



20 March 2019

Angel Gurria
Secretary-General
Organization of Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD)

Dear OECD Secretary General Angel Gurria:

We, the leadership of STOP, a global tobacco industry watchdog, write to express our grave concern that a Philip Morris International (PMI) executive is scheduled to speak in a session entitled “Responsible Lobbying: Aligning Profit for Public Good” at the OECD Anti-Corruption and Integrity Forum on March 21, 2019.

The OECD cannot effectively promote integrity, anti-corruption, and good governance with the tobacco industry at the table. We express the views of the global public health community when we say that, because of the tobacco industry’s sordid reputation, the association between a tobacco company and the OECD’s Integrity Forum casts a cloud of doubt on the integrity of the event itself.

Tobacco is a unique product in that it kills half of its consumers.ⁱ It is the only consumer product that is subject of a global treaty, the WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (FCTC), with over 180 Parties including all but one OECD member.^{ii iii} The FCTC is now embedded in the UN Sustainable Development Goals, enshrining the tenet that good governance in public health involves treating tobacco companies differently from the rest of industry.^{iv}

There is no such thing as “responsible lobbying” for the tobacco industry; its lobbying is equated with “tobacco industry interference” which remains the greatest challenge in tobacco control treaty implementation.^v In the words of a model policy endorsed for agencies of the United Nations through a UN ECOSOC Resolution: “Tobacco industry interference...includes maneuvering with lobbyists to influence law making...”^{vi} Many countries including OECD states have developed practices and policies on how to deal with or restrict tobacco industry lobbying, and to reject partnerships and arrangements with the tobacco industry.^{vii viii}

The WHO has also created clear rules against working with the tobacco industry.^{ix} Backed by more than 200 organizations from 52 countries,^x the WHO governing body recently denounced the attempt of a PMI-funded foundation to be considered a partner in public health.^{xi xii}

In the field of transparency and anti-corruption, tobacco companies have been subject of investigations relating to their undue influence of government officials to the detriment of public service.^{xiii} Philip Morris’ own internal documents show how it thrived in an environment that is non-transparent and corrupt,^{xiv xv} and reports have shown its complicity in smuggling.^{xvi xvii xviii} The latest evidence suggests this involvement is likely ongoing.^{xix}

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The attempt of the tobacco industry to align itself with OECD's work on integrity and elsewhere will not be an isolated one as it has been known to "manipulate public opinion to gain the appearance of respectability"^{xx} and advance its corporate affairs agenda to the detriment of governments trying to save lives from tobacco use and reach the SDGs.

OECD has an opportunity to demonstrate that its commitment to good governance is a commitment in action, not just in words. It also has an opportunity to stand in partnership with its member state governments, the WHO, and other members of the international community in rejecting the tobacco industry. It is in this light that we urge the OECD to act in a manner consistent with the institution's long-standing principles to protect its credibility and integrity; not only at this event, but all future events of the OECD.

Nuntavarn Vichit-Vadakan

Chair of Global Center for Good Governance in Tobacco Control (GGTC), Thailand

Gan Quan

Director of Tobacco Control, The Union, France

Anna Gilmore

Professor of Public Health, University of Bath, United Kingdom

Sandra Mullin

Senior Vice President,
Policy, Advocacy and Communication, Vital Strategies, United States

ⁱ World Health Organization. Tobacco. Retrieved from <https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/tobacco> (accessed on 20 March 2019).

ⁱⁱ World Health Organization (2003). WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control. Retrieved from https://www.who.int/tobacco/framework/WHO_FCTC_english.pdf (accessed on 20 March 2019).

ⁱⁱⁱ United Nations Treaty Collection: Framework Convention on Tobacco Control. Retrieved from https://treaties.un.org/pages/ViewDetails.aspx?src=TREATY&mtdsg_no=IX-4&chapter=9&clang=en (accessed on 20 March 2019).

^{iv} United Nations. WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control. Retrieved from <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/index.php?page=view&type=30022&nr=186&menu=3170> (accessed on 20 March 2019).

^v Model policy for agencies of the United Nations system on preventing tobacco industry interference. Retrieved from <https://www.who.int/ncds/un-task-force/events/model-policy-agencies-united-nations1.pdf?ua=1> (accessed on 20 March 2019); UN ECOSOC (04 August 2017). United Nations Inter-Agency Task Force on the Prevention and Control of Non-Communicable Diseases. E/RES/2017/8. Retrieved from http://undocs.org/E/RES/2017/8?utm_source=feedburner&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=Feed%3A+LatestUnDocuments-EconomicSocialCouncilDocuments+%28Economic+%26+Social+Council+documents+issued+at+United+Nations+Headquarters%29 (accessed on 20 March 2019).

