

224 *Can an International Tobacco Control Treaty Assist in Transforming Gender Relations?*

Global tobacco use is a critical and growing threat to public health and economic sustainability. In many developed countries, tobacco use has declined, and is now concentrated in vulnerable groups, but gender and diversity are key considerations for developing tobacco control policies and programs. In low and middle income countries, however, tobacco use is escalating across populations, generally with male uptake first, followed by female uptake. Globally, male rates of tobacco use have now peaked and are slowly waning, but female rates are still rising. Currently, 12% of the world's women smoke, but this is expected to rise to 20% by 2020.

The Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (FCTC), the world's first international public health treaty, presents an important opportunity for improving health and preventing future illness, death and economic challenges across a range of signatory countries. Within the FCTC there is a stated concern about the potential for widespread uptake of tobacco use among girls and women in the 21st Century, and a desire for taking gender and diversity into account in the enactment of the various Articles of the FCTC.

Using a gender and diversity lens, this paper analyses current evidence, trends and potential actions linked to several Articles of the FCTC. These include the gendered implications and effects of various components of tobacco control such as tobacco tax and price increases, restrictions on sales and marketing, and policies on environmental tobacco smoke. There are several options to consider when incorporating gender into tobacco programs and policies. While the potential exists for replicating or supporting existing gender inequities through tobacco control, this presentation will outline an argument for integrating gender into the FCTC in ways that transform gender relations and contribute to reducing vulnerability to tobacco by reducing inequities. The implications for maximizing equity and strengthening human and women's rights are explored through using the FCTC.