

TOP 10 REASONS

Why **Bans** of Low-Risk Nicotine Alternatives to Smoking in Low- and Middle-Income Countries (LMICs) **Will Do More Harm Than Good**

EXPOSING THE INCONVENIENT TRUTHS OF A FAILED GLOBAL FRAMEWORK TO REDUCE HARM CAUSED BY COMBUSTIBLE TOBACCO.

1

BANS ARE AN OVERLY SIMPLISTIC SOLUTION TO A COMPLEX ISSUE AND WILL NOT WORK



SMOKING PREVALENCE REMAINS HIGH, WITH AROUND 1.3 BILLION TOBACCO USERS WORLDWIDE – AND OVER 80% OF THOSE LIVE IN **LMICs**.



GLOBAL TOBACCO CONTROL POLICIES SUCH AS MPOWER ARE UNWORKABLE IN MANY LMICs DUE TO LACK OF ACCESS TO SMOKING CESSATION SERVICES AND OTHER RESOURCES.



ANY MOVE TO BAN HARM REDUCTION PRODUCTS, AND THE ALMOST CERTAIN SUBSEQUENT INCREASE IN ILLICIT MARKETS, NEEDS TO BE EVALUATED CAREFULLY.

2

PRIORITISING THE BANNING OF REDUCED HARM ALTERNATIVES OVER CIGARETTES IS ILLOGICAL



NICOTINE DOES NOT ITSELF CAUSE SMOKING-RELATED DISEASES.



AN EXPERT INDEPENDENT EVIDENCE REVIEW PUBLISHED BY PUBLIC HEALTH ENGLAND CONCLUDED THAT E-CIGS ARE AT LEAST 95% LESS HARMFUL THAN SMOKING.



IT SEEMS ILLOGICAL TO APPLY A BAN ONLY TO REDUCED HARM ALTERNATIVE PRODUCTS AND NOT TO CIGARETTES, WHICH ARE SIGNIFICANTLY MORE HARMFUL.

3

REDUCTION AND SUBSTITUTION ARE VALID GOALS FOR SMOKERS IN LMICS



REPLACING COMBUSTIBLE TOBACCO WITH ALTERNATIVE NICOTINE PRODUCTS CAN SIGNIFICANTLY REDUCE RISK OF HARM BY AT LEAST 95%.



STUDIES SHOW THAT INTENTION TO QUIT IS DRAMATICALLY LOWER IN LMICS THAN HIGH INCOME COUNTRIES (HICS).*



WITH NRT UNAFFORDABILITY AND CURRENT TOBACCO CONTROL STRATEGIES IN MANY LMICS SHOWING MEAGRE RESULTS, ADDING ACCESSIBLE, MARKET-DRIVEN HARM REDUCTION MEASURES IS A VITAL WAY FORWARD.**

* "Burden of tobacco in Pakistan: findings from global adult tobacco survey 2014", Nicotine & Tobacco Research. 21(1):136.

** Enabling access to new WHO essential medicines: the case for nicotine replacement therapies. Global Health. 6, 22.

4

PEOPLE WHO SMOKE HAVE THE RIGHT TO CHOOSE TO REDUCE THEIR OWN RISK OF HARM



BY REMOVING REDUCED HARM ALTERNATIVES FROM THE MARKET LEAVES SIGNIFICANTLY MORE DANGEROUS CIGARETTES AVAILABLE, COUNTRIES WOULD REMOVE THIS RIGHT FROM THE INDIVIDUAL.



HARM REDUCTION TO IMPROVE PUBLIC HEALTH IS NOT A NEW PHENOMENON, SUCH AS NEEDLE EXCHANGE PROGRAMS, MALARIA CONTROL INTERVENTIONS, AND THE USE OF SEATBELTS.



AWARENESS OF AND ACCESS TO ALTERNATIVE NICOTINE PRODUCTS IS LOWER IN MANY LMICS THAN HICS.

5

REDUCED HARM ALTERNATIVES CAN SIGNIFICANTLY CONTRIBUTE TO THE AIMS OF GLOBAL TOBACCO CONTROL



THE FCTC ITSELF RECOGNISES “HARM REDUCTION” AS A KEY STRATEGY IN TOBACCO CONTROL AND “TOBACCO CONTROL MEANS A RANGE OF SUPPLY, DEMAND AND HARM REDUCTION STRATEGIES.”



VERY FEW COUNTRIES HAVE ADOPTED ALL OR EVEN MOST OF THE MPOWER MEASURES AT BEST-PRACTICE LEVELS.



