20 September, 2021

To: Honorable government delegates to the World Health Organization Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (WHO FCTC) and Protocol to Eliminate Illicit Trade in Tobacco Products (The Protocol).

As governments around the world have grappled with the COVID-19 pandemic, another pandemic continues to devastate people’s lives around the globe: that of tobacco-related disease, which continues to claim more than 8 million lives each year. Although it is wholly preventable, it is still driven by a powerful industry with a history of interference in lifesaving public health policy.

Fortunately, governments have united to protect people’s lives from this industry’s abuses through the WHO FCTC, and its groundbreaking Article 5.3. At the Eighth Conference of the Parties (COP8) of the WHO FCTC and the First Session of the Meeting of the Parties (MOP1) of The Protocol, governments agreed upon a groundbreaking decision to enhance Article 5.3 and maximize transparency in negotiations, protecting against the undue influence of the tobacco industry.

We, the undersigned civil society tobacco control and public health organizations (some of which are observers to the WHO FCTC), are writing to respectfully remind all Parties to the WHO FCTC and The Protocol of this decision. We urge Parties to fulfill this decision by submitting a declaration (via a declaration-of-interest form, or any format of your preference) as soon as delegations are confirmed in advance of the upcoming meetings of the WHO FCTC: COP9 and MOP2, which will take place in virtual format on November 8 – 13 and 15 – 18, 2021 respectively.

Specifically, on October 6 and 10, 2018, at COP8 of the WHO FCTC and MOP1 of The Protocol, Parties adopted the following decisions:
• FCTC/COP8(12) and FCTC/MOP1(15) "Maximizing transparency of delegations from Parties and observers to the Conference of the Parties, its subsidiary bodies and other WHO FCTC Meetings". [1][2]

• When designating representatives to COPs, MOPs, or other WHO FCTC-related bodies, each Party decided to formally indicate that it has "observed Article 5.3 of the WHO FCTC and has been mindful of the recommendations 4.9 and 8.3 of the Guidelines for the implementation of Article 5.3 of the WHO FCTC." Parties may do this via a declaration-of-interest form, or the format they determine to be in accordance with their internal procedures and domestic legislation.

These important decisions serve two primary goals: i) Accelerate and strengthen the implementation of Article 5.3 of the WHO FCTC and Article 4.2 of The Protocol; and ii) Forestall the tobacco industry’s ongoing efforts to infiltrate and undermine implementation of the WHO FCTC and The Protocol.

When the decisions were first proposed at COP8 and MOP1, they received broad support from Parties. By making these declarations (whether via a declaration-of-interest form, or the format that Parties choose) mandatory for all Party delegations, Parties are leading by example.

Parties to the WHO FCTC and The Protocol adopted the guidelines laid out by the treaty and its protocol. To effectively implement these international instruments and its measures, it is critical that Parties protect themselves against the vested interests of the tobacco industry.

If Parties do not fulfill the obligation agreed upon in the FCTC/COP8(12) and FCTC/MOP1(15) decisions or “Maximizing Transparency Decisions" to indicate their observance of Article 5.3 and its guidelines (in the format of their preference) as soon as delegations are confirmed in advance of the upcoming meetings of COP9 and MOP2, they will be leaving the door open to the influence of the tobacco industry that will undermine the agreement. Other treaty bodies and international forums are already looking to this decision as a powerful precedent for protecting policymaking from the interference of abusive industries. With the eyes of the world on the WHO FCTC, it is critical that governments submit these declarations as soon as delegations to COP9 and MOP2 are confirmed.

Parties can find a template form that was discussed as part of the decision at COP8 here, to use as a guide if they so choose: https://bit.ly/3nw9oMx

We look forward to supporting the COP9/MOP2 Presidency, WHO FCTC Secretariat, Parties, and observers in continuing to advance the WHO FCTC and its lifesaving, precedent-setting measures.
Sincerely,

The undersigned organizations

Co-sponsors
ASH - Action on Smoking and Health U.S.
ATCA - African Tobacco Control Alliance
Corporate Accountability
SEATCA - Southeast Asia Tobacco Control Alliance
STOP - Stopping Tobacco Organizations and Products
The Union - International Union against Tuberculosis and Lung Disease

