

# The Union denounces PMI launch of a ‘Foundation for a Smoke-free World’

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The Union today denounced Philip Morris International’s (PMI) launch of a ‘Foundation for a Smoke-free World’ as a billion-dollar bribe the tobacco company hopes will secure it a seat at the table with public health policymakers around the world.

“Philip Morris International makes huge profits each year off the back of people who are sick, impoverished and dying as a result of its cigarettes. Tobacco kills half of its users. And nearly 80 percent of smokers live in the world’s poorest countries.

Meanwhile PMI spends over US\$6 billion each year on campaigns to hook new tobacco users. With its new foundation PMI aims to gain the ear of policymakers and public health experts—and respectability through association. But the tobacco industry has a four-decade track record of disseminating junk science to confuse the public about the deadly truth of smoking.

We already have a foundation for a tobacco-free world—it’s the World Health Organization’s Framework Convention on Tobacco Control—a legally-binding health treaty with 180 countries committed to implementing measures that are proven to reduce tobacco use and the death and disease it causes.

A core measure of the WHO tobacco control treaty is to prevent the tobacco industry from interfering in public health policymaking. Where countries are not making good progress on their obligations under this treaty, you don’t have to look too far to find the tobacco industry thwarting progress—including by their mounting legal challenges to public health policy under international trade law; direct threats, intimidation and lobbying of governments; tobacco industry funded front groups advocating the rights of farmers and the hospitality industry.

WHO projects that tobacco use will claim one billion lives this century. PMI’s US\$1 billion dollar fund will not prevent this tragedy. It will not help build a tobacco-free world. Through propaganda, it only has the potential to undermine, delay and obfuscate the work of public health policymakers and advocates who champion evidence-based measures to reduce tobacco use.

A tobacco-free world will not be built on the blood money of tobacco giants, or the pseudoscience they peddle. It is being built, on the commitment of policymakers to securing the health of populations, and on the integrity and technical excellence of academics and civil society organisations worldwide.”