

## INNCO Statement

The International Network of Nicotine Consumer Organisations (INNCO) was formed in June 2017 to represent consumers of low-risk, alternative nicotine products and to promote Tobacco Harm Reduction (THR) on the global stage. THR is a public health policy that respects individual autonomy, empowers consumers to make safer choices, and offers pragmatic solutions to combating use of high-risk forms of tobacco. It is an alternative to the 'quit or die' mindset prevalent among WHO FCTC and its member governments who impose restrictive regulations and bans on risk-reduced nicotine products in pursuit of unrealistic tobacco elimination goals.

INNCO, and its member organisations spanning six continents, seek adoption of rights-based, risk-relative and balanced harm reduction strategies as a legitimate human right. We believe denying tobacco users the means to reduce harm violates basic health principles.

While INNCO provides a collective voice for its members organisations on an international level, it is also committed to empowering and supporting them to achieve their individual aims and objectives within the countries they represent. INNCO's core mission is to support consumers of low-risk alternative nicotine products and their representative organisations so they can be active and engaged participants as primary stakeholders with their governments and public health officials.

We are driven to make consumers an integral part of THR discussions worldwide by helping develop and strengthen member organisations of the INNCO community.

INNCO also represents the interests of millions of people worldwide who smoke or use high-risk nicotine products but who may in the future choose to use a THR alternative. INNCO is striving to ensure consumers have accurate information so that they can make informed choices, and when they decide to reduce risk by using THR products, those products are available, affordable and effective.

A key INNCO strength is the breadth and diversity of its members' knowledge and expertise around THR and their shared commitment to adults around the world having access to affordable, significantly safer nicotine products, thereby reducing the death and disease burden of high-risk tobacco use.

As the voice of consumers, INNCO serves as the crucial, missing link between policymakers and interventions that work. Nothing about us, without us.

## **Association Aims and Goals**

### **INNCO Aims to:**

To promote a globally accepted framework which acknowledges the public health benefits of low-risk forms of nicotine use based on evidence-based quantitative and qualitative science that is the foundation for risk proportionate public health policies involving alternative nicotine products and their consumers.

We will achieve this through the following goals:

Goal 1: To shape public guidance and advice on the comparative risks of safer alternative nicotine use to ensure this is aligned with the principles of harm reduction.

Goal 2: To work cooperatively with others to further global efforts towards the adoption of rights-based, risk-relative and balanced harm reduction strategies as a legitimate human right in a broader context.

Goal 3: To defend and promote the right for low-risk nicotine consumer organisations, individual advocates and the Association to be recognised as legitimate stakeholders to be consulted in the formulation of any policies and regulations which impact on the modification, availability, taxation or prohibition of low risk forms of nicotine use.

## **Priorities of the Association**

### **Leadership**

INNCO is working to position itself as a leader amongst international advocacy organisations to raise awareness and education on THR. Most roles in INNCO have been voluntary positions since inception. If INNCO is going to be effective on behalf of its members, it needs to have strategic positions filled in the General Secretariat to manage the Association and strong leadership in the Governing Body to reflect not only the membership, but also to develop appropriate policy positions regarding low-risk, alternative nicotine products.

INNCO is first and foremost a membership association, and it needs strong leaders to advocate for its mission and goals. A key position in the Secretariat is the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) – this is a dynamic and pivotal role to represent the interests of INNCO through intelligent leadership and collaborative engagement. The CEO will represent INNCO at an international level with confidence, transparency and calm resolve.

Expert Advisory Groups will be established under the governance of INNCO to assist both consumers and scientists/researchers to engage and support each other in their respective endeavours. These advisory groups will report to the Governing Body on key areas that are critical to THR and which support the aims of INNCO and its members.

## **Membership**

INNCO's founding members are established, independent consumer advocate organisations from around the world. Many of these members have individual supporters who have been directly involved in advancing and defining the quality, safety and effectiveness of THR products. In particular, the enthusiasm and commitment of early adoptors of e-cigarette/vapor products has played a pivotal role in driving THR to the point it exists today.

INNCO is the uniting force of consumer advocacy groups and provides knowledge and support to aid these organisations in managing and informing their own members and consumers on THR issues.

Currently, the Association's membership consists of 33 member organisations in 31 countries, but the goal is to have member consumer organisations in countries around the globe. These member organisations will operate independently in their country, and will also work cooperatively with other member organisations regionally and internationally. INNCO's support and structure will provide a powerful voice for consumers on THR issues.

INNCO charges no membership fees or dues and works closely with organisations who align with INNCO's mission, aims and values in order for them to become active participants in our global mission. Member input is valued, and our annual General Assembly provides a platform for members to raise their ideas and concerns on the governance and direction of the Association as well as oversee, nominate, and vote on representatives on the Governing Board. Members are also encouraged to serve on committees and working groups which offer significant input on INNCO's policies and activities.

## **Capacity Building**

INNCO members require support. In a survey conducted in February 2019, 80% of members indicated they receive no funding or grants. In a public health area which requires ongoing support, this is a concern.

Members were asked which of a list of priorities they would rank as their top three, and they identified the following as top priorities to them collectively:

1. Administrative support to provide consistency and follow through on activities and efforts

2. Attend local seminars and/or key international conferences relating to tobacco harm reduction
3. Prepare, organise and present workshop(s) / open public seminars on tobacco harm reduction

Four top areas were flagged as most important administrative needs to their organisations:

1. Developing, maintaining and/or improving capacity to produce blog posts and/or video material which provide up-to-date information on THR and current legislations
2. Creating, maintaining and/or updating the organisation's website
3. Training and guidance on the management and strategic operations of managing the organisation
4. Hiring part-time administrative assistance services

Out of two key options suggested, members felt that they mostly need current, compelling scientific evidence on tobacco harm reduction which has been translated into the native language.

## **Communication**

INNCO is strengthening internal and external communication channels to inform members on the latest science and positioning, as well as represent members at an international level.

From the member survey conducted, it is clear that members are looking for support to produce projects and educational materials, and also need the ability to present scientific evidence on THR in their local languages. In order to do this, INNCO requires technical expertise to prepare reports, case studies, and scientific statements, all of which need to be translated into the local language.

INNCO's message needs to be united and clear. The members need to be able to demonstrate their position with confidence and clarity. Our position as an Association needs to be proactive and engaging, rather than reactive to the latest threats to the global THR community.

A database of members will be developed to capture our member information and interests, as well as include a forum for members to safely and confidently engage with each other to discuss issues and support each other in solutions.