



International Union Against
Tuberculosis and Lung Disease
Health solutions for the poor

PRESS RELEASE

The Union defends governments from tobacco industry interference on World No Tobacco Day

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31 May 2102 / Edinburgh, Scotland – With the theme “Stop Tobacco Industry Interference”, World No Tobacco Day 2012 highlights the critical need to meet head on the aggressive strategies and tactics used by the tobacco industry to dilute, delay and prevent tobacco control policies and measures.

‘Ever since 1998, when tobacco companies were forced to make their documents public, we have had a very good idea of the tactics tobacco companies use to manipulate governments and lie to the public about the harms of tobacco use,’ said Dr Ehsan Latif, Director of the Department of Tobacco Control for the International Union Against Tuberculosis and Lung Disease (The Union). ‘Consequently, we know what we’re up against, but governments do not always know how they can best protect their public health policies against tobacco industry interference.’

To assist governments and other agencies involved in tobacco control, The Union has developed a free **FCTC Article 5.3 Toolkit: Guidance for Governments on Preventing Tobacco Industry Interference**. This set of nine factsheets offers step-by-step guidance on the key legislative and policy elements of a strategy to safeguard laws and policies from tobacco industry interference. The toolkit also includes model directives, policy and legislation – based on legislation that has already been enacted in several countries – that governments can adapt to suit their own legal system.

For the 175 countries that are Parties to the World Health Organization’s Framework Convention on Tobacco Control, this guidance is much needed, since they are required to take such protective steps by the world’s first public health treaty.

Article 5.3 states that ‘In setting and implementing their public health policies with respect to tobacco control, Parties shall act to protect these policies from commercial and other vested interests of the tobacco industry in accordance with national law.’ The Guidelines for Implementation Article 5.3 sum up why such protection is so important: ‘There is a fundamental and irreconcilable conflict between the tobacco industry’s interest and public health policy interests.’

The global tobacco industry is aggressively opposing and attacking governments and health leaders in every region of the world over the fundamental right of governments to implement the WHO FCTC and save lives. The industry’s multiple and devious tactics include legal and economic threats, funding front groups to oppose health policies, making political donations and funding mass media campaigns to discredit health policy. The Australian government is one of many that are facing aggressive and desperate opposition from the tobacco industry – currently over plain tobacco packaging.

In August 2010, several tobacco companies jointly founded a sham grassroots organisation through which small Australian retailers claimed that the government’s plan to introduce plain tobacco packaging would unfairly hurt their businesses without benefiting public health. In reality, plain

tobacco packages – with no logos, colours, images or trademarks – have been proven to prevent children from being attracted to smoking and to help reduce tobacco use in general. In April 2012, four tobacco companies launched a bid to stop the introduction of plain packaging in Australia's high court. Despite unprecedented tobacco industry interference in Australia, the plain tobacco packaging law will commence this year.

Union tobacco control consultant Anne Jones will be speaking on Australia's struggle with the industry in Edinburgh, Scotland, at 9.30am on Thursday, 31 May 2012 at the University of Edinburgh. The toolkit will also be launched at this event.

These issues are of particular relevance to the UK where governments are currently consulting on a proposal to introduce plain packaging in Scotland, England, Northern Ireland and Wales. Other countries – and the tobacco industry – will undoubtedly be watching closely as these events unfold, as any new tobacco control legislation serves as a model for other countries facing the same challenges.

To download The Union's FCTC Article 5.3 Toolkit, visit:

<http://www.tobaccofreeunion.org/content/en/446/>

For further details about the event in Edinburgh, visit:

<http://www.tobaccofreeunion.org/content/en/458/>

To request an interview or obtain press credentials for the event, contact:

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About The Union and tobacco control

The International Union Against Tuberculosis and Lung Disease (The Union) is an international scientific organisation dedicated to a world free from the poverty, disease and death caused by tobacco. It has been working to advance tobacco control in low- and middle-income countries for more than 25 years, with a focus on supporting effective tobacco control programmes through grants and promoting effective tobacco control through training, resources and research.

www.tobaccofreeunion.org

About The Union

The mission of the International Union Against Tuberculosis and Lung Disease (The Union) is to bring innovation, expertise, solutions and support to address health challenges in low- and middle-income populations. With nearly 10,000 members and subscribers from 150 countries, The Union has its headquarters in Paris and offices serving the Africa, Asia Pacific, Europe, Latin America, Middle East, North America and South-East Asia regions. Its scientific departments focus on tuberculosis and HIV, lung health and non-communicable diseases, tobacco control and research. Learn more at www.theunion.org