

Latin America and the Caribbean Face Increasing Tobacco Industry Interference, Warns New Regional Index

Region of the Americas, November 11, 2025. According to the 2023–2025 *Regional Tobacco Industry Interference Index*, Latin America and the Caribbean are facing a rise in tobacco industry interference—a concern for civil society representatives as the *Eleventh Session of the Conference of the Parties (COP11) to the WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (WHO FCTC)*¹ approaches.

The *2023–2025 Regional Tobacco Industry Interference Index*—released on the eve of deliberations of the global public health treaty—reveals that in 11 countries across the region, interference increased between 2023 and 2025, threatening progress in reducing tobacco use and protecting the health of millions of people.



Latin America and the Caribbean Regional Tobacco Industry Interference

Index 2025

Fourth Edition

A Concerning Trend

This civil society study, based on publicly available information, assesses how governments are implementing the guidelines of Article 5.3 of the WHO FCTC, which obliges Parties to protect public health policies from the commercial and vested interests of the tobacco industry². The results show an uneven trend: while some countries are strengthening transparency mechanisms, others are backsliding under the political, economic, and media influence of tobacco corporations.

1. <https://fctc.who.int/convention/conference-of-the-parties/sessions/eleventh-session-of-the-conference-of-the-parties>

2. <https://fctc.who.int/resources/publications/m/item/guidelines-for-implementation-of-article-5.3>

Among the countries with the lowest levels of interference are Mexico, Uruguay, Chile, Peru, and Panama, due to measures promoting transparency and limiting contact with the tobacco industry. In contrast, the Dominican Republic, Colombia, Paraguay, and Argentina rank among the most affected, given the persistence of political ties, lack of accountability, and the continued promotion of so-called “corporate social responsibility” activities by tobacco companies.

The report also documents significant setbacks in Colombia, Paraguay, Bolivia, Argentina, Ecuador, Guatemala, and El Salvador, where tobacco corporations have strengthened their presence in public decision-making spaces by exploiting legal loopholes or institutional cooperation programs.

National Cases: Progress and Challenges

During the launch of the *2023–2025 Regional Tobacco Industry Interference Index*³, representatives from several countries shared national experiences reflecting the diversity of approaches across the region.

Dr. Vera Luiza da Costa e Silva, Executive Secretary of Brazil’s *National Commission for the Implementation of the Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (CONICQ)*, highlighted advances in institutional integrity. She noted that CONICQ adopted a declaration discontinuing briefing sessions with the industry, a code of conduct for public officials, and a decision tree for interactions with the tobacco industry. She also emphasized that Brazil’s Federal Revenue Service (*Secretaria Especial da Receita Federal do Brasil*) issued Regulation No. 605/2025, which sets strict rules for official meetings, including the requirement for minutes and the presence of at least two public officials whenever meetings with industry representatives occur. However, she warned that **“challenges persist, such as the influence of the tobacco caucus in Congress and ongoing lawsuits by indebted manufacturers seeking privileges despite their tax liabilities.”**

Mr. Pablo Analuisa, National Director of Strategy for the Prevention and Control of Noncommunicable Diseases, Mental Health, and the Socioeconomic Phenomenon of Drugs at Ecuador’s Ministry of Health, reported that the country has made the implementation of Article 5.3 a top priority. He noted that since COP9, Ecuador has led the transparency maximization initiative, encouraging Parties to submit voluntary conflict-of-interest declarations. He also highlighted that Ecuador’s *General Regulation of the Organic Law on Mental Health* prohibits all direct or indirect interference by the industry in the formulation of health policies.

Dr. Sophia Mus, Advisor to the Minister of Public Health and Social Assistance of Guatemala, explained that her country faces a more complex scenario. She pointed out that the lack of specific legislation on Article 5.3 facilitates tobacco industry influence in Congress, even during debates on e-cigarette laws. Nonetheless, she stated that Guatemala approved a *Code of Conduct and Ethics* in 2024, which includes a chapter on conflict of interest, and new laws—such as the *Comprehensive Cancer Care Act*—are beginning to incorporate provisions to protect public health spaces from corporate interference.

3.- https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wt_pngvxfQ

Ms. Michell Castillo Trejo, Health Policy Advisor for Tobacco Control in the Office of the Undersecretary of Health Policy and Population Well-being, emphasized that in Mexico, health authorities have reaffirmed their political and ethical commitment to prioritize health over commercial interests. The country has become a regional reference for its effective application of Article 5.3 guidelines, the adoption of codes of conduct for public officials, and its ongoing vigilance against tobacco industry attempts to influence regulatory decisions. She stressed, however, that **“the industry constantly reinvents itself with increasingly sophisticated tactics, requiring a continuous and adaptive institutional response.”**

Dr. Reina Roa, WHO FCTC Focal Point at Panama’s Ministry of Health, remarked that her country also stands out as a leading case. She underlined that the Index **“is a key tool to externally assess how interference is being addressed and to guide improvements in control mechanisms,”** in accordance with Articles 5.3 and 4.2 of the WHO FCTC and its Protocol.

A Shared Regional Challenge

Experts and civil society representatives free of conflicts of interest agreed that tobacco industry interference has become more sophisticated, diversifying its influence channels and extending **beyond the health sector.**

“The 2025 Regional Index shows that the industry continues to exert undue influence over public policies, exploiting governance and transparency gaps to protect its interests at the expense of public health,” said **Laura Salgado** of the *Global Center for Good Governance in Tobacco Control (GGTC)*. **“Governments must act collectively to close these gaps and protect the right to health from corporate interference,”** she added.

“Protecting public policies from tobacco industry interference requires stronger transparency, accountability, and regional cooperation,” stated **Daniel Dorado** of *Corporate Accountability*. **“It is urgent to consolidate monitoring systems and eliminate tax incentives that benefit tobacco companies in order to move toward a future free from addiction and corporate impunity.”**

COP11: A Decisive Opportunity

The findings of the *2023–2025 Regional Tobacco Industry Interference Index* come at a crucial moment: COP11 in Geneva, Switzerland, where WHO FCTC Parties will discuss measures to safeguard the integrity of international negotiations from industry interference and to strengthen transparency and accountability mechanisms at all levels of government.

“The increase in interference across Latin America shows that tobacco corporations continue to deploy sophisticated political and diplomatic capture strategies. COP11 is an opportunity to reaffirm the spirit of the Convention and ensure that no corporation can influence public health policies,” concluded representatives from GGTC and Corporate Accountability.

The *2023–2025 Regional Tobacco Industry Interference Index* serves as a regional benchmark to compare progress and setbacks in implementing Article 5.3 of the WHO FCTC. It is a resource for governments, legislators, and civil society organizations aiming to strengthen health governance and prevent conflicts of interest. It is also part of the broader international effort represented by the *2025 Global Tobacco Industry Interference Index*, launched on November 11 of this year.

More information and resources:

- Regional Index: <https://globaltobaccoindex.org/regions/latin-america>
- Global Index: <https://globaltobaccoindex.org/gti/2025>

Press inquiries:

media@stopcorporateabuse.org