# 2nd Africa Conference on Tobacco Control and Development (ACTD)

## Breaking Barriers, Building Futures:
## Advancing the Tobacco Control Ecosystem in Africa

**November 13 -14, 2024**
**Labadi Beach Hotel, Accra, Ghana**

# Report

THE AFRICAN CAPACITY BUILDING FOUNDATION | FONDATION POUR LE RENFORCEMENT DES CAPACITÉS EN AFRIQUE

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World Health Organization
African Region



# A REPORT ON THE 2ND AFRICA CONFERENCE ON TOBACCO CONTROL & DEVELOPMENT



# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The organizers of the 2nd Africa Conference on Tobacco Control & Development would like to extend its heartfelt gratitude to everyone who contributed to the success of this landmark event. We express our sincere appreciation to the organizing committee, whose tireless efforts and dedication made this conference possible. Their commitment to advancing tobacco control and public health in Africa has been invaluable.

We are especially grateful to our esteemed speakers and panelists, who shared their expertise and insights, enriching our discussions and providing a deeper understanding of the challenges and opportunities in tobacco control. Your contributions have inspired and motivated us all to continue our work in this critical area.

A special thank you to our partners and sponsors, whose generous support and collaboration helped facilitate this conference. Your commitment to the cause of tobacco control demonstrates a shared vision for a healthier and more sustainable future for our communities.

We also acknowledge the role of participants from various sectors—including government, academia, civil society, and the private sector—who engaged in meaningful dialogue and shared their experiences. Your active participation has been crucial in fostering a collaborative environment for addressing the complexities of tobacco control in Africa.

Together, we have laid the groundwork for continued advocacy and action in tobacco control across the continent. We look forward to the collective efforts that will arise from this conference and to seeing the positive impacts of our collaboration in the years to come.

## Day 1: Wednesday 13th November 2024

## 9:00 GMT -16.30 GMT

# OPENING SESSION

### Welcome and introduction

The conference opened with a strong call for African countries to collaborate to support the shared goals in tobacco control. The conference theme ***"Breaking Barriers, Building Futures: Advancing Tobacco Control Ecosystems in Africa"*** reflected the collective mission of creating a sustainable, tobacco-free continent.

### Youth Voices in Africa

Ms. Mawena Azuma from the Youth Bridge Foundation opened the conference sharing a poignant anecdote of her neighbour Nana, whose life was tragically cut short due to tobacco use. Azuma emphasized the aggressive marketing of tobacco products targeting youth, and the introduction of Electronic Nicotine Delivery Systems (ENDS). She highlighted an alarming statistic: nine out of ten adult smokers have had their first cigarette before age 18. Azuma called for stronger youth-focused approaches to tobacco control, including smoke-free environments and stricter advertising restrictions. She introduced the West Africa Sub-Regional Youth Advisory Board (YAB), a group of young people leading the charge for tobacco-free communities.

### Welcome and Keynote Addresses

***Mr. Mamadou Biteye, Conference Co-Chair and Executive Secretary of the African Capacity Building Foundation (ACBF),*** welcomed participants and emphasized the urgency of tobacco control in Africa. He cited alarming statistics: tobacco kills over 8 million people globally, with nearly 900,000 deaths in Africa alone. Mr. Biteye highlighted the economic burden of tobacco-related illnesses, citing examples from Uganda, South Africa, and Kenya. He stressed the need for a multi-sectoral approaches to tobacco control which involved Ministeries of finance, education, and agriculture. He also stressed the need for a renewed commitment to the WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (FCTC) and its Article 5.3, which focuses on protecting public health policies from tobacco industry interference.

***Prof. Buyinza Mukadasi, Acting Deputy Vice Chancellor (Academic Affairs) of Makerere University*** who represented the Conference Co-Chair and Chair of the Steering Committee of the Centre for Tobacco Control in Africa (CTCA)

addressed the conference, highlighting the progress made in tobacco control while acknowledging the significant challenges. He noted the funding gap, with current global funding far below the estimated need. Professor Mukadasi emphasized the need for sustainable funding, capacity building, and locally relevant research. He called for governments to prioritize tobacco control in national budgets and explore innovative funding models. He also stressed the importance of developing human resources and investing in research that addresses the unique context of tobacco use in Africa.

## Goodwill messages from partners

- Ms. Cynthia Lewis, Deputy Director, Global Policy & Advocacy from the Bill and Gates Foundation (BMGF) acknowledged the significant progress made in Africa towards reducing tobacco use prevalence. She highlighted successful initiatives in countries like Sierra Leone, Nigeria, and Cote d'Ivoire. Ms. Lewis acknowledged the work of various partners, including the African Capacity Building Foundation, Youth in Action, the WHO, and the Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids. She outlined Gates Foundation's USD400 million commitment since 2008 to tobacco control initiatives and also emphasized the Foundation's commitment to supporting tobacco control efforts in Africa, particularly those focused on protecting young people, preventing tobacco and vape access, and investing in youth-led advocacy.

- Ms. Adriana Blanco Marquizo, Head of the WHO FCTC Secretariat emphasized the positive link between tobacco control and sustainable development in a virtual message. She highlighted the FCTC 2030 project, which supports countries in implement comprehensive tobacco control measures and develop investment cases analyzing the economic costs of tobacco use and the return on investment of implementing key WHO FCTC measures. She urged Parties to seek domestic resources (taxes) to accelerate the implementation of the FCTC.

- Dr. Adelheid Onyango, who represented the WHO Regional Office for Africa stressed the need for swift action to protect youth from the harmful effects of tobacco. Dr. Onyango highlighted the importance of fully enforcing tobacco control policies and staying ahead of new trends in tobacco products. The message also calls for a whole-of-government approach and youth engagement in tobacco control efforts. Ambassador Mohammed Lawan Gana, the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS)'s Resident Representative to Ghana emphasized tobacco control as a development issue, not just a health issue. He stressed the need for joint action to mitigate the effects of tobacco use on the continent, particularly among youth.

## Official Opening and Keynote Address

The conference was officially opened with a keynote address from Dr. Darius Osei, representing Ghana's Minister of Health. Dr. Osei emphasized the public health threat posed by tobacco use and the importance of collective action to address it. He highlighted Ghana's proactive stance on tobacco control, including legislative measures and tax reforms; noting the country's low tobacco use rate along with the government's commitment to protecting youth from tobacco industry tactics. Dr. Osei concluded by urging African governments to fulfill their obligations to protect their populations from the harmful effects of tobacco and to accelerate the implementation of anti-smoking policies.

# PLENARY SESSION 1:

## Tobacco Control Ecosystem and its Future in Africa

The session aimed to get an in depth understanding of the state of the implementation of the WHO-FCTC in Africa, whilst identifying the successes and barriers. It hoped to identify the potential solutions for sustainable TC in Africa that meets the unique needs of the different country contexts in the ecosystem. It also reflected on how the future of the TC ecosystem looks like, given the global technological advancements in packaging, regional integration trends and other emerging issues, and how key stakeholders can better prepare for the outlook.

### Presentation by Dr. William Maina (WHO AFRO)

Dr. Maina provided an overview of the tobacco control landscape in the African region:

- **Framework Implementation:** 96% of African countries have ratified the WHO FCTC, but significant gaps remain in domestication and enforcement.
- **MPOWER Strategies:** Progress has been made in monitoring, public awareness, and creating smoke-free environments. However, enforcement of taxation policies and cessation programs remains weak.
- **Current Trends:** While tobacco prevalence in Africa has declined (from 18% in 2000 to 9.5% in 2022), the absolute number of tobacco users is increasing due to population growth.
- **Call to Action:** Dr. Maina emphasized the need for stronger political will, enhanced taxation, and targeted youth interventions to reduce tobacco consumption.

