Republic of the Philippines
House of Representatives
Quezon City, Metro Manila

HON. JOSE T. PANGANIBAN, JR., CPA, Llb.
Representative, ANAC-IP Partylist

January 17, 2018

MR. LIANG ENG HWA
Chairperson
Government Parliamentary Committee
Finance and Trade and Industry
Parliament of Singapore

Email: liang_eng_hwa@singnet.com.sg
Subject: Proposed Standardized Packaging of Tobacco Products for Singapore

Dear Chairperson Liang Eng Hwa,

I respectfully write in my capacity as Chairperson of the Committee on Agriculture and Food of the Philippine House of Representatives.

The House of Representatives Committee on Agriculture oversees matters relating to agricultural production, agricultural research and technology, agricultural education, and crop production. Its mandate is to propose legislation geared towards the improvement of the country's agricultural production as well as the development of the Philippine agricultural industry.

Tobacco is a vital agricultural crop in the Philippines. The livelihood of at least 2.7 Million Filipinos, primarily tobacco farmers and growers, depend on it.

Recently, It has come to my knowledge that a recent parliamentary debate in Singapore, which took place last November 2017, indicated that Singapore intends to hold public consultation regarding the proposed implementation of standardized packaging for tobacco products by this year.

Given that the said proposal will directly impact Philippine tobacco exports to Singapore, which ultimately will also negatively impact the livelihood of Philippine tobacco farmers, I would like to take this opportunity to express my serious concerns on such proposal.

Batasan Office: House of Representatives, SW Rm. 519
Batasan Hills, Quezon City
Tel. No. 931-5001 loc. 7297 Telefax: 931-6055

Manila Office: ANAC-IP Partylist National Headquarters
No. 6 Road 7, Pag-asa, Quezon City
Tel No. 02 398-9908/ 928-7926

While I fully respect Singapore's public health objective to reduce smoking incidence, I believe that there are many alternatives to achieve this without running contrary to international trade rules and disrupting the free flow of trade under international law. For example and as you may be aware, many countries have opted out of the standardized packaging approach given the unintended consequence of facilitating illicit trade and instead adopted larger health warnings for tobacco products.

As the Philippines hands-over the ASEAN Chairmanship to Singapore, I remain hopeful that we can continue to strengthen our regional trade partnership and support the livelihood of Philippine farmers by promoting a regional trade framework that facilitates trade and minimizes barriers for the same.

I hope that my concerns herein will warrant your consideration.

Thank you very much.

Sincerely Yours,

JOSE T. PANGANIBAN, JR.

Chairman: Agriculture and Food
Co-Chairperson: Congressional Oversight Committee on Agriculture and Fisheries Modernization
Vice Chairman: Cultural Communities and Indigenous People
Member: Games and Amusements • Good Government and Public Accountability • Natural Resources • Public Works and Highways • Transportation • North Luzon Growth Quadrangle • West Philippine Sea

Batasan Office: House of Representatives, SW Rm. 519
Batasan Hills, Quezon City
Tel. No. 931-5001 loc. 7297 Telefax: 931-6055

Manila Office: ANAC-IP Partylist National Headquarters
No. 6 Road 7, Pag-asa, Quezon City
Tel No. 02 398-9908/ 928-7926