



OPEN LETTER

24 January 2020

Derek Yach
President
Foundation for a Smoke-free World

Dear Dr. Yach,

SEATCA and University of Bath are not to be associated with your Philip Morris International (PMI)-funded Foundation for a Smoke-free World (FSFW).

Since its launch in 2017, [FSFW](#)'s attempts to engage with the public health community have failed and been repeatedly rejected by global and public health organizations, including the World Health Organization (WHO).

In June 2019, the Tobacco Control Research Group (TCRG) at the University of Bath (which runs the website www.tobaccotactics.org referred to later) [exposed](#) how FSFW spent significantly more in 2018 on public relations (US\$7.5 M) than research (US\$6.4 M), supporting the growing consensus that FSFW provides a [key public relations function for PMI](#).

In July 2019, SEATCA [publicly denounced](#) FSFW for hijacking the term "smoke-free" and SEATCA's Smoke-free Index. FSFW had falsely touted its copycat Smoke-Free Index as "the [first ever Smoke-Free Index](#)" (Figure 1) and even [registered](#) a trademark for "Smoke-Free Index." This was misleading, confusing, and tantamount to wrongful appropriation of SEATCA's intellectual property, completely ignoring the fact that SEATCA's Smoke-Free Index -- the first of its kind to document how countries are implementing 100% smoke-free public places in accordance with Article 8 of the WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control -- was first published in 2016 and updated in 2017.

When SustainAbility, a think tank FSFW had engaged (together with a market research company, [Euromonitor International](#)) to develop its fake Smoke-Free Index, conducted regional "smoke-free dialogues" with the public health community in various countries, these were met with protests and rejection by civil society and governments, causing sessions in Turkey and Thailand to be cancelled.

Figure 1. How FSFW's Smoke-Free Index was promoted on its website before November 2019.



Overall, the [exposés and negative publicity](#) effectively laid bare FSFW's mischief in hijacking smoke-free for its own end, creating a copy-cat smoke-free Index, building public relations for its activities and undermining global tobacco control efforts.



In November 2019, perhaps not wanting to bring more attention to its misdeeds, FSFW quietly dropped its fake “Smoke-free Index” and replaced it with the Tobacco Transformation Index (Figure 2). However, the FAQs of the so-called Transformation Index (Q: How does the Tobacco Transformation Index relate to the work of tobacco control?) inaccurately and inappropriately state that as FSFW “shares common goals with organizations such as Tobacco Tactics and the Southeast Asia Tobacco Control Alliance, vocal critics of the Foundation and its work, we welcome opening a constructive dialogue with their leadership toward achieving the common goal – improving global health by ending smoking in this generation.”

Figure 2. As of November 2019, the Smoke-Free Index had been replaced with the Tobacco Transformation Index.



TCRG, which hosts the TobaccoTactics website, and SEATCA denounce this wrongful association with and by FSFW. Unlike FSFW, we work towards reducing tobacco use, not supporting PMI in its mission to maximise profits by promoting new forms of tobacco use. Unlike PMI-funded FSFW, we do not recognize the tobacco industry as a responsible and legitimate stakeholder in tobacco control. Instead we concur with overwhelming evidence that it is the single greatest barrier to successful tobacco control. Even the Danish Institute for Human Rights, which PMI had engaged to carry out a human rights assessment of its company, concluded its work by first stating: “According to the UNGPs [United Nations Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights] companies should avoid causing or contributing to adverse impacts on human rights. Where such impacts occur, companies should immediately cease the actions that cause or contribute to the impacts. Tobacco is deeply harmful to human health, and there can be no doubt that the production and marketing of tobacco is irreconcilable with the human right to health. For the tobacco industry, the UNGP therefore require the cessation of the production and marketing of tobacco.” It subsequently disengaged from working with PMI.

FSFW is hereby directed to cease and desist from associating SEATCA and TCRG (and its website Tobacco Tactics) with FSFW and its activities and to remove our organisations’ names from the FSFW website immediately.

Thank you


Ulysses Dorotheo, MD
Executive Director
SEATCA


Prof. Anna Gilmore
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