

Ending the Exploitation of the People of Palau: *Eliminating Tobacco and Related Health Disparities*



A Strategic Plan of Action 2010-2015

About the Republic of Palau

The Republic of Palau became an independent nation on October 1, 1994 and joined the United Nations in December of the same year. It comprises the westernmost group of the Caroline Islands in Micronesia, lying almost equidistant from the Philippines to the west, Papua New Guinea to the south, and Guam to the northeast. It is comprised of over 340 islands (only 12 are permanently inhabited), and has a total land mass of 188 square miles. The population in 2005 was 19,907 persons, of whom 14,685 (74%) were ethnic Palauans and 5,272 (26%) were non-Palauans including Filipino migrant workers (*Census 2005*). Palau ratified the world's first international public health treaty, the WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (FCTC) on February 12, 2004.



Letter from Palau Minister of Health



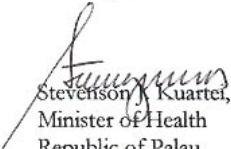
Dear Friends:

Palau is a newly independent island nation (1994) rich in tradition and culture. Although not a traditional practice, tobacco use has been fast gaining acceptance in our society. Tobacco, either cigarette pieces or loose tobacco, is commonly added to betelnut chew as well as being smoked. Home grown tobacco use is also increasing. Its use has been identified as one of the eight priority areas for public health to address over the next ten years. Tobacco use is one of the leading causes of preventable death in the Republic. In response, Palau has joined over 160 nations of the world and ratified the first international public health treaty, the World Health Organization Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (FCTC).

This Strategic Plan is the work of many dedicated community leaders, community members and professionals from diverse organizations, skill sets and backgrounds. It is intended to provide a framework for understanding and taking action on this critical issue of tobacco use in our communities. The Plan is designed to be used in conjunction with the National Non-Communicable Disease Strategic Implementation Plan for paving the way forward toward a Tobacco Free Palau.

We call upon all of our partners and colleagues to play a major role and take action in addressing this important issue. Thank you for your commitment to the elimination of tobacco use and subsequent consequences in our population. Together, we can make a difference in our people's lives.

Sincerely,


Stevenson J. Kuartel, M.D.
Minister of Health
Republic of Palau

BACKGROUND

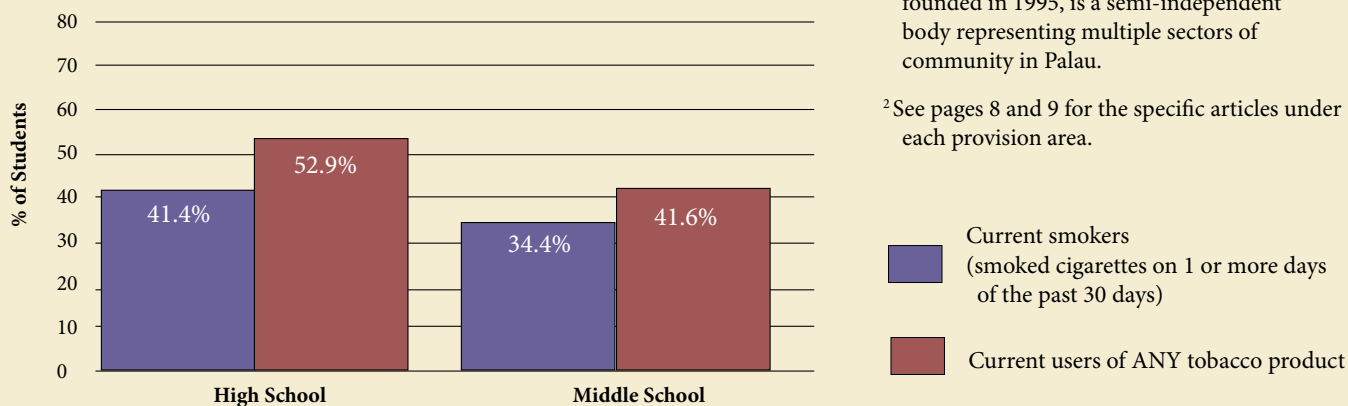
In October, 2007, the Coalition for a Tobacco-Free Palau (Coalition)¹ and the MOH Tobacco Control Program started the process for developing a comprehensive strategic plan on tobacco control for Palau. This comprehensive process included the development of three components: 1) review and use of the WHO Regional Plan for Tobacco Control; 2) parallel development and use of the National Non-Communicable Disease (NCD) Strategic Implementation Plan; and 3) development of this National Strategic Plan on Tobacco Control for Palau.

While the NCD Implementation Plan was intended to be used as a workplan for all chronic disease efforts in Palau, this Strategic Plan was to provide a globally-based, local vision for addressing tobacco use and tobacco-related health disparities in Palau for the next five years.