### Presentation by Mr. Modou Njai (Africa Centres for Disease Control and Prevention Africa CDC)

Mr. Njai discussed the multisectoral approach to tackling tobacco control under the Africa CDC framework:

- **Strategic Focus:** The 2022–2026 strategy integrates NCDs, mental health, and injury prevention, with tobacco control as a key pillar. He also discusses the AU Africa CDC Multisectoral Task Force and the opportunities for collaboration in tobacco control.
- **Challenges:** Weak multisectoral coordination and underfunding are major obstacles. Implementation gaps often stem from insufficient political commitment.
- **Recommendations:** Establishing functional task forces, aligning with regional economic communities (e.g., ECOWAS), and innovative financing mechanisms were proposed as solutions.

### Presentation by Dr. Judith Segnon (Bureau of the Conference of the Parties)

Dr. Segnon, Vice-President and Rapporteur forthe African Region, presented updates from the recent Conference of the Parties (COP) meeting:

- **Environmental Impacts:** Tobacco cultivation and waste significantly contribute to deforestation and pollution.
- **Global Decisions:** Measures to combat cross-border tobacco advertising and enhance public awareness were adopted, including decisions include protecting the environment from the harmful effects of tobacco, banning the promotion of tobacco products, and creating a working group to explore innovative measures to reduce tobacco use. African representation was emphasized in decision-making bodies.
- **Recommendations:** Strengthen political will and ensure that COP decisions are implemented at the national level.

### Presentation by Dr. Olivia Boateng (Ghana's Ministry of Health)

Dr. Boateng highlighted Ghana's achievements and ongoing challenges:

- **Progress:** Smoke-free laws and tax stamps to combat illicit trade are in place. However, emerging tobacco products like e-cigarettes pose new challenges.
- **Challenges:** Weak enforcement mechanisms and low literacy levels which hinder effective implementation.
- **Future Plans:** Ghana is enhancing its regulatory frameworks, exploring digital tools for tracking illicit trade, and promoting cross-sector collaboration.

### Presentation by Dr. Catherine Egbe (South African Medical Research Council)

Dr. Egbe introduced the concept of a tobacco endgame and what it would take to achieve it in Africa:

- **Endgame vs. Control:** The endgame seeks to completely eradicate tobacco use rather than merely managing its prevalence.
- **Afrocentric Strategies:** Culturally tailored approaches, incorporating cessation programs and mobilizing current smokers as advocates, are essential.
- **Key Challenges:** The influence of the tobacco industry remains a significant barrier.

### Presentation by Mr. Leonce Sessou (African Tobacco Control Alliance)

Mr. Sessou discussed the importance of transforming the tobacco control ecosystem in Africa:

- **Ecosystem Complexity:** Effective control requires addressing industry interference and leveraging regional partnerships.
- **Future Directions:** Strengthening youth-focused initiatives, adapting to new tobacco products and mobilizing resources are crucial steps for tobacco control in Africa.
- **Call for Collaboration:** He emphasized the need for shared best practices and regional cooperation to counter industry tactics.

## Panel Discussion

The session concluded with a panel discussion covering a range of topics, including the most widely implemented provisions of the FCTC, challenges in implementing tobacco control policies, and the solutions for creating a tobacco control framework that meets the needs of each country.

- **Challenges Identified:** Implementation gaps, underfunded initiatives, and limited public awareness were common themes.
- **Success Stories:** Countries like Mauritius and Kenya were praised for their progressive policies, such as plain packaging and tax reforms.
- **Path Forward:** The session underscored the importance of multisectoral collaboration, youth involvement, and robust monitoring systems to drive change.

## Conclusion

The session reinforced the urgency of addressing tobacco control as a public health priority. Panelists and participants emphasized the need for political commitment, resource mobilization, and culturally sensitive strategies to combat the growing tobacco epidemic in Africa.

# PLENARY SESSION 2:

## Smoking Cessation in Africa

The session looked at cessation in Africa, highlighting the critical importance of cessation to reduce tobacco-related deaths. Moderator Dr Fabrice Ebeh noted many African nations lacked robust tobacco cessation services, such as support hotlines or access to cessation medications. The session aimed to explore innovative solutions to integrate cessation efforts into national health policies and share experiences from global experts.

## Keynote Presentations

### Dr. William Maina (WHO AFRO)

Dr. Maina presented an overview of tobacco and nicotine cessation challenges and opportunities in Africa. Key points included:

- **Tobacco's Prevalence:** 80% of tobacco consumption globally is through smoking, with cigarettes dominating. Adolescent smoking rates in Africa are comparable to global averages, highlighting a pressing need for intervention.
- **Cessation Challenges:** Cultural practices, economic barriers, and lack of infrastructure hinder cessation programs. For example, in some communities, tobacco is integral to rites of passage or dowry practices.
- **Proposed Solutions:**
    - » Integrating cessation into universal health coverage and primary care systems.
    - » Leveraging technology, such as mobile apps and social media, to disseminate cessation messages.
    - » Establishing quit lines and including cessation drugs like bupropion in essential medicine lists.
    - » Training healthcare providers in cessation support.

### Dr. Arnauld Fiogbe (International Union Against Tuberculosis and Lung Disease)

Dr. Fiogbe shared insights from the CesTA_TB C study smoking cessation intervention in routine care for TB patients, conducted in Benin and Burkina Faso. Highlights included:

- Tobacco use contributes significantly to TB progression and poor treatment outcomes.
- The study implemented the **ABC Strategy** (Ask, Brief Advice, Cessation Support) in 20 clinics.
- The study found that smoking cessation interventions are not a key component of the national TB program. The study also found that there is a high rate of smoking among TB patients in West Africa.
- Results showed a 70% cessation rate among intervention groups over six months, compared to 55% in control groups.
- Recommendations: Integrate cessation into routine care, use cost-effective strategies like the ABC approach, and leverage digital tools for monitoring.

### Prof. Heather Wifpli (University of Southern California)

Prof. Wifpli discussed smoking cessation efforts targeting people living with HIV, funded by the U.S. National Cancer Institute. Key points:

- HIV-positive smokers have significantly reduced life expectancy due to smoking-related diseases.
- People living with HIV are at a higher risk of developing cancer and heart disease, and that smoking cessation is crucial in reducing this risk.
- Funded projects in Africa (Kenya, Botswana, South Africa, Uganda, Zambia) focus on integrating cessation programs into HIV care.
- Collaboration and knowledge sharing across projects were emphasized, with tailored cessation messaging and the use of mobile health (mHealth) tools.

## Panel Discussion

- **Funding and Policy:** Panelists urged governments to allocate revenue from tobacco taxes to cessation programs and ensure these funds are not diverted into general budgets. Examples from Kenya and Botswana demonstrated the feasibility of dedicated tobacco control funds.
- **Innovative Solutions:** Suggestions included leveraging artificial intelligence for cessation counseling and using community health workers for outreach.
- **Challenges:** The panel highlighted barriers, such as limited access to cessation drugs, the cultural acceptance of tobacco, and the lack of regulatory frameworks for novel tobacco products.

## Closing Remarks

The session emphasized that only 12% of Africans have access to cessation services, a gap that needs urgent addressing. Proposed strategies included integrating cessation into health systems, leveraging technology, and ensuring government and donor flexibility in funding.

Participants were thanked for their dedication, with a reminder to continue discussions in breakout sessions focusing on research, advocacy, youth, gender, and climate-related aspects of tobacco control.

# PARALLEL SESSIONS

### TRACK A: Research and Advocacy

The session moderator, Mr. Michael Adegbe, Fund Manager and Project Lead for Management Sciences for Health (MSH), Nigeria, introduced the importance of tobacco control in Africa, emphasizing its impact on health and economic well-being. The focus was on using research and evidence-based policies to drive impactful interventions.

