



## **GYV Declaration [1]**

1. We, the youth of the world, *have gathered* to recognize the role of the tobacco industry and those furthering its interests, in perpetuating the tobacco and vaping epidemic.
2. We have crafted and endorsed this declaration to underscore our dedication to tackling the issue, raising awareness about the tobacco industry's **accountability** to our generation and those to come, and compelling governments worldwide to take decisive action. We understand that the primary obstacle to prioritizing our well-being is the tobacco industry and those furthering its interests. Given that the world has committed to upholding our rights, prioritizing the protection of public health,[2] and recognizing the fundamental conflict of interest between the tobacco industry and public health,[3] there's no justification for allowing tobacco industry interests to outweigh our collective welfare.
3. We refuse to accept compromised solutions that prioritize lining the pockets of tobacco companies under the guise of benefiting smokers, while ultimately sacrificing our well-being. As victims of the tobacco industry's predatory tactics, we demand justice and restitution for the harm inflicted and ongoing threats to our health and future.
4. It's crucial for all youth to be aware and vigilant, to avoid becoming pawns in the industry's schemes. We urge every young individual to safeguard their peers from lifelong addiction by actively confronting tobacco marketing tactics that prey on children and adolescents, ensnaring them in a cycle of addiction. Our collective strength lies in participating in campaigns that shield young people from industry interference, both locally and globally. To achieve this goal, we must **reject, denounce, and condemn tobacco funding and any engagements** or ties with the tobacco industry-linked organizations. We need to **expose the industry's approaches and outreach to the youth**, and hold the tobacco industry, along with those furthering its interests, accountable for their complicity in perpetuating the cycle of addiction and environmental degradation.
5. Whatever action taken by governments so far is simply inadequate. Governments, while claiming to care about the youth, continue to fail us. We want governments to stop their lip service and start showing they really care by taking these actions:
6. Particularly, we demand that governments take WHO FCTC and human rights treaty-commitments very seriously and adopt pro-youth tobacco-related policies.

## **Make Tobacco Industry Pay (Liability)**

7. We urge governments and policymakers worldwide to hold tobacco companies accountable for fostering addiction among vulnerable youth and to address environmental damages caused by their products, such as polluting oceans with toxic plastics from cigarette butts. Access to justice is imperative to ensure that the tobacco industry bears the financial responsibility for its actions. Moreover, we call for the insulation of policy development processes from the tobacco industry, in accordance with Article 5.3 of the World Health Organization Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (WHO FCTC), to safeguard public health policies from conflicts of interest.

### **Protect the Environment**

a. *Adopt a comprehensive ban on all forms of tobacco advertising, promotion and sponsorship, including so-called Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR), tobacco Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR), and tobacco Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG), cross-border tobacco advertisement, promotion, and sponsorship, as well as the depiction of tobacco in entertainment and digital media.*

b. *Adopt an immediate ban on cigarette filters and disposable vapes plastics in related electronic devices), while ensuring protection from tobacco industry interference. (Classify these as hazardous waste, reject eco-friendly filters and ineffective recycling initiatives pushed by the industry.*

c. *Adopt and implement measures to hold the tobacco industry liable for harms caused, including measures to require the industry to bear the financial consequences of harms through taxes levies, compensation mechanisms, sanctions, and other administrative and legislative measures. Additionally, support measures that impose or significantly increase taxes on the tobacco industry but ensure that these measures are not exploited to evade liability or gain positive social standing.*

### **Ban Addictive Products**

d. *Stop considering tobacco and the related industry's products as harm reduction strategies or public health interventions and adopt and implement a ban on **any new recreational addictive products**.*\*

e. *Support a strict application of the polluter pays principle and do not extend EPR privileges and benefits to the tobacco industry as it is not an ordinary stakeholder.*

f. *Promote policy coherence and reiterate these policies that put youths first when representing the nation in various intergovernmental panels and bodies.*

8. Governments that have banned **novel products**\* of the tobacco industry have significantly less youth vaping rates and set a commendable example for the rest of the world. We implore such governments to collaborate and share strategies for resisting tobacco industry interference to help others follow suit.