The Strategic Plan is a product of two major meetings held in 2008. The Coalition, under the leadership of Kambes Kesolei, Valerie Whipps, Dr. Caleb Otto and Annabel Lyman and with assistance from the Asian Pacific Partners for Empowerment, Advocacy and Leadership (APPEAL), conducted a Strategic Planning workshop on May 13-14 with a follow-up meeting in September. The workshop, involving about 40 people, was facilitated by Rod Lew of APPEAL, while the follow up meeting, comprising mainly Coalition members, was facilitated by Dr. Caleb Otto.

At the forefront of all of the meetings was the emphasis on the WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (WHO FCTC). It is the first treaty negotiated under the auspices of the World Health Organization, and is the most widely embraced treaty in UN history. The WHO FCTC is an evidence-based treaty that reaffirms the right of all people to the highest standard of health. The FCTC asserts the importance of demand reduction strategies, supply issues, as well as other important matters.² Palau, which ratified the treaty on February 12, 2004, has been legally bound by its provisions since it came into force on February 27, 2005.

2009 Palau Youth Tobacco Survey



¹ The Coalition for a Tobacco-Free Palau, founded in 1995, is a semi-independent body representing multiple sectors of community in Palau.

² See pages 8 and 9 for the specific articles under each provision area.

Strategic Overview

PLANNING PROCESS OVERVIEW

- Step 1 Identify Mission and Vision
- Step 2 Identify Key Areas for Planning
- Step 3 Assess Community Stages of Readiness in Key Areas
- Step 4 Assess Community Strengths, Challenges, Opportunities, Threats (SCOT)
- Step 5 Identify Critical Issues in Key Areas
- Step 6 Develop Goals and Objectives
- Step 7 Implement Plan*
- Step 8 Monitor and Evaluate Implementation

*(see Palau National NCD Strategic Implementation 2009-2014)

Step 1

THE MISSION STATEMENT

To promote the concept of a “Healthy Island” where individuals are free from tobacco and its effects by providing support, education and information regarding prevention and cessation, and by collaboration with local, regional and international partners.



COMMUNITY READINESS TO IMPLEMENT TOBACCO CONTROL IN PALAU

	Contemplation	Preparation
<p>Policy <i>FCTC Articles 6, 8-11, 13, 15-18</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Allocation of tobacco funds • Tobacco advertising • Labeling products • Contents of tobacco products • Alternative activities • Protection of the environment • Industry liability 	
<p>Research, Surveillance and Exchange of Information <i>FCTC Articles 20, 21</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local capacity to do research • Evaluation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adequate funding for research • Translation of data into practice
<p>Infrastructure <i>All FCTC Articles esp. 12, 20 & 23</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Involvement of faith-based leaders 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Involvement of traditional leaders • Leadership and advocacy trainings
<p>Programs <i>FCTC Articles 5.3, 8, 12, 14</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Awareness of tobacco industry tactics • Youth mobilization • Provider education 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monitoring tobacco industry activities • Community-based cessation

* These readiness levels were self-assessed by the Strategic Planning members during the first meeting on May 13-14, 2008 and refined later in 2008. The key articles from the FCTC were linked to each of the four major categories of policy, research, programs and policy. The readiness levels are defined as follows:

Contemplation - coalition or community has thought about taking action, but has developed no plans.

Preparation - coalition or community has thought about taking action and are developing plans.



This Strategic Plan is driven by the vision of Palau being free from tobacco use and its related health and socio-economic ills. This vision is shared by many in the Pacific Islands region who see the Western Pacific Region as the first WHO region to become tobacco-free. This is possible through the effective implementation of the first international public health treaty, the WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control.



PAU

	Action- Initiating	Action- Ongoing	Maintenance
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clean indoor air • Youth access 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tobacco tax • Licensing • Countering smuggling 	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adequate funding for surveillance • Surveillance data on tobacco use • Reporting data 		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Trained tobacco control staff • Capacity building programs on tobacco control 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strong coalition structure • Strong leadership “champions”
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tobacco-free sports promotion • Countermarketing against tobacco industry • Integration of tobacco with other issues 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Protection of public health policy from tobacco industry interference • Secondhand smoke campaigns



Action Initiating - coalition or community has begun taking action.

Action Ongoing - coalition or community continues to take action on a consistent basis.

Maintenance - coalition or community has been taking action for several years and has begun developing a plan for sustaining action.