### Dr. Cosmos Zyambo (Zambia)

Dr. Zyambo presented findings from a study in Zambia on tobacco smoking and smokeless tobacco use among people living with HIV in Zambia. The study revealed a 9.7% prevalence of tobacco smoking and 1.4% prevalence of smokeless tobacco use. Factors associated with tobacco use included being male, higher education attainment, alcohol consumption, and non-adherence to ART.

He mentioned the need to create awareness among people living with HIV about the risks of tobacco use. He also suggested developing a smoking cessation policy and counseling protocol for healthcare providers in Zambia.

### Dr. Mamadou Abdoulaye Diallo (Senegal)

Dr. Diallo presented a study on tobacco use among young people in Senegal. The research focused on factors influencing youth tobacco consumption, including socio-demographic characteristics and behavioural factors.

The study found that education level, marital status, and employment were significant factors in tobacco use among youth. He proposed involving youth movements and associations in tobacco control efforts in Senegal.

### Dr. Ezekiel Musasizi (Uganda)

Dr. Musasizi presented findings from a cross-sectional study in Uganda on tobacco use among people living with HIV on ART. The study revealed a 39.64% prevalence of biochemically verified tobacco use, significantly higher than self-reported use. Factors associated with tobacco use included age, sex, income, and alcohol use.

He recommended focusing on building health knowledge about tobacco risks among people living with HIV.

### Ms. Vanessa Darsamo (Mozambique)

Ms. Vanessa Darsamo presented a study on making cigarette taxes more effective in Mozambique. The research proposed substantial increases in cigarette excise taxes in Mozambique to reduce consumption and increase revenue. The study simulated various scenarios of tax increases and their potential impact on consumption, revenue, and tax shares.

### Mr. Abraham Emmanuel Agbons (Nigeria)

Mr. Agbons presented a study on second-hand smoke exposure among hospitality workers in Abuja, Nigeria. The research found that 34.01% of workers were exposed to second-hand tobacco smoke. Factors associated with exposure included education level, presence of designated smoking areas, and ability to control exposure.

He suggested enacting 100% smoke-free workplace policies to protect hospitality workers from second-hand smoke exposure.

### Ms. Winnie Awuor (Kenya)

Ms. Awuor presented findings from a study on tobacco use prevalence among patients with tobacco-related illnesses in four national referral hospitals in Kenya. The study revealed a 46% prevalence of tobacco use among these patients. Demographic factors associated with tobacco use included being male, employed, above 60 years, and having a history of alcohol use.

He recommended increased enforcement of the FCTC to prevent smoking uptake and encourage cessation among patients with tobacco-related illnesses.

## Discussion and questions

The session concluded with a discussion period where participants asked questions and shared insights on the presented research. Topics included intervention strategies, policy implications, and the complexities of tobacco control efforts in Africa.

## TRACK B: Youth and Gender

## Introduction

The moderator Ms. Winnie Olwal, Regional Programme Lead for Youth In Action urged participation to create a vibrant, youthful atmosphere. The session focused on youth and gender in tobacco control, aiming to ncrease understanding of these intersections and discuss initiatives in tobacco control that incorporate gender and youth perspectives.

### Ms. Elvina Majiwa (Kenya)

Ms. Majiwa shared her experience in tobacco control advocacy, highlighting Kenya's legislative efforts, including the 2004 ratification of the Framework Convention on Tobacco Control and the Tobacco Control Act of 2007. She outlined that despite Kenya's efforts to combat tobacco use, such as adopting smoke-free public spaces, health warnings, a comprehensive advertising ban and education campaigns, there are persisting challenges of limited visibility and poor enforcement of health warnings on tobacco packaging. Ms. Majiwa also emphasized the role of youth in advocacy and the necessity for mentorship and funding in sustaining youth-led efforts.

### Ms. Mutinta (Zambia)

Ms. Mutinta from Zambia discussed her study on tobacco use among young people with disabilities. She addressed the impact of lead pollution on mental and physical health in her community, noting that tobacco use often becomes a coping mechanism. This demographic's tobacco use is exacerbated by high unemployment and lack of community support, leading to increased engagement with tobacco for income or personal relief.

### Mr. Marvin Kiwanuka (Uganda)

Mr. Kiwanuka highlighted the unique gender dynamics of tobacco use in Uganda, where girls often use tobacco as a coping mechanism in sex work, and boys use it as a rite of passage into adulthood. Mr. Kiwanuka's project focused on educating the Masaka region on tobacco's health risks, providing economic empowerment programs, and engaging community leaders to foster tobacco-free environments. The lack of mental health resources remains a challenge, and he advocated for more funding to support sustainable youth-led tobacco control programs.

### Sky Girls' Empowerment Model for Teen Girls

The speaker from Sky Girls explained the program's empowerment model, designed to prevent smoking initiation among adolescent girls across Africa.

Sky Girls utilized relatable media, peer influence, and aspirational messaging to build a sense of belonging and empowerment among young girls. The program addressed social pressures rather than focusing solely on health messaging, thus creating a space where girls feel supported and valued in their decisions to reject tobacco.

## Audience Q&A and key takeaways

During the Q&A , several audience members, including representatives from Ghana, Niger, and Uganda engaged the panel, raising questions about the challenges of combating online tobacco marketing, youth mental health services, and the stigma around mental health in tobacco control initiatives. Speakers discussed the importance of localized advocacy strategies, the role of traditional and religious leaders in spreading anti-tobacco messaging, and the need for governments to fund sustained tobacco control efforts.

## Conclusion

The session closed with a call for increased mentorship and collaboration among youth advocates to amplify their impact. It was wrapped up with a commitment to continue fighting against tobacco use and acknowledged the support of organizations like the Gates Foundation in funding youth-led advocacy. The discussion reaffirmed the importance of targeted, culturally sensitive approaches in tobacco control efforts across Africa.

# TRACK C: Environment, Alternative Livelihoods and Climate

## Introduction

The moderator, Mrs. Betina Edziwa explained that the session would focus on Articles 17 and 18 of the WHO FCTC, addressing alternative livelihoods for tobacco farmers and the protection of the environment from the detrimental impacts of tobacco cultivation. The discussion was aimed to highlight experiences and strategies implemented in Kenya and Zambia, along with a broader focus on addressing liability issues under Article 19.

### Mr. Stanley Haabowa and Mr. Michael Njagi (WFP)

Mr. Stanley Haabowa and Mr. Michael Njagi from WFP presented the Tobacco Free Farms initiative in Kenya and Zambia. They highlighted the severe environmental degradation caused by tobacco farming, including soil nutrient depletion due to tobacco's high nutrient demands, deforestation driven by the need for firewood to cure tobacco, and biodiversity loss and water contamination from agrochemical runoff.

On the economic front, tobacco cultivation limits farmers' ability to grow food crops, exacerbating food insecurity. Farmers often face health issues, including nicotine poisoning and respiratory diseases, while earning minimal profits.

The initiative used a market-driven approach to transition farmers to alternative crops, engaging various stakeholders including UN agencies, government ministries, and the private sector.

Mr. Michael Njagi detailed the implementation process of the initiative, focusing on:

- **Market Engagement:** Identifying buyers and ensuring market linkages for alternative crops like high-iron beans, groundnuts, and avocados.
- **Community Sensitization:** Raising awareness among farmers and local leaders to facilitate behaviour change.
- **Farmer Support:** Providing training, inputs, and credit linkages to aid farmers in transitioning from tobacco to alternative crops.

Since 2021, 6,600 farmers, in Kenya, have shifted to alternatives like high-iron beans and groundnuts whilst over 500 farmers, in Zambia, have transitioned, with a focus on climate-smart crops and renewable energy integration.

### Mr. Kabenuka Munthali (Zambia Agriculture Research Institute)

Mr. Kabenuka Munthali presented Zambia's experience in implementing alternative livelihoods. He emphasized the importance of government support, community engagement, and market linkages. He highlighted the following successes of the project.

