

October 10<sup>th</sup>, 2025

**Honorable Dr. Terrance Michael Drew**

*Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, National Security, Citizenship and Immigration, Health and Human Resource Management and Social Security in St. Kitts and Nevis. Lead Head with responsibility for issues pertaining to Human Resource Development, Health, and HIV/AIDS, in the CARICOM Quasi Cabinet.*

Dear Right Honorable Prime Minister Dr. Terrance Michael Drew;

**Subject: COP11 discussions on preventing and reducing nicotine addiction in light of the tobacco industry's "harm reduction" narrative**

Your Excellency,

We, the undersigned representatives of organizations working to advance tobacco control and protect the right to health, from the Caribbean, the region of the Americas and the world, are writing to alert you to the tactics of the world's largest tobacco companies leading up to the Eleventh Session of the Conference of the Parties (COP11) to the WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (WHO FCTC).

This November, St. Kitts and Nevis will join 183 Parties to the WHO FCTC in Geneva as governments gather to address crucial tobacco control measures. Among key issues on the agenda are measures to prevent and reduce tobacco consumption, nicotine addiction and exposure to tobacco smoke – and the protection of such measures from the tobacco industry, in light of the tobacco industry's narrative on 'harm reduction'.

Around the world, products like e-cigarettes and nicotine pouches have been aggressively marketed to young people by the world's largest tobacco companies. They are sold in thousands of youth-friendly flavors (like chocolate and menthol) and mass-marketed by an industry that perfected the art of addicting young people. **While the tobacco industry claims that these products are intended only for adult smokers, they are marketed on social media, at music events and parties – and even in teen magazines.** This is particularly alarming given that nicotine use by young people is not safe in any form.

These products are a crucial piece of the tobacco industry's business model, which is built on addicting new customers for life. The same tactics the industry has long used to promote conventional products are now being deployed with e-cigarettes, nicotine pouches and other novel and emerging nicotine and tobacco products. It is no surprise then that the tobacco industry is actively seeking to infiltrate COP11 negotiations to stall, delay, and weaken the urgent public health measures needed to safeguard young people from addictive products. Time and again, the tobacco industry has responded this way whenever countries have acted boldly to reduce tobacco use and shield youth from a lifetime of addiction.

As the published Report from the Convention Secretariat of the WHO FCTC on this agenda item establishes, *"It has long been established that the tobacco industry has operated for years with the express intention of subverting the role of governments and of WHO in implementing public health policies to combat the tobacco epidemic."*

The report reminds Parties of their obligation to protect public health policies from the commercial and other vested interests of the tobacco industry and highlights evidence showing that tobacco companies use a wide range of tactics to interfere with tobacco control efforts. The industry continues to attack hard-won public health gains, pressing for exceptions that would allow advertising, promotion, and use of e-cigarettes and novel and emerging tobacco products in 100% smoke-free environments.

In particular, *"the tobacco industry and its allies have been using unproven health claims of harm reduction to further the marketing and commercialization of novel and emerging nicotine and tobacco products, and to avoid or reduce regulation of these products."* Further, the United Nations Special Rapporteur warned that on the topic of "harm reduction" corporations such as the tobacco

industry have “co-opted” this narrative ***“by seeking to position themselves as part of the solution to problems they have largely created, including through alleged harm reduction efforts.”***

Concerningly, Barbados and Trinidad and Tobago are amongst the countries being targeted by the global tobacco industry with aggressive campaigns consisting of social media advertisements and articles in the traditional media, accompanied by imagery glamorizing young people vaping, and calling for country support of the harm reduction agenda at the upcoming COP11.

Honoring WHO FCTC commitments also means rejecting tobacco industry-driven narratives of “harm reduction” and safeguarding the integrity of tobacco control policies so that they truly serve the interests of public health. As such, in the context of COP11 and pre-COP 11 deliberations, we respectfully urge Your Excellency to:

- Support WHO FCTC Parties’ efforts to prevent and reduce nicotine addiction through the comprehensive regulation of novel and emerging nicotine products; and
- Safeguard the integrity of COP11 discussions from tobacco industry interference, as required by Article 5.3 of the WHO FCTC, by ensuring transparency and preventing conflicts of interest from the commercial or other vested interests of the tobacco industry.

Your Excellency, the decisions taken at COP11 will have long-lasting consequences for global public health. We express our deep appreciation for the commitment and engagement of St. Kitts and Nevis in advancing tobacco control and protecting present and future generations. We are confident that your delegation will stand firmly alongside those working to prioritize health over industry interests. We stand ready to extend our full support to your delegation in these endeavors.

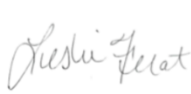
Respectfully,



**Yolonda C. Richardson**  
President and CEO  
Campaign for  
Tobacco-Free Kids



**Daniel Dorado**  
Tobacco Campaign  
Director: International  
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**Leslie Rae Ferat**  
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**Dr. Kenneth Connell**  
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**Abi Begho**  
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**cc:** Dr. Denzil Llewellyn Douglas, Minister of Foreign Affairs, International Trade, Industry, Commerce and Consumer Affairs, Economic Development and Investment, St. Kitts and Nevis

**cc.** Her Excellency Dr. Carla Barnett, Secretary General, CARICOM

**cc.** Alison Drayton, Assistant Secretary-General, Human and Social Development at the CARICOM Secretariat

**cc:** The Honourable Mia Amor Mottley, Prime Minister of Barbados

**cc:** Dr. The Honourable Jerome Walcott, Minister of Health of Barbados

**cc:** The Honourable Kamla Persad-Bissessar, Prime Minister of Trinidad and Tobago **cc:** Dr. The Honourable Lackram Bodoie, Minister of Health of Trinidad and Tobago