

Two Months Before COP11, Trinidad and Tobago Faces Historic Opportunity to Tackle Smoking Through Innovation

TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO, September 15, 2025 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Trinidad and Tobago is just two months ahead of the WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control's 11th Conference of the Parties (COP11) convenes in Geneva, and has an unprecedented opportunity to lead Caribbean nations in the fight against smoking, through championing innovation and not prohibition.

[At the moment](#), Trinidad and Tobago has an adult smoking prevalence of 19 percent, with 5.4 percent of all deaths being related to tobacco use, representing thousands of lives that could be saved annually. However, while the country undoubtedly faces a public health challenge tied to smoking, success stories from abroad demonstrate that reversing the landscape is possible with the right approach.

Amidst an European Union (EU) [struggling](#) with average smoking rates of 24 percent, Sweden stands out with a rate of just 5.3 percent. Considering that the EU has set 2040 as its target year to become smoke-free, Sweden is 15 years ahead of schedule. The Scandinavian country's good results are based on the [Triple-A Innovation](#) approach, which makes sure innovative nicotine products are accessible, acceptable, and affordable, so that smokers can seek alternatives to cigarettes. This approach has a significant impact in public health, as Sweden reports 21.2 percent fewer smoking-related deaths, 36 percent fewer lung cancer deaths, and 31.3 percent fewer total cancer deaths when compared to EU averages.

At the latest Conference of the Parties (COP10), many States called out for evidence-based references to harm reduction and smokeless alternatives, including New Zealand, the Philippines, Guyana and Saint Kitts and Nevis, which advocated for a Working Group on tobacco harm reduction. Considering the already existing Caribbean support, Trinidad and Tobago has the chance to lead regional efforts to combat smoking through a blend of traditional and innovation-oriented measures.

Federico N. Fernández, the CEO of We Are Innovation, a global network that works on the topic of innovation in nicotine, comments, "The stakes could not be higher for Trinidad and Tobago. The 5.4 percent of deaths attributable to smoking demand bold leadership that builds on existing Caribbean support from nations like Saint Kitts and Nevis and Guyana."

Tania Rak, the COO of We Are Innovation, says "Innovation should be treated as an ally, not a threat enemy. Focusing on evidence-based approaches that blend innovation with traditional measures is the key to accelerate the timeline while saving lives."

At COP11, Prime Minister Kamla Persad-Bissessar, has the choice between stagnation and innovation. Sweden had the same choice years ago, chose to embrace innovation, and the results are in sight. Trinidad and Tobago has the opportunity to lead the Caribbean towards a smoke-free future with extremely positive consequences for public health. The earlier action is taken, the better.

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ABOUT WE ARE INNOVATION

We Are Innovation is a dynamic network of individuals and institutions who fervently believe in the power of innovation to drive progress and solve the world's most pressing problems. With a global presence encompassing over 50 think tanks, foundations, and NGOs, We Are Innovation represents the diverse voices of a global civil society committed to advancing human creativity, embracing new technologies, and promoting innovative solutions. Through our collaborative approach and cutting-edge expertise, we are spearheading transformative change on a global scale. To learn more about our work, visit us at <https://weareinnovation.global/>

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