- Over 600 farmers have transitioned to growing improved crop varieties, such as drought-resistant groundnuts, within four years.
- Farmer field schools have been established to provide hands-on training and knowledge exchange.
- Collaboration with the private sector and government has improved market access and reduced post-harvest losses.

Alternatively, the following challenges were also outlined.

- Scaling up efforts is hindered by limited funding and entrenched tobacco-growing traditions in rural areas.
- Soil degradation in former tobacco-growing regions poses additional obstacles to alternative crop productivity.

### Mr. Peter Magati (Kenya)

Mr. Peter Magati presented the tobacco industry's environmental impact and proposed mechanisms for holding the industry accountable. He discussed the need for industry-funded, independently managed resources to ensure a just transition for farmers. He highlighted the tobacco industry's continued interference in alternative livelihood projects, including:

- Undermining initiatives by increasing leaf prices to lure farmers back.
- Co-opting narratives of sustainability to maintain influence.

Mr. Magati suggested the following solutions.

- Policy and Legal Frameworks: Strengthen enforcement of Article 19 to hold the tobacco industry accountable for environmental damage.
- Funding Mechanisms: Establish an industry-funded but independently managed fund for environmental rehabilitation and farmer transitions.
- Support for Farmers: Provide resources and training to ensure farmers do not revert to tobacco cultivation.

## Discussion and Q&A session

The panel discussed challenges in scaling up alternative livelihood programs, industry interference tactics, and the need for data-riven policy support. They also explored the potential for environmental taxes and the importance of government position in successful implementation of alternative livelihood initiatives. The following are some key takeaways.

- **Industry Interference:** Panelists shared examples of the tobacco industry's aggressive tactics, such as buying out seeds meant for alternative farming projects.
- **Data-Driven Advocacy:** Panelists emphasized the need for robust data to support policy change and advocacy efforts.
- **Environmental Taxes:** Participants discussed implementing environmental taxes to fund restoration and farmer support programs.
- **Scaling Challenges:** Barriers to scaling alternative livelihoods include limited funding, farmer resistance, and lack of government support.

## Closing Remarks

All panellists agreed to collaborate on developing strategies to counter tobacco industry interference in alternative livelihood initiatives. The session concluded with panellists highlighting the importance of resilience, collaboration, and market-oriented production in addressing the challenges of tobacco control. Advocacy for stronger policies and continued multi-stakeholder engagement was emphasized as crucial for sustainable progress.

# TRACK D: New and Emerging Products

## Introduction

Session moderator Ms. Emma Wanyonyi, a WHO consultant said the session would focus on regulating emerging tobacco products. She emphasized the importance of discussing the proliferation of these products, especially among youth, and outlined two session objectives:

1. Enhance understanding of new and emerging products.
2. Discuss possible regulatory mechanisms for controlling these products in Africa.

### Dr. Ranti Fayokun (WHO)

Dr. Fayokun presented on the global landscape of emerging tobacco products, with a focus on electronic cigarettes, heated tobacco products, and nicotine pouches. She highlighted the following points:

- **Challenges:** Nicotine addiction, youth-targeted marketing, and regulatory gaps.
- **Innovations in Products:** Examples included flavored nicotine pouches and e-cigarettes designed to mimic everyday items, such as hoodies.
- **Regulation:** While 121 countries had regulatory measures in place by 2022, only a few comprehensively addressed these products. Many African nations lacked regulations altogether.

### Mr. Retselitsoe Pokothoane (University of Cape Town, South Africa)

Mr. Pokothoane discussed findings from a survey on nicotine products among adolescents in Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), Kenya, and Nigeria.

- **Prevalence:** Below 1% for e-cigarettes and nicotine pouches across all three countries.
- **Key drivers:** Tobacco advertising, urban residency, and exposure to educational content (surprisingly associated with increased use).
- **Recommendations:** Ban these products or implement stricter regulations and taxation.

The study concluded that it is the right time for tobacco control actors to intervene and put in place measures to prevent the use of these products from rising in the future.

### Ms. Siphesile Gwambe (South African Medical Research Council)

Ms. Gwambe presented a study on electronic cigarette and hookah use among university students in South Africa.

- **Motivators:** The study found that various factors influenced the use of these products, including peer pressure, social norms, marketing tactics, and perceptions of reduced harm compared to traditional tobacco products.
- **Health Effects:** Participants reported experiencing health effects from using these products, such as headaches, respiratory difficulties, fatigue, decreased performance, and mental health issues.
- **Financial Implications:** The high cost of purchasing these products can be a financial burden on students, with some using their bursary money or money intended for food and educational needs to purchase them.

### Mr. Cyprian Mostert (Kenya)

Mr. Mostert shared research on the landscape of new generation tobacco and nicotine product consumption in Kenya:

- **Trends:** Higher prevalence in urban areas and among older, wealthier, and educated demographics.
- **Challenges:** The study noted that the taxation framework for these products is not effective in reducing consumption due to illicit trade and online sales.
- **Recommendations:** He recommended increasing taxation, implementing a track and trace system, tailored education campaigns and capacitating the tax revenue authority to monitor online trade.

### Ms. Zanele Mthembu (South Africa)

Ms. Mthembu explored the social narratives influencing e-cigarette use among young South African women, and how they can lead to social exclusion and adverse inclusion.

- **Themes:** Social exclusion, adverse inclusion, stress relief, and peer pressure. She found that young women use e-cigarettes for various reasons, including stress relief, social acceptance, and perceived modernity.
- **Perceived Harms:** She also noted that there are mixed perceptions about the harm of e-cigarettes, with some believing they are less harmful than conventional cigarettes.
- **Recommendations:** Targeted public awareness campaigns and regulatory interventions to address misconceptions.

## Questions and Answers

The session's Q&A covered a range of topics, including regulatory approaches for African governments, cultural and social norms influencing the acceptance or rejection of e-cigarettes, the role of the feminist movement in e-cigarette use among women, the possibility of banning e-cigarettes completely, and the level of taxation that should be imposed on these products.

## Conclusion

The session concluded with closing remarks from the moderator, who thanked the speakers and the audience for their participation. The moderator highlighted three key takeaways from the session:

1. **Timing:** Act now while prevalence is still low in Africa.
2. **Regulation:** Tailored, enforceable regulations, including taxation, are critical.
3. **Collaboration:** Governments, civil society, and youth must collaborate to counter industry tactics.

The session closed with a call for immediate and coordinated action to prevent the widespread adoption of these harmful products.

## Day 2: Thursday 14th November 2024

## 9:00 GMT -16:00 GMT

# OPENING SESSION

### Welcome and Setting the Stage

# PLENARY SESSION 3:

### Reflections on Capacity Building for Tobacco Control

## Introduction

The session was on the theme, ***Reflections on Capacity Building for Tobacco Control.*** The goal of the session was to explore successful capacity-building efforts, identify persistent challenges, and share actionable insights.

## Panel Discussion

Success Stories in Capacity Building

**Prof. Olalekan Ayo-Yusuf** highlighted the achievements of the Africa Center for Tobacco Industry Monitoring and Policy Research (ATIM), noting its success in training a new generation of tobacco control advocates. He described capacity building as "vaccination against tobacco industry interference," with ATIM's courses fostering resilience among governments and stakeholders.

**Ms. Leslie Rae,** from the Global Alliance for Tobacco Control, discussed her experience with mentorship programs designed to prepare advocates for international negotiations, such as the Conference of the Parties (COP). She noted the tangible impact of such programs and the diminished outcomes when funding for these initiatives was unavailable.

**Dr. Jim Arinaitwe** detailed collaborations between state actors and civil society in Uganda and Zambia to enact tobacco control legislation compliant with the Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (FCTC).

**Mrs. Betina Edziwa,** of the Africa Capacity Building Foundation (ACBF), emphasized the importance of institutional strengthening, citing successful advocacy efforts in Gambia and Mauritania.

