



STOPPING TOBACCO
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More Than 100 Public Health Organizations Urge a Complete Rejection of the Tobacco Industry at the UN General Assembly's 74th Session

STOP Tobacco Industry Watchdog Warns of Tobacco Company Efforts to Influence the UN Agenda

New York (September 10, 2019) — An international group of 142 non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and individuals from 42 countries—organized through STOP (Stopping Tobacco Organizations and Products), a global tobacco industry watchdog—petitioned every member and observer at the United Nations General Assembly to refrain from accepting money, establishing partnerships, or attending events that involve tobacco industry entities. STOP cautioned against the tobacco industry's efforts to ingratiate themselves to delegates in an effort to influence UN policy making.

The request comes two months after the former head of the UN's Geneva office—as one of his final actions in an official capacity—requested that the UN reconsider the exclusion of tobacco entities from its work on achieving the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. In fact, any work conducted by the UN or its members in partnership with tobacco interests would lead to a direct violation of the World Health Organization Framework Convention on Tobacco Control, a global treaty.

“UN delegations risk being complicit in tobacco-related deaths if they allow the industry to influence UN policy making,” said Bungon Ritthiphakdee, Executive Director of Global Center for Good Governance on Tobacco Control and a partner in STOP. “Tobacco use causes cancer, heart and lung diseases, and other illnesses, and thus undermines all the Sustainable Development Goals.”

According to the letter signed by health advocates around the world:

“Every year, the tobacco industry's products claim 8 million lives and cause losses worth at least \$1.4 trillion, leaving behind a devastating trail of social, economic, environmental and health harms. Partnership with the tobacco industry, therefore, directly contradicts the Sustainable Development Goals, and constitutes a major reversal of the progress achieved towards the attainment of SDG 3 (Healthy Lives); which includes strengthening the implementation of the FCTC, a treaty that requires governments to protect public health from the commercial and vested interests of the tobacco industry (Article 5.3).

The tobacco industry has a long history of operating at the margins of the United Nations to develop influence, from underwriting side events alongside the General Assembly—such as Philip Morris International's sponsorship of the Concordia Summit—to even appropriating the branding of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in marketing materials and annual reports. Tobacco companies recently sponsored, through the [Transnational Alliance To Combat Illicit Trade](#), a report on countering



STOPPING TOBACCO
ORGANIZATIONS & PRODUCTS

illicit trade, which was endorsed by the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development. Several tobacco companies are widely promoting this document and the relationship with UNCTAD despite historic evidence of tobacco companies' complicity in illicit trade.

"Tobacco lobbying lingers longer than cigarette smoke and ultimately hurts people and economies," said Rebecca Perl of Vice President of Partnerships and Initiatives at Vital Strategies and a partner in STOP. "Big tobacco works hard to gain access to the United Nations because the standards set in international forums cascade downward to national and local policy."

Please contact the [STOP press office](#) for more information or to speak to a STOP spokesperson.

About STOP (Stopping Tobacco Organizations and Products)

STOP is a global tobacco industry watchdog whose mission is to expose the tobacco industry strategies and tactics that undermine public health. STOP is a partnership between The Tobacco Control Research Group at the [University of Bath](#), [The Global Center for Good Governance in Tobacco Control](#), [The Union](#) and [Vital Strategies](#). Learn more at [exposetobacco.org](#).

Notes to Editors

Text of the letter sent to UN delegates, including list of signatories:

10 September 2019

Delegates of the
UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY

To: Permanent Representatives of Member and Observer States of the United Nations General Assembly

Re: World Leaders Should Reject Engagement with the Tobacco Industry at the United Nations General Assembly's 74th session

Excellencies,

Ahead of the 74th regular session of the United Nations General Assembly we write, on behalf of public health groups and individuals, to call on your delegation to decline invitations from the tobacco industry or those furthering its interests, and to reject tobacco industry partnerships.

