

# CONFERENCE DECLARATION

## 3<sup>RD</sup> NATIONAL CONFERENCE ON TOBACCO OR HEALTH 2014

We, the participants of the 3rd National Conference on Tobacco or Health 2014 assembled at the Tata Memorial Hospital, Mumbai on 15th and 16th December 2014 here by:

1. Acknowledge that the enormous burden of disease poverty and premature deaths that tobacco imposes is no longer acceptable to the people of India. Tobacco threatens to derail the future of development of the country as it enters the twenty-first century and stands to undermine and reverse progress made thus far. Tobacco use is responsible for more than one million premature deaths annually pushing more than a million families every year to brink of abject poverty.
2. Recognize the primary role and responsibility of the Union and State Governments to advance tobacco control through the strict enforcement of legislation. We emphasize that tobacco control efforts need to address not only the vulnerabilities among women, children and marginal populations but also harness their potential role in changing the course of the tobacco epidemic, embedded within the larger human rights framework.
3. Solicit proactive roles of the several government ministries and non-government stakeholders under a stronger leadership of Ministry of Health and Family Welfare which commands an effective response by creating a powerful high-level authority which takes upon itself to reverse the trends of tobacco use and reduce its harms.
4. Recognize that the tobacco industry and industry promoting mandate of the government must now end and that the government should not be complicit in its support to and benefit from a lethal industry like tobacco.

With this background, the participants of the National Conference on Tobacco or Health 2014 call for the immediate and unified action to the following:

- I. **Engage** with all relevant stakeholders to strengthen the legislative framework further, and overcome the shortcomings and set up an accountability of all implementing agencies for effective enforcement. To this end, the Government of India must chart a course for an endgame of tobacco which becomes reality during our lifetime.
- II. **Empower** the people and all forms of media and agency to involve and inform people about the harms of tobacco on a war footing- from policymakers to the poorest and the marginalized populations in every corner of India.
- III. Capitalize on the lost opportunity of involving women in leadership roles- in policy and at a community level and **empower** women to protect themselves, their families and the community at large.
- IV. Urgently demand that the Government of India and states notify policies that stop tobacco industry interference from thwarting tobacco control efforts especially the imminent threat to reversing pictorial warnings.
- V. **Eradicate** tobacco use through the reduction in the supply and manufacturing by 50% of tobacco crops and products by 2020, while offering alternative livelihood for those currently engaged in its production and cessation services for those who are currently addicted to tobacco.
- VI. **Engage** with public and private organizations to dedicate resources for sustaining tobacco control and ensure the strict exclusion of tobacco and other such nefarious industries
- VII. **Call for an immediate ban on the spread of new and emerging technologies that promote tobacco use**

In conclusion, we reaffirm our unwavering commitment to protect the lives of those who stand to be affected by tobacco use, especially the imminent use by vulnerable youth and women and challenge the tobacco industry and its nefarious partners which prevent tobacco control advocates, and district administration and state governments and the Union government from advancing tobacco control.