



The Chairperson,  
COVID-19 National Task Force,  
Plot 9-11 Apollo Kagwa Rd,  
Kampala, Uganda.  
Dear Honorable Minister,

**Petition Protesting the Acceptance of the Tobacco Industry Contribution to the Uganda National Response Fund to COVID-19.**

We are grateful for the work you do in ensuring proper health conditions of the citizens of Uganda especially during the COVID-19 pandemic.

WE the Tobacco Control Champions in Uganda, concerned about the acceptance of the tobacco industry's contribution to the Uganda National Response Fund to COVID-19;

**AWARE THAT:**

- Over 38 Ugandans die every day due to tobacco related illnesses according to the Uganda Cancer Institute (UCI).
- COVID-19 is an infectious disease that primarily attacks the lungs.
- Smoking impairs lung function making it harder for the body to fight off coronaviruses according to the World Health Organization (WHO).
- UGX 328.82 billion (USD 126.48 million) is the annual health care, morbidity and mortality cost of tobacco use in Uganda – Health Cost Survey (HCS) Fact sheet Uganda 2017,
- UGX 108.05 billion (USD 41.56 million) is the direct cost of treating tobacco attributable illnesses in Uganda (HCS Fact sheet Uganda 2017).
- The cost of tobacco use constitutes 0.5 percent of Uganda's GDP, while expenditure on treating tobacco-induced illness was 2 percent of the national health expenditure in 2013. This means for every 1 UGX government earns from tobacco, 4 UGX is spent treating tobacco related illness - HCS Fact sheet Uganda 2017).



- The Meridian Tobacco Company based in Arua and Leaf Tobacco and Commodities contributed sh250m to the Uganda National Response Fund to COVID-19.

**WE NOTE THAT:**

- The response to COVID-19 is costly as the Parliament of Uganda approved Shs 284 billion to combat the COVID-19 pandemic in the country.
- The cost of treating tobacco related illnesses is also very high. According to Uganda Cancer Institute (UCI) a cancer patient in advanced stages (stage 4) needs 6 cycles of chemotherapy treatment - each costing about UGX 1 million, making the cost per patient UGX 6 million. Many children and youth who suffer from tobacco related diseases such as cancers, heart diseases and chest infections are left to suffer in agony because their parents cannot afford the cost of treatment.
- In Uganda, there are new deceptively attractive tobacco products being sold cheaply and openly in shops across the country and sometimes given to children freely by supermarkets - many of these products have been banned in their countries of origin. These include; Kuber, Shisha/hooker, Khutica and tobacco candy. Many youths are led by the tobacco industry to wrongly believe that the use of these products has the potential to enable them read for long hours and think better during exams.

**GRATEFUL THAT** the Uganda Government enacted a WHO FCTC compliant Tobacco Control Law in 2015, which is envied globally; by doing so, as a country, we demonstrated that we can again be the world's role model in the promotion of good health like we demonstrated when we effectively contained HIV/AIDS transmission in the 80s and 90s.

**WE ARE CONCERNED THAT** According to the Tobacco Control Act, 2015 that was enacted, there is prohibition of the tobacco industry in the provision of financial or other forms of support to events, activities, individuals or groups, including corporate social responsibility activities of any kind, even if such support is not done in exchange for publicity like in the case of the contribution to the Uganda National Response Fund to COVID-19.

**WE THE CONCERNED TC CHAMPIONS APPEAL TO YOU TO:**

- Expedite the compliance to the Tobacco Control Act 2015 and its implementing regulations to protect all citizens of our country from tobacco industry manipulation and undermining efforts to implement the laws of our country Uganda.

- Fulfill your obligation as Chair of the Tobacco Control Committee to effective implementation of the Tobacco Control Act, 2015 particularly the compliance with the prohibition on acceptance of voluntary contribution from the tobacco industry as well as direct or indirect financial or resource contribution or involvement in any manner in any initiative, campaign or programme directly or indirectly related to tobacco control or public health from the tobacco industry.
- Strongly become the roaring voice for the implementation of the TCA 2015.

Yours sincerely,

His Worship, Ntale Ismail; Deputy Division Mayor

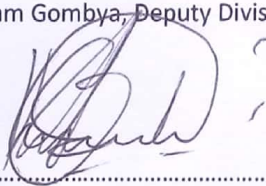
KCCA Kawempe Division



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His Worship, Kiyimba Sam Gombya, Deputy Division Mayor

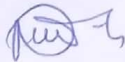
KCCA Central Division



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Her Worship, Namata Mungi Florence, Deputy Division Mayor

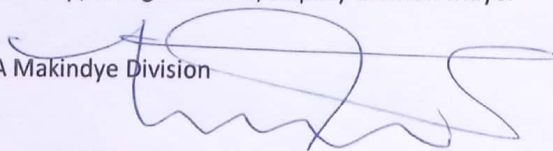
KCCA Nakawa Division



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His Worship, Lusagala Bosco, Deputy Division Mayor

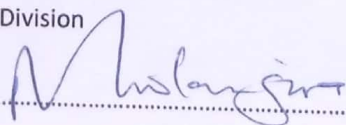
KCCA Makindye Division



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His Worship, Asuman Ntale, Deputy Division Mayor

KCCA Rubaga Division



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- CC The Right Honorable Prime Minister
- CC The Honorable Minister for Health
- CC The Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Health
- CC The Inspector General of Police
- CC The Executive Director- KCCA
- CC The Director Public Health- KCCA
- CC The Chair National Tobacco Control Committee
- CC The Coordinator Uganda Health Communication Alliance