



Press Release

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British American Tobacco Nigeria Expresses Commitment to Tobacco Harm Reduction

The World No Tobacco Day is an annual occasion marked on the 31st of May. It is the initiative of the World Health Organisation (WHO), with the intention to draw the attention of the global community to the health risks associated with tobacco use and advocate for effective policies to reduce tobacco consumption.

'Tobacco and Cardiovascular Diseases,' which is the theme of the 2018 World No Tobacco Day, highlights the link between cardiovascular diseases and unhealthy diet, obesity, smoking and lack of exercise.

Aware of these risks, the tobacco industry has, for about 50 years, intensified research on ways to make tobacco products safer for adult consumers, protect the environment while ensuring that human and social capital costs are sustainable and productive. The concept of tobacco harm reduction remains a top agenda of the industry and has been vigorously explored.

In this regard, British American Tobacco Nigeria (BATN) has restated a commitment to its advocacy for safer alternatives to tobacco. Freddy Messanvi, Legal and External Affairs Director, BATN, noted that "e-cigarettes are a natural extension of our desired destination in harm reduction. This would represent a breakthrough and transformation of our industry as it produces vaporised nicotine without the harmful side effects from tobacco smoke."

Messanvi added that, "as a responsible organisation, we will continue to abide by all the laws of the countries we operate in and will constantly explore safer and new offerings to consumers as our commitment to tobacco harm reduction."

There are few products, which are the outcomes of years of extensive research by tobacco companies into safer alternatives to cigarettes, such as the propellant-based nicotine delivery, heat-not-burn products, e-cigarettes, etc. Perhaps, most prominent among them are e-cigarettes. E-cigarettes provide developing evidence in support of tobacco harm reduction.

There is no doubt that e-cigarettes are way safer than regular cigarettes. More importantly, long-term smokers can use them as a substitute for traditional cigarettes to help in quitting the habit or, at least, switch to a less risky alternative.

Health experts and medical research findings have affirmed the much-reduced risk potential involved in the use of e-cigarettes. In a written submission to the United Kingdom House of Commons inquiry on e-cigarettes, which examined the impact of electronic cigarettes on human health, Charity Cancer Research in the UK highlighted the benefits of e-cigarettes.

The Charity noted that: “e-cigarettes are almost certainly far safer than smoking, as they do not contain tobacco.” This inquiry followed a 2015 review published by Public Health England suggesting that vaping was around 95% less harmful than smoking tobacco.

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