Africa
Actions Justes pour le Bien-être Social (Actions Justes-ONG)
Action Solidarité Recherche en Milieu Réel/ASOREMIR
Alternatives Durables pour le Développement (ADD) Membre de ATCA
AMOSAPU - Associação Moçambicana de Saúde Pública
Anti Alcohol and Drug Abuse Zambia
Anti Tobacco Network (Botswana)
Appui aux Initiatives de Développement-AIDE
Association pour la Défense de l'Environnement et des Consommateurs (ADEC)
Cedars Refuge Foundation
Coalition Camerounaise Contre le Tabac
Comité/Club Unesco Universitaire pour la Lutte Contre la Drogue et autres pandémies(CLUCOD)
Consumer Grassroots Association
Daily Monitor
Delight Global Foundation
Elat Meyong Femmes
Factcheckers Zambia
Ghana Health Service
HHNB
Initiative Locale Pour Le Developpement Integre (ILDI ONGD)
Initiative pour l'Education et le Contrôle du Tabagisme
Ligue sénégalaise de lutte antitabac
Mathiwos Wondu -YeEthiopia Cancer Society
Nigeria Tobacco Control Alliance
Nigerian Current
NY SAHY
ONG Actions Juste
ONG CLUCOD
ONG JADES Jeunesse actions développement solidarité
Programme national de Lutte contre le Tabac
Réseau des Ong Congolaises de lutte antitabac
Tobacco Free Association of Zambia
UHCA-Uganda Health Communication Alliance
Vision for Alternative Development
Zambia Consumer Association
Zambia Media Network Against Tobacco
Zambia Tobacco Control Consortium

Americas
Acción Contra El Alcoholismo Ac
ACT Promoção da Saúde / ACT Health Promotion
Alianza Bolivia Libre Sin Tabaco
Alianza contra el Tabaco A.C. ACTA
Alianza ENT Uruguay
Alianza ENT Perú
Asociación Boliviana de Sociedades Científicas de Estudiantes de Medicina
Asociación Dominicana de Estudiantes (ADEE) Evangélicos
ASPANNIC-Bolivia
CEDRO - Centro de Información y Educación para la Prevención del Abuso de Drogas
Chile Libre de Tabaco
CIET Uruguay
CLAS-Coalición Américas Saludable
Clínica del Tabaco S. C.
Coalición México Salud-Hable
COLAT Perú-Comisión Nacional Permanente de Lucha Antitabáquica
Congregación Cristiana INC.
CRECE, AC
Educar Consumidores
Felsocem
FCA - Framework Convention Alliance for Tobacco Control
FIC Bolivia/ Alianza por la Salud
Fundación Anáas
Fundación Dominicana de Obesidad y Prevención Cardiovascular
Fundación Foro Nacional de Cáncer
IHF-Fundación Interamericana del Corazón
FIC Argentina-Fundación Interamericana del Corazón Argentina
Fundahabla
FUNSAD
Mesa Ciudadana Tabaco o Salud
Pacientes en Acción, A. C.
PPcENT-Personas Proactivas con ENT
Polithink
RENATA-Red Antitabaco de Costa Rica
Refleacciona con Responsabilidad A.C.
RespiraLibre
Salud Justa MX
Scem UPFT
Sociedad Chilena de Salud Pública Oral
Sociedad de NeumoNorte
SODOCARDIO – Sociedad Dominicana de Cardiología
SÚMATE – Sociedad Unida para la Movilización Anti Tabaco en el Salvador
SUT - Sociedad Uruguaya de Tabacología
The Center for Black Health & Equity
Tu Museo, exposiciones interactivas S.C. de R.L. de C.V.

Asia
A Woman Alliance of Against Tobacco-TABINAJ
ASH Thailand
Asha Parivar
Asian Consultancy on Tobacco Control
Association For Promotion Sustainable Development
Association of Environmental Health Officers, Malaysia (EHOM)
Black Sail Ventures
CNS- Citizen News Service
Education and Research Association of Pahang
Empower India
HealthJustice Philippines
Huvadhoo Aid
Indraprastha Public Affairs Centre
Jeewaka Foundation
Li Chee Chinese Women Association SKL
Malaysian Association of Adolescent Health
Malaysian Green Lung Association
Malaysian Women's Action on Tobacco Control and Health (MyWATCH)
National Campaign for Sustainable Development Nepal
NGO Pertubuhan Ikram Malaysia
Persekutuan Seruan Islam Selangor & Wilayah Persekutuan Pertubuhan TELANG Malaysia
People's Health Foundation
Smoke-free Cities Asia Pacific Network (SCAN)
Sustainable Development Network Malaysia
Third World Network
Women Development Program

**Mediterranean and Middle East**
Smoke Free Israel

**Western Europe**
Austrian Council on Smoking and Health
Cancer Research UK
Centro Colaborador de la OMS para el Control del Tabaco / Institut Català d'Oncologia
CNCT - Comité National Contre le Tabagisme,
ENSP - European Network for Smoking and Tobacco Prevention
Unfairtobacco / BLUE 21
XQNS !