^{vi} World Health Organization. Model policy for agencies of the United Nations system on preventing tobacco industry interference. Retrieved from <https://www.who.int/ncds/un-task-force/events/model-policy-agencies-united-nations1.pdf?ua=1> (accessed on 20 March 2019); UN ECOSOC (04 August 2017). United Nations Inter-Agency Task Force on the Prevention and Control of Non-Communicable Diseases. E/RES/2017/8. Retrieved from http://undocs.org/E/RES/2017/8?utm_source=feedburner&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=Feed%3A+LatestUnDocuments-EconomicSocialCouncilDocuments+%28Economic+%26+Social+Council+documents+issued+at+United+Nations+Headquarters%29 (accessed on 20 March 2019).

^{vii} Global Center for Good Governance in Tobacco Control (2018). Handbook on Implementation of WHO FCTC Article 5.3: Policies and Practices that Protect Against Tobacco Industry Interference (2nd edition). Retrieved from <https://ggtc.world/dmdocuments/Handbook%20Implementation%20WHO%20FCTC%2053.pdf> (accessed on 20 March 2019).

^{viii} Assunta M (2018). Good country practices in the implementation of WHO FCTC Article 5.3 and its guidelines: Report commissioned by the WHO FCTC Secretariat. Retrieved from <https://www.who.int/fctc/publications/fctc-article-5-3-best-practices.pdf?ua=1> (accessed on 20 March 2019).

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^{ix} World Health Organization. Guidelines for implementation of Article 5.3 of the WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control on the protection of public health policies with respect to tobacco control from commercial and other vested interests of the tobacco industry. Retrieved from https://www.who.int/fctc/guidelines/article_5_3.pdf?ua=1 (accessed on 20 March 2019).

^x An open letter to the Director General and Executive Board of the WHO, 28 January 2019. Retrieved from <https://ggtc.world/2019/01/28/an-open-letter-to-the-director-general-and-executive-board-of-the-world-health-organization/> (accessed on 20 March 2019).

^{xi} Southeast Asia Tobacco Control Alliance (02 February 2019). WHO affirms commitment to public health, rejects partnership with PMI foundation. Retrieved from <https://seatca.org/?p=13437> (accessed on 20 March 2019).

^{xii} WHO FCTC Knowledge Hub on Article 5.3 & Global Center for Good Governance in Tobacco Control (March 2019). WHO affirmed its commitment to keeping tobacco industry-funded entities out of public health. Retrieved from <https://ggtc.world/2018/08/31/newsletter/> (accessed on 20 March 2019).

^{xiii} Global Center for Good Governance in Tobacco Control. Tobacco Industry Interference. Retrieved from <https://ggtc.world/2018/08/18/tobacco-industry-interference/> (accessed on 20 March 2019).

^{xiv} Kalra A, et al. (13 July 2017). Inside Philip Morris' campaign to subvert the global anti-smoking treaty. Reuters. Retrieved from <https://www.reuters.com/investigates/special-report/pmi-who-fctc/> (accessed on 20 March 2019).

^{xv} K Alechnowicz, Simon Chapman, 'The Philippine Tobacco Industry: The Strongest Tobacco lobby in Asia' (2004) <http://tobaccocontrol.bmj.com/content/13/suppl_2/ii71.full?> accessed March 2019.

^{xvi} Beelman M (14 May 2012). Philip Morris accused of smuggling, money-laundering conspiracy in racketeering lawsuit. International Consortium of Investigative Journalists. Retrieved from <https://www.icij.org/investigations/big-tobacco-smuggling/philip-morris-accused-smuggling-money-laundering-conspiracy-racketeering-lawsuit/> (accessed on 20 March 2019).

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^{xviii} Gilmore AB, et al. (2015). Exposing and addressing tobacco industry conduct in low-income and middle-income countries. The Lancet. Retrieved from <https://www.thelancet.com/action/showPdf?pii=S0140-6736%2815%2960312-9> (accessed on 20 March 2019).

^{xix} Gilmore AB, et al. (2015). Tobacco industry's elaborate attempts to control a global track and trace system and fundamentally undermine the Illicit Trade Protocol. Tobacco Control. Retrieved from <https://tobaccocontrol.bmj.com/content/tobaccocontrol/28/2/127.full.pdf> (accessed on 20 March 2019).

^{xx} Model policy for agencies of the United Nations system on preventing tobacco industry interference. Retrieved from <https://www.who.int/ncds/un-task-force/events/model-policy-agencies-united-nations1.pdf?ua=1> (accessed on 20 March 2019); UN ECOSOC (04 August 2017). United Nations Inter-Agency Task Force on the Prevention and Control of Non-Communicable Diseases. E/RES/2017/8. Retrieved from http://undocs.org/E/RES/2017/8?utm_source=feedburner&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=Feed%3A+LatestUnDocuments-EconomicSocialCouncilDocuments+%28Economic+%26+Social+Council+documents+issued+at+United+Nations+Headquarters%29 (accessed on 20 March 2019).