**\* Novel & emerging nicotine and non-nicotine products.**

9. We further call on our allies and those not affiliated with the tobacco industry to lend their support. Public officials at **Ministries of Health and the Environment\*\*** hold a crucial responsibility in implementing the outlined policy positions to protect youth from the influence of the tobacco industry. We implore our allies to prioritize youth well-being by adopting clear policies that unequivocally reject any form of tobacco industry interference, safeguarding policies from their commercial interests. **Heads of States, Parliament, and Local Governments\*\*** must abstain from engaging with the tobacco industry and reject any attempts at exerting influence as history demonstrates the industry's prioritization of profit over youth health. Furthermore, **United Nations (UN) agencies and international organizations should align with their human rights commitments by adopting a model policy to counter tobacco industry interference. Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs), educational institutions, and media outlets\*\*** must reject tobacco industry funding and influence to safeguard youth from addiction. **Parents, guardians, and teachers\*\*** are urged to advocate for policies that protect youth from tobacco industry tactics, ensuring a tobacco-free future for the next generation. (\*\* See [Annex](#) for customized messages for each ally)

### Our commitment

10. Finally, we pledge to remain vigilant against the deceptive tactics of the tobacco industry, advocating for policies that prioritize our health and well-being. We will raise our voices, educate our peers, and hold our leaders accountable for their actions. Together, we will build a tobacco-free world, ensuring a brighter tomorrow for generations to come.

**NOTE:**

*This Declaration was adopted at the Global Youth Voice Summit, hosted by the Global Centre for Good Governance on Tobacco Control (GGTC) in May 2024, in line with the World No Tobacco Day theme: **Protecting Children Against Tobacco Industry Interference**. The context can be found [here](#).*

### About the Global Youth Voices

The Global Youth Voices (GYV) is a movement that represents youth coalitions and organizations from across the globe that seek to make the tobacco industry pay for the harms caused to the planet and its people, not only for those in this generation but also future generations. GYV's previous [statements](#) and [initiatives](#) have been recognized by the [World Health Organization \(WHO\)](#) and at the [WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control \(FCTC\) Conference of the Parties](#). The Global Center for Good Governance in Tobacco Control (GGTC) convenes and provides technical assistance to GYV.

### Signees of the Declaration (a.o. 25 May, 2024)



## REFERENCES

Previous statements of the Global Youth Voices as published

### 1.

For reference, see previous positions and statements here :  
KEY MESSAGES

§ The tobacco industry manipulates the youth into a lifelong addiction. To protect the youth, governments must adopt a ban on novel recreational addictive products (Art 9/10, novel tobacco products), Where bans are not possible, strictly enforced regulations should apply. Further technical work in this area must be supported and protected from tobacco and related interests. A comprehensive ban on marketing of all forms of tobacco products and other novel addictive products including in digital media, should also be adopted. Supplemental guidelines on Art 13 must be adopted.

§ The tobacco industry must pay for its misconduct and for all the harms caused to the planet and its people; it must be held accountable and liable for past, present, and future harms. Hence, strong support is needed for the work that advances TI Liability (Art 19) and policies, including administrative measures and compensation mechanisms that help hold the tobacco industry liable for its misconduct as well as the harms caused. It is also crucial to support intersessional work on dealing with environmental harms (Art 18) such as elimination of cigarette filters (Art 9/10) and on the management of cigarette butts as hazardous waste.

