



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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CTPD EXPECTATIONS FROM THE PRESIDENTS OFFICIAL OPENING OF PARLIAMENT SESSION: IMPROVED REGULATION OF TOBACCO

The dangerous and harmful effects of tobacco consumption cannot be overstated – it is one of the leading causes of non-communicable diseases such as lung cancer, ischemic heart disease, stroke, asthma, respiratory infections, and the list goes on. According to the Ministry of Health, tobacco is responsible for over 7,000 deaths annually in the country, translating to a health cost burden of approximately K2.8 billion each year. Moreover, not only are smokers at risk of disease/death but also non-smokers through exposure to second-hand tobacco smoke, which according to the ministry of health is responsible for nearly 800 annual deaths in the country.

Whereas statistics by the MoH indicate that young people and adolescents are more at risk of tobacco related deaths, the innovations presented by industry players aimed at increasing the rate of tobacco use and consumption are on the rise. With a percentage population of youths in Zambia standing at 74% (Youthmap: 2014), deliberate policy interventions have to be enforced to ensure enhanced regulation of tobacco consumption. Members of Parliament, specifically parliamentary committees that speak to health and development planning are key gate-keepers in pushing the agenda for tobacco control, and therefore CTPD advances these expectations.

While CTPD realises that the Government is able to raise significant revenue through the tobacco industry to enhance its domestic resource mobilisation efforts. The centre remains alive to the fact that the health and developmental impacts of tobacco far outweigh the benefits from its production. This links well to the recently published Eighth National Development Plan (8NDP), under that strategic development area 2, which focusses on human and social development. Ensuring adequate budgetary allocation to sectors that promote human and social development entails that resources are ring-fenced, and therefore health expenditures resulting from tobacco consumption limit this allocation.

To curb the negative impact of tobacco usage, Zambia, in 2005 ratified the World Health Organisation Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (WHO FCTC), committing itself to giving priority to protect public health by adopting effective administrative, policy and legislative measures to mitigate the spread of the tobacco epidemic. However, it has been

nearly 15 years since Zambia ratified the WHO FCTC, and no tangible progress beyond a draft tobacco control bill, has been made in domesticating the Convention by enacting a comprehensive national tobacco control law.

It is therefore CTPD's expectation that the Tobacco Control Bill is tabled before Parliament for enactment in the forthcoming session of Parliament. Strong laws, as proven in countries with comprehensive tobacco control legislative measures, are essential in the fight against tobacco use. The adverse health effects caused by tobacco consumption both in terms of deaths caused and the cost burden on the health sector need to be curbed by strong tobacco control laws.

In order to expedite the tabling of the tobacco control bill in parliament, CTPD further expects that the cabinet memo in regards to the control bill will be tabled soon in Cabinet to move forward this agenda and in turn realise meaningful benefits so far as public health promotion is concerned.

Issued by

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Editor's Note

The Centre for Trade Policy and Development (CTPD) is a not-for-profit, membership based trade policy and development think tank. The organization was established in 1999 and existed as the civil society trade network (CSTNZ), until 2009 when it was rebranded as the Centre for Trade Policy and Development (CTPD).

The mandate of CTPD is to influence pro-poor trade and investment reforms at national, regional and multilateral levels as well as facilitate the participation of various stakeholders including member organizations in ensuring that trade is used as a tool for poverty eradication.

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