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SEATCA Statement on PMI's Foundation for a Smoke-free World

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The Southeast Asia Tobacco Control Alliance (SEATCA) joins the international public health community in denouncing^[1] the Philip Morris International (PMI)-funded Foundation for a Smoke-free World that is positioned to sabotage global tobacco control. Governments, universities, and health advocates must reject any partnerships with this foundation.

PMI's contribution to the foundation of around US\$ 80 million annually for the next 12 years is for purportedly "independent" research to support a "smoke-free" world, not a "tobacco-free" world. In other words, it's a platform to legitimize and accelerate sales of IQOS, its heat-not-burn tobacco product. In essence, this Foundation is really a foundation to promote its new product while simultaneously continuing to sell its cigarettes.

SEATCA endorses the statement^[2] of the Convention Secretariat for the WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (FCTC) that the foundation is an industry-funded attempt to interfere in public policy and undermine implementation of the WHO FCTC. By using the term "smoke-free", PMI is attempting to blur the fundamental and irreconcilable conflict between the interests of the tobacco

industry and those of public health. It is clearly looking for opportunities to participate in policy development, although it opposes stringent tobacco control measures. Hence SEATCA concurs that, “any collaboration with this Foundation, due to its current funding arrangements that comes from a tobacco multinational, would constitute a clear breach of Article 5.3 of the Convention concerning tobacco industry interference.”

Echoing the Convention Secretariat and the World Health Organization,^[3] SEATCA strongly recommends that governments, non-governmental organizations, and individuals everywhere do not endorse, support, form partnerships with or participate in any activities of this foundation.

The foundation is a distraction away from the many deaths PMI's cigarettes cause, because PMI is not stopping its sales of cigarettes; in fact, PMI is increasing cigarette sales in ASEAN countries and continues to run covert campaigns to block or undermine the implementation of any tobacco legislation that protects public health and results in reduced tobacco use.

In Indonesia, PMI uses its front group, GAPRINDO, to fight tobacco control measures such as advertising ban and tax increase. In Malaysia, a PMI-funded local think-tank, IDEAS, opposes tobacco control measures, especially plain packaging and tax increase, while the local affiliate of PMI in the Philippines, PMFTC, violated the Civil Service Commission-Department of Health Joint Memorandum Circular to protect the bureaucracy against tobacco industry interference by sponsoring summits on climate change for public officials.^[4]

There will be no smoke-free world with PMI still selling its deadly products. The tobacco industry's products will kill an estimated 1 billion people worldwide in the 21st century.

About SEATCA

SEATCA is a multi-sectoral non-governmental alliance working to promote health and save lives by assisting ASEAN countries to accelerate and

effectively implement the evidence-based tobacco control measures contained in the WHO FCTC. Acknowledged by governments, academic institutions, and civil society for its advancement of tobacco control movements in Southeast Asia, the WHO bestowed on SEATCA the World No Tobacco Day Award in 2004 and the WHO Director-General's Special Recognition Award in 2014.

[1] <https://www.tobaccofreekids.org/media/2017/pmi-rejection-quotes>

[2] <http://www.who.int/fctc/mediacentre/statement/secretariat-statement-launch-foundation-for-a-smoke-free-world/en/>

[3] <http://www.who.int/mediacentre/news/statements/2017/philip-morris-foundation/en/>

[4] <http://tobaccowatch.seatca.org/index.php/2017/10/10/tobacco-industry-corrective-statements-only-in-the-us/>

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