§ The tobacco industry is not a stakeholder and must be excluded from policy development. Forward-looking measures (Art 2.1) should be supported, provided that these measures and the development of the same are protected from tobacco industry interference

### SUMMARY OF POSITIONS

The COP10 must consider the global youth a priority in making its decisions. For each (Provisional Agenda Items), the Global Youth Voices call on the COP10 and the Parties to:

- a. recognize that novel and emerging tobacco products are a threat to the global youth, and hence, these cannot be considered harm reduction strategies or public health interventions (6.1 & 6.3);
- b. adopt a ban on novel recreational addictive products. In jurisdictions where an outright ban cannot be put in place, support effective regulatory measures to restrict novel and emerging tobacco products, including a flavors ban (6.1 & 6.3);
- c. continue the important work on tobacco regulation and include studies on the elimination of toxic cigarette filters; ensuring that tobacco regulation is protected from tobacco and related interests (6.1);
- d. adopt the supplemental guidelines to address cross-border tobacco advertisement, promotion, and sponsorship (TAPS) and the depiction of tobacco in the entertainment/digital media. (6.2);
- e. support work to elaborate on forward-looking measures provided that these measures and the development of the same are protected from tobacco industry interference. Pressing issues such as immediate ban on cigarette filters and disposable vapes must be prioritized (6.4); and
- f. support the expansion of the work on WHO FCTC Article 19 as well adopt decisions that can help hold the tobacco industry liable for the harms caused, including measures to require the tobacco industry to bear the financial consequences of harms through the adoption of levies, compensation mechanisms, effective sanctions, and other administrative and legislative measures. (6.5)

To the Governments and Delegates of the Tenth session of the Conference of the Parties (COP10) to the WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control  
We, the youth, representing the global youth voices from across the globe, acknowledge our roles and responsibilities towards the global environmental crisis and are committed to developing skills to create a greener world. However, we cannot achieve this objective while the tobacco industry continues to harm our generation and the planet.

We fervently appeal to you to adopt decisions that shield us from the manipulative practices of tobacco and related industries.

These industries are profit-driven and have no qualms in selling and marketing addictive recreational products that have the potential to ensnare an entire generation in a web of addiction.

We urge you to end the tobacco industry's insidious strategy of introducing innovative and alluring features (e.g., biodegradable filters) or products (e.g., vaping devices) and using digital media, including entertainment media, to influence our impressionable minds. Such tactics only serve to perpetuate addiction and endanger our well-being. The interests of the tobacco industry or even of smokers should never serve as justification for legitimizing products that could send even a single child down the path of addiction.

Additionally, we call on you to address the damaging impact of tobacco industry pollution on our oceans and environment. The tobacco industry must be held responsible and accountable for its toxic plastics that pollute our oceans and for other environmental harms it perpetrates.

The tobacco industry should not be given the power to mislead our generation further by associating itself with deceptive terms like "harm reduction," "wellness," "social responsibility," "environmental steward," or "producer responsibility." Instead, it must be held accountable for the lasting pain and suffering it has inflicted and will continue to inflict upon countless lives. It must bear the financial consequences of the devastation it has wrought on the planet. Front groups and persons that voice industry positions should also be held accountable as they put us in danger.

We urge you to prioritize ensuring easy access to justice for the youth and future generations. The tobacco industry must be held accountable and liable for its actions. Liability measures should not be limited to court cases that may not be feasible in some countries. A range of measures should be explored, including license revocation, compensation mechanisms for damages, financial guarantees against future harm, tobacco surcharges, penalties, fees, or taxes, among other measures. In making your decisions, we implore you to put the well-being of the youth at the forefront of considerations concerning liability, product regulation, marketing, and harm reduction.

We must protect future generations from the devastating consequences of tobacco and related industries' manipulative and harmful practices.

The Intergenerational Responsibility of the Tobacco Industry  
We, youth from around the world, joined together by international organizations, call for intergenerational solidarity to hold the tobacco industry accountable and liable for its continuous acts of harming the people and the planet.

We represent a global constituency committed to protect the young adults, the children, and the future generation from the lifelong addiction caused by the tobacco industry. Because of the tobacco industry's tactics, a significant number of youth are addicted to nicotine: Many of us are destined for a lifelong struggle with our mental health and well-being. The tobacco industry's products continue to target our parents as well: We don't want another child to lose a father or mother to smoking.

