



International Network of Women Against Tobacco

Advisory Board

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Editorial

In this 7th INWAT Europe newsletter we focus on the 17th World Conference on Tobacco or Health (WCTOH) which was held in Cape Town in March 2018 (www.wctoh.org). INWAT has a long association with the WCTOH. Indeed, it was at the 7th WCTOH at Perth, Australia in 1990 that INWAT was born, out of frustration about the lack of focus on women and gender issues in the presentations and as presenters. Fast forward 28 years to Cape Town, and while considerable progress has been made in achieving more equal gender representation at the WCTOH, many challenges remain. In this issue we celebrate some of the highlights, which included a Plenary Session on International Women's Day on 'Women, Development and Tobacco Control' and INWAT Europe Board member Elif Dagli being presented with the highly prestigious Luther Terry Award. We also consider some of the on-going challenges, as well as the potential opportunities presented by the next WCTOH being held in Europe, in Dublin in 2020.



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17th World Conference on Tobacco or Health- moving gender up the agenda?

The 17th WCTOH was notable for being held for the first time in its 50 year history in Africa- a continent which continues to be aggressively targeted by the tobacco industry, and where women are viewed as a key opportunity for market growth. Indeed, the BAT headquarters were within walking distance of the conference venue. It was therefore appropriate (though long overdue) that it was also the first conference to have a female President, Dr Flavia Senkubuge, and that 'Tobacco and Women- the gendered nature of tobacco' was a key theme of one of the five programme tracks (Track 5 Social Justice, the Underserved and Vulnerable Populations). Included under the Tobacco and Women track theme were- a plenary session (one of only three plenaries); 3 symposia; 1 oral session; 3 poster sessions and a pre-conference workshop. But how much has changed since 1990?

Recognising and supporting women's leadership and contribution to tobacco control

An undoubted highlight of the conference was the Plenary Session on 'Women, Development and Tobacco Control'. The all-female presenters included INWAT Awardee Dr Judith Mackay and INWAT past-President Dr Lorraine Greaves, along with Dr Matshidiso Moeti (WHO Regional Director for Africa) and Dr Malebona Precious Matoso (Director General of South Africa's Department of Health). Through their presentations and the panel discussion they made cogent and persuasive arguments for equity in tobacco control, for gender and sex to be incorporated into research as standard, and for greater implementation of the FCTC, particular comprehensive tax policies which reduce initiation and increase cessation in women and young girls.

Judith Mackay highlighted how 'The tobacco industry is manipulating women into bondage, not freedom' where the bondage of tobacco addiction impacts not only their own health but has significant personal economic costs in terms of health care and family income being spent on tobacco rather than food and education, which together can drive women and families into poverty. This point was reinforced by Dr Moeti who succinctly summed up the tobacco industry's activities in Africa as viewing the region as 'virgin territory. They are targeting women and girls specifically, and interfering in the adoption of tobacco control policies that will protect health when properly enforced'.

How women can and do play important roles in combatting tobacco industry interference at the national level was ably illustrated by Dr Sheila Ndyabangi, Uganda's Principal Medical Officer, in the final plenary session where she gave an inspirational presentation on her team's eight-year struggle and battles to secure a strong national tobacco control law. Drawing

on own often shocking experiences of tobacco industry tactics, she described how 'We filled the courts. We filled the corridors. We had six lawyers. We must show our force. We are many; they are few. They have lies, deception and blood money to give out. We can make the tobacco industry run! We are on the right side and we have the victory'.

A further highlight recognising women's important leadership in tobacco control was the award of the prestigious Luther Terry Award to Dr Elif Dagli for outstanding leadership (see article in this newsletter). However, as Margaretha Haglund pointed out in her presentation in the symposium on 'Women's Leadership in Tobacco Control', between 2000 and 2018 only 9 Luther Terry Individual Awardees have been women, compared to 27 men (25%). This includes only 3 women from Europe (compared to 7 men). While INWAT has played a pivotal role in empowering and promoting women as tobacco control leaders, there is still a long way to go to achieve equity in the recognition of women's important contribution to the field.

Increasing the profile of gender-based research, approaches and programmes

The different symposia, presentations and posters included in the Woman and Tobacco track theme described diverse experiences and research from countries around the globe, revealing the range of complex issues that need to be researched and addressed. This ranged from Elif Dagli highlighting the increase in non-cigarette tobacco use among women in conservative countries and societies such as Turkey (see 6th INWAT Europe newsletter on this theme) to exploring the links between women, tobacco and violence in Nigeria (Alex Asiime) and Argentina (Karina Agolina), and women's health, equality and empowerment in tobacco farming in China (Hong Cao). Presenters also shared frameworks that could be applied to undertake gender-based analyses of smoking and tobacco control (Lorraine Greaves) and how international treaties and conventions such as FCTC/COP and CEDAW can be used to advance gender-based approaches to tobacco control nationally and internationally (Robert Eckford, Lorraine Greaves, Maria Belen Rios).

