

## Book Reviews

Ellen Rosskam and Ilona Kickbusch (eds), (2012). *Negotiating and Navigating Global Health: Case Studies in Global Health Diplomacy*. Hackensack, NJ: World Scientific, ISBN 978-981-4368-03-2, 464 pp., US\$ 59.00.

Ellen Rosskam and Ilona Kickbusch have assembled a formidable collection of cases to illustrate the dynamic and maturing field of global health diplomacy. In doing so, the editors begin to demystify this new field, which 'relates in particular to health issues that cross national boundaries, are global in nature, and require global agreements to address them both in health and non-health forums'.

There are eighteen cases in this 400-page book, which depict the blood-and-guts realities of negotiations to achieve agreement at the World Health Organization (WHO), the World Trade Organization, the United Nations and five selected countries. The cases comprise many of the controversial health and trade issues that occupied member states during the first decade of the twenty-first century.

Most of the cases are about the process of multilateral negotiations as well as their major substantive issues. Many negotiations spanned several years. The case authors therefore strove to distill the highlights and landmark events of those years, while extracting lessons from them. By and large, the authors succeeded in doing so, spinning narratives that captured the essence of the process as it evolved. Some of the narratives can be quite fascinating, as they describe what was going on behind the scenes or what the participants may have been thinking or saying at the time.

For example, it is engaging to read the observations of Kenneth Bernard, who was actually at the frontline of the tobacco negotiations as a member of the United States' delegation to the negotiations on the Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (FCTC). The FCTC process, which started in May 2000 after almost two years of preparations, lasted for another three years and involved six two-weeklong periods of intense deliberations among member states. Costing millions of dollars before an agreement was finally reached in 2003, the negotiations resulted in a health treaty, a first for the WHO. The treaty represented agreement by the member states on a wide range of provisions, including protection from exposure to tobacco smoke, tobacco advertising and tax measures.

While tobacco negotiations did result in global agreement, Jonathan B. Tucker's chapter describes a case where no definitive agreement has to date been reached, despite repeated consultations and negotiations. Although member

states have since 1999 reiterated their intention to destroy the last two known existing stocks of smallpox virus, which are kept in laboratories in the United States and Russia, the date for this destruction has not been agreed. In the post-9/11 climate, the issue has been shelved time and again because of the fear that unknown and unauthorized stocks exist elsewhere. The destruction of known stocks would curtail the capacity to produce a smallpox vaccine in the event of unknown stocks being used for biological warfare or terrorism.

The negotiation processes around intellectual property and public health involved trade issues and were excruciatingly tortuous. Starting in 2003 with the creation of the Commission on Intellectual Property Rights, Innovation and Public Health, it ended five years later with a World Health Assembly resolution that — according to former WHO Assistant Director-General Harold Zucker — fell short of resolving the controversial issues on intellectual property rights and access to medicines.

The selection of cases cover many other contemporary issues, including the brain drain of health professionals, access to anti-retrovirals in South Africa and health reform in Kyrgyzstan. Allyn Taylor, a legal adviser from Georgetown University, who contributed to both the tobacco negotiations and those of the WHO code of international recruitment for health personnel, compares the two processes, one resulting in a binding treaty, and the other in a voluntary instrument. Christopher J. Colvin and Mark Heywood describe the celebrated court case between Big Pharma and the South African government, which the latter won with the support of civil society. Judyth L. Twigg, a specialist in Soviet studies, reviews the challenges and achievements of Kyrgyzstan's health reform in the aftermath of the breakup of the Soviet Union.

While the cases are highlights in themselves, it must be said that the issues continue to evolve as governments and the various stakeholders navigate their way towards the goals and outcomes that they have collectively agreed to achieve. In that sense, the cases in the book are open-ended and the question can always be raised of what happened after the negotiations were concluded and agreement was reached?

This book will help the reader to understand how much or how little negotiations at these global forums affect our daily lives — from the prices of cigarettes to the availability of low-cost medicines and vaccines. For the student of public health, international relations and trade, it is a recommended read in these interconnected times.

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