**Mr. Dereje Shimeles Moges** highlighted Ethiopia's success in institutionalizing tobacco control training through Addis Ababa University, supported by the Ethiopian Food and Drug Administration. This effort included integrating tobacco control into pharmaceutical regulatory curricula and creating resources in local languages.

## Challenges in Capacity Building

**Language and Cultural Barriers:** Panelists acknowledged that a lack of technical resources in local languages hinders accessibility. Ethiopia's translation of technical and legal documents into local languages was cited as a promising step toward inclusivity.

**Financial Constraints:** Budget limitations for tobacco control programs and capacity-building initiatives were a recurring issue. Speakers advocated for innovative domestic resource mobilization and leveraging regional partnerships to address funding gaps.

**Sustainability:** Participants raised concerns about the sustainability of capacity-building efforts. Dr. Mahama Missoué-Drago from Niger stressed the importance of risk management and follow-through mechanisms to ensure the longevity of programs.

## Global and Regional Partnerships

The panellists discussed the role of the Global North in funding and providing technical assistance for capacity building on the continent. Mr. Michael Adegbe highlighted the importance of balancing funding from the Global North with locally led initiatives. Ms. Leslie Rae emphasized South-South cooperation, where countries within the region share expertise and resources to build capacity.

## Lessons from Southeast Asia

Ms.Bungon Ritthiphakdee from the Southeast Asian Tobacco Control Alliance shared strategies, including engaging non-health sectors like the Ministry of Finance and the Prime Minister's Office and using peer comparisons to encourage policy reforms. She cited regional successes in adopting plain packaging and public health-centered taxation policies.

## The Shift to Online Learning

Mrs. Betina Edziwa described ACBF's pivot to online and hybrid training models during the COVID-19 pandemic. While highlighting the benefits of online training, such as reaching more people and offering flexibility, she also explained that there are challenges such as, ensuring participant engagement, costs in initial setup and curriculum development as well as addressing technical barriers.

## Key Takeaways

The panellists discussed strategies for ensuring that tobacco control goals are met. They emphasized the importance of converting commitments into actions and leveraging the power of multinational organizations. They also highlighted the need for innovative thinking and local approaches.

## Final Reflections and Conclusion

Prof. Ayo-Yusuf called for leveraging Africa CDC's convening power to involve high-level policymakers in tobacco control discussions.

Leslie Ray urged stakeholders to prioritize collaboration, coordination, and capacity.

Other speakers highlighted the importance of aligning capacity-building efforts with broader public health systems and leveraging regional strengths.

The session concluded with a shared commitment to innovation, sustainability, and grassroots empowerment as Africa continues to lead the fight against tobacco's harmful effects.

# PLENARY SESSION 4:

## Tobacco Control Funding and Sustainability

The session, moderated by Ms. Rachel Kitonyo-Devotsu, focused on the critical need for funding to sustain tobacco control efforts across Africa. She emphasized the importance of robust funding mechanisms for achieving effective tobacco control and highlighted the existing gaps in financial support.

## Panel Discussion

### The Tobacco Control Funding Landscape and Major Challenges

The discussion opened with an analysis of the global funding landscape for tobacco control, drawing attention to a substantial funding shortfall for the complete implementation of the Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (FCTC). Panellists revealed that tobacco control efforts needed approximately USD9.6 billion annually, yet only around USD1.2 billion is currently allocated, leaving an $8.4 billion funding gap.

Key obstacles in securing this funding included the lack of awareness of tobacco control as a development issue, insufficient prioritization by governments, and interference from the tobacco industry. Internationally, most funding is from philanthropic organizations, with notable contributions from the Gates and Bloomberg Foundations. However, tobacco control is often overlooked as a critical public health and sustainable development issue by bilateral agencies, further limiting resources.

### Domestic Resource Mobilization and Tobacco Control Funds

Domestic resource mobilization strategies were discussed with a particular focus on tobacco taxes and levies to support sustainable funding. Kenya's Solatium Fund was highlighted as a model for earmarked funding, which collects levies from licensed tobacco importers and manufacturers. These funds are dedicated solely to tobacco control activities, including policy dvocacy, cessation programs, and education initiatives, and are protected by law to ensure sustained support.

Ms.Bungon Ritthiphakdee from Southeast Asia shared insights into Thailand's and Vietnam's health promotion funds. Thailand's Thai Health Promotion Foundation, funded through a mandatory contribution from tobacco and alcohol industries, serves as a model for health funding independent of direct government control. In Vietnam, a similar tobacco control fund exists but is more restrictive in its usage, which hinders its flexibility and limits civil society participation.

The discussion underscored the importance of enacting legislation to establish these funds, ensuring sustainability and minimizing the risk of political interference.

### Environmental Taxes and Levies

The panel examined environmental taxes and their role in tobacco control funding. Dr. Fabrice Kodjo Ebeh, discussed the concept of environmental taxes on tobacco products, intended to cover the environmental costs of tobacco waste and pollution. He shared examples from African countries like Chad, Benin, and The Gambia, where such taxes are in place. However, these taxes often lack optimization; the panel noted the importance of setting tax rates that match the social and environmental costs of tobacco-related pollution, such as cigarette waste and deforestation.

A challenge also existedin the allocation of these environmental taxes, as funds collected are often absorbed into broader national environmental programs, making it difficult for tobacco control programs to access them. Dr. Ebeh emphasized the need for transparent and targeted tax collection structures to ensure funds are used specifically for tobacco waste management and environmental rehabilitation.

### Civil Society Engagement and Advocacy

The session then highlighted the essential role of civil society organizations (CSOs) in advocating for increased domestic resources for tobacco control. Mr. Moges from the Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids (CTFK) shared examples of CSO-led initiatives in countries like Senegal, where advocates push for earmarked tobacco taxes specifically for health programs.

The panellists then discussed how CSOs play a pivotal role in raising awareness, fostering government commitment, and advancing policy change. Strategic partnerships, especially with sectors focused on non-communicable diseases (NCDs), cancer, and other health issues, were encouraged to create broader support for sustainable funding solutions.

## Questions and Audience Engagement

One issue raised was the need for governments to formally recognize and compensate the work of individual tobacco control advocates and esearchers. Another stressed the importance of governments setting up "killer taxes" on tobacco, as high tax rates on tobacco products can deter usage while funding health initiatives. The advice from the panellists was that legislation, government commitment, and a structured framework for fund allocation are essential for the successful implementation of tobacco control programs.

## Closing Remarks and Takeaways

Ms. Rachel Kitonyo-Devotsu summarized the main takeaway; achieving sustainable tobacco control funding requires a combination of legislative action, strategic advocacy, and capacity building.

The session concluded with a call to strengthen national commitment, secure reliable funding streams, and engage all levels of society in tobacco control efforts.

# PLENARY SESSION 5:

## Tobacco Industry Monitoring

The session was moderated by Mr. Daouda Elhadj Adam, a tobacco control expert who underscored the importance of monitoring the tobacco industry's influence in policymaking, emphasizing the need for vigilance as the industry increasingly targets the African market, especially the youth. With Africa's population projected to grow significantly, tobacco companies see it as a major target for new customers, including for emerging products.

## Countering Tobacco Industry Interference

Professor Olalekan Ayo-Yusuf highlighted the tobacco industry's interference as a major challenge for effective anti-tobacco policy implementation. He called for a comprehensive legal framework restricting interactions between government officials and industry representatives.

Moreover, he advocated for a multisectoral approach involving various ministries beyond just health, as tobacco control is often seen as a health-only issue. He also emphasizes the need for public awareness campaigns to educate citizens about the deceptive tactics of the tobacco industry.

