

Jordan

Overall score:

77

Summary of Findings

1. Industry participation in policy development

There is still no law that limits the presence of tobacco companies and excludes them during developing or regulating tobacco products in Jordan. Tobacco companies are part of the Jordan Standards and Metrology Organization (JSMO) committee, which is responsible for the standards and technical regulations of tobacco products (Jordan Standards and Metrology Organization, 2019c, 2019d).

Following our first report, we noticed no change in the relations of Jordan Restaurant Association (JRA) and the Ministry of Tourism (MOT) board, which drafted the law on inspection of touristic establishments forbidding any public health law inspection without JRA and MOT being present (Ministry of Tourism, 2015). Because the government approves tobacco industry interactions and accepts, supports or endorses policy or legislation drafted by or in collaboration with the tobacco industry (Al Zawawi, 2019), and have a permanent tobacco industry committee related to standards and technical regulations, the opportunity for the tobacco industry to increase its influence on policy has increased (Jordan Standards and Metrology Organization, 2017a, 2017b, 2019c, 2019d).

2. Industry CSR activities

Circulated bans from the Minister of Health to all government institutions (Ministry of Health, 2019a), and the prime minister to all educational institutions to ban any form of interactions with tobacco companies, including accepting funds/support from the tobacco industry in line with the government adaptation of WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (FCTC) Article 5.3, were issued. In spite of that, tobacco companies

continue to participate in community CSR activities and provide their support through local charities/NGOs (Kolona Al Urdon Society, 2019), targeting youth through their collage funds/training initiatives (El-Eqbal Investments, 2019) and internship programs (Philip Morris International, 2019).

3. Benefits to the industry

The government of Jordan still accommodates requests from the tobacco industry for a longer implementation period of the law as separation measurements in restaurants are still in force, as well as the postponement of banning indoor waterpipe usage in restaurants and cafes. We recorded in this report benefits given to tobacco companies, such as advertisement platforms on Duty Free shops and online platforms (Jordanian Duty Free Shops, 2020b).

4. Unnecessary interaction

Government officials are unnecessarily engaging with tobacco companies, with one such example involving Japan Tobacco International (JTI) receiving the Environmental Stewardship Award from the Ministry of Environment and the World Bank for its usage of direct Solar Steam Generation in its tobacco factory in Amman, Jordan (Japan Tobacco International, 2020).

5. Transparency

The government of Jordan and other agencies do not publicly disclose meetings/ interactions with the tobacco industry. It is worth noting this since the code of conduct for ministers (Prime Ministry of Jordan, 2018) and governmental workers (Ministry of Public Sector Development, 2013) calls for them to disclose any conflict of interest or previous work with the industry. However, this doesn't apply to parliamentarians (House of Representatives of Jordan, 2015).

6. Conflict of interest

There is no evidence that the government prohibits contributions from the tobacco industry to political parties, candidates or campaigns, nor is there a law that prohibits government officials and relatives from holding positions in tobacco companies. As a result, some of the house of representative members and ministers have shares in tobacco companies, or own restaurants that serve tobacco products (waterpipes) (Al Zawawi, 2019). Additionally, the husband of the Director General of a leading health institute in Jordan holds a consultancy position at a leading tobacco company, (Jordan Standards and Metrology Organization, 2019c, 2019d).

In March 2019, the trial on fake-brand cigarette cases began in Jordan: 29 former officials and businesspersons, including a former minister, were called for questioning at the country's state security court (Andrews, 2019). They are accused of organizing, manufacturing, and importing fake brand cigarettes, which cost the government an estimated \$200 million in lost fees and taxes (Kamal, 2018).

7. Preventive measures

The Minister of Health made the decision to ban all forms of sponsorship activities, including CSR of the tobacco industry, with the government. This decision was shared with all governmental agencies (Ministry of Health, 2019a). The Ministry of Health (MOH), in collaboration with WHO, has conducted several awareness and policy activities, including workshops on pictorial health warnings, a ban on smoking indoors, as well as initiated a draft for the new public health law (Jordan Times, 2019a; Ministry of Health, 2019b). To reduce shisha consumption, no new licenses were issued to cafes and restaurants as of 2017 (Prime Ministry of Jordan, 2017). The MOH drafted FCTC Article 5.3 guidelines, which have yet to be adopted.

Recommendations

1. Disallow participation of the tobacco industry and its front groups in policymaking committees.
2. Develop laws and regulations that demand transparency in all meetings and interactions between government agencies with the industry.
3. Ban all tobacco industry CSR activities.
4. Push the implementation of FCTC Article 5.3 through conducting workshops and awareness sessions, circulating instructions to all governmental institutions, prohibiting acceptance of any support, including gifts or sponsorship from the tobacco industry, and prohibiting any form of unnecessary interaction.