

## Condemning industry attempts to subvert public policy for a tobacco-free world

The World Heart Federation, alongside its partners in the Global Coalition for Circulatory Health, condemns outright the launch of the Foundation for a Smoke-Free World,<sup>1</sup> which is a vehicle for the tobacco industry.

Despite funding a foundation that claims its goal is “ultimately eliminating smoking worldwide”,<sup>1</sup> Philip Morris International (PMI) continues to invest billions of dollars in marketing cigarettes worldwide, focusing many of these efforts in low-income and middle-income countries to gain new customers.

Throughout previous decades, the tobacco industry—including PMI—has sought to maintain its profits by sowing misinformation among the public and blocking policies designed to protect public health.<sup>2</sup> PMI's recent failed attempt to sue the Government of Uruguay<sup>3</sup> for implementing anti-smoking legislation is just one recent example of these efforts to protect their markets and profits.

Tobacco is one of the leading causes of premature cardiovascular disease mortality, in some regions accounting for 25–30% of all cardiovascular deaths. According to current WHO projections, tobacco use could kill one billion people this century.<sup>4</sup>

Alongside our colleagues at the WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (FCTC)<sup>5</sup> and The Union,<sup>6</sup> the Global Coalition for Circulatory Health condemns this newly formed foundation as an attempt by the tobacco industry to subvert public policy for a tobacco-free world. We urge all parties with an interest in public health to do the same and support all legitimate and honest efforts to protect people from the harms of tobacco and smoking.

The best way to tackle the smoking epidemic and achieve a smoke-free

world is by implementing policies set out in the WHO FCTC—not by engaging with an industry whose disingenuousness shows it cannot be trusted with people's health.

DW is the President of the World Heart Federation. J-LE is the CEO of the World Heart Federation. We declare no competing interests.

*\*David Wood, Jean-Luc Eiselé, on behalf of the Global Coalition for Circulatory Health (appendix)*  
d.wood@imperial.ac.uk

World Heart Federation, 1201 Geneva, Switzerland (DW, J-LE); and Department of Cardiovascular Medicine, National Heart and Lung Institute, Imperial College London, London, UK (DW)

- 1 Foundation for a Smoke-Free World. About us. <https://www.smoke-free-world.org/about-us> (accessed Oct 4, 2017).
- 2 WHO Tobacco Free Initiative. Tobacco industry interference with tobacco control. World Health Organization, Geneva; 2009. <http://www.who.int/tobacco/publications/industry/interference/en/> (accessed Oct 2, 2017).
- 3 International Centre for Settlement of Investment Disputes Washington, DC. Philip Morris Brands Sàrl, Philip Morris Products SA and Abal Hermanos SA (the claimants) and Oriental Republic of Uruguay (the respondent). ICSID case no. ARB/10/7. July 8, 2016. [www.tobaccofreekids.org/assets/content/press\\_office/2016/2016\\_07\\_08\\_uruguay.pdf](http://www.tobaccofreekids.org/assets/content/press_office/2016/2016_07_08_uruguay.pdf) (accessed Oct 2, 2017).
- 4 WHO. WHO report on the global tobacco epidemic: 2011. World Health Organization, Geneva; 2011. [http://www.who.int/tobacco/global\\_report/2011/en/](http://www.who.int/tobacco/global_report/2011/en/) (accessed Oct 2, 2017).
- 5 FCTC media centre. WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control Secretariat's statement on the launch of the Foundation for a Smoke-Free World. Sept 19, 2017. <http://www.who.int/fctc/mediacentre/statement/secretariat-statement-launch-foundation-for-a-smoke-free-world/en/> (accessed Oct 2, 2017).
- 6 The Union news centre. The Union denounces PMI launch of a 'Foundation for a Smoke-free World'. Sept 13, 2017. <https://www.theunion.org/news-centre/news/the-union-denounces-pmi-launch-of-a-foundation-for-a-smoke-free-world> (accessed Oct 2, 2017).

## Nuclear war and public health: rebalancing priorities and global health leadership

Recently, the North Korean nuclear and missile crisis has gripped international media headlines.<sup>1</sup> In the streets of Seoul, the vast majority of civilians remain remarkably calm, confident that this threat will pass like those

of the past. Yet, complacency would not serve an excuse in the face of war by either intention or tragic miscalculation. By then, the silence of the global health community will likely be seen as an opportunity missed. Why does it remain silent? Perhaps the community feels out of its depth in an area of competence of the UN Security Council—surely they must know what they are doing?

War on the Korean peninsula would result in unimaginable costs to human life—killing and maiming in the order of millions. Without doubt, present public health issues would flail in comparison to the catastrophic human cost of thermonuclear war. Preventing a second Korean War is of paramount interest to global health.

It was not that long ago that physicians fervently drew attention to the human cost of nuclear war. The International Physicians for the Prevention of Nuclear War provided this leadership and were awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 1985 for the “redefining of priorities, with greater attention being paid to health and other humanitarian issues”.<sup>2</sup> Moreover, the World Health Assembly (WHA) demonstrated remarkable resolve in passing WHA resolution 34.38 in 1981, declaring the promotion and preservation of peace as the single most important factor in achieving health for all.<sup>3</sup>

In the midst of constant war-mongering, who will sound the voice of reason? Recently, *Lancet* Editor Richard Horton wrote an outstanding Comment (Sept 9, p 1016)<sup>4</sup> advocating for greater engagement, which garnered huge attention globally, and he is not alone in his views. Yet, the global health community seems to have shown disdain and disinterest, at least if money and research are anything to go by. Tracings of humanitarian aid show a tenfold drop from 2001 (US\$377.6 million) to 2017 (US\$37.3 million)—one of the lowest on record.<sup>5</sup> Moreover, a search conducted on Sept 29, 2017, for health



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