

Brazilian Senate Urged to Approve Global Anti-Tobacco Accord

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Friday, 08 April 2005

The Brazilian Clinical Oncology Society (SBOC), the São Paulo regional chapter of the SBOC, the Support Union for Combatting Breast Cancer (UNACCAM), and the Cancer Patient Support Nucleus (NAPACAM) issued an "Open Letter to Brazilian Senators" today, World Anti-Cancer Day.

The letter expresses concern over the Senate's delay in voting Brazil's participation in the Tobacco Control Framework Convention, an international treaty that took effect officially on February 27, 2005, to combat and reduce smoking.

"While around 200,000 Brazilians die every year as a result of tobacco-related diseases, the Framework Convention remains under wraps," the text reports.

"So far 51 countries have ratified the agreement, which needed only 40 to go into effect. Among them are some of the world's major tobacco producers, such as India and Turkey.

"By not ratifying the Framework Convention, Brazil is turning its back on the health of its citizens, allowing tobacco to continue to damage and kill millions of people in the years to come."

The treaty is linked to the World Health Organization (WHO), which is attempting to formulate and apply measures to reduce tobacco production and consumption around the world.

Brazil took part in the drafting of the Framework Convention proposal but has still not ratified the agreement, because the project has yet to be discussed and approved by the Senate.

In the text the SBOC asks the Senators to give urgent attention to approving the Framework Convention, "since it represents an unparalleled opportunity for us to initiate a great process aimed at preventing unnecessary deaths, caused by a kind of slow and subtle war in which millions of people are induced, from the time they are children, into consuming a product that, for the sake of a momentary pleasure, brings a long process of dependence, leaving only pain and suffering for the whole of humanity."

Agência Brasil