



The New Nicotine Challenge: Preventing a New Wave of Youth Addiction

Ministerial Roundtable at the Eleventh session of the Conference of the Parties to the WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control, hosted by Belgium

Date & time: Monday 17 November 2025 – 13:30–14:30 hrs. (CET)

Place: Geneva, International Conference Center (CICG, Plenary D)

Format: Open to the public and media – Livestreaming will be foreseen

Language: Interpretation will be provided in English, French and Spanish

1. Introduction

In recent years, the use of nicotine-containing products that do not involve tobacco combustion—such as e-cigarettes—has increased rapidly, particularly among adolescents and young adults. These products are often highly addictive, contain elevated levels of nicotine, are broadly commercially available, and are marketed – including on social media - in ways that appeal directly to youth through flavored variants, sleek designs, and colorful packaging.

Despite marketing claims, the evidence in respect of these products does not support the conclusion that they are effective for cessation at the population level. Instead, evidence is mounting regarding their harmful impact on public health, especially in initiating nicotine addiction among new generations.

Pursuant to Article 5.2(b) of the WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (FCTC), Parties have an obligation to adopt and implement measures to prevent and reduce nicotine addiction, and the World Health Organization has repeatedly underscored the urgency of comprehensive regulation of all nicotine products, not just traditional tobacco. In this context, there is a growing need for coordinated, future-oriented policy responses—especially in international frameworks such as the WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control.

By convening this ministerial roundtable, Belgium seeks to build international momentum for measures with proven effectiveness to implement the obligation in Article 5.2(b) of the WHO FCTC and to protect youth against this new wave of vaping and other nicotine products.

As stated by Dr Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, Director-General of WHO: “Without bold action, the global tobacco epidemic, already killing around 8 million people each year, will continue to be driven by addiction dressed up with appealing flavors.”



2. Agenda

13:30 – 13:38 | Welcome and Opening Remarks

Mr. Frank Vandenbroucke, Vice-prime minister and minister of social affairs and public health

Dr. Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, WHO Director-General

13:38 – 13:48 | Setting the Stage

- Update on the scientific evidence on the current situation and risks related to vaping and the use of other nicotine products.

Distinguished Professor Emily Banks (National Centre for Epidemiology and Population Health, Australian National University).

13:48 – 14:25 | Ministerial Panel Discussion

Ms. Imogen Foulkes, Moderator

Ms. Sandra Gallina, Director-General for Health and Food Safety, European Commission

Dr. Cristina Lustemberg, Minister of Public Health, Uruguay

14:25 – 14:30 | Conclusions and Next Steps

Mr. Frank Vandenbrouck