



24 May 2016

Ref: International Tax and Investment Center attack on SEATCA

Tobacco needlessly claims six million human lives yearly and could kill up to one billion people in this century, so it is urgent that governments and society take decisive actions to reduce tobacco use. Tobacco taxation is widely acknowledged as a highly effective measure to reduce tobacco consumption, and its importance and effectiveness are recognised by all 180 Parties to the WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (FCTC). As such, the tobacco industry fights doubly hard to ensure that tax policies remain favourable to the industry through misinformation and false claims.

Because of its low credibility with governments in many countries, the tobacco industry relies increasingly and heavily on proxies to spread its arguments against effective interventions to reduce tobacco use. The International Tax and Investment Center (ITIC) is widely considered to be the industry's leading proxy of the hour on tobacco tax issues. Apparently, SEATCA's exposure in recent years of ITIC's pro-industry stance (based on industry data and supported by industry funding) has hit a nerve, and mischaracterization and intimidation of industry opponents, such as SEATCA, are among the known tactics of the industry.

SEATCA is a long-standing, well-respected regional tobacco control alliance that has played a key role in the development and implementation of the FCTC in Southeast Asia and internationally, and the Framework Convention Alliance (FCA) is proud to have SEATCA as one of its more active members in this fight to protect human well-being from the many devastating harms of tobacco.

FCA welcomes this opportunity to clarify that (a) FCTC Guidelines are negotiated by all Parties to the FCTC and adopted by consensus of the Conference of Parties (COP), and (b) the decision to exclude INTERPOL from COP observer status was made by the COP (not by the FCTC Secretariat) based on INTERPOL's partnership with the tobacco industry. Questioning such decisions is tantamount to questioning the collective wisdom of the COP.

FCA reiterates its support for the decisions of the COP on tobacco taxes and industry interference, and expresses its solidarity with SEATCA in standing up to the tobacco industry.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Francis Thompson".

Francis Thompson  
Executive Director  
Framework Convention Alliance

