

Ghana



Summary of Findings

1. INDUSTRY PARTICIPATION IN POLICY DEVELOPMENT

Harm Reduction Alliance of Ghana (HRAG), a tobacco industry (TI)-allied organization, was invited to participate in the stakeholders' engagement on the Narcotics Control Bill by the Chairman of the Committee on Defense and Interior of the Ghanaian Parliament. One of the key objectives of the HRAG is to advocate to the government to provide access to products that provide an alternative and less risky alternative to smoking. The industry achieved its goal when the Minister of Finance announced a proposal to tax e-cigarettes in the 2023 Budget. The government played into the TI's hands by interacting with a group linked to the industry.

2. INDUSTRY CSR ACTIVITIES

CSR activities are conducted mainly through industry-linked front organizations. For example the Atlas Network, a group affiliated with the TI, sponsored the YouOpportunity Summit and through educational institution collaboration projects such as the Ghana Inter-University Liberty Economic Challenge. The Atlas Network also supported the Africa Centre for Entrepreneurship and Youth Empowerment, a policy think tank with scholars' clubs in all Ghanaian university campuses dedicated to promoting entrepreneurship and free markets.

3. BENEFITS TO THE INDUSTRY

During the passage of the excise Duty Amendment Bill 2022 the American Chamber of Commerce Ghana petitioned the Parliament to sanction broader consultation with the industry for a downward review of the excise duty to boost investor interest, protect jobs, and ensure consistent and steady revenue flows to the government.

The law was introduced in Parliament on 24 November 2022, and passed on 31 March 2023, despite resistance from several members of Parliament.

International travelers are allowed to import 200 cigarettes or 100 cigarillos or 50 cigars, or 250 grams of tobacco into the country duty-free. This also constitutes a huge benefit to the TI.

4. UNNECESSARY INTERACTION

BAT West Central and African Markets reported that the TI has been collaborating with the government on corporate development strategy for BAT Ghana and that the government has demonstrated willingness to comply with the Trade Bloc recommendations if it is free of revenue loss to the country. Strategically, the TI hides behind the Trade Bloc to undermine tobacco control policy and expand its market reach, which will eventually increase consumption and prevalence of tobacco use.

5. TRANSPARENCY

Tobacco Control Regulations ensure the registration of industry entities and provide public records on the same, but there is no detailed official disclosure on engagements between government and these entities- although there is reported evidence. A regulatory instrument should be instituted to obligate the government to officially share details of meetings and interactions with the industry to the public.

6. CONFLICT OF INTEREST

A review of current and former government officials reveals a link between some officials and the TI. Mr. Samuel Dentu, who is the current Deputy CEO of the Ghana Export Promotion Authority was previously the Head of Finance



BAT in Ghana. Mr. Edward Prince Amoati Younge, Executive Director of Sales and Marketing at Target Link Company Limited, who earlier worked as Head of Trade Marketing and Distribution at BAT Ghana, was appointed a board member of the Ghana Commercial Bank from 2019 to the end of 2021. Throughout his tenure as a board member he kept his role at Target Link Ghana Limited. Samuel Cudjoe Hanu is an addiction specialist and currently the head of research with the Ghana Mental Health Authority. He is also the Director of the HRAG, a CSO that is linked to the TI and promoted the adoption of policies on harm reduction products such as e-cigarettes as a public health strategy.

7. PREVENTIVE MEASURES

The absence of an official document related to WHO FCTC Article 5.3 has caused regulatory and enforcement deficits; a situation that has also exposed agencies, officials and their close relations to the negative advances and manipulations of the TI. This prevailing condition undermines national tobacco control and incentivizes TI interference. Government must work with VALD Ghana and other stakeholders to develop and enforce a regulatory document to prevent TI interference.

Recommendations

1. Support evidence-based policies and place a high priority on surveillance and monitoring of TI operations nationwide.
2. The Ministry of Health needs to collaborate closely with CSOs and other stakeholders not linked to the industry, to draft a code of conduct as soon as possible to govern how public officials interact with the TI. The development and implementation of the code of conduct will prevent unnecessary encounters between government representatives and the TI.
3. Ban all tobacco-related CSR activities and direct the TI to publicly report or declare its CSR initiatives. This information is unavailable in the public domain.
4. Require the TI to publicly disclose on the website their activities, including market shares, revenue, and profits, tax exemptions, and any privileges they receive. Similarly, government officials should be mandated to publicly make available information on their interactions with the TI.
5. Require the Ministry of Finance to conduct frequent price checks on tobacco products and to limit the pricing and accessibility of tobacco products.
6. The importance of the media in augmenting the actions of a few CSOs, such as VALD-Ghana, in projecting and spotlighting the operations of the TI, their interference, and overall harm to the people must be emphasized. The media's role should be recognized and enhanced towards comprehensive implementation of the WHO FCTC standards as well as the enforcement of local laws such as tariff increases and other tobacco control measures.