In the past few years alone, we have seen the tobacco industry's hand in the vaping epidemic, youth-targeted digital marketing, sports sponsorship/advertising, continued exploitation of child labor, continued environmental damage from cigarette butts, fake philanthropic activities, acquisition of pharmaceutical companies to cover up the damage, and influencing of governments to roll back on tobacco control measures or overturn regulations/bans.

With its corporate influence on government actors, the profit-driven tobacco industry effectively holds the future of the next generation in its hands. We condemn the actions of the tobacco industry and those representing its interests and call for justice.

#### GRIEVANCES

1. Tobacco companies created a youth vaping epidemic resulting directly from employing tobacco transnational's marketing playbook.
2. Tobacco companies caused a rise in youth vaping in markets where tobacco transnationals have lobbied aggressively to introduce novel nicotine and tobacco products.<sup>1</sup>
3. Tobacco companies accessed the young crowd through sports sponsorship and advertising of novel and tobacco products and related materials.
4. Tobacco companies' deceived the public as to its social acceptability while continuing to exploit child labor
5. Tobacco companies disguised their environmental harms, which will deprive the future generation of marine resources (for example, anti-litter programs to wash its hands off the environmental harms of cigarette butts as a toxic single use plastic)
6. Tobacco companies conducted so-called philanthropic activities to further its interests, influencing policymakers in a manner that will increase corporate profits at the expense of youth's health.
7. Tobacco companies acquired pharmaceutical and recreational drug companies, including vaccines and cannabis.
8. Tobacco companies lobbied to influence governments to roll back on tobacco control measures or overturn bans and strict regulations of the tobacco industry.

Because tobacco products cost 8 million lives and 1.4 trillion USD in economic losses annually, we demand the following action:

#### REQUIRE THE TOBACCO INDUSTRY TO PAY COMPENSATION

- a. Those addicted to tobacco products are hooked while young and vulnerable. Tobacco industry's actions have induced youth uptake and have caused the loss of familial/social connection and support for children. The tobacco industry should be made to pay for the lasting pain and suffering caused. The youth and the future generation must have access to and be assured of compensation.
- b. Because the future generation will inherit the environment, tobacco companies must pay reparations for polluting our oceans for decades with toxic plastics (cigarette butts), among other environmental harms. To prevent further harm, governments must ban cigarette filters as a single use plastic. This measure will also reduce the attractiveness of cigarettes.
- c. Governments must make access to justice easy for the youth. Tobacco industry accountability and liability can come in the form of revocation of licenses, compensation for harms, financial guarantees for future harms, which can be exacted through court cases, tobacco surcharges, penalties, fees or taxes, among others.

#### REMOVE THE TOBACCO INDUSTRY FROM POLICY DEVELOPMENT

- a. Governments must investigate the influence of the tobacco industry on policymakers and prevent conflicts of interests. Tobacco's corporate sponsorships, including so-called CSR of the tobacco industry, which is partly a lobbying disguise and a marketing tactic aimed at the youth, should be banned.
- b. The youth's risk of addiction and recreational use should be at the center of any policy decision on novel and emerging tobacco products. The tobacco industry should not be allowed to profit from the said products.

There is a fundamental conflict of interest between the tobacco industry and public health, including the health of future generations that will be decided by policies adopted now. On the occasion of International Youth Day, we seek intergenerational solidarity to create a World for All Age, a sustainable future without tobacco industry interference. We condemn the tobacco industry's continued imposition of irreparable harms on the youth and the future generation. The time for the government to make the tobacco industry pay is no

#### 2.

"The Parties to this Convention, Determined to give priority to their right to protect public health," WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control, "Preamble" (2003). Available at: <https://iris.who.int/bitstream/handle/10665/42811/9241591013.pdf?sequence=1>

#### 3.

"38. Recognize the fundamental conflict of interest between the tobacco industry and public health" Source: United Nations General Assembly, 'Draft resolution submitted by the President of the General Assembly Political declaration of the High-level Meeting of the General Assembly on the Prevention and Control of Non-communicable Diseases' (2011). Available at: <https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/710899?ln=en&v=pdf>