We were alarmed that, in July, a then-sitting UN official directly advocated to the Secretary-General in favor of tobacco partnerships in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. This egregious approach from within the UN defied the UNGA's long-standing tenet of a fundamental conflict of interest between



STOPPING TOBACCO
ORGANIZATIONS & PRODUCTS

the tobacco industry and public health. It also signals a renewed effort by the tobacco industry to infiltrate the UNGA and steer global policy to its advantage.

The threat is both real, and present. Every year, the tobacco industry's products claim 8 million lives and cause losses worth at least \$1.4 trillion, leaving behind a devastating trail of social, economic, environmental and health harms. Partnership with the tobacco industry, therefore, directly contradicts the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), and constitutes a major reversal of the progress achieved towards the attainment of SDG 3 (Healthy Lives). This goal involves strengthening implementation of the World Health Organization Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (WHO FCTC), a treaty that requires governments to protect public health from the commercial and vested interests of the tobacco industry (Article 5.3). Yet tobacco companies use SDG logos in their reports, sponsor UNGA side events, and launch global initiatives to divert attention from these facts.

These actions are not benevolent. Tobacco industry documents reveal that access to the UN is part of a deliberate strategy to establish credibility, to gain access to policy makers for the purposes of undermining tobacco control and to open up new markets for its products. Association with the UN (including its agencies and events) lends legitimacy to tobacco companies, which, in turn, enhances their ability to sell lethal products, and market in ways that attract children. The UNGA must avoid being complicit in the tobacco industry's plans.

It is in this context that we call on you to reject invitations from tobacco companies or those furthering their interests; and to counter proposals that support tobacco industry partnerships and positions.

We also urge you to remind all entities in the UN system to adhere to the model policy for preventing tobacco industry interference, through the rejection of funds from, and partnerships with, the tobacco industry. Global progress has already been made in excluding the tobacco industry at the United Nations Development Program, the UN Global Compact and the World Health Organization.

Rejecting industry proposals and funding within the UNGA and across all UN agencies would accelerate achievement of the SDGs, promoting wellbeing for all at all ages.

Sincerely,

Sandra Mullin
Senior Vice President, Vital Strategies and
Partner in STOP (Stopping Tobacco Organizations and Products)



Signatories list

Organization	Name	Title	Country
Action Nepal	Anand Bahadur Chand	Director	Nepal
Action on Smoking and Health (ASH)	Laurent Huber	Executive Director	USA
Action on Smoking and Health Foundation	Prakit Vathesatogkit, M.D.	Executive Secretary	Thailand
Advocacy Center "LIFE"	Lilia Olefir	Executive Director	Ukraine
Alcohol and Drug Information Centre	Pubudu Sumanasekara	Executive Director	Sri Lanka
Aliansa Nasional Controllo Tabaku Timor-Leste (ANCT-TL)	Sancho Fernandes		Timor Leste
American University of Beirut	Rima Nakkash	Associate Professor	Lebanon
ASH Finland	Mervi Hara	Executive Director	Finland
ASH Philippines	Maria Encarnita B. Limpin	Executive Director	Philippines
ASH Scotland	Sheila Duffy	Chief Executive	Scotland
Association "Salauat Astana"	Ahmetova Saule	Director	Kazakstan
Association of European Cancer Leagues	Dr. Wendy Yared	Director	Belgium
Australian Health Promotion Association	Gemma Crawford	President	Austalia
Austrian Council on Smoking and Health	Kurt Aigner	MD	Austria
Balajee Sewa Sansthan	Awadhesh Kumar		India
Cachar Cancer Hospital and Research Centre	Dr. R. Ravi Kannan	Director	India
Campaign for Tobacco Free Kids	Doan Thi Thu Huyen (MPH)	Country Director, Vietnam	Vietnam
Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids	Matthew L. Myers	President	USA
Center for Health Consultation and Community Development (CHD)	Nguyen Hoang Yen	Director	Vietnam
Center for Innovative Government and Society Studies	Heru Syah Putra, SE., MA	Representative	Indonesia
Center for Media in Educating Community	Mai Phan Loi	Chairman of the Scientific Council	Vietnam



