

# WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control Secretariat's statement on the launch of the Foundation for a Smoke-Free World

WHO FCTC statement

19 September 2017

The WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control Secretariat (Convention Secretariat) notes the launch of the Foundation for a Smoke-Free World, led by a former official of the World Health Organization.

The Convention Secretariat regards this tobacco industry-funded initiative as a clear attempt to breach the WHO FCTC by interfering in public policy. It is a deeply alarming development aimed at damaging the treaty's implementation, particularly through the Foundation's contentious research programmes.

The WHO FCTC is the world's only tobacco control evidence based treaty and has been commended by global leaders as providing the primary roadmap to a tobacco-free world. It has 181 Parties, representing 180 States and the European Union, and is supported by numerous nongovernmental organizations.

## **The Convention Secretariat wishes to make the following points and clarifications:**

### 1. With regard to the president of this Foundation

- Although the president of the Foundation was part of the WHO Secretariat during the negotiation of the WHO FCTC, the treaty had no single architect. It resulted from the work of hundreds of committed government representatives, individuals and organizations, and that is its greatest strength – teamwork.
- The Foundation's president is in no way linked to the Convention Secretariat, nor does he represent the Convention Secretariat's views.

### 2. With regard to the Foundation's funding

- The Foundation for a Smoke-Free World describes itself as an independent organization. It reportedly will be funded solely with almost US\$ 1 billion from Philip Morris International, the tobacco conglomerate.
- There is extensive experience of tobacco-industry funded research

that was later used to prevent effective tobacco control policies. It is clear that the industry aims to follow the same path in the area of non-traditional tobacco products, which are unregulated in many countries.

### 3. With regard to interactions with the tobacco industry

- Parties to the WHO FCTC should note that any collaboration with this Foundation, due to its current funding arrangement that comes from a tobacco multinational, would constitute a clear breach of Article 5.3 of the Convention concerning tobacco industry interference.
- Parties to the Convention have agreed, through the Guidelines to Article 5.3, that activities described as “socially responsible” by the tobacco industry, constitute a marketing and public-relations strategy that falls within the Convention’s definition of advertising, promotion and sponsorship. Parties should not endorse, support, form partnerships with or participate in tobacco industry activities described as socially responsible. Tobacco industry is clearly looking for a seat at the table.

### 4. With regard to new products

- The tobacco industry is introducing new products in pursuit of profit rather than public health. For example, new “heat-no-burn” products contain tobacco and electronic nicotine delivery systems (ENDS) contain nicotine, an addictive substance regulated through appropriate policies under Article 5.2(b) of the Convention related to legislative and administrative measures.
- Parties to the Convention have agreed to consider applying regulatory measures to prohibit or restrict the manufacture, importation, distribution, presentation, sale and use of ENDS, as appropriate to their national laws and public health objectives. If other novel tobacco or nicotine products emerge, the way that they are treated needs to be considered in the same way.

### 5. With regard to possible effects on tobacco growers

- Article 17 of the WHO FCTC requires Parties to promote, as appropriate, economically viable alternatives for tobacco workers and growers. The tobacco industry knows that it creates social problems, including the use of child labour. Initiatives endorsed by the industry and those it funds are not designed to solve the problems it creates, but to give a false impression of sympathy for its victims.

### 6. With regard to the impact of the WHO FCTC on public health

- The WHO FCTC, despite the efforts of the tobacco industry to prevent progress, has substantially improved global public health through the evidence-based measures it endorses.
- The WHO FCTC has been recognized as playing “a critical role as an authoritative and agreed catalyst and framework for action.” The use by the tobacco industry of research to prevent effective tobacco control policies, now in relation to non-traditional tobacco products, is proof that the policies originating from Parties’ implementation of the WHO FCTC provisions are having an important and lasting effect on tobacco control.

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## Related links

- [WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control](#)
- [Guidelines for implementation of Article 5.3](#)
- [Guidelines for implementation of Article 13](#)

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-  [Electronic nicotine delivery systems and electronic nonnicotine delivery systems](#)  
pdf, 213kb  
COP7 Decision

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## Statement by WHO

- [WHO Statement on Philip Morris funded Foundation for a Smoke-Free World](#)

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## Statement Head of the Secretariat of the WHO FCTC about the tobacco industry

- [Transparency, Yes. Interference, No.](#)
- [Commentary on the launch of the Foundation for a Smoke-Free World](#)  
Dr Vera da Costa e Silva  
Head of the WHO FCTC Secretariat