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Organizations Around the World Call on International Labour Organization to Sever Ties with Tobacco

October 31, 2018

WASHINGTON, DC – Today, the Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids [joined over 100 health, development, labor, and corporate accountability organizations](#) around the world in calling on the International Labour Organization (ILO) – a United Nations (UN) agency – to finally cut ties with the tobacco industry. The announcement comes as the ILO gathers in Geneva for the 334th Session of the Governing Body, where it is scheduled to debate its ties to tobacco companies once more on October 31.

The ILO should end its financial relationship with the deadly tobacco industry. The ILO has faced repeated calls to protect its work from the tobacco industry and adopt guidelines consistent with Article 5.3 of the World Health Organization’s Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (WHO FCTC). Yet on three prior occasions when the issue was on the agenda it has failed to hold a vote (March 2017, November 2017, March 2018). The effect of a decision by the ILO to sever its ties with the tobacco industry would be to eliminate the current ILO contract with Japan Tobacco International and impede the tobacco industry’s ability to influence ILO policy.

The relationship between the ILO and tobacco companies presents a number of conflicts of interests for the UN agency. According to the letter sent from international organizations:

- The ILO’s acceptance of funding from the tobacco industry undermines the ILO’s obligations as a UN entity, as laid out in the WHO FCTC;
- The ILO’s acceptance of funding from the tobacco industry provides cover for egregious tobacco industry abuse through establishing a partnership with a respected organization like the ILO while failing to address many of the industry practices that perpetuate poverty;
- The ILO’s acceptance of funding from the tobacco industry allows the tobacco industry to expand its objectives within the UN more broadly; and
- The ILO’s acceptance of funding from the tobacco industry risks tarnishing the ILO’s reputation and the effectiveness of its work if it chooses to continue accepting funding from the tobacco industry.

“If the ILO wants to live up to its mission of promoting human and labor rights, the decision should be an easy one: end the current funding relationship with Japan Tobacco International and reject all future tobacco industry funding,” said Matthew L. Myers, President of the Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids. “Tobacco companies that spread death and disease across the globe should have no place in the ILO, or any responsible organization.”

Tobacco companies remain the single greatest obstacle to curbing the global tobacco epidemic that kills seven million people each year. Without urgent action, tobacco use will kill one billion people around the world this century.

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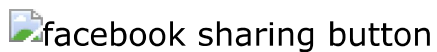
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