Networking and supporting women in tobacco control

The WCTOH provides an opportunity every 3 years for INWAT members from around the globe to get together, share experiences and research, discuss issue, and develop new ideas. It also provides new opportunities to connect with women who have not heard of INWAT but who are interested in furthering gender-based policy, research and/or action. The pre-conference workshop, INWAT meeting, Track Theme sessions and distribution of the

latest issue of The NET to delegates, certainly increased the profile of INWAT and women's issues, and new links and friendships were made. We were delighted to hear at the INWAT members meeting that Marion Hale had been re-elected for a second term as President of INWAT. Her leadership has been vital in sustaining INWAT's role around the globe and providing strong advocacy for gender-based approaches to tobacco control.

However, the size of the conference, over 2000 delegates from 125 countries, with numerous competing events and parallel sessions made effective networking challenging. In addition, the difficulties in obtaining funding to attend the WCTOH meant that only a very small proportion of women working in tobacco control can attend, and even fewer are able to present work on gender issues. Indeed, it was striking how few women from European countries gave presentations or posters in the Women and Tobacco track- I counted only 3 from a total of 34 presentations/posters. However, all the conference presentations and videos are available at www.wctoh.org

Going forward- the Conference Declaration, 18th WCTOH and INWAT Europe

INWAT's final achievement at the WCTOH was ensuring that one of the ten declarations in the Conference Declaration was an action point on gender:

9. We call on the Parties to the WHO FCTC to integrate gender based data collection and reporting into Party reports to the Conference of the Parties on their implementation of the WHO FCTC by COP9.

This was a notable achievement given that the conference organisers limited the number of declarations to ten. It provides a key area for future action by WHO and COP9 which is measurable, and would provide data that could be

used to both assess and progress gender-based tobacco control around the globe. INWAT and INWAT Europe have the expertise to help undertake such an analysis. But achieving this will require commitment and resources from the participating Parties and WHO.

The 18th WCTOH will be held in 2020 in Dublin. This provides an opportunity and a challenge for INWAT Europe to ensure that the relatively high profile and momentum given to gender issues at the 17th WCTOH is not only sustained but built upon. This will require significant advocacy and work with key stakeholders about the importance of this issue. The high profile of women's issues at 17th WCTOH was due in large part to the work of long standing INWAT members including past-Presidents Lorraine Greaves and Margaretha Haglund (both members of the WCTOH Scientific Committee), and Judith Mackay who first succeeded in getting equal numbers of female and male chairs and plenary presenters at the 10th WCTOH in Beijing in 1997, and has been involved in the organisation of all subsequent WCTOHs. Being located in Europe should provide, at the very least, more opportunities for women involved in tobacco control in Europe to participate, to share their knowledge and experience with each other and with women from around the world. Importantly, the new Track Theme on Women and Tobacco will be included in this conference. However, we need to think creatively about how the 18th WCTOH can be supported to help move forward action to address the continuing global epidemic of women and smoking, particularly among women from socioeconomically disadvantaged backgrounds. The new Track Theme on Women and Tobacco will be included in this conference. However, we need to think creatively about how the 18th WCTOH can be supported to help move forward action to address the continuing global epidemic of women and smoking, particularly among women from socioeconomically disadvantaged backgrounds.

INWAT Lifetime Achievement Award- Professor Amanda Amos



Professor Amanda Amos was awarded the INWAT Lifetime Achievement Award at 17th WCOTH. INWAT President Marion Hale presented Amanda with her award, in recognition of her significant contributions to the science of tobacco control and her advocacy for the health of women and girls.

Amanda is Professor of Health Promotion at the University of Edinburgh. She is a founding member of INWAT and a longstanding Board Member of INWAT Europe, representing the UK. In 2013 she was awarded the WHO World No Tobacco Day Award.

Professor Elif Dagli, winner of 2018 Luther Terry Award for Outstanding Leadership

INWAT Europe would like to congratulate our Board Member Elif Dagli who was awarded the Luther Terry Award for Outstanding Leadership at the 17th WCOTH. Elif is a physician who has worked in tobacco control since the 1980s. She was the founding chair of the Tobacco or Health working group at the Turkish Thoracic Society in 1992 and was instrumental in establishing an NGO coalition on Tobacco or Health in 1995. From 2011 to 2014, she served as a board member of the Framework Convention Alliance, representing the European Region. Elif strongly believes in the importance of addressing tobacco use in all forms among women and young girls. She was awarded the INWAT Lifetime Achievement Award in 2017. In 2014 she became a board member of INWAT Europe and is on the Board of INWAT.



Elif's tobacco control advocacy and leadership role has been crucial in Turkey. She has been involved with the first tobacco control legislation, protecting the tobacco advertising ban and implementation of smoke-free legislation, and stopping tobacco industry interference. She promoted FCTC ratification through chest physicians in Europe and led Turkey to be among the first countries to ratify the FCTC. Through her teaching and training programmes she has helped raise a new generation of tobacco control experts. A fearless tobacco control advocate working in challenging circumstances- a most worthy Luther Terry Awardee!