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WELTGESUNDHEITSORGANISATION
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Mr Irakli Kobakhidze
Speaker of the Parliament of Georgia
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Our reference:	KMA/yvk	Your reference:
Notre référence:		Votre référence:
Unser Zeichen:		Ihr Zeichen:
См. наш номер:		На Ваш номер:

Dear Sir,

On behalf of the WHO Regional Office for Europe, please allow me to congratulate you on your recent appointment as Speaker of the Parliament of Georgia.

First of all, I would like to avail myself of this opportunity to congratulate Georgia on the significant progress in the implementation of the Government's initiatives to move towards universal health coverage and to eliminate hepatitis C. The WHO Regional Office for Europe fully supports those initiatives and will continue to promote this important work in the future.

I would also like to acknowledge the continuous efforts of Georgia in tobacco control over the past years. Building on this legacy, I would like to stress the importance of the adoption of national legislation in line with the legal obligations under the WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (WHO FCTC), ratified by your country in 2006.

I count on your leadership and strong commitment to health in the upcoming debates on tobacco control legislative amendments initiated by the previous Parliament. The proposed revisions of the current policy would bring your national tobacco control legislation in line with the WHO FCTC and relevant European Union directives, contributing to your country's European integration process. Stronger tobacco control policies would also benefit the health of Georgian people as well as your economy. There is compelling evidence from the WHO European Region that implementation of strong tobacco control policies effectively protects adults and children from smoking initiation and tobacco-related harm, and also leads to healthier national budgets.

Tobacco use is the leading cause of premature death in the world and one of the most important behavioural risk factors. In the WHO European Region, tobacco use causes 1.6 million premature deaths yearly and 16% of all deaths in adults over 30 years of age are attributable to smoking.

Tobacco control is a primary entry point for achieving the global target of a 25% reduction in premature mortality from noncommunicable diseases by 2025. Strengthening the implementation of the WHO FCTC is also a key driver in achieving, by 2030, the health aims of the Sustainable Development Goals adopted by world leaders in September 2015 at the United Nations General Assembly.

The world cannot expect to meet its overarching health goals for the coming years without making meaningful progress in tobacco control.

I hope that the Parliament of Georgia under your visionary leadership will adopt the currently proposed amendments to tobacco control legislation in the coming months. The WHO Regional Office for Europe is fully committed to continuing its support to Georgia in this challenging endeavour, leading to the adoption and future implementation of strong tobacco control legislation, improving the health of the Georgian people and the national economy.

Yours very truly,



Dr Zsuzsanna Jakab
Regional Director

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