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Foundation for a Smoke-Free World has made substantial progress and is independent

Tess Legg and colleagues¹ make unsubstantiated claims about the Foundation for a Smoke-Free World's progress and independence. They cite disclosures made in our 2018 tax return² to suggest we are "struggling".¹ However, the authors' assessment disregards the substantial progress outlined in our Annual Report,³ which was released simultaneously with the tax return. The Foundation is where it was projected² to be when we launched in 2017.⁴

The tax return reflects our grant-issuance status as of December 2018, as required by law. The Annual Report shows that our Board, after review and support of our independent advisory boards, has approved over US\$130 million in research grants involving 130 researchers worldwide.³

Our grantees have published independent global reports on smoking cessation and the science of tobacco harm reduction. We have established a Center for Agricultural Transformation to address Malawi's debilitating tobacco dependence.⁵ We published results from a survey of 17000 people who smoke in 13 countries to guide communications to identify why people who smoke struggle to achieve their goal of quitting and means to help them achieve this goal. Our communications and legal costs from the first year are commensurate with building a foundation from scratch. These early start-up costs have shifted markedly to grant making this year.

Independence is a central tenet to the Foundation's success. Legg and colleagues¹ noted that Cohen and

Zeller's criteria are the gold standard for guiding acceptance of tobacco industry funding. In my 2017 viewpoint,⁴ I indicate that the Foundation has enshrined these principles in our core governance documents and legal structure. We are therefore independent of our funder. This isn't a claim, it is a legal, ethical, and non-negotiable fact.

DY is President of the Foundation for a Smoke-Free World, an independent, US nonprofit 501(c)(3) organization with the purpose of improving global health by ending smoking in this generation. The Foundation has received contributions from Philip Morris International (PMI) in 2018 and 2019 each in the amount of US\$80 million. PMI has pledged to contribute \$80 million annually for the next 10 years. The Foundation's Bylaws and Pledge Agreement, preclude DY, other Foundation staff, and board members from accepting any remuneration from PMI. PMI and the tobacco industry, generally, are precluded from having any control or influence over how the Foundation spends its funds or focuses its activities.

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- 1 Legg T, Peeters S, Chamberlain P, Gilmore, A. The Phillip Morris-funded Foundation for a Smoke-Free World: tax return sheds light on funding activities. *Lancet* 2019; **393**: 2487–88.
- 2 Foundation for a Smoke-Free World. 2018 annual tax return form 990-PF: return of private foundation. 2018. https://www.smokefreeworld.org/sites/default/files/uploads/documents/fsfw_2018_form_990-pf_public_inspection.pdf (accessed June 12, 2019).
- 3 Foundation for a Smoke-Free World. Annual report. 2018. <https://annualreport.smokefreeworld.org/> (accessed June 12, 2019).
- 4 Yach D. Foundation for a Smoke-Free World. *Lancet* 2017; **390**: 1807–10.
- 5 Foundation for a Smoke-Free World. News release: center for agricultural transformation in Malawi to help smallholder farmers diversify their livelihoods. 2019. <https://www.smokefreeworld.org/newsroom/center-agricultural-transformation-malawi-help-smallholder-farmers> (accessed June 12, 2019).