COMMUNITY ASSESSMENT

CURRENT INTERNAL



Strengths

- Coalition for a Tobacco-Free Palau (CTFP)
- Established and organized STUN program with trained tobacco control staff
- Strong advocates, community champions and personal testimonies
- Traditional leadership support
- Strong faith-based community
- Effective media campaigns
- Community awareness of tobacco
- PNOC policy against alcohol and tobacco use
- Incentives for promoting cessation
- Existing law prohibiting tobacco sales to minors
- Smoke-free establishments
- Some tobacco use data available
- Some tobacco control funding

Challenges

- Parents allow their children to chew betel nut with or without tobacco
- No more “village raising a child” approach
- Sharing resources and effectiveness of existing network
- Practice of tobacco use with betel nut being socially accepted
- Lack of culturally appropriate tobacco education in school
- Not enough good role models
- Not enough support from community leaders
- Available cessation services under utilized
- Absence of comprehensive tobacco control legislation
- Sponsorship by wholesale tobacco companies
- Sustaining commitment of Coalition (CTFP) members
- Ineffective collaboration between organizations

FUTURE EXTERNAL



Opportunities

- Traditional leaders to support tobacco control
- Internet — communication and accessibility
- Easy access to media and communications (radio and TV)
- Increased youth involvement in tobacco prevention programs
- Increased tobacco awareness in the communities
- Collaboration with other agencies in working toward a tobacco-free nation

Threats

- Lack of political support for tobacco control
- Less available family income for life's necessities
- Increase in mini-stores that sell single cigarettes
- Increase in tobacco use with betel nut
- Tobacco industry influence
- Asian-manufactured cigarettes are not properly labeled
- Illegal smuggling of tobacco products
- Increase in number of users (especially the youth/female population)





ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Strategic Planning Workshop

May 13- 14, 2008,

Koror, Palau

Participants

Ngebtuch Baules
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Printer

The Printing Guys

Graphic Designer

Vickie Ho-Washington



Fish-bearing breadfruit tree of Ngibtal and how greed sank an island

The story of the fish-bearing breadfruit tree of Ngibtal is one of the most depicted stories on Palauan storyboards, portraying abundance and evoking intrigue. On reflection, it tells a sad tale of greed, non-caring, exploitation of the poor and a disastrous consequence.

It is a story about an elderly woman who lived alone on the island of Ngibtal. She had a son named Mangidabrutkoel but he often traveled through other villages. The men of the village often passed by her house when returning from fishing, but they never shared their fish with her as was customary practice. When Mangidabrutkoel finally came to visit his mother, she complained to him that while the other villagers had fish to eat, she only had breadfruit. Mangidabrutkoel felt sorry for his mother. He went to the breadfruit tree in the yard near the water's edge, and cut one of the stumps from which water and fish came gushing out. The villagers, seeing the great event, decided to take advantage of the situation and greedily cut as many branches as they could. The fish and the sea came gushing out of each cut branch which eventually sank the island.

The tobacco industry makes tobacco products intriguing and attractive like the fish-bearing breadfruit tree. It exploits resources of the poor and in many instances sinks whole families.



Organization of the Strategic Planning workshop was a collaborative effort between the Palau Tobacco Control Program and the Coalition for a Tobacco-Free Palau. Email stun@palaunet.com or call (680) 488-8118 for more information.

Funding for the strategic planning meeting and this report was provided in part by The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

PALAU'S TOBACCO CONTROL ACTION PLAN 2010-2015

Steps 5 & 6

KEY AREAS	CRITICAL ISSUES
<p>Policy <i>FCTC Articles</i> 6, 8-11, 13, 15-18</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development & enactment of legislation • Implementation and enforcement of legislation • Support & protection of policies
<p>Research, Surveillance and Exchange of Information <i>FCTC Articles 20, 21</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consumption and consequence data • Local capacity for research
<p>Infrastructure <i>All FCTC Articles esp.</i> 12, 20 & 23</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Human resources • Data • Systems • Partnerships
<p>Programs <i>FCTC Articles</i> 5.3, 8, 12, 14</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cessation • Denormalization • Advocacy/education • Focus on wellness & cultural values

Core demand reduction provisions

Article 6: Price and tax measures to reduce the demand for tobacco

Article 8: Protection from exposure to tobacco smoke

Article 9: Regulation of the contents of tobacco products

Article 10: Regulation of tobacco product disclosures

Article 11: Packaging and labeling of tobacco products

Article 12: Education, communication, training and public awareness

Article 13: Tobacco advertising, promotion and sponsorships

Article 14: Demand reduction measures concerning tobacco dependence and cessation.

Core supply reduction provisions

Article 15: Illicit trade in tobacco products

Article 16: Sales to and by minors

Article 17: Provision of support for economically viable alternative activities.



GOALS	
Research & policy Legislation & policy	Pass comprehensive legislation that implements the Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (FCTC) and begin implementation.
	Establish a national system for epidemiological surveillance of tobacco consumption and consequences of use
	Strengthen infrastructure of national tobacco control efforts
	Strengthen programs to increase their impact on wellness

IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

See Palau National Non-Communicable Disease Strategic Implementation Plan 2009-2014 for objectives with accompanying activities and indicators.

Other important matters

- Article 18: Protection of the environment and the health of persons
- Article 20: Research, surveillance and exchange of information
- Article 21: Reporting and exchange of information
- Article 23: Conference of the Parties

Reference:

WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control, World Health Organization, 2003, updated reprint 2004, 2005.



Produced by Asian Pacific Partners for Empowerment, Advocacy and Leadership (APPEAL).
www.appealforcommunities.org