

# WHO key meetings postponed until 2021

The World Health Organisation has rescheduled key meetings on illicit trade and tobacco control until November 2021.

The DFWC has expressed serious concern at proposals that will be discussed at both these meetings alleging that the duty free industry is a source of illicit trade and with the ultimate aim of banning the sale of duty free tobacco products.

Sarah Branquinho, DFWC President, states, "The Duty Free World Council acknowledges the decision taken by the FCTC Secretariat to reschedule the next round of meetings until November 2021. It is right for the WHO to be focused on the very real threat of COVID-19."

"In the face of the COVID-19 outbreak the Duty Free industry's contribution to the recovery and ongoing success of the travel sector is going to be critical. In the months ahead our sector will be central to helping to drive the revenues needed to fuel the biggest economic recovery effort the global aviation and maritime sectors have ever seen."

She continued, "In the short term, our industry's operating conditions have changed, but our message has not - the Duty Free channel is a transparent, controlled and legitimate retail channel vital to the growth and success of airports and ports across the world. That is a message which will continue to be repeated across the world by our retailers, airport, airline and maritime partners.

"We remain clear in our view that any study run by the WHO under Article 13 of the Illicit Trade Protocol should only be carried out after adequate time is given for existing measures within the protocol to take place.

"While the next FCTC meetings will now take place in 2021, the Duty Free World Council will not be pulling back on its campaign to defend the Duty Free industry from unfair accusations and unwarranted attacks under the pretext of controlling illicit trade.

We will continue to make our case across the world to help regulators understand both the economic value of our sector, and the integrity, security and transparency of our industry."