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His Excellency
Mr Volodymyr Zelenskyy
President of Ukraine
Kyiv
Ukraine

In reply please
refer to:

Your reference:

17 December 2021

Your Excellency,

I have the honour to request your support in achieving our shared goal of reducing premature deaths from noncommunicable diseases by accelerating tobacco control. I would like to congratulate Ukraine for staying the course on its commitment to increase excise taxes on cigarettes and heated tobacco products, by an average of 20% annually until 2024, amidst pressure from the tobacco industry to reduce these rates.

Every year tobacco kills more than 130 000 people in Ukraine, and exacts a tremendous human, health, social and economic cost. This toll is fuelled by the tobacco industry, which promotes its products by targeting children, adolescents and other vulnerable populations.

One of the tactics of the tobacco industry is to promote the use of novel and emerging nicotine and tobacco products and seeking regulatory carveouts for these products. Scientific evidence shows that the use of these products is not without harm, they are aggressively promoted to children and young people, who when they use them, are twice as likely to use conventional tobacco products, including cigarettes.

Your Government may, therefore, wish to consider further strengthening of its tobacco control laws that are currently being considered by the Parliament. This would include effective regulation of all forms of novel and emerging nicotine and tobacco products to further safeguard public health, and in particular, to protect the next generation, in accordance with the decisions of the Conference of the Parties to the World Health Organization (WHO) Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (WHO FCTC) and WHO recommendations. Ukraine could also consider becoming a Party to the Protocol to Eliminate Illicit Trade in Tobacco Products.

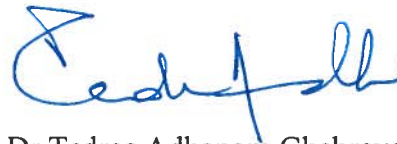
cc: The Minister for Foreign Affairs of Ukraine, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine, Kyiv
The Minister of Health of Ukraine, Ministry of Health of Ukraine, Kyiv
Permanent Mission of Ukraine to the United Nations Office and other International
Organizations at Geneva
The Head of the Secretariat of the WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco
Control (FCTC)

Ukraine has been a Party to the WHO FCTC since 2006 and, together with other 181 Parties, shares a commitment to accelerate tobacco control as outlined in the Global Strategy to Accelerate Tobacco Control 2019-2025 adopted by the Conference of the Parties in 2018. WHO holds Ukraine's achievements in public health and tobacco control in extremely high regard and do not want to see these successes undermined by industry tactics designed to derail tobacco control.

WHO experts are available to meet with your representatives to explore how we can protect and advance your country's tobacco control work in 2022. Together we can protect the public health gains made so far and further strengthen tobacco control in Ukraine.

Please accept, Your Excellency, the assurance of my highest consideration.

with much gratitude



Dr Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus
Director-General