

4. Promoting accountability through health law

Law is essential on the path towards UHC. WHO supports Member States in enhancing the rule of law for stronger health governance and expanding the role of law for more effective development, implementation and evaluation of health policy.

To better enable countries to address health issues through law, WHO has established a health law team in the Regional Office for the Western Pacific that collaborates closely with technical units across a broad range of programmatic areas, including health systems, communicable diseases, health security and emergencies, and noncommunicable diseases and health through the life course.

The team offers support in generating and facilitating access to legal research, monitoring and enabling health laws in Member States, producing materials for policy guidance and building legal capacity.

WHO helped Member States in ongoing legislative, regulatory and administrative reform, including health workforce regulation in Cambodia, the fundamental health law and smoke-free laws in China, restrictions on the marketing of foods and non-alcoholic beverages to children in Fiji, health-related aspects of the penal code of the Lao People's Democratic Republic, medicines regulation in Papua New Guinea, taxation of sugar-sweetened

beverages in the Philippines, alcohol legislation in Solomon Islands and infectious disease control legislation in Viet Nam.

With WHO support, Member States successfully reinforced their legal frameworks for health, such as enacting tobacco control legislation in Cambodia, amending regulations for electronic nicotine delivery systems in Fiji, establishing an enforcement agency to restrict breast milk substitute marketing in Mongolia, updating legislation to improve the quality of drinking-water in the Philippines, enacting food legislation in Samoa and Tonga, and enacting occupational health legislation that includes coverage for informal sector workers in Viet Nam. ■



The Regional Director attends the International Symposium on Fundamental Health Law in China in November 2015.