

**THE SEOUL DECLARATION:
Public Health Experts and Consumer Groups Call on
The Government of the Philippines to Risk Proportionately Regulate E-cigarettes**

We call on the Government of the Philippines to allow its citizens to have access to safer alternatives to cigarettes through risk proportionate regulation of safer nicotine products, including e-cigarettes, Heat Not Burn Tobacco and snus. We urge the Government to:

Realise that smoking causes the vast majority of tobacco-related death and disease. Burning tobacco is the main cause of smoking related disease, not nicotine or inhaling vapour. Tobacco use causes at least one million deaths per year in the Philippines, and smoking causes the majority. E-cigarettes provide smokers with an option to get away from smoking and could hasten the demise of the cigarette. We should all want to see that.

Recognise that vaping is dramatically safer than cigarettes and has helped millions quit smoking. Vaping is not smoking. It uses electronic devices to generate a nicotine-containing vapour without burning tobacco. Public Health England's annual reviews of all available evidence have consistently concluded that e-cigarettes are around 95% less harmful than smoking. Millions of people have switched from cigarettes to these significantly safer products. Governments charged with protecting public health should welcome that, not discourage it.

Recall that harm reduction is at the core of the Philippine's international treaty obligations. The Framework Convention on Tobacco Control defines 'tobacco control' as 'a range of supply, demand and harm reduction strategies that aim to improve the health of a population'.

Risk Proportionate Regulation. Restrictive regulations and bans serve only to protect the cigarette industry. Concerns that vaping may appeal to youth or may serve as a 'gateway' to smoking are inconsistent with the evidence: E-cigarettes have been gateways out of smoking for millions and have been accompanied by declining youth smoking rates. Instead of regulating these products harsher than the tobacco products that kill people, the Government should regulate e-cigarettes to maximise the benefits of low risk alternatives while minimising the likelihood they will be used by youth or non-smokers.

Rethink dogma. Safer products should be encouraged, not attacked with the same vehemence as cigarettes or, worse, banned. Smokers' health and the Government's credibility is at stake: The Government of the Philippines should avoid being perceived as promoting the interests of cigarette and pharmaceutical industries, and smokers should not be forced to choose between deadly cigarettes and marginally effective nicotine replacement therapies.

Remember that public health is about people. With appropriate regulation, you can help thousands of Thai vapers and tens of millions of Thai smokers by simply telling them the truth: although the best option is not using any nicotine-containing products, switching to a regulated vape product is better than continuing to smoke.

Seoul, August 29, 2019

