



AN OPEN LETTER TO THE SECRETARY-GENERAL OF THE ORGANIZATION FOR ECONOMIC CO-OPERATION AND DEVELOPMENT

10 March, 2020

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

cc. Gabriela Ramos, Chief of Staff and Anthony Gooch, Director of Public Affairs and Communications

Dear Secretary General Angel Gurria,

Last year, [we wrote to your office](#) to raise the concern about Philip Morris International (PMI) speaking at a session on responsible lobbying during the 2019 Anti-Corruption and Integrity Forum¹. This constituted a blatant disregard of the international norms that [call for governments to reject any partnership or so-called corporate social responsibility](#) initiative of the tobacco industry.²

We appreciate your kind assurance to us that *[“It is incumbent on international organizations to consider carefully the platforms we provide and to whom, be they private or public actors. We will have this very present as we plan events in future”](#)*; and noted that the incident arose out of the fact that *“you liaised closely with the Business Industry Advisory Council (BIAC) which in turn nominated Philip Morris International.”*³

As you plan this year’s event, we want to alert your office to PMI’s underhanded tactics to ensure its visibility among reputable organizations and individuals. PMI and its allies have ensured their attendance at high-profile events, alongside legitimate spokespeople, by omitting to announce its participation until the very last minute. We saw this during the side meetings around the World Economic Forum in Davos, where prominent personalities and officials were caught unaware that PMI would be among them in a panel. This lack of transparency and accountability is the trademark of the tobacco industry; thus, [treaty guidelines have required governments to ensure that the tobacco industry is made accountable and transparent.](#)⁴

We also want to put you on alert that this year’s theme “Public, Private and Beyond” is one that the tobacco industry has been promoting to secure a seat at the table and to be considered legitimate partners with governments and international organizations. This is in flagrant defiance of the governments’ duties under Art 5.3 of the WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (WHO FCTC); the guidelines of which call for the

¹ Stopping Tobacco and Organizations and Products. (2019, March 20). STOP’s letter to the OECD Secretary General. Global Center for Good Governance in Tobacco Control (GGTC). Retrieved from <https://ggtc.world/2019/03/21/stops-letter-to-the-oecd-secretary-general/>

² World Health Organization Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (WHO FCTC). (2013). 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. World Health Organization (WHO). Retrieved from https://www.who.int/fctc/guidelines/article_5_3.pdf?ua=1

³ Gooch, A. (2019). OECD Response to Stopping Tobacco and Organizations and Products’ (STOP) letter to the OECD Secretary General. OECD. Retrieved from https://ggtc.world/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/OECD-Response-Letter_2019.pdf

⁴ World Health Organization Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (WHO FCTC). (2013). 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: **Principle 3 WHO FCTC Article 5.3 Guidelines**. World Health Organization (WHO). Retrieved from https://www.who.int/fctc/guidelines/article_5_3.pdf?ua=1

[rejection of partnerships with the tobacco industry](#).⁵ Notably, all OECD member states, with the exception of the United States, are Parties to the WHO FCTC.

In line with your good office's commitment to "[promote higher standards of transparency and accountability in public policy and discourse, and live up to those standards](#)",⁶ we wish to inquire what steps you have undertaken to exercise due diligence in minimizing the risk of a similar incident. Although the forum will no longer take place at the OECD conference centre and will now proceed in a virtual format the risk is still present as the tobacco industry and its allies have a history of harnessing online engagement and social media around such high-profile events.

We will be happy to support and help amplify your efforts as these would fall under support towards implementing the WHO FCTC and thus achieving [Target 3.a](#)⁷ and [Target 16.5](#)⁸ of the United Nations SDGs .

We are attaching our correspondence last year for your reference as well as a copy of our recent report – [Addiction at Any Cost – Philip Morris International Uncovered](#). The report explains how PMI has given the public a misleading impression of providing societal benefits while concealing the fact that its actions have undermined progress in WHO FCTC implementation.⁹

Governance principles dictate that governments must hold the tobacco industry to account and not become complicit in its egregious schemes. We count on you to uphold these principles in your mission to promote integrity.

