

The MPOWER framework and United Nations human rights treaties: An additional argument for the promotion of tobacco control goals

Fact Sheet

Background

WHO's Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (FCTC) reaffirms the "right of all people to the highest standard of health" while calling for parties to "give priority to their right to protect public health."

The MPOWER framework endorses health promoting policy interventions that are consistent with a human rights-based approach to health and the control of tobacco.

A new publication from the Institute for Global Tobacco Control identifies specific articles and language within each international human rights treaty that could be used to promote tobacco control goals.

Results

Seven of the nine human rights treaties contain language that aligns with MPOWER policy areas.

Thirty of the provisions/articles include relevant text, and most language abstracted from the treaties fell within policy areas "P" (Protect), "O" (Offer), and "W" (Warn) (Table 1).

Tobacco control-related themes which were identified include:

1. rights related to working conditions
2. the right to access healthcare services
3. the right to access healthcare information

All seven treaties contain language requiring parties to create policies that ensure the implementation of all treaty articles.

Conclusion

Strong arguments from UN human rights treaties can be made for:

1. the implementation or strengthening of smoke-free policies;
2. the implementation or strengthening of effective communication strategies, including stronger health warnings on tobacco packages; and
3. the inclusion or ramping up of cessation services, including counseling and the provision of cessation medication in healthcare coverage plans.

The treaties can also be used as tools to advocate for tobacco control policies that focus on special populations, including people with disabilities, migrant workers, ethnic and/or racial minorities, women, and children.

Spires M, Rutkow L, Feldhaus I, Cohen JE. The MPOWER framework and international human rights treaties: An opportunity to promote global tobacco control. *Public Health*. 2014; 128(7):665-667.

Table 1. Provisions and articles as they relate to the MPOWER Framework.

| Treaty | M | P | O | W | E | R |
|---|----------------------|--|--|---|--|---|
| International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights | | ART.7 ^c ART.10.3 ^c ART.12 ^H | ART.12.2 ^H | | ART.10.3 ^c | |
| International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights | | | | ART.19.2 ^I | ART.19.3 ^I | |
| Convention to Eliminate All Forms of Discrimination Against Women | | ART.11 ^c | ART.12.1 ^H ART.14.2 ^H | ART.10 ^I | | |
| Convention on the Rights of the Child | | ART.3.2 ART.24 ^H ART.32.1 ^c | ART.24.1 ^{H,I} | ART.13.1 ^I ART.17.1 ^I ART.24.1 ^I | ART.13.2 ^I ART.17.1 ^I | |
| Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities | ART.31. ^I | ART.9.1 ART.27.1 ^c ART.28.2 ART.30.1 | ART.24.1 ^{H,I} | ART.24.1 ^{H,I} | | |
| International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination | | | ART.5 ^H | | | |
| Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment | | | | | | |
| International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families | | ART.70 ^c | ART.25.1 ^c ART.43.1 ^H ART.45.1 | ART.13.2 ^I | ART.13.3 ^I | |
| International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance | | | | | | |

Themes related to tobacco control goals: C = Working conditions; H = Healthcare services; I = Health information