):** Recent UN guidelines have increasingly focused on the cross-border challenges of novel and emerging products, urging member states to strictly regulate or **ban ENDS to protect children and adolescents**.

Following a legislative pivot, New Zealand has transitioned from absolute prohibition to a pragmatic harm-reduction and targeted enforcement framework that protects public health without fueling illicit black markets. To strengthen global FCTC implementation, Aotearoa deploys a three-pillar solution.

- ☐ First, the delegation advocates for a pragmatic **harm-reduction** model that differentiates regulatory weight between **high-risk combustible tobacco and lower-risk alternatives** exclusively for adult cessation.
- ☐ Second, New Zealand enforces aggressive youth defenses to combat the vaping epidemic, implementing a **total ban on disposable e-cigarettes, prohibiting child-friendly flavors, and restricting retail advertising**.
- ☐ Finally, in strict alignment with our constitutional obligations **under Te Tiriti o Waitangi**, we **prioritize indigenous health sovereignty**. This routes funding directly into **localized, culturally led cessation programs designed and driven by Māori and Pacific health providers, effectively modernizing FCTC compliance by targeting systemic inequities directly at their source rather than relying on punitive, blanket bans**.

Hereby, New Zealand emphasizes that the contemporary nicotine landscape demands an immediate regulatory evolution. The global community must **recognize that the most immediate threat to youth is no longer traditional combustible tobacco, but rather the modern influx of disposable e-cigarettes crossing international ports**. New Zealand urges the World Health Organization to adopt its comprehensive template: **a total international prohibition on single-use disposable nicotine delivery systems, the absolute removal of retail and digital visibility, and the strict enforcement of generic packaging to protect the next generation**. Aotearoa stands ready to collaborate on a dynamic, realistic, and legally binding framework.