

21 January 2015

**Honourable Shri Jagat Prakash Nadda**  
**Union Minister of Health and Family Welfare**  
**Government of India**  
**New Delhi, India**

Honourable Minister:

On behalf of Framework Convention Alliance, I am writing to congratulate the Government of India for requiring that health warnings must cover 85 percent of the front and back of tobacco packages effective 1 April 2015. This improved measure demonstrates national and international leadership in the area of public health. These new, larger tobacco package health warnings will reduce tobacco use and, consequently, tobacco-caused disease and death. It has been demonstrated that picture health warnings are more effective than text-only warnings, especially for people who are illiterate. It has also been shown that the effectiveness of health warnings increases with size. The new Indian health warnings will provide an example for other countries in South Asia and worldwide.

The Canadian Cancer Society publishes an international report documenting country practices worldwide for package health warnings. Its most recent report indicated that Thailand had the largest package health warnings in the world at 85 percent of the package front and back. With the changes, India will have a new rank equal to that of Thailand, which has successfully implemented package health warnings with an 85 percent size since September 2014. India is in good company alongside Nepal from the region that has since increased the size of warnings on its tobacco packs from 75 to 90%.

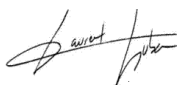
FCA notes that similar health warnings were first proposed in 2006, and they were vigorously opposed in and out of courts by the tobacco industry. The Government of India persevered until announcing the new measures last year. The tobacco industry will certainly object to the warnings, just as it does in every country that seeks to protect public health by implementing tobacco control measures. We recommend that the tobacco industry simply be ignored and that priority be given to the health of the Indian population. If countries such as Nepal, Thailand, Australia and Uruguay can implement similar size warnings (80 – 90 percent), there is no reason why India cannot as well.

FCA notes also that the new 85 percent sized warnings in India will apply to tobacco products generally, not just cigarettes. This is essential given the diversity of tobacco products on the Indian market.

The leadership by the Government of India is especially important given that your Government will host the seventh session of the Conference of the Parties to the WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (FCTC) in New Delhi in 2016.

The FCTC, the international tobacco control treaty, now has 180 Parties. The world will be coming to India to focus on key tobacco control issues, and will be eager to see first-hand the new Indian tobacco package health warnings.

Once again, congratulations for the impressive public health achievement of requiring new tobacco package health warnings, as of 1 April 2015.



Laurent Huber  
FCA Director