

ENDGAME CABINET RECOMMENDATIONS

for the Future of Tobacco Control in Canada

I: A 21st Century Federal Tobacco Control Strategy

To be successful in substantially reducing tobacco use and related harms, a new federal tobacco control strategy must move beyond the traditional approach of implementing incrementally stricter measures. A fundamental shift in focus is needed to the disease vector itself—the tobacco industry—while at the same time offering greater assistance to those most afflicted by industry behaviour and products and greater protection to those affected by second-hand smoke. And greater cooperation and coordination between the federal and provincial/territorial governments is required.

- I (a) **Goal: Less than 5% tobacco use by 2035, with interim targets and additional prevalence reduction goals for specific sub-populations**
- I (b) **Framework: A nimble, long-term strategy, with sustained intensity, that affirms a whole-of-government approach and includes the following elements:**
- application of a health equity lens
 - policy reforms
 - mass media and social media campaigns
 - research
 - industry monitoring
 - mandatory public disclosure by tobacco companies of the information required under the *Tobacco Reporting Regulations* prior to any new product appearing on the market
 - greatly enhanced surveillance, including real-time monitoring and monthly, quarterly, and annual surveys
 - enforcement
 - capacity building and knowledge exchange
 - increased resources and support for Indigenous communities to develop their own commercial tobacco use reduction strategies and targets
 - significant technical, human, and financial support for global implementation of the *Framework Convention on Tobacco Control* (FCTC) and groundbreaking tobacco control measures that go beyond the FCTC
 - the ability to adjust the plan and related measures quickly in response to new developments
- I (c) **Financing: An annual licence fee on tobacco companies to fully recover the costs of the strategy**
- I (d) **Accountability: An annual progress report to Parliament to be reviewed by a parliamentary committee**
- I (e) **Policy reforms: A fundamental transformation in how the tobacco industry does business**

II. Priority Interventions: Policy Reforms Targeting the Industryⁱ

The regulatory and fiscal policy measures governing tobacco companies in Canada are not proportionate to the fact that tobacco industry products kill when used exactly as intended, cause immeasurable loss of quality of life, burden the health care system, and cause a host of other social and environmental harms. A new federal strategy must concentrate on reversing this situation by fundamentally transforming all the ways in which tobacco companies are permitted to operate in Canada.

ⁱ These recommendations do not deal with vaping products given that e-cigarettes are subject to a separate, parallel process through Bill S-5 before Parliament.

II (a) Comprehensive pricing strategy

- A pricing strategy developed jointly by Health Canada and Finance Canada that combines substantial excise tax increases and other mechanisms to ensure that high prices serve to deter tobacco use initiation and promote quitting, as well as enhanced contraband prevention measures

II (b) Prevention of industry interference in health policy (as in Article 5.3 Guidelines to the Framework Convention on Tobacco Control)

- Public education about *both* harmful nature of industry products and industry strategies to undermine public health policy
- Proactive public disclosure of industry information provided to government, with limited exceptions
- Divestment of industry stock by all governmental and quasi-governmental bodies
- Implementation of guidelines for public servants, elected officials, etc., for interaction with representatives of tobacco firms and any organization to which they provide funding

II (c) Plain and standardized tobacco packaging of all tobacco products, including one format of cigarette pack (slide-and-shell); strict controls over brand and variant names; and enhanced, continually refreshed package health warnings

II (d) A total ban on promotion, including a ban on tobacco branded tobacco accessories and non-tobacco products; mandatory hard-hitting anti-tobacco ads accompanying all movies and video games that depict tobacco use; and a prohibition on incentive payments to retailers for tobacco sales and/or promotion

II (e) A fundamental reform of tobacco retailing, including raising the age of sale to 21 years and partnering with the provinces/territories to restrict tobacco sales in the medium-term to a limited number of government-controlled outlets

II (f) Controls over products, including a ban on all flavourings in *all* tobacco products and herbal shisha

III. A Comprehensive, Coordinated National Cessation Strategy

Although prevention strategies are central to achieving a smoking prevalence in Canada of less than 5% by 2035, they alone are insufficient. To reach this goal, the absolute number of smokers in Canada will need to fall from approximately 5.3 million today (CCHS 2015) to less than 2 million, an annual decrease of some 200,000 smokers. Canadians addicted to industry products must receive evidence-based cessation help when and where they want it. And new approaches are needed to specifically target populations with the highest smoking rates. The federal government should substantially increase cessation initiatives and work with the provinces/territories to require all health care institutions and designated health professionals to provide cessation advice and services as part of a strengthened and integrated cessation system.

IV. Increased Protection from Second-Hand Smoke

There are a number of environments, such as multi-unit housing, where much more needs to be done to protect people from second-hand smoke, to enhance quitting, and to reduce the role modelling of smoking to vulnerable youth. The federal government can significantly advance progress on this front by providing leadership to the provinces/territories through research, resources, and coordination. The federal government can also legislate enhanced protection in areas under its jurisdiction, for example, by requiring specified outdoor areas to be smoke-free and by ensuring that herbal shisha is covered under tobacco laws and that places free of tobacco smoke remain free of marijuana smoke.