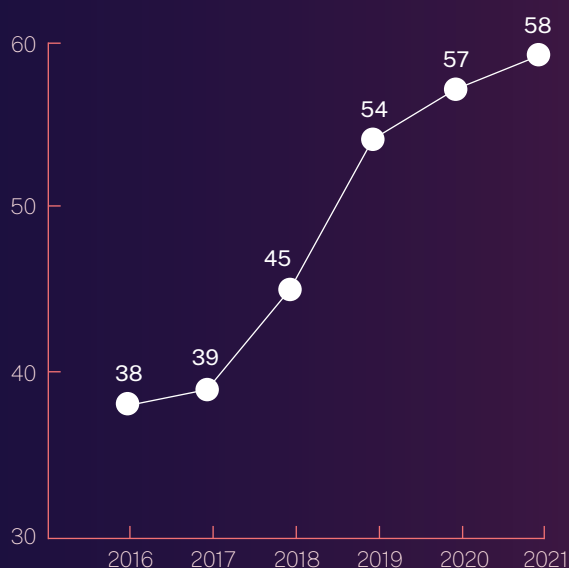


TOBACCO INDUSTRY EXPLOITATION OF COVID-19 FOR PROFIT

Findings from the 2021 Tobacco Industry Interference Index:
The Philippine Report on the Implementation of Article 5.3
of the WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (FCTC)

Tobacco Industry Interference:
Subverting public health amid a pandemic

The Philippines' score in the Index has risen steadily throughout the years, with the most significant increases from 2017 to 2019.



The increase of the Philippines' score over time on Tobacco Industry Indices indicates higher levels of tobacco industry interference.

EXPLOITATION

The tobacco industry took advantage of the COVID-19 crisis by, among others:



Pushing for vapes, e-vapor products, and heated tobacco products



Donating medical equipment and supplies to hospitals



Partnering with government agencies, local governments



Providing food, and rapid test kits to communities

These are donations and sponsorships are prohibited in DOH Administrative Order 2021-0022, DOH Memorandum 2020-0156, and CSC-DOH Joint Memorandum Circular 2010-01, and many other FCTC-compliant policies in the Philippines.

The eighth Tobacco Industry Interference (TII) Index Report reviews the implementation of the Philippines of Article 5.3 of the WHO FCTC. Read the full report by scanning the QR code:



bit.ly/2021TII_Index



FCTC

WHO FRAMEWORK CONVENTION ON TOBACCO CONTROL

A GLOBAL SOLUTION TO THE TOBACCO PANDEMIC

WHO FCTC Article 5.3 aims to protect strong tobacco control policies from the harmful influence of the tobacco industry. Specifically, Article 5.3 legally obligates Parties to the treaty “to protect their public health policies related to tobacco control from commercial and other vested interests of the tobacco industry.”

EXPLOITERS ARE NOT “GOOD SAMARITANS”

The WHO and governments around the globe have long recognized the need to protect public health from the tobacco industry. In 2020, tobacco companies continued to their strategy of building positive public perceptions while:



Lobbying for lower tax rates on e-cigarettes and HTPs and pushing for their lax regulations



Getting special exemptions from the government to keep their factories open and continue the manufacture and distribution of cigarettes

Even amid a global pandemic, the tobacco industry quickly adapts its methods and tactics to protect their deadly business. The 2021 TII Index shows us that we can collectively safeguard public health by monitoring, mapping, and exposing tobacco industry interference to better detect and counter the industry's actions.

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EXAMPLES OF TOBACCO INDUSTRY INTERFERENCE IN 2020

**This is not an exhaustive list. The 2021 TII Index provides a broader range of examples of tobacco industry tactics amid the pandemic.*

MANEUVERING TO HIJACK POLITICAL AND LEGISLATIVE PROCESSES



PMFTC launched IQOS in Manila in 2020 while simultaneously lobbying for a bill that is favorable to e-cigarettes or vapor products



Members of Congress questioned the Food and Drug Administration and other government agencies implementing tobacco control policies for receiving funding support from Bloomberg Philanthropies

FAKE CSR ACTIVITIES INCLUDE GIFTS AND DONATIONS TO GOVERNMENT AGENCIES

Tobacco companies continued conducting their so-called corporate social responsibility activities directly through their companies, foundations, or by courting it through other organizations.



Philip Morris Fortune Tobacco Corporation (PMFTC), through its CSR arm, Embrace, partners mainly with Jaime V. Ongpin Foundation Inc. (JVOFI) to conduct 34 out of the 36 monitored industry donations or so-called CSR activities in 2020



A Senator has observed that the tobacco industry styled themselves "as vaccine developer and donor of personal protective equipment (PPEs) but they have, in fact, tried to get tax privileges and exemptions from quarantine rules for their supply chains."

RECOMMENDATIONS

The tobacco industry should NOT be part of pandemic management and response.

There is a *fundamental and irreconcilable conflict between the tobacco industry's interests and public health policy interests*. Allowing tobacco companies to participate in government measures designed primarily to regulate them is a threat to public health. It shows a clear conflict of interest in violation of Article 5.3 of the WHO FCTC.

URGENTLY PROTECT THE CSC DOH JMC 2010-01 AND STRENGTHEN ITS IMPLEMENTATION



The Philippines is regarded as one of the world's pioneers in implementing the Article 5.3 Guidelines, with the JMC serving as a best practice. Protecting the JMC means protecting public health.

ALIGN POLICIES WITH ART. 5.3 OF THE WHO FCTC



The government cannot view the tobacco industry as a stakeholder to be invited to attend legislative hearings and government meetings on proposed public health policies. The upcoming 2022 elections in the Philippines require us to be collectively on our guard regarding conflicts of interest and prohibited campaign contributions from the tobacco industry.

REVIEW COMMUNICATION STRATEGIES ON RAISING AWARENESS ON TOBACCO INDUSTRY INTERFERENCE



The 2021 TII Index showed that the pandemic year involved an escalation of tactics. We all have a role to play in engaging with agencies, organizations, or government officials to inform or remind them of WHO FCTC Article 5.3 and the CSC-DOH JMC.

FIGHT FOR PUBLIC HEALTH AND CHALLENGE THE TOBACCO INDUSTRY'S EXPLOITATION OF THE COVID-19 CRISIS AND OTHER EMERGENCIES FOR PROFIT

Scan to read the report