CURRENT STRATEGIES OVERLOOK THE OPPORTUNITY TO ENCOURAGE PEOPLE WHO SMOKE WHO ARE NOT READY TO QUIT OR SWITCH TO REDUCED-HARM ALTERNATIVES.

6

LACK OF RESEARCH IN LMICs IS NOT A VALID REASON TO BAN REDUCED HARM ALTERNATIVES



SIGNIFICANT EVIDENCE FROM SEVERAL HICs SUPPORTING THE CORRELATION BETWEEN INCREASING USE OF ENDS AND REDUCTION IN THE NUMBER OF PEOPLE SMOKING COMBUSTIBLE TOBACCO.



A REVIEW OF TOBACCO CONTROL STUDIES IN THE GLOBAL SOUTH, WHICH CONTAINS A LARGE PERCENTAGE OF LMICs, FOUND THAT ONLY 4% DETAILED HARM REDUCTION.*



THERE IS A RICH BODY OF EVIDENCE FROM HICs SUPPORTING THE IMPACT OF ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS ON REDUCING SMOKING PREVALENCE AND REDUCING HARM.

* Kumar N, Janmohamed K, Jiang J et al. 2020. An overview of tobacco control interventions in the Global South. *Drugs and Alcohol Today*. May 25

7

THE PROHIBITIONIST APPROACH IN LMICs IS OUTDATED, UNREALISTIC AND CONDESCENDING



PROGRESS IN MEETING THE GLOBAL TARGET SET BY GOVERNMENTS TO CUT TOBACCO USE BY 30% BY 2025 REMAINS OFF TRACK.



SUCH DISCRIMINATORY POLICIES ALSO SERVE TO FURTHER INCREASE HEALTH INEQUALITIES BETWEEN HICs AND LMICs.



THERE IS A RICH BODY OF EVIDENCE FROM HICs SUPPORTING THE IMPACT OF ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS ON REDUCING SMOKING PREVALENCE AND REDUCING HARM.

8

BANS WILL LEAD TO ILLICIT MARKETS WITH INCREASES IN CRIME AND NO TAX REVENUE



BHUTAN, A SMALL HIMALAYAN COUNTRY, SERVES AS A CASE STUDY ON THE ADVERSE IMPACT OF BANS, WHICH RESULTED IN 33% OF THE MALE POPULATION STILL SMOKING.



ILLICIT MARKET RETAILERS OF E-CIGARETTES IN SINGAPORE SELL AT A LARGE MARK-UP OF 300% OVER THE ORIGINAL PRICE OF THE PRODUCTS.



THE ILLICIT MARKET IN CIGARETTES REMAINS RAMPANT, WITH 50% OF MEXICAN SMOKERS PURCHASING CIGARETTES ILLEGALLY.*

*Instituto Nacional de Salud Pública. Encuesta Global de Tabaquismo en Adultos. México 2015. Cuernavaca, Mexico

9

BANNING REDUCED HARM ALTERNATIVES LEADS PEOPLE BACK TO SMOKING



LEGISLATION OF NICOTINE ALTERNATIVES IS OFTEN STRICTER – OR AT LEAST AS STRICT – AS FOR CIGARETTES THEMSELVES.



THR PRODUCTS ENCOURAGED MORE CIGARETTE-CESSATION ATTEMPTS IN SOUTH KOREA,* BUT HEAVY TAXES AND CRITICAL STUDIES CONVINCED MANY KOREANS TO RETURN TO SMOKING.**



THE 2020 BAN OF ENDS AND THRS IN MEXICO IS EXPECTED TO SEE MANY OF THE 1.2 MILLION USERS OF ENDS IN THE COUNTRY SWITCH BACK TO SMOKING REGULAR CIGARETTES.

*Brand Shares – Cigarette in South Korea. *Euromonitor*.

**Kim, T. 2018. Heat-not-burn cigarettes heat up controversy. *J Periodontal Implant Sci*; 48(4): 201.

10

BLANKET BANS IN LMICS ARE A FORM OF “PHILANTHROPIC COLONIALISM”



LMICS ARE NOT A HOMOGENOUS ENTITY.



BLANKET APPROACHES PROPOSED BY THE UNION AND OTHERS TO BAN E-CIGS AND HTPS IN LMICS SMACKS OF PHILANTHROPIC COLONIALISM, DEFINED AS “BARGING IN AS OUTSIDERS AND FORCING THEIR SOLUTIONS ON OTHER PEOPLE’S PROBLEMS.”



A BETTER USE OF INVESTMENT WOULD BE TO FUND LOCAL RESEARCH TO HELP LMICS DEVELOP THEIR OWN INSIGHTS AND SOLUTIONS FOR THEIR RESPECTIVE SITUATIONS.