Partnership for Prevention
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Partnership for Prevention ("Partnership") is a national membership association, incorporated as a 501(c)(3) in the United States.

Mission of Partnership for Prevention. Partnership is committed to increasing resources for and knowledge about effective disease prevention and health promotion policies and practices. Our board and staff adhere to the highest standards of scientific evidence supporting the case for preventive services, health promotion, and environmental health.

Partnership's Interest in the Framework Convention. As a member of the U.S. Effective National Action to Control Tobacco (ENACT) coalition, we support an international framework to effectively reduce the use of tobacco - the leading cause of preventable death and disease in the United States and other nations.

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TESTIMONY

Tobacco control is an international problem as much as it is local, and the burden of tobacco-related death and disease is rapidly increasing in developing countries. Across the world approximately 4 million people die each year. Many of tobacco's future victims are today's children. If current trends continue, 250 million children and teenagers will die from tobacco-related disease. Tobacco will soon become the leading cause of death worldwide, causing more deaths than HIV, tuberculosis, maternal mortality, automobile accidents, homicide, and suicide combined.

International agreement is needed on transnational issues such as smuggling and marketing. In addition, because tobacco companies have international operations, any solution to stem the tobacco epidemic must take a coordinated multinational approach.

A strong, effective Framework Convention would adhere to the following policy principles.

1) The protection and promotion of public health should be the sole basis for all FCTC provisions.
2) The convention must be strong and enforceable. First, FCTC must hold tobacco companies accountable for their actions. FCTC provisions and related protocols should be made legally binding on the tobacco companies and, therefore, be implemented by legislation or regulation within member countries. Second, FCTC should support and encourage national policies to stem the global public health epidemic resulting from tobacco use. Provisions are needed to promote strong national tobacco control measures in areas that are traditionally domestic, such as taxation, prevention and treatment, toxins from environmental tobacco smoke, youth access, health education, and some areas of advertising.

3) Strong international measures are appropriate for controlling problems that cannot be handled on a national or local level, including smuggling and advertising that cannot be stopped at borders, e.g. Internet and satellite television commercials.

4) The convention should also facilitate the international transfer of information and technology for such purposes as product testing and regulation, data collection and analysis, and agricultural diversification. Such efforts should be governed by international agreements and monitored by international institutions.

5) The framework convention and related protocols must not reduce, relax or in any other way diminish existing tobacco control initiatives, regulations, laws, or practices in any signatory country. Accordingly, FCTC provisions and related protocols should establish a floor, rather than a ceiling, for national efforts. Nothing should prevent or discourage any government or group of governments from taking stronger action than required in the convention or its protocols.

6) Because tobacco companies' marketing efforts have successfully promoted tobacco use, FCTC should provide for stringent restriction on all direct or indirect advertising for tobacco products.

7) Tobacco companies (including their subsidiaries, agents, and consultants) should not serve in any official capacity in negotiating or implementing the convention because they do not have public health concerns as their foremost priority. Furthermore, tobacco company interests directly conflict with the FCTC’s primary purpose, the prevention of tobacco-related deaths.

8) Non-governmental organizations (NGOs) should be fully integrated into the framework convention process. Rules for NGO participation should rely on the precedents set at other recent United Nations' conferences. Furthermore, WHO should work with governments and private organizations to
seek funds to enable strong representation from NGOs based in developing countries.

We appreciate the opportunity to submit these comments. If you need more information, please contact us at (202) 833-0009.

Sincerely yours,
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