## Evolving Tactics of the Tobacco Industry

Mr. Leonce Sessou outlined evolving tactics used by the tobacco industry, including aligning itself with post-COVID economic recovery efforts and sustainable development goals (SDGs) in Africa. The industry, he noted, is increasingly positioning itself as a "partner" in development, complicating government and public resistance.

He then argued that more synergy across sectors and investment in research capacity are essential to effectively counter these tactics and provide governments with evidence-based arguments against industry claims.

## Legislative Gaps and Regional Monitoring Efforts

Dr. Francis Boli pointed out specific challenges in Côte d'Ivoire, where a lack of multisectoral cooperation and legislative frameworks hindered tobacco control efforts. The absence of a legal basis for Article 5.3 of the WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (FCTC), which aimed to protect policies from industry interference, madeit difficult for governments to resist the industry's influence.

He stressed the importance of training local monitoring teams and equipping them with suitable tools, especially in local languages, to track industry activities more effectively.

## Industry Interference and Regulatory Gaps

Ms. Vimla Moodley discussed South Africa's involvement in the Global Index on Tobacco Industry Interference. She revealed that industry interference is prevalent in both health and non-health sectors like environmental sustainability. The industry uses Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) initiatives as a guise to infiltrate government policies. She noted that in South Africa, the current tobacco legislation has lapsed, and the new bill has been delayed due to industry interference.

Ms. Moodley emphasized the need for a code of conduct across government sectors and increased digital regulation to protect the youth, who are especially targeted by the tobacco industry through online platforms.

## Effective Implementation of Article 5.3

Ms. Celine Awuor discussed the importance of fully implementing Article 5.3 across all government sectors, not just health, to prevent industry interference. Using the Philippines as an example, she suggested that African countries adopt similar codes of conduct that limit unnecessary interactions between government officials and industry representatives.

Ms. Awuor also stressed the need for Civil Society Organizations to play a critical role in monitoring and holding governments accountable for enforcing Article 5.3, as many governments lack internal mechanisms for oversight.

## The Role of Civil Society and Collaborative Efforts

The discussion highlighted the essential role of civil society in tobacco industry monitoring and advocacy. Mr. Sessou explained that ATCA collaborates with organizations such as the African Capacity Building Foundation (ACBF) to establish national monitoring teams. These teams, active in over 13 African countries, gather data on industry activities, mobilize resources, and raise awareness about tobacco industry tactics. However, funding constraints and the lack of long-term sustainability remain significant challenges for these teams.

## Emerging Products and Harm Reduction Narrative

Professor Ayo-Yusuf warned of the dangers posed by the tobacco industry's promotion of harm reduction products, such as e-cigarettes and nicotine patches, especially in African countries with low smoking prevalence. He argued that such products, marketed as less harmful alternatives, are a way for the industry to normalize tobacco use among young people and secure new generations of users.

The panellists agreed that Africa should focus on preventing the spread of tobacco use rather than accepting harm reduction as a viable solution.

### Concluding Remarks and Call to Action

The panellists conclude with recommendations for enhancing tobacco control efforts in Africa. Some key suggestions include:

- Establishing a regional coordination mechanism
- Strengthening public awareness campaigns
- Building capacity among policymakers
- Involving multiple sectors, including finance and trade, in the fight against tobacco

The session closes with a call to intensify efforts against tobacco industry interference, stressing that comprehensive, well-enforced legislation and regional collaboration are essential to protect public health in Africa.

# PARALLEL SESSIONS

## TRACK E: Human Resource Networking/Partnerships and Coordination

Ms. Celine Awuor, representing the International Institute for Legislative Affairs, introduced the session's agenda, which centred on human resources, networking, partnerships, and coordination in tobacco control.

### Presentation 1: Mr. Mohamed Maikudi (Nigeria)

Mr. Maikudi discussed the strategic human resource networking and collaboration in tobacco control, drawing lessons from the DATA program in Nigeria. The DATA program is an initiative that addresses critical data gaps in adolescent tobacco use in Nigeria. The program is a collaborative effort between Development Gateway, the Nigerian Ministry of Health, and the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation.

He highlighted the unique human resource and collaboration strategies of the DATA program, which have streamlined operations, minimized bureaucratic challenges, and ensured efficient data collection while maintaining governmental oversight.
Key strategies included:

- Utilizing a co-creation methodology to engage stakeholders in multiple feedback loops.
- Employing younger, relatable data collectors to build rapport with adolescents during surveys.

He also demonstrated how the DATA program can serve as a replicable model for tobacco control research efforts across the continent.

### Presentation 2: Dr. Yvonne Olando (Kenya)

This presentation assessed the impact of web-based training on healthcare providers' ability to deliver tobacco cessation interventions for people living with HIV in Kisumu, Kenya.

The training modules, based on the five A's of brief intervention (Ask, Advise, Assess, Assist, Arrange), showed significant improvements in practice and client engagement over three months.

Key findings included:

- Increased provider engagement in tobacco cessation.
- Positive feedback on the accessibility of web-based training modules.

The study underscored the importance of integrating tobacco cessation support into routine healthcare for HIV patients.

### Presentation 3: Ms. Rachel Kitonyo-Devotsu (Kenya)

Ms. Kitonyo-Devotsu shared about shares about Building Coalitions for Sustainable Tobacco Tax Advocacy in East Africa (Kenya and Uganda), emphasizing long-term funding and multi-stakeholder collaboration.

The initiative focused on advocating for uniform and regular tax increases in alignment with WHO-FCTC guidelines.

Key achievements included:

- Establishing formal coalitions with clear governance structures.
- Developing country-specific tax proposals using evidence-based models.
- Public engagement through media campaigns and youth forums.

Challenges, such as public opposition and historical grievances within coalitions, were addressed through capacity building and trust-building activities.

### Presentation 4: Mr. Paul Ebusu (Uganda)

Mr. Paul Ebusu talked about the impact of smoke-free enforcement and compliance training at sub-national levels in Uganda. Mr. Ebusu discussed efforts to strengthen the enforcement of Uganda's robust smoke-free laws through capacity building and compliance assessments. The program, supported by WHO and local agencies, trained law enforcers and conducted periodic evaluations. He further emphasized the three-layered approach to capacity building, including training, catalytic support, and periodic assessments.

Key outcomes included:

- Improved compliance with smoke-free regulations, evidenced by reduced violations.
- Challenges with banned products like e-cigarettes and flavoured tobacco which were persistant in the market.

Recommendations included sustained sensitization, multi-agency collaboration, and integrating enforcement into routine district activities.

### Presentation 5: Ms. Winnie Awour

Ms. Winnie Awor presented on an iterative and collaborative approach to inclusive and sustainable intervention in tobacco control efforts in Africa, drawing insights from the Tobacco Control Data Initiative (TCBI) project. The initiative aimed to bridge data and evidence gaps, enhance policymaking, and transition management to regional entities.

Achievements included:

- High adoption rates of the dashboards in six African countries.
- The use of dashboards for countering industry interference and advocating for higher taxes.

The presentation emphasized iterative stakeholder engagement and continuous updates to maintain relevance and utility.

## Discussion and Key Takeaways

Participants raised critical questions and offered insights on:

- **Inclusion of Traditional Leaders:** Suggestions were made to engage traditional leaders more effectively in research and dissemination, as they play key roles in community acceptance and enforcement.
- **HIV and Tobacco Link:** Presenters explained the scientific, social, and financial intersections between tobacco use and HIV management, highlighting the compounded health risks.
- **Sustainability of Enforcement Efforts:** Discussions centred on integrating tobacco control into routine district operations and ensuring long-term funding.

## Closing Remarks

The session concluded with acknowledgments of the presenters' contributions and a call for continued collaboration, trust-building, and the adoption of innovative approaches to address tobacco control challenges across Africa.

# TRACK F: Collaborative Responses on Tobacco Control and Health Emergencies

## Introduction

The session was about collaborative responses on tobacco control and health emergencies.

