August 29, 2000

World Health Organization/TFI
20 Avenue Appia
1211 Geneva 27
Switzerland

Dear Colleagues:

Tobacco use is the leading cause of preventable death, disease and disability in the world today. If current trends continue, 10 million people will die annually by the year 2030. Action must be taken immediately, otherwise tobacco will soon become the leading cause of death worldwide, causing more deaths than HIV, tuberculosis, maternal mortality, automobile crashes, homicide and suicide combined.

Tobacco inflicts an alarming toll of death and disability upon Canadians. Tobacco kills over 45,000 Canadians a year (21% of all deaths) and is responsible for over 200,000 hospitalizations. The tragedy is that these deaths and illnesses are preventable.

The Sudbury & District Health Unit supports efforts to eradicate the tobacco epidemic in Canada and across the world. A strong Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (FCTC) will help to achieve this objective. Investing in comprehensive tobacco use prevention and control now will lead to substantial savings in the costs of treating tobacco-related illness in the future.

I understand that if successfully negotiated, the FCTC would be the world's first global agreement devoted entirely to tobacco control. To this end, I am supportive of the joint submission that has been presented by a group of Canadian health and anti-tobacco non-governmental organizations.1 In the spirit of a fair and proper consultation process, we believe that non-governmental organizations should be fully integrated into the Framework Convention process.

Thank you for the opportunity to support this important initiative.

Sincerely,

Penny Sutcliffe, MD, MHSc, FRCPCHiddenA
Medical Officer of Health
Sudbury & District Health Unit

1Canadian Cancer Society, the Coalition québécoise pour le contrôle du tabac, Heart and Stroke Foundation of Canada, Non-Smokers' Rights Association and Physicians for a Smoke-Free Canada.