



Contacts:

Chris Martin

Vice President, Public Relations

CMartin@DavidJamesGroup.com | 630-670-2745

Becky Bunn, MSc

IASLC Project Specialist

Becky.Bunn@IASLC.org | 720-254-9509

**The International Association for the Study of Lung Cancer (IASLC) Welcomes Uruguayan President
at Annual Conference**

Tabaré Vázquez Discusses Successful Tobacco Control Efforts in Uruguay

VIENNA, AUSTRIA (Dec. 5, 2016) – Uruguayan President and oncologist, Tabaré Vázquez, joined his peers today in Vienna at the IASLC 17th World Conference on Lung Cancer (WCLC) to discuss tobacco control efforts and progress in Uruguay – measures that instigated a futile law suit by Philip Morris International.

“People need to be given the tools they need to fight against this disease,” Dr. Vázquez said during a press briefing on global tobacco control measures held at the IASLC meeting in Vienna, Austria today. “That is why I consider that this activity, here in Vienna, is of paramount importance for the fight against lung cancer.”

Vázquez helped initiate tobacco control measures in Uruguay during his first term in office from 2005 to 2010, starting with a ban on smoking in public spaces – the first Latin American country to do so. Additional legislation followed, including higher taxes on tobacco products, a ban on the use of the words “light” and “mild” on cigarette packages, and a requirement that firms include large warnings and graphic images on cigarette packages. The tobacco control measures have been associated with a substantial decrease in tobacco use. From 2005 to 2011, per-person consumption of cigarettes in Uruguay decreased by 4.3 percent per year, while increasing in neighboring countries.¹

“As tobacco is an addicting product, despite the reduction of the percentage of consumers and of sales, the State collected significantly more due to tobacco taxes,” explained Dr. Vázquez. “It is often difficult to convince governments to accept a reduction of their tax revenues. However, there is an element known internationally that spending on the therapy of tobacco-induced diseases is much higher than the money that comes in through tobacco taxes. The taxes applied to the sale of tobacco contribute to State treasuries and improves the countries’ expenditures.”

He explains, in 2004, Uruguay collected 84 million dollars, and in 2011, after raising taxes, Uruguay collected 318 million dollars. Uruguay has been “earning” at least 100 million dollars each year derived from its tobacco taxation policy.

“Tobacco control has been a “win-win” situation, in terms of health, which is the key benefit – but also economically,” Dr. Vázquez said.



www.iaslc.org

Philip Morris International sought compensation with a law suit against Uruguay, claiming economic damages caused by the anti-smoking legislation. The World Bank's International Centre for Settlement of Investment Disputes (ICSID) ruled in favor of Uruguay on July 8, 2016, and ordered the tobacco company to pay Uruguay \$7 million to cover administrative fees and expenses. This suit was one of other similar suits against countries including Togo and Australia, [a topic of discussion on a 2015 episode of Last Week Tonight with John Oliver](#).

"Mr. Vázquez has made commendable strides in regulating tobacco in Uruguay," said Fred R. Hirsch, MD, PhD, Professor of Medicine and Pathology at the University of Colorado Cancer Center and School of Medicine, and CEO of the IASLC. "Legislation like that invoked by Mr. Vázquez coupled with scientific advances in research will be critical in the fight against lung cancer. We're happy to welcome him here in Vienna at the IASLC 17th WCLC to hear about the impact he's made and to discuss how we can continue to replicate his success globally."

During the press briefing, Dr. Vázquez explained, "I think there is no further objective and scientific evidence than what I have said to prove that tobacco is detrimental to health and is causing an international epidemic that we all have to fight against. Besides the harm that is done to the health and lives of people, in our countries we have to think about the enormous damages to finances. If we can avoid these diseases by simply not smoking, all the money that is spared from that can be used for better education and health progress."

To view a recording of the press briefing, visit <http://wclc2016.iaslc.org/live-stream/>.

About the WCLC:

The WCLC is the world's largest meeting dedicated to lung cancer and other thoracic malignancies, attracting more than 6,000 researchers, physicians, and specialists from more than 100 countries. The goal is to increase awareness, collaboration, and understanding of lung cancer, and to help participants implement the latest developments across the globe. Organized under the theme of "Together Against Lung Cancer," the conference will cover a wide range of disciplines and unveil several research studies and clinical trial results. For more information, visit <http://wclc2016.iaslc.org/>.

About the IASLC:

The International Association for the Study of Lung Cancer (IASLC) is the only global organization dedicated to the study of lung cancer. Founded in 1974, the association's membership includes more than 5,000 lung cancer specialists in over 100 countries. Visit www.iaslc.org for more information.

###

ⁱ http://www.tobaccofreekids.org/tobacco_unfiltered/post/2012_09_18_uruguay