### Presentation 1: Ms. Kgomotso Kali (South Africa)

Ms. Kgomotso Kali, presented findings on the link between tobacco, alcohol use and depression among South African TB patients. She highlighted that South Africa is one of the highest-burden countries for TB and that smoking is linked to around 25% of TB-related deaths.

The results revealed a significant association, i.e. TB patients who smoke and drink alcohol are more likely to suffer from depression. The speaker

emphasized the need to integrate mental health and tobacco cessation services within primary healthcare for TB patients, especially for those in lower socioeconomic groups.

### Presentation 2: Mr. Ronald Kusolo (Uganda)

Mr. Ronald Kusolo explored the relationship between tobacco use and type 2 diabetes among Ugandans. Using data from a recent national survey, the study found that 8.3% of Ugandans smoke tobacco, and 2.8% use smokeless forms of tobacco. Also, raised blood sugar levels linked to diabetes have also increased among Ugandans.

Mr. Kusolo's analysis showed a 10% higher risk of elevated blood sugar for tobacco users, though it lacked statistical significance, highlighting the need for additional research. He called for the integration of tobacco control into broader NCD management, arguing that tobacco use not only raises diabetes risks but also complicates diabetes management.

### Presentation 3: Dr. Jim Arinaitwe (Uganda)

Dr. Jim Arinaitwe's presentation centred on a trial studying tobacco cessation among people living with HIV in Uganda and Zambia. He explained that while nicotine replacement therapies and SMS-based interventions have reduced smoking rates, these need to be tailored to people with HIV due to the complex social and psychological factors they face. The research involved adapting an SMS intervention for people with HIV, considering cultural sensitivity and the double stigma associated with HIV and tobacco use.

Preliminary findings indicated that community involvement and supportive text messaging can effectively promote cessation efforts and results.

### Presentation 4: Mr. Peter Magati (Kenya)

Mr. Peter Magati's presentation focused on the intersection of tobacco use, HIV status, and socioeconomic factors among young people in Kenya. Using demographic data, he observed higher tobacco use rates among young people living with HIV compared to those living without. These disparities were influenced by a variety of factors, including gender, education, and socioeconomic status. For example, youth in urban areas with lower educational levels were observed to be at greater risk of tobacco use.

Mr. Magati advocated for integrating tobacco cessation into HIV care programs, especially for vulnerable youth. He also underscored the need for gender-sensitive approaches, as societal expectations can affect smoking behaviours differently for men and women.

## Panel Discussion on Policy Recommendations and Public Health Campaigns

In the panel discussion, the presenters shared policy recommendations to address tobacco and alcohol use among at-risk populations. They suggested integrating mental health services, smoking cessation programs, and alcohol control into primary healthcare settings for TB, diabetes, and HIV patients.

Public health campaigns, particularly on social media, were recommended to target younger populations and raise awareness about the health risks associated with tobacco and alcohol use. The panel agreed that community awareness and health education are critical, with social media and local radio seen as valuable tools for reaching diverse demographics.

## Q&A Session

Audience members ask questions related to study methodologies, data reliability, and sampling criteria. One question centred on the role of tobacco farming regions, with a particular interest in how the prevalence of tobacco use in such areas may influence study results. The presenters clarified that the study sites were chosen based on tobacco use prevalence, rather than farming, to capture relevant health impacts among at-risk groups. Questions about the role of confounding variables in diabetes research also arose, with the speaker acknowledging limitations while emphasizing the data's value as a basis for policy advocacy.

## Closing Remarks and Key Messages

The session concluded with each presenter sharing a key message for tobacco control advocates. They stressed the importance of using available data, such as national health surveys, for advocating policy changes and budget allocations for tobacco cessation programs. Collaborative efforts across different health domains—such as tobacco, alcohol, and mental health—were highlighted as essential to addressing the multifaceted challenges faced by TB, HIV, and diabetes patients who use tobacco. The panel also emphasized the importance of tailored interventions that address the unique needs of each vulnerable group.

# TRACK G: Taxation, Earmarking and Sustainability

## Introduction and Objectives

The session was about taxation, earmarking, and sustainability in tobacco control. The co-moderator, Ms. Patience Yakobe, from the African Capacity Building Foundation, highlighted the importance of financing tobacco control initiatives in Africa and emphasized the need to explore innovative approaches to enhance effective taxation and earmarking. She then introduced the session's panellists, each an expert in tobacco control, public health, or economic policy.

## The Role of Taxation in Sustaining Tobacco Control Programs

Mr. Pape Yona Mane emphasized the importance of integrating tobacco taxation within broader health financing frameworks. He argued that African countries should work collectively to adopt regional tax directives that support tobacco control funding. This, he believed, will strengthen national programs and ensure long-term sustainability.

## Challenges with Low Taxation Rates in Africa

Panellists also noted the structural challenges that hinder effective tobacco taxation. Many African countries have low tobacco tax rates, averaging only 33%, far below the WHO-recommended 70% minimum. The low rates not only reduce potential revenue but also fail to curb tobacco consumption effectively. Dr. Estelle Dauchy highlighted Ghana's recent adoption of a specific tax on tobacco, which offers a model for other African countries to consider. However, even with improvements, several nations still struggle with ineffective tax structures, which weaken health and economic benefits.

## Political and Economic Realities Affecting Tobacco Taxation

The session then addressed the political and economic factors that impact tobacco taxation. Panellists agreed that the economic effects of COVID-19 and other crises, like wars, often divert government focus and resources away from public health. In times of economic uncertainty, countries might lower taxes on tobacco products to prioritize revenue generation, but this practice ultimately harms public health. Earmarking funds specifically for tobacco control, they argued, could protect these resources from being reallocated during crises.

## Senegal's Approach to Tobacco Control Funding

Dr. Oumar Ba shared Senegal's experience in using fines from tobacco regulation violations to support health programs. He noted however, that despite increases in tobacco tax rates, the funds are often diverted due to the state's unified budget system. As such, the Senegalese government was considering a "parafiscal tax," a separate tax dedicated solely to funding health initiatives and tobacco control. This approach, he argued, could provide a more sustainable funding source.

## Earmarking in Tobacco Control: Global and Local Perspectives

The discussion then shifted to the topic of earmarking, exploring how to defend earmarking and address the resistance it often faces.

Dr. Estelle Dauchy discussed the pros and cons of earmarking tax revenue for health initiatives. She noted that while the IMF and other global entities often discourage earmarking due to budget rigidity, several African countries see it as necessary due to limited resources. She cited the Philippines as an example where a soft earmarking approach allocates incremental tax revenue to national health insurance and poverty reduction programs. This model allows for flexible funding without the drawbacks of strict earmarking.

## Social Acceptance of Tobacco Taxes and Public Awareness

In discussing public acceptance of tobacco taxation, Ms. Irene Otieno from the National Taxpayers Association in Kenya highlighted that while citizens are wary of higher taxes, many support taxes on products like tobacco. However, she argued that framing the conversation around health benefits rather than revenue generation could help foster broader public acceptance. By promoting taxes as a means of funding health initiatives and reducing harmful consumption, governments could build public support for tobacco taxes.

## Addressing Low-Income Populations and Equity Concerns

Panellists also discussed the notion that tobacco taxes disproportionately affect low-income individuals. Mr. Labram Musah, Program Director at Vision for Alternative Development in Ghana, countered this by noting that tobacco taxes are progressive in the sense that they discouraged consumption among vulnerable populations. High tobacco taxes protect low-income groups from the health and economic burdens of tobacco-related diseases.

## Collaboration Among Stakeholders

The panel stressed the importance of collaboration between Health, Finance, and other sectors to ensure successful tobacco control. Mr. Michael of the Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids explained that often, Ministries of Health and Finance operate in silos, limiting the effectiveness of public health taxation. The panellists advocated for involving all relevant government sectors and international organizations in these discussions to ensure that public health priorities are represented in financial policymaking.

