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March 7th, 2024

The Rt Hon Kemi Badenoch MP

Secretary of State for Business and Trade

Old Admiralty Building
Admiralty Place
London
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United Kingdom

Subject: Concerns Regarding the Impact of the Smoke-Free Generation Policy Implementation

Dear Secretary of State,

I hope this letter finds you well. I am writing to express my grave concern and disappointment regarding the proposed implementation of the Smoke-Free Generation policy and the open dismissal of industry views in the decision-making process. Please find attached the response I have received from the Department of Health as a result of the letter I sent on behalf of all the members of the Imported Tobacco Products Advisory Council and which refers to the restrictions placed on the government by Article 5.3 of the FCTC.

As you are aware, Article 5.3 of the Framework Convention on Tobacco Control acknowledges the importance of protecting public health policies from commercial and vested interests, but it does not explicitly prohibit the consideration of industry views. The guiding principles to the Guidelines to Article 5.3 emphasize the need for accountability and transparency in interactions with the tobacco industry. This categorically does not imply a total prohibition on taking industry views into account.

It is deeply worrying to witness the Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC) taking a position that seems to go against the spirit of collaboration and inclusiveness. I believe this stance may not align with the views of several members of the government,

as it potentially overlooks the nuances of balancing public health objectives with the concerns of various stakeholders.

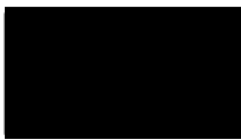
Equally concerning is the apparent neglect of domestic business interests in favour of an aggressive and inaccurate interpretation of government obligations under the FCTC treaty. Numerous retailers, importers and distributors who took the time to engage with the consultation process, are now being told that their views, as UK taxpayers and contributors to the economy, are neither relevant nor welcome.

The repercussions of such decisions extend far beyond the tobacco industry. Small and large businesses, including the hospitality industry, tourism, restaurants, hotels, and retail sectors will all be negatively impacted by the proposed policy. The potential impact on trade, tourism, and employment is significant and warrants careful consideration. The total absence of any form of Impact Assessment should be urgently addressed before proceeding with any new legislation with such a wide impact.

I urge you to reevaluate the current approach and ensure that the voices of affected industries and businesses are not only heard but genuinely considered in the decision-making process. Striking a balance between public health goals and the economic well-being of the nation is crucial, and I believe a more collaborative approach will lead to more effective and sustainable outcomes.

Thank you for your attention to this matter, and I look forward to your prompt response.

Sincerely,



Tatiana Camacho

Secretary-General