WHY PASSAGE OF A COMPREHENSIVE FCTC-COMPLIANT NATIONAL TOBACCO CONTROL BILL IS ESSENTIAL

A Policy Brief of the Nigeria Tobacco Control Alliance (NTCA)

The Nigerian decision makers have a unique opportunity to prevent an emerging tobacco epidemic by quickly enacting and implementing effective and comprehensive legislation that incorporates all of the key evidence-based measures prescribed by the World Health Organization Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (WHO FCTC) and its implementation guidelines. Nigeria can ensure that it does not make the same mistakes countries that are now in the later stages of the global tobacco epidemic made decades ago.

Those mistakes resulted in 100 million dead in the 20th century.

THE TIME TO ACT IS NOW

TOBACCO: A SOCIO-ECONOMIC BURDEN FOR NIGERIA

- Globally, tobacco use kills more people than HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis, and malaria combined.[1]
- Tobacco is the only legally available consumer product which kills people when it is used entirely as intended.[2]
- Tobacco use is the one preventable risk factor common to the four main groups of Non-Communicable Diseases – cardiovascular disease, cancer, chronic lung disease, and diabetes – which account for 60% of all deaths globally.
- Tobacco use is also a risk factor for infectious diseases, tuberculosis, and lower respiratory infections.[3] In Nigeria – whether smoking, chewing, sniffing, or placing the product between the teeth and gum – these tobacco-related deaths are rising and killing more people each year.
- The cost of tobacco smoking to the Nigerian economy in terms of losses to medical treatment and low productivity is at US$591 million annually.[4]
- A 2011 survey conducted by the Nigerian Federal Ministry of Health reveals that about 250,000 Nigerians are diagnosed with cancer every year.[5]
- Cigarettes are cheap in Nigeria. It is estimated that over 20 billion sticks of cigarette are consumed in Nigeria annually[6] where the median amount spent on one pack of 20 manufactured cigarettes is ₦187.70.
- Easy access and affordability of tobacco products drives initiation and addiction to tobacco use, especially among the young and poor sections of the population.

TOBACCO INDUSTRY INTERFERENCE

- Africa is a major target for tobacco industry sales and marketing.[7] The industry has used a wide range of methods to buy influence and power, and penetrate markets across the world.[8]
- The tobacco industry targets youth as 'replacement smokers'[9] to substitute for its dying consumers, a fact that is particularly dangerous for Nigeria's vibrant and entrepreneurial youth population.
- There is a fundamental and irreconcilable conflict between the tobacco industry's interests and public health policy interests.[10]
- The tobacco industry has a history of using front groups to undermine and prevent the passage of strong tobacco control laws.[11]
- The tobacco industry is therefore not and cannot be a partner in effective tobacco control.[12]
- Nigerian decision makers are therefore encouraged to refrain from engaging with the transnational tobacco companies and their front groups when setting tobacco control policies designed to protect public health.[13]

9 in 10 Nigerians express overwhelming support
for laws and policies to restrict and regulate smoking[14]

THE FRAMEWORK CONVENTION ON TOBACCO CONTROL

The World Health Organization Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (WHO FCTC) is the world's first global public health treaty. The treaty was developed in response to the global tobacco epidemic and reaffirms the right of all people to the highest attainable standard of health. The treaty entered into force in February 2005. More than 178 WHO member states, including Nigeria, are now parties to the convention.

The FCTC provides a set of legally-binding measures to be implemented in countries that have ratified the FCTC. Nigeria ratified in 2005,[15] and, as a Party to the FCTC, should domesticate the treaty and fulfill its obligations under the FCTC by enacting and implementing FCTC-compliant tobacco control legislation aimed at reducing tobacco use and secondhand smoke exposure and saving the lives of Nigerians.

By passing and implementing a comprehensive set of tobacco control policies,
Nigeria has the opportunity to prevent teenage initiation,
avoiding the health, social, and economic burden that tobacco use has proven to bring

ESSENTIAL ELEMENTS OF AN EFFECTIVE FCTC-COMPLIANT TOBACCO CONTROL LAW

- Adopting tax and price measures to reduce tobacco consumption (Article 6)
  - *Higher tobacco prices encourage cessation among existing tobacco users, prevent initiation among potential users, and reduce the quantity of tobacco consumed among continuing users.[16]*
- Banning tobacco advertising, promotion, and sponsorship (Article 13)
  - *Comprehensive bans, which prohibit the use of all marketing strategies by the tobacco industry, reduce tobacco use among people of all income and educational levels.[17]*
- Creating smoke-free workplaces, public places and public transport (Article 8)
  - *Scientific evidence is clear that the only effective way to protect workers and the public from secondhand smoke is to enact 100 percent smoke-free laws that ban smoking in all indoor workplaces and public places (including restaurants, bars and other hospitality venues) and public transport.[18]*
- Putting prominent graphic health warnings on tobacco packages (Article 11)
  - *Effective warning labels increase knowledge about risks associated with smoking and can prevent youth from starting to smoke and encourage smokers to quit. .[19]*
- Exclusion of tobacco industry from tobacco control policies and implementation (Article 5.3)
  - *The tobacco industry is not a legitimate public health stakeholder as tobacco has no known health benefits.*
- Massive public awareness campaigns on the dangers of tobacco consumption and exposure to secondhand smoke (Article 12)[20]
- Regulations and full disclosure of tobacco contents including their toxic and addictive levels (Articles 9 & 10)

Manufacturers and importers should be required to disclose information to governmental authorities about ingredients, design features, company information, and sales volume.

About the National Tobacco Control Alliance (NTCA): The NTCA is a network of over 35 Civil Society Organizations (CSOs), Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs), Community-Based Organizations (CBOs), Faith-Based Organizations (FBOs), and several professionals in Nigeria. The Alliance works with issues concerning human rights, public health, cancer, and tobacco control, with a view to ensuring qualitative health, sustainable human development, and good governance for all Nigerians. NTCA has been involved in advocacy efforts for the re-passage of the National Tobacco Control Bill (NTCB) and the implementation of smoke free policies in Nigeria.

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