We look forward to hearing from you on this matter.

Sincerely yours,



Nuntavarn Vichit-Vadakan



Gan Quan

Anna Gilmore



Sandra Mullin

On behalf of STOP, a global tobacco industry watchdog, and 101 organizations and individuals.

Attachments:

STOP Letter to OECD 2019

OECD Response Letter 2019

GGTC OECD Brief 2019

Addiction at Any Cost: PMI Uncovered 2020

⁵ World Health Organization Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (WHO FCTC). (2013). 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: **Recommendation 4 WHO FCTC Art 5.3 Guidelines**. World Health Organization (WHO). Retrieved from https://www.who.int/fctc/guidelines/article_5_3.pdf?ua=1

⁶ Gooch, A. (2019). OECD Response to Stopping Tobacco and Organizations and Products' (STOP) letter to the OECD Secretary General. OECD. Retrieved from https://ggtc.world/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/OECD-Response-Letter_2019.pdf

⁷ United Nations Sustainable Development Goals. 3.a Strengthen the implementation of the WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control in all countries, as appropriate. World Health Organization. Retrieved from <https://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/health/>

⁸ United Nations Sustainable Development Goals. 16.5 Substantially reduce corruption and bribery in all their forms. World Health Organization. Retrieved from <https://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/peace-justice/>

⁹ Stopping Tobacco and Organizations and Products. (2020, February 20). Addiction at Any Cost: Philip Morris International Uncovered. Stopping Tobacco and Organizations and Products.



Organizations:

1. **Action on Smoking and Health (ASH US)**, Megan Arendt, Associate Director of Communications, United States
2. **Advocacy Center "LIFE"**, Lilia Olefir, Executive Director, Ukraine
3. **Alcohol and Drug Information Centre (ADIC)**, Pubudu Sumanasekara, Executive Director, Sri Lanka
4. **ASH Finland**, Mervi Hara, Executive Director, Finland
5. **ASH Ireland**, Council of the Irish Heart Foundation, Mark Murphy, Ireland
6. **ASH Scotland**, Sheila Duffy, Chief Executive, United Kingdom
7. **Asian Consultancy on Tobacco Control**, Judith Mackay, Hong Kong, China
8. **Association of European Cancer Leagues (ECL)**, Wendy Yared, Director, Belgium
9. **Australian Health Promotion Association**, Gemma Crawford, President, Australia
10. **Austrian Council on Smoking and Health**, Kurt Aigner, President, Austria
11. **Balajee Sewa Sansthan**, Awadhesh Kumar, Executive Director, India
12. **Cancer Council Victoria**, Todd Harper, CEO, Australia
13. **Campaign for Tobacco Free Kids**, Mark Hurley, Director of International Communications
14. **Center for Advocacy, Treatment and Recovery**, Portugal
15. **Centre for Combating Tobacco, University of Colombo**, Mahesh Rajasuriya, Director, Sri Lanka
16. **Coalition for a Tobacco Free Arkansas**, Katherine Donald, Executive Director, United States
17. **Coalition for a Tobacco-Free Hawaii, a program of Hawaii Public Health Institute**, Jessica Yamauchi, Executive Director, United States
18. **Comité Nacional para la Prevención del Tabaquismo (CNPT)**, Andrés Zamorano Tapia, CNPT President, Spain
19. **Consumers Association of Penang (CAP)**, Uma Ramaswamy, President, Malaysia
20. **Corporate Accountability**, Michél Legendre, Associate Campaign Director, United States
21. **"Dutch Alliance for a Smokefree Society"**, Guy Muller, Public Affairs Consultant International, KWF Kankerbestrijding, Netherlands
22. **European Network for Smoking and Tobacco Prevention-ENSP**, Cornel Radu-Loghin, Secretary General, Belgium
23. **FAECAP Federation of Family and Community Nursing Associations**, Adelaida Lozano Polo, Coordinator group of smoking, Spain
24. **Framework Convention Alliance**, Francis Thompson, Executive Director, Strategy and Policy
25. **FCTC for Indonesia**, Margianta SJD, Spokesperson, Indonesia
26. **Fresh (Making Smoking History)**, Ailsa Rutter, Director, United Kingdom
27. **GAT SEMFYC (Family Doctors)**, Clara Isabel Soria Lopez, General Practitioner, Spain
28. **Global Center for Good Governance in Tobacco Control**, Nuntavarn Vichit-Vadakan, Chair, Thailand
29. **Grambangla Unnayan Committee (GUC)**, A K M Maksud, Executive Director, Bangladesh
30. **Gramin Vikas Sewa Samiti**, Ram Lalit Yadav, Tobacco Control, India
31. **Group for Research on Inequalities and Tobacco Control**, University of Edinburgh, Amanda Amos, Convenor, United Kingdom
32. **Health Promotion Foundation**, Witold Zatoński, President, Poland
33. **HealthBridge Foundation of Canada Vietnam Office**, Nguyen Thi An, Director, Vietnam
34. **HealthJustice Philippines**, Jacky Sarita, Managing Director, Philippines
35. **Indonesian Public Health Association (IAKMI)**, Ede Surya Darmawan, Chairman, Indonesia
36. **Israeli Association of Public Health Physicians**, Hagai Levine, Chairperson, Israel

