

His Excellency  
Dr. Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus  
Director General, World Health Organization  
20 Avenue Appia  
Geneva, Switzerland

Dear Dr. Tedros,

We, the cancer community, are at the front lines of the tobacco epidemic. We see first-hand the devastating personal and community impacts of tobacco use – lives and families ruined, economies and health systems overburdened by this completely preventable scourge. Since your appointment, we have applauded your commitment to accelerating the implementation of key measures of the WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control, as explicitly stated in your foreword to the 2017 WHO Report on the Global Tobacco Epidemic.

We share your commitment to tobacco control. This week, as you debut in your new role as Director-General of the World Health Organization at the United Nations General Assembly, we seek your continued support to battle cancer and other non-communicable diseases. Tobacco use causes twenty percent of all cancer deaths globally and we urge you to redouble WHO’s efforts to support member states in increasing tobacco taxes to make tobacco less affordable – the most effective yet least implemented policy to reduce tobacco use and a WHO “best buy” for health. Furthermore, we admire those countries that have turned tobacco taxes towards improving care, such as the Philippines, where a tax on tobacco is paying to extend health care to millions more people.

The cancer community stands as your ally on this important issue and a movement called Prevent20 is bringing cancer groups together to galvanize our efforts to reduce the 20 percent of cancer deaths driven by tobacco use. We also invite you to join us in March 2018 in Cape Town for the next World Conference on Tobacco or Health, to strategize on how the WHO and cancer community can work together to move tobacco taxes from “best buy” to fully implemented policies.

We wish you the very best for this important week. Thank you again for your leadership in ensuring that the world is working to reduce tobacco use.

Co-signing Members and Friends of Prevent20



*With the support of:*

- \*Association PROI
- \*Dominica Cancer Society
- \*Earth Microorganisms Organization
- \*Jeewaka Foundation
- \*Mental Health Initiative (Lithuania)
- \*Nigerian Heart Foundation
- \*Serbian Society for the Fight Against Cancer
- \*Singapore Cancer Society
- \*Slovenian Coalition for Public Health, Environment and Tobacco Control
- \*The Icelandic Cancer Society
- \*Tobacco free Association of Zambia
- \*Union of Lithuanian Health Psychologists
- \*Vision for Alternative Development
- \*Women4Cancer Early Detection & Treatment
- \*XQNS Movement for Public Health and the Advancement of Tobacco Control Law in Spain