## Data and Evidence-Based Decision Making

Panellists emphasized the importance of data in shaping effective tobacco taxation policies. Accurate data on tobacco consumption, health impacts, and economic costs enable governments to make informed decisions about taxation. Ms. Otieno noted that organizations like the Tax Justice Network Africa and the University of Cape Town have developed simulation models to predict outcomes of tax increases, providing valuable tools for policymakers.

## Conclusion and Key Takeaways

The panel recommended implementing a framework for tobacco taxation that is responsive to regional health needs and economically sustainable. The session closed with a call for a more structured and collaborative approach to tobacco taxation in Africa.

Key takeaways included the need for improved tax structures, greater public awareness, and collaboration across sectors. The co-moderator, Dr. Barassou Diawara, introduced the acronym "CIDI" as a mnemonic for the session's primary themes: Collaboration, Inclusivity, Data, and Institutional Strengthening.

# TRACK H: Tobacco Control and the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA)

## Introduction

The session covered the intersection of tobacco control and the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA). The moderator, Mr. Daouda Elhadj Adam, highlighted the importance of understanding the impact of the AfCFTA on tobacco control efforts in Africa. To achieve this, a study was that evaluates the impact of AfCFTA on health outcomes in Africa was introduced. Tere was a particular focus on tobacco usage. This study involved the

collaboration of multiple researchers, including Dr. Adedeji Adeniran from the Center for the Study of the Economy of Africa (CSEA) in Nigeria and the Institute of Policy Analysis and Research (IPAR) in Rwanda.

### Presentation 1: Dr. Adedeji Adeniran (Nigeria)

Dr. Adedeji Adeniran discussed the potential impacts of the AfCFTA on tobacco control in Africa. He noted that while the trade liberalization within AfCFTA has the potential to boost income growth and reduce poverty, it could inadvertently lead to higher tobacco consumption as products become more accessible and affordable.

Drawing on global examples, such as Central America and Asia, he warned that trade agreements could lead to adverse health outcomes due to increased accessibility to harmful products like tobacco.

The study identified six protocols within AfCFTA that influence trade, including those on goods, services, origin, investment, digital trade, and youth and women's trade. The free movement of goods, for instance, could increase tobacco access if not regulated, as tobacco is currently not excluded from AfCFTA's trade protocols.

Dr. Adeniran therefore argues for the inclusion of tobacco control measures in trade policies. If countries remain unregulated, tobacco will continue to flow freely within African markets, undermining health initiatives. He also highlighted the need for policymakers to track key indicators, such as affordability of cigarettes, tobacco trade, and health indicators, to ensure that the AfCFTA does not negatively impact public health.

### Presentation 2: Dr. Radjab Nyabyenda

Dr. Radjab Nyabyenda, the Director of Institute of Policy Analysis and Research (IPAR-Rwanda) discussed the challenges and opportunities presented by the AfCFTA for tobacco control. He reaffirmed AfCFTA's potential to strengthen regional cooperation and coordination on public health issues. He therefore advocated for the need for standardized policies, particularly in taxation and regulatory frameworks, to address tobacco control within the trade agreements.

Dr. Nyabyenda outlined the six protocols of the AfCFTA and their potential implications for tobacco control policies; detailing how protocols on intellectual property, for example, could pose challenges as tobacco manufacturers may argue that health warnings infringe on their rights.

Despite the challenges posed by AfCFTA, Dr. Nyabyenda identified opportunities for enhancing institutional mechanisms to support public health. He noted that, AfCFTA could strengthen public health efforts by fostering regional cooperation, building capacity for monitoring and evaluation, and integrating health considerations into economic policies. For instance, funds generated through a regional tobacco tax could support health initiatives in member states.

Dr. Nyabyenda's presentation also included a case study of tobacco control efforts in Southern Africa, showing varied levels of regulation across countries. South Africa, for example, had implemented stringent tobacco laws, while other nations, like Malawi, were still in the early stages of adopting policies. He therefore stressed on the need for collaboration among regional stakeholders, such as economic and civil society organizations, to develop unified strategies for tobacco control within AfCFTA.

Dr. Nyabyenda addressed issues within Regional Economic Communities (RECs) that may compete with AfCFTA. He explained that in regions where RECs have established zero-tariff policies, some countries may prefer to trade under these arrangements rather than AfCFTA. Furthermore, inconsistent regulations across RECs complicate efforts to harmonize tobacco control policies, highlighting the need for streamlined approaches.

## Conclusion

The session concluded with closing remarks from the moderator, thanking the speakers and the audience for their participation. The moderator highlighted the key takeaways from the session, emphasizing the importance of ongoing research and collaboration to ensure that the AfCFTA supports tobacco control efforts in Africa. Only by prioritizing health within trade policies can Africa realize the full potential of AfCFTA, ensuring both economic growth and public well-being.

# OFFICIAL CONFERENCE CLOSING SESSION

## Conference Communique

Prof. Buyinza Mukadasi, representing the Conference Co-Chair and Vice Chancellor of Makerere University, addressed the conference and highlighted the significance of the conference theme, " Breaking Barriers, Building Futures: Advancing Tobacco Control Ecosystems in Africa," and its relevance to the continent's development aspirations.

He then proceeded to read the Conference Communique, which summarized the key discussions and outcomes of the conference. The communique highlighted the significant burden of tobacco-related diseases in Africa, the challenges posed by emerging tobacco products and industry tactics, and the role of youth and regional collaboration in tobacco control efforts. Emphasis was placed on the dangers posed by new tobacco products and the aggressive marketing tactics of the tobacco industry.

## Resolutions

The conference produced ten resolutions, which include:

1. Urging governments to reinforce tobacco control policies aligned with the WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control.
2. Scaling up accessible smoking cessation programs for high-risk populations.
3. Increasing youth engagement in tobacco control initiatives across Africa.
4. Allocating dedicated funds for tobacco control through government and international donors, potentially through innovative financing methods like taxes on tobacco products.
5. Recognizing the role of youth and gender, with targeted interventions to address the challenges faced by women and young people.
6. Investing in research to understand local dynamics in tobacco use and emerging products.
7. Proactively monitoring and countering tobacco industry activities.
8. Integrating environmental health in tobacco control by promoting alternative livelihoods for tobacco farmers.
9. Building multi-sector collaborations among government, NGOs, academia, and the private sector.
10. Establishing robust monitoring and evaluation frameworks to ensure accountability and sustained growth.

These resolutions, aimed to foster a tobacco-free Africa, emphasized sustainable health, economic development and environmental protection.

## Vote of Thanks

Mr. Mbacke Niang, Director of Programs and Impact at the African Capacity Building Foundation, extended gratitude to the Ghanaian government, conference partners, and speakers for their commitment to the cause. Niang emphasized the collective dedication displayed over the past two days, as participants engaged in critical discussions to shape the future of tobacco control in Africa. Special acknowledgments were given to key figures such as the Ghanaian Minister of Health, the Gates Foundation, and other major contributors who helped structure the event and provide technical expertise.

## Closing Remarks

Dr. Olivia Boateng from the Ghana Ministry of Health shared her reflections on the conference's impact. She expressed gratitude for the insights gained, the partnerships formed, and the focus on capacity building for tobacco control. Dr. Boateng encouraged participants to continue advocacy for stronger tobacco regulations and health promotion, ensuring that Africa's development prioritizes public health.

## Final Youth Perspective

Ms. Winnie Olwal, Regional Programme Lead from Youth in Action, closed the session with a call for continued youth involvement in tobacco control advocacy. She acknowledged the Gates Foundation's commitment to youth-led initiatives and emphasized the unique role young people play in bringing innovative solutions to community health challenges. Ms. Olwal encouraged stakeholders to invest further in youth-driven efforts, highlighting the power of aligning voices and amplