**Supporting Palau's request for an independent review of nicotine**

*16 October 2026*

To: The Members of the WHO Expert Committee on Drug Dependence
c/o the ECDD Secretariat, World Health Organization, Geneva

Dear Members of the Committee,

**For the first time, a government has asked for nicotine to be reviewed by this Committee.**

On 10 June 2026, the Republic of Palau formally notified the Secretary-General of the United Nations, setting in motion the procedure for a critical review of nicotine by this Committee. We, the undersigned organisations, warmly welcome this initiative and offer it our full support.

Nicotine is the common thread. Tobacco kills more than 7 million people every year, and its products are used by more than a billion people.[1] Nicotine is the principal addictive agent in tobacco and nicotine products.[2] WHO warns that it is highly addictive and harmful, especially for children and young people whose brains are still developing.[3] Increasingly, the concern is the molecule itself. Nicotine is now sold in its own right, in tobacco-free formats that are just as addictive and reach many people who have never smoked; leading cardiovascular societies agree that no nicotine-containing product can be considered safe for the heart.[4] E-cigarette use in pregnancy is also associated with preterm birth and lower birth weight.[5]

The products that deliver nicotine are changing faster than the rules that govern them. At least 15 million children aged 13-15 already use e-cigarettes, nine times the adult rate in countries with data.[6] Nicotine pouch sales passed 23 billion units in 2024, up more than 50% in a single year. Around 160 countries have no specific rules for pouches.[7]

Palau speaks from experience. In 2023, it removed e-cigarettes from its market, yet new products delivering the same addictive molecule keep arriving. Regulating one product at a time can no longer keep pace.

WHO has stressed that the true risks of these products will only become clear through a sustained commitment to impartial assessment.[8] The Committee's established criteria are precisely the questions that matter for nicotine today:

- its dependence potential;
- its liability to abuse;
- the seriousness of its impact on public health;
- its usefulness in medical therapy, including its established role in helping people quit.

Assessing nicotine on the same scientific basis as other substances would give every country, whatever its size or resources, a shared scientific reference point.

This initiative complements the WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control. It is in the spirit of the Convention's Article 2.1, which encourages Parties to go beyond its requirements in order to better protect human health.[9]

We trust the Committee to examine the evidence with the independence and rigour for which it is known. Our organisations stand ready to support that work with the evidence and expertise we hold.

The children now starting on nicotine, through products their parents never knew, will live with the consequences for decades. They deserve decisions grounded in the best independent science we have.

Yours faithfully,

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(1) WHO. *Tobacco and nicotine*. Fact sheet, 26 June 2026. https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/tobacco
(2) WHO Study Group on Tobacco Product Regulation. *Report on the scientific basis of tobacco product regulation: tenth report of a WHO study group*. WHO Technical Report Series No. 1066. Geneva: WHO; 2025, §2.3.3.1. https://www.who.int/publications/i/item/9789240117488
(3) WHO. *Tobacco and nicotine*. Fact sheet, 26 June 2026. https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/tobacco
(4) Münzel T, Kuntic M, Keaney JF Jr, et al. Nicotine-containing products and the cardiovascular system: mechanisms and global health implications. *Nat Rev Cardiol* (2026). https://doi.org/10.1038/s41569-026-01331-6
(5) Vallée A, Eid M, Feki A, Ayoubi JM. Maternal vaping and pregnancy adverse outcomes: a systematic review and meta-analysis. *Women Birth* 2025;38(5):101951. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.wombi.2025.101951; Sukhato K, et al. Comparative effects of electronic cigarettes and dual use of electronic and conventional cigarettes on adverse pregnancy outcomes: a systematic review and meta-analysis. *BMC Public Health* 2025;25:4359. https://doi.org/10.1186/s12889-025-25765-8
(6) WHO. World No Tobacco Day 2026: Unmasking the appeal – countering nicotine and tobacco addiction. 17 October 2025. https://www.who.int/news/item/17-10-2025-world-no-tobacco-day-2026--unmasking-the-appeal---countering-nicotine-and-tobacco-addiction
(7) WHO. WHO warns nicotine pouch brands targeting youth as sales surge. News release, 15 May 2026. https://www.who.int/news/item/15-05-2026-who-warns-nicotine-pouch-brands-targeting-youth-as-sales-surge
(8) WHO. *WHO position on tobacco control and harm reduction*. 12 November 2025. https://www.who.int/publications/m/item/who-position-on-tobacco-control-and-harm-reduction
(9) WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control, Article 2.1. Geneva: WHO; 2003. https://fctc.who.int/resources/publications/9241591013

## Annex 1 - Signatory organisations

103 organisations in 46 countries, listed in alphabetical order.

| # | Organisation | Country |
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| 1 | A Non Smoking Generation | Sweden |
| 2 | ADIC Sri Lanka - Alcohol and Drug Information Center | Sri Lanka |
| 3 | Afghanistan NCD Alliance | Afghanistan |
| 4 | African Tobacco Control Alliance (ATCA) | Togo |
| 5 | American College of Chest Physicians | United States |
| 6 | American Thoracic Society | United States |
| 7 | APEPOC (Asociación de Pacientes con EPOC) | Spain |
| 8 | ASH (Action on Smoking and Health) | United States |
| 9 | ASH Canada | Canada |
| 10 | ASH PHILIPPINES | Philippines |
| 11 | ASH Scotland | United Kingdom |
| 12 | Asociación Oncológica Extremeña | Spain |
| 13 | Asociatia Aer Pur Romania | Romania |
| 14 | Association for Nonsmokers - MN | United States |
| 15 | Association of European Cancer Leagues (ECL) | Belgium |
| 16 | ATAEX (Asociación de Afectados por Tabaquismo en Extremadura) | Spain |
| 17 | Austrian Council on Smoking and Health | Austria |
| 18 | Beacon of excellence for consulting,training and professional development | Jordan |
| 19 | Belgian Alliance pour une Société sans Tabac | Belgium |
| 20 | Cambodia Movement For Health | Cambodia |
| 21 | Cedars Refuge Foundation | Nigeria |
| 22 | Center for Tobacco and the Environment | United States |
| 23 | CLAS - Coalition for Americas' Health | United States |
| 24 | Coalition for a Tobaccco Free Palau | Palau |
| 25 | Coalition for Respiratory Health from Moldova | Moldova |
| 26 | Coastal Communities Drug Free Coalition | United States |
| 27 | Comité national contre le tabagisme | France |
| 28 | Consejo general de dentistas | Spain |

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| 29 | Consumers Association of Penang,( CAP) | Malaysia |
| 30 | Corporate Accountability | United States |
| 31 | Costa Rica Saludable | Costa Rica |
| 32 | Danish Cancer Society | Denmark |
| 33 | Danish Society for Public Health | Denmark |
| 34 | Danske Tandplejere | Denmark |
| 35 | Dentistry against Tobacco, Sweden | Sweden |
| 36 | DNF-Demain sera Non-Fumeur | France |
| 37 | Doctors against Tobacco | Sweden |
| 38 | European Association of Urology | Netherlands |
| 39 | European Chronic Disease Alliance | Belgium |
| 40 | European Network for Smoking and Tobacco Prevention- ENSP | Belgium |
| 41 | European Respiratory Society Tobacco Control Committee | Belgium |
| 42 | Foundation Smart Health - Health in 3D | Poland |
| 43 | Fowenguep Foundation | Cameroon |
| 44 | Fundación Bolivia Saludable | Bolivia |
| 45 | Fundación Interamericana del Corazón Argentina - FIC Argentina | Argentina |
| 46 | Fundación Lovexair | Spain |
| 47 | Global Allergy & Asthma Patient Platform | Austria |
| 48 | Global Alliance for Tobacco Control | Canada |
| 49 | Grand Est Sans Tabac | France |
| 50 | Green Crescent Health Development Initiative | Nigeria |
| 51 | Green Crescent Zimbabwe | Zimbabwe |
| 52 | Grupo de Tabaquismo Sociedad Extremeña de Medicina Familiar y Comunitaria | Spain |
| 53 | Health Funds for a Smokefree Netherlands | Netherlands |
| 54 | Health Professionals against Tobacco | Sweden |
| 55 | HealthJustice | Philippines |
| 56 | Healthy Romania Generation 2035 | Romania |
| 57 | Hellenic Thoracic Society | Greece |
| 58 | Hospital general de Fuerteventura | Spain |
| 59 | Impact Unfiltered | Netherlands |
| 60 | Kenya Tobacco Control Alliance (KETCA) | Kenya |
| 61 | King Hussein Cancer Center | Jordan |

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| 62 | Korea Center for Tobacco Control Research and Education | South Korea |
| 63 | Kosovo Advocacy and Development Centre (KADC) | Kosovo |
| 64 | Lärare mot Tobak, Teachers against Tobacco | Sweden |
| 65 | Macedonian Respiratory Society | North Macedonia |
| 66 | Malaysian Women's Action for Tobacco Control and Health (MyWATCH) | Malaysia |
| 67 | MANAS (Madak o Nesha Nirodh Sangstha) | Bangladesh |
| 68 | National Initiative of Non-smokers of Serbia - NINS | Serbia |
| 69 | NCD Alliance | Switzerland |
| 70 | NEBISI | Georgia |
| 71 | Nofumadores.org | Spain |
| 72 | ONG La Grande Puissance de Dieu | Benin |
| 73 | Psykologer mot tobak | Sweden |
| 74 | Public Health Advocacy Institute | United States |
| 75 | Public Health Association of Fiji | Fiji |
| 76 | RENATA (Red Nacional Antitabaco) | Costa Rica |
| 77 | Renevlyn Development Initiative | Nigeria |
| 78 | Respiratoire Gezondheid (VRGT) | Belgium |
| 79 | Romanian Society of Pneumology | Romania |
| 80 | School for Moral Ambition | Netherlands |
| 81 | SEPAR (Sociedad Española de Neumología y Cirugía Torácica) | Spain |
| 82 | Servicio extremeño de salud | Spain |
| 83 | Slovenian Coalition for Public Health, Environment and Tobacco Control | Slovenia |
| 84 | Smoke Free Israel | Israel |
| 85 | Smoke Free Partnership | Belgium |
| 86 | Society for Oral Cancer and Health | India |
| 87 | Southeast Asia Tobacco Control Alliance | Thailand |
| 88 | Stichting Rookpreventie Jeugd (Youth Smoking Prevention) | Netherlands |
| 89 | Stoplinien | Denmark |
| 90 | Swedish Nurses Against Tobacco | Sweden |
| 91 | Te Ao Hurihuri | New Zealand |
| 92 | The International Union Against Tuberculosis and Lung Disease | France |

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| 93 | The Welfare Association for the Development of Afghanistan (WADAN) | Afghanistan |
| 94 | TIME - for a nicotine-free future | Germany |
| 95 | Tobacco Control Alliance of Georgia | Georgia |
| 96 | Tobacco Control Research Group, Centre for 21st Century Public Health, University of Bath, UK | United Kingdom |
| 97 | Tobacco Free Association of Zambia | Zambia |
| 98 | Tobacco Free Jordan | Jordan |
| 99 | TobaccoFree Research Institute Ireland | Ireland |
| 100 | Tobaksfakta | Sweden |
| 101 | Vapen #jouwkeuze | Netherlands |
| 102 | VISIR (Riksförbundet Vi Som Inte Röker) | Sweden |
| 103 | Vital Strategies | United States |