Professor Gerry Stimson – reaction to WHO FCTC position on e-cigarettes (ENDS)

written by Clive Bates | 18 October 2014

UPDATE: The E-cigarette ('ENDS') final language

Statement On the Declaration of the 6th Conference of the Parties of the World Health Organisation (WHO) Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (FCTC).

By **Professor Gerry Stimson***, Emeritus Professor at Imperial College, London and co-director of Knowledge-Action-Change (KAC)

Saturday, 18 October 2014 (London, UK)

The Conference of the Parties meeting on the WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (FCTC) which took place this week to in Moscow issued a declaration that is unambiguously bad for e-cigarettes, bad for public health and scandously bad for evidence based policy-making

In a meeting tainted by the exclusion of the public and a ban on all media representatives from attending, the WHO FCTC seems unashamedly indifferent to the endemic disregard for evidence and the harmful unintended consequences of the kind of actions that have been agreed in Moscow – the most obvious one being the protecting of conventional cigarettes from competition from far less dangerous products like e-cigarettes.

The 'Moscow Declaration' calls for countries to take steps to minimise the proliferation of new nicotine products – which includes the much safer e-cigarettes.

The ultimate irony has successfully managed to take the *public* out of public

health.

The meeting has just got it plain got it wrong because:

> It places all its emphasis on minor, hypothetical or imaginary risks and gives no emphasis to the great opportunities that arise from having a popular replacement for smoking with likely 95-100 per cent lower risk than cigarettes.
>
> It seeks to marginalise the industry and innovation behind these products, and encourages forms of regulation – including outright bans on the products and total bans on advertising – that would have the obvious effect of protecting conventional cigarettes from competition from far less dangerous products. If implemented these measures would reduce the likelihood that people will switch to lower risk products and so cause more smoking and disease than would otherwise be the case.
>
> It views electronic nicotine delivery systems (ENDS) as part of the problem, but in reality they are part of the solution – and the widespread uptake of these products is essential if there is to be any hope of meeting the commitment to reducing tobacco consumption by 30 per cent by 2025 (UN commitments on reducing non-communicable disease).

The question needs to be asked – is the WHO capable of getting that particular job done?

* *Professor Stimson is a signatory to the letter addressed to WHO Director General Margaret Chan by 53 leading scientists in May 2014 urging the WHO not to treat e-cigarette regulation in the same manner as traditional tobacco.*

For media contacts via here

About Knowledge-Action-Change

Knowledge-Action-Change is an independent organisation committed to the development and promotion of evidence-based policies and interventions in the field of substance use and related areas of public health and public policy. The organisational ethos is to link knowledge transfer and organisational development to achieve impact at relevant organisational, community, national and international levels.

www.kachange.eu

Update (not part of Professor Stimson's statement): Position on Electronic Nicotine Delivery Systems evolved (not 'improved'). Here are relevant texts:

1. The WHO ENDS Report FCTC/COP/6/10 published 26 August 2014. See para 36 for the principles that formed starting point for the final decision. See my critique and open letter and Framework Convention Alliance ENDS position for alternative views of the appropriate principles.

2. The amended version of the WHO ENDS report FCTC/COP/6/10 Rev.1 (significant change at para 52)

3. The Costs Rica proposed wording of a Decision on ENDS 14 Oct 2014

4. An amended version of the Cost Rica proposal for a Decision on ENDS 16 Oct 2014

5, Final language as agreed Decision on ENDS 18 October 2014