

The Most Hon. Portia Simpson Miller, O.N., M.P.
Prime Minister of Jamaica
Office of the Prime Minister
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Jamaica
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April 2, 2015

Dear Madam Prime Minister:

We, the undersigned, are organizations that work to improve global health. We share a commitment to protect the world's population from the extensive health and economic damages caused by the largest fully preventable cause of death: tobacco use and the exposure to secondhand smoke.

We congratulate the Government of Jamaica for working to meet its moral and legal obligations to protect its citizens' health by enacting and enforcing strong tobacco control policies. Jamaica demonstrated its commitment to action when it ratified the WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (WHO FCTC) in 2005. The WHO FCTC, now uniting 179 countries from around the world to control the global tobacco epidemic, provides for a comprehensive set of policies that, if fully implemented, has the potential to reduce tobacco use and the health and economic damages it causes.

The Secretariat of the WHO FCTC recently worked with your government to identify how to give Jamaicans the fullest protection from the threat of tobacco. In this connection, Honorable Minister Ferguson recalled the policies and principles of the WHO FCTC that relate to protecting tobacco control policies from commercial and other vested interests of the tobacco industry. This drew criticism in the press from Carreras.

Around the world, the tobacco industry spends billions to protect its profits by delaying, weakening and undermining the implementation of tobacco control measures. Parties to the FCTC have identified such interference as the top barrier to implementing the treaty. It is not surprising that those who profit from tobacco use are resistant to policies designed to reduce it. These include the measures recommended by the guidelines for implementation of Article 5.3 of the FCTC. These guidelines have been adopted by the Conference of the Parties of the treaty.

Hon. Minister Ferguson's integrity and courage in promoting and defending life-saving tobacco control measures is admired and highly appreciated by health experts, officials and advocates from around the world. Jamaica's efforts in the implementation of the WHO FCTC, which Hon. Minister Ferguson presented this February at the ceremony celebrating the 10th anniversary of entry into force of the treaty, bring honor to the Government and the people of Jamaica. Hon. Minister Ferguson's willingness to take a strong stand serves as a valuable model for health officials in the many other countries that are struggling to protect their people and economies from the losses caused by tobacco.

We trust that Jamaica will continue to resist all opposition and manipulation from the tobacco industry and forge ahead towards full implementation of the FCTC. We urge the government to proceed with the elaboration of new comprehensive tobacco control legislation, and as part of that process to follow the recommendations made with respect to WHO FCTC Article 5.3 in the Joint Needs Assessment report. These are to:

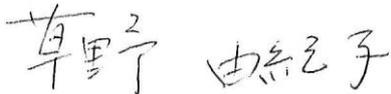
- continue to raise awareness on protection of public health policy from the vested interests of the tobacco industry among all government agencies and public officials, and
- include the obligations under Article 5.3 in comprehensive tobacco control legislation, based on the Guidelines for implementation of Article 5.3 of the WHO FCTC.

We stand ready to support all such efforts.

Yours faithfully,



Dr Tin Chun Wong, President, FDI World Dental Federation



Yukiko Kusano, Consultant Nursing and Health Policy, on behalf of David C. Benton, CEO, International Council of Nurses.



Katie Dain, Executive Director, NCD Alliance



José Luis Castro, Executive Director, International Union Against Tuberculosis and Lung Disease



Dr. Mengistu Asnake, President, World Federation of Public Health Associations



Dr. Salim Yusuf, President, World Heart Federation

cc. Hon Fenton Ferguson, Minister of Health



The NCD Alliance
Putting non-communicable diseases
on the global agenda