37. **Lentera Anak Foundation**, Lisda Sundari, Chairperson, Indonesia
38. **Malaysian Council for Tobacco Control**, Datuk Dr. Lekhraj Rampal, President, Malaysia
39. **Malaysian Green Lung Association**, Ho Rhu Yann, Founding President, Malaysia
40. **Malaysian Medical Association**, Rissa Soetama, COO, Malaysia
41. **MANT (Manbhumi Ananda Ashram Nityananda Trust)**, Nirmalya Mukherjee, Director, India
42. **Marathwada Gramin Vikas Sanstha, Aurangabad**, Akash Kasliwal, State Project Officer, Advancing Tobacco Control Program, India
43. **National Coalition "For smoke-free Kazakstan"**, Jamilya Sadykova, Director, Kazakstan
44. **National Committee on Tobacco Control**, Hasbullah Thabrany, President, Indonesia
45. **NCD Alliance**, Nina Renshaw, Policy and Advocacy Director
46. **Nofumadores.org (non-smokers.org)**, Raquel Fernandez Megina, President, Spain
47. **Norwegian Cancer Society**, Nonguebzanga Maxime Compaore, Special Advisor, International Affairs, Norway
48. **NPO Tobacco-Free Advocacy Japan (TFAJ)**, Jun Sono, Chairman, Japan
49. **Oswaldo Cruz Foundation**, Silvana Rubano Turci, Coordinator of the Observatory of the Strategies of the Tobacco Industry of the Tobacco and Health Studies Center, Brazil
50. **OxySuisse**, Pascal Diethelm, President, Switzerland
51. **Pandit Govind Ballabh Pant Institute of Studies in Rural Development**, Shiv Pujan Pandey, Director, India
52. **Philippine Pediatric Society, Inc.**, Rizalina Racquel H. Gonzalez, Chair, PPS Tobacco Control Advocacy Group, Philippines
53. **Portuguese Confederation of Tobacco Prevention**, Portugal
54. **Portuguese NGO Movement for Tobacco Control**, Portugal
55. **PRASAR**, Shishupal, Secretary, India
56. **Pratyasha Anti-Drugs Club**, Helal Ahmed, Secretary General, Bangladesh
57. **PROGGA**, ABM Zubair, Executive Director, Bangladesh
58. **Red PaPaz Sede Nacional**, Colombia
59. **SGSS**, Vijay Kumar Rao, CEO, India
60. **Smoke Free Israel**, Shira Kislev, CEO, Israel
61. **Smoke Free Kuala Lumpur (KLBAR)**, Liza Ali, Board Member, Malaysia
62. **Smoke Free Life Coalition**, Gergana Geschanova, Chair of the Board, Bulgaria
63. **Smoke Free Partnership**, Anca Toma Friedlaender, Director, Belgium
64. **Sociedad Española de Especialistas en Tabaquismo (SEDET)**, César Minué-Lorenzo, President, Spain
65. **Southeast Asia Tobacco Control Alliance**, Ulysess Dorotheo, Director, Philippines
66. **Spanish Heart Foundation**, Carlos Macaya Miguel, MD, President, Spain
67. **Tanzania Tobacco Control Forum**, Lutgard Kokulinda Kagaruki, Executive Director, Tanzania
68. **The Union**, Gan Quan, Director of Tobacco Control, United States
69. **Tobacco-Free Association of Zambia**, Brenda Chitindi, Executive Director, Zambia
70. **Tobacco Control Research Group, Tobacco Tactics, University of Bath**, Anna Gilmore, Director, United Kingdom
71. **Vital Strategies**, Sandra Mullin, Senior Vice President, United States

Individual Supporters

1. **Alessandra Lugo, PhD**, Department of Environmental Health Sciences - Istituto di Ricerche Farmacologiche Mario Negri IRCCS, Italy
2. **Alison Breland**, Assistant Research Professor, Virginia Commonwealth University, Center for the Study of Tobacco Products, United States
3. **Boyd Swinburn**, Professor of Population Nutrition and Global Health, University of Auckland, New Zealand
4. **Buenalyn Teresita Ramos-Mortel, MD**, Professor of Health Promotion, University of the Philippines Manila - College of Public Health, Philippines
5. **David Thomas**, Professor and Head of Tobacco Control Research, Menzies School of Health Research, Australia
6. **Godwin Aja**, Professor, Adventist International Institute of Advanced Studies, Philippines
7. **H. H. R. Prabath Hewasundara**, University of Colombo, Sri Lanka
8. **Harry Rutter**, Professor of Global Public Health, University of Bath, United Kingdom
9. **Jamie Pearce**, Professor of Health Geography, University of Edinburgh, United Kingdom
10. **Janet Hoek**, Professor of Public Health and Marketing, University of Otago, New Zealand
11. **Jim McCambridge**, Professor, University of York, United Kingdom
12. **Laura Rosen**, Professor, Tel Aviv University, Israel
13. **Mark Petticrew**, Professor of Public Health, London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine, United Kingdom
14. **Melissa Mialon**, PhD in nutrition, BSc in food science and engineering, University of Sao Paulo, Brazil
15. **Mike Daube**, Emeritus Professor, Curtin University, Australia
16. **Mira B. Aghi**, Consultant, Healis Sekhsaria Institute of Public Health, India
17. **Norbert Hirschhorn**, Tobacco Industry watcher, United Kingdom
18. **Renee Bittoun**, Adjunct Associate Professor, University of Notre Dame Australia, Australia
19. **Rob Moodie**, Professor of Public Health, University of Melbourne, Australia
20. **Ruth E. Malone**, Professor of Nursing and Health Policy, University of California, San Francisco, United States
21. **Sarah Hill**, Senior Lecturer, Global Health Policy Unit, University of Edinburgh, United Kingdom
22. **Sharon Lawn**, Professor & Director, Flinders University of South Australia, Australia
23. **Silvano Gallus**, Department of Environmental Health Sciences - IRCCS, Italy
24. **Simon Capewell**, Professor of Clinical Epidemiology, University of Liverpool - Department of Public Health & Policy / Institute of Psychology, Health & Society, United Kingdom
25. **Simon Chapman**, Emeritus Professor, University of Sydney - School of Public Health, Australia
26. **Stanton A. Glantz**, Professor of Medicine and Director, University of California San Francisco - Center for Tobacco Control Research and Education, United States
27. **Stephan Lewandowsky**, Professor, School of Psychological Science and Cabot Institute, University of Bristol, United Kingdom
28. **Tony Jewell**, Retired Chief Medical Officer for Wales (2006-12), United Kingdom
29. **Widyastuti Soerojo**, Public Health Advocate, Indonesia
30. **Yong Check Yoon**, Independent Researcher, Malaysia