Center for Tobacco Control Studies	Heru Syah Putra, SE., MA	Representative	Indonesia
Centro de Información y Educación para la Prevención del Abuso de Drogas (CEDRO)	Carmen Barco Olguín	Coordinadora de Control de Tabaco	Peru
Centro de Investigación para la Epidemia del Tabaquismo (CIET)	-	-	Uruguay
Chinese Association on Tobacco Control (CATC)	Hu Dayi	President	China
Chitranshu Samaj Kalyan Parishad (CSKP)	Dilip Srivastava	Director	India
Coalition for a Tobacco-Free Arkansas	Katherine Donald	Executive Director	USA
Codice S. C.	Eduardo del Castillo	Director	Mexico
Comisión Nacional Permanente de Lucha Antitabáquica - COLAT	Flavia Radovic	Presidenta	Peru
Corporate Accountability	Michel Legendre	Associate Campaign Director	USA
Department of Home Affairs and Justice, Government of Punjab, Chandigarh	Dr. Rakesh Gupta	Director of Chemical Examiner Lab / CCE	India
Development and Policies Research Center	Dr. Nguyen Ngoc Anh	Director	Vietnam
Distinguished Fellow The George Institute for Global Health	Michael Moore AM	Professor	Australia
Escuela Nacional de Salud Pública	Désirée Vidaña Pérez	Estudiante del doctorado en salud pública (PhD student in Public Health)	Mexico
Evidence-based Health Policy Development Coalition (EBHPD)	Tran Tuan	President	Vietnam
Faith Foundation	Susan Samson	Project Director	India
Forumul National de Preventie (FNP)	Prof.Mihaltan Florin Dumitru	Member,ENSP representative	Romania
Framework Convention Alliance (FCA)	Francis Thompson	Executive Director	Switzerland
Framework Convention on Tobacco Control Alliance, Philippines (FCAP)	Bobby Del Rosario	President	Philippines
Fresh - Making Smoking History	Ailsa Rutter	Director	United Kingdom
Fundación Anáas	María Clara Ávila Barragán	Secretaria General	Colombia
Fundación InterAmericana del Corazón - Bolivia (FIC)	Alejandra Karina Garron	Directora Ejecutiva	Bolivia



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Gramin Vikas Sewa Samiti (GVSS)	Mehar Chand		India
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Israel Association of Public Health Physicians, Israel Medical Association	Dr. Hagai Levine	Chairperson	Israel
Israeli Medical Association for Smoking Cessation and Prevention	Yael Bar-Zeev	Chair	Israel
Japan Society for Tobacco Control	Manabu Sakuta, MD, Professor	Board Chairman	Japan
Kerala Voluntary Health Services	Saju V. Itty	Executive Director	India
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STOPPING TOBACCO
ORGANIZATIONS & PRODUCTS

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Muhammadiyah Tobacco Control Center (MTCC) - Universitas Muhammadiyah Yogyakarta	Winny Setyonugroho, S.Ked., M.T., Ph.D	Support for STOP (Stopping Tobacco Organizations and Products)	Indonesia
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National Committee on Tobacco Control Indonesia	Dr. Priyo Sidipratomo	Chairman	Indonesia
National School of Public Health / Oswaldo Cruz Foundation / Ministry of Health	Silvana Rubano Barretto Turci	Doctor in Public Health	Brazil
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Nofumadores.org	Raquel Fernández Megina	President	Spain
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OxySuisse	Pascal Diethelm	President	Switzerland
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Promotion of Awareness, Social Action and Research (PRASAR)	Shishupal Yadav	Secretary	India
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Tobacco-Free Association of Zambia	Brenda Chitindi	Executive Director	Zambia
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Vietnam Nutrition Association	Le Thi Hop	President	Vietnam
Vietnam Public Health Association	Le Vu Anh	Chairman	Vietnam
Vision for Alternative Development	Labram Musah	Programmes Director	Ghana
World Federation of Public Health Associations	Prof. Laetitia Rispel	President	Switzerland
World Heart Federation	Florence Berteletti	Director for Advocacy	Switzerland
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