

COP9 BULLETIN

MONDAY, 8 NOVEMBER, 2021



Global Tobacco Industry Interference Index 2021



NEW! THE GLOBAL TOBACCO INDUSTRY INTERFERENCE INDEX 2021

Parties cite industry interference as a main barrier to FCTC implementation. Tobacco Industry interference must be exposed and governments held accountable to their obligations to protect policy. Last week STOP published the **Global Tobacco Industry Interference Index 2021**, using civil society reports from 80 countries to analyze government efforts according to a set of key indicators. It reveals the industry found opportunity to build influence during the pandemic. Every country was affected and several afforded the industry favourable policy decisions, including tax breaks. Recommendations include a whole-of-government application of Article 5.3, banning industry CSR, improving transparency and constant vigilance.

COVID-19: A HURDLE FOR GLOBAL TOBACCO CONTROL, BUT ONE WE CAN OVERCOME

The COVID-19 pandemic has been a major disruptor in global public health and is continuing to have significant, long-lasting effects on the social and economic environments in which we live and work. At the same time, tobacco use kills over 8 million people worldwide each year – a slow moving pandemic in itself – imposing enormous health and economic costs on society and severely exacerbating the challenges governments face as they seek to address the health and economic costs of the COVID-19 pandemic. Annually, tobacco use costs the world's economies more than US\$ 1.4 trillion in health care expenditures and lost productivity.

Before the COVID-19 pandemic emerged, the world was already well off-track in terms of meeting agreed targets to accelerate FCTC implementation. A 2019 analysis found that only 32 countries are on track to achieve the globally agreed-upon goal of reducing tobacco use by 30% by 2025. And while implementation of the FCTC continued to modestly improve in the 2018–2020 period for most of the WHO FCTC Articles, there is still a great need for Parties to address many of the Articles in a more comprehensive manner.

While COP9 was originally slated for 2020, those plans changed rapidly as the pandemic continued to sweep across the globe. So here we are now, 3 years after COP8, participating in COP9 virtually with an abridged agenda. The ongoing COVID-19 pandemic has imposed many restrictions on the ways we all work, including on how COP9 will be run. For example, the agenda is to be adopted, exceptionally, through a COP decision which includes not only agenda adoption but also adopting the recommendations of the Bureau to defer certain items to COP10 and to note reports under certain items and defer related substantive discussions to COP10.

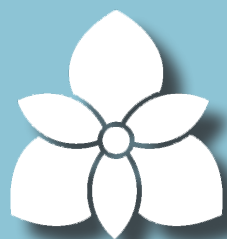
Although substantive discussions will be deferred to an in-person COP10, and rightly so, we still need to ensure that the key administrative issues are taken care of to enable the work of the COP to continue. The two items up for discussion at COP9 are time sensitive and of high importance: the budget and workplan, setting out the key priorities for FCTC activities in coming years, and the investment fund. The proposed investment fund represents a significant opportunity to help fund the COP budget at a time when increased financial resources are required to accelerate implementation and to provide Parties, especially in low- and middle-income countries, the assistance they need.

We must remember that FCTC implementation needs to happen daily and not just around the COP – agreeing on the investment fund and the budget and workplan will facilitate this work. While no one expects the abridged agenda of COP9, by itself, to put an immediate end to the epidemic of tobacco-caused death, we should all be aware of the heavy responsibility on our collective shoulders. We must focus on the key decision items without delay.

We still have a lot of work to do at COP9 and we need all hands on the virtual deck to ensure key items are adopted and complex issues are deferred to COP10 when we can devote the required time in-person to address such topics fully in pursuit of FCTC implementation.

WATCH THIS SPACE!

We will be looking out for nominees for the Orchid and Dirty Ashtray awards daily. You can nominate Parties throughout the day for either award through your FCA Regional Lead. Nominees will be compiled daily and voted on by members of the FCA COP listserv after the daily session ends.



ORCHID AWARD

STRATEGIC APPROACH TO THE
TREATY AND ITS
IMPLEMENTATION



DIRTY ASHTRAY

PARTIES ACTING ON BEHALF OF
BIG TOBACCO AND OTHER BAD
BEHAVIOUR

MAKING PROGRESS ON FCTC IMPLEMENTATION

Sara Rose Taylor, Framework Convention Alliance

The ninth edition of the Global Progress Report on Implementation of the WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control was released last week. This report, based mainly on information submitted by Parties via the national reporting system, provides the tobacco control community with key observations and trends in FCTC implementation. Globally, we saw modest improvements in the 2018-2020 period for most of the FCTC articles but there is more work to be done.

“ **WITH THIS DATA AS A STARTING POINT, WE CAN DETERMINE AREAS WHERE WE NEED TO MAKE PROGRESS IN THE NEXT FEW YEARS IN ORDER TO TRULY ACCELERATE TOBACCO CONTROL.** ”

This year's edition also includes a few new components, including a section on the Global Strategy indicators. The indicator data in this report provides a baseline against which to measure Global Strategy progress from now to 2025. With this data as a starting point, we can determine areas where we need to make progress in the next few

years in order to truly accelerate tobacco control.

One of the 20 Global Strategy indicators measures the number of Parties that include civil society participation in the development and implementation of national tobacco control approaches. According to the Global Progress Report, 148 Parties included civil society participation in implementing Article 12, referring to programmes on education, communication, training, and public awareness. FCA also supported the Convention Secretariat with gathering data on civil society participation in implementing all FCTC articles, finding that 137 Parties included civil society in national tobacco control programs. Although this finding was not included in the report, it is important to note.

In gathering this data, FCA also took the opportunity to gather additional information on the types of civil society engagement. We wanted to know how many governments meaningfully engaged with civil society, not just doing so to check a task off of their to do lists. We gathered additional data on 86 countries and found that engagement most commonly meant meetings (95%) and consultations (80%) with civil society for feedback, with fewer countries working in partnership (67%) or including CSOs in national program rollout (64%) or review (60%).

As the FCTC itself notes, NGOs and other civil society actors have contributions to make to national and

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international tobacco control efforts. Civil society involvement is crucial in successful tobacco control efforts, including in our work to raise awareness, support strong policy positions, collect and disseminate valuable data, monitor the industry, and provide programs and services.

Truly effective tobacco control efforts incorporate these CSO activities in a comprehensive, multifaceted approach. We encourage Parties, both during and outside of COP, to think about how to better include civil society in their FCTC implementation efforts.

