

Statement of 57 Financial Institutions on the Urgency of Tobacco Control

As 57 financial institutions¹, from 10 countries with over US\$ 2.9 trillion assets under management, we call upon Member States of the United Nations (UN) to accelerate progress on implementing the provisions of the WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (WHO FCTC) as called for in Sustainable Development Target 3.a.

The WHO FCTC provides a global response to a global problem – namely, the tobacco epidemic. It is an evidence-based treaty that reaffirms all people's right to the highest standard of health. The WHO FCTC is a milestone in the promotion of public health and provides new legal dimensions for the advancement of international health.

It is the first treaty negotiated under the auspices of WHO. The WHO FCTC was adopted by the World Health Assembly on 21 May 2003 and entered into force on 27 February 2005. Since its entry into force in 2005, this international treaty has become one of the most rapidly and widely embraced treaties in UN history. To date, the WHO FCTC has 182 Parties globally, including 51 WHO European Member States.

As financial institutions, we recognize the profound detrimental impact of tobacco on human and planetary health worldwide. Tobacco is a fundamentally unsustainable product with no place in a global community aligned in aspiring to and working towards global ambitions including the Sustainable Development Goals and The Paris Agreement.

As financial institutions we note the financial impact of smoking on the global community (due to health costs and lost productivity) is estimated at US\$1.4 trillion per year, imparting burdensome financial costs to all governments. We see the WHO FCTC as a crucial tool in creating a future free from tobacco.

Therefore, collectively, we call upon Member States to:

- Sign and ratify the WHO FCTC. We specifically call on all Member States that have not yet signed and ratified the treaty to do so as soon as practicable.
- Accelerate implementation of the provisions of the WHO FCTC: The Guidelines for implementation of the WHO FCTC set out effective evidence-based steps for Parties to implement WHO FCTC obligations, to protect populations from tobacco. Prioritizing progress on implementation of the Treaty is vital. For Government-related financial institutions, we wish to draw specific attention to the guidelines for implementation of Article 5.3, that note that Government-related public monies should not be invested in the tobacco industry and related venture. We call upon Parties to the WHO FCTC to collaborate, share experience and aspire to best practice.
- Monitor and report on implementation progress Under Article 21 of the WHO FCTC, Parties provide periodic reports on implementation of the Convention. As investors in a range of financial instruments, enhanced transparency around tobacco control regulations would facilitate more informed investment decisions.
- Acknowledge the financial and economic upside of a tobacco-free world, in addition to the immense health benefits for populations. Economic arguments have been used to hamper

¹ The signatories represent a wide range of institutions that finance and/or invest, from banks, insurers, asset managers, asset owners, foundations to pension funds.

progress on tobacco prevention. As financial institutions we note such arguments are not supported by data. Rather, we see that tobacco prevention and economic development go hand-in-hand.

As financial institutions, we will also support global tobacco control by taking actions where possible. For example by excluding tobacco producers from our portfolio and/or signing the Tobacco-Free Finance Pledge.





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Figure 8 Investment Strategies





Sisters of St. Francis of Philadelphia



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Vancity Investment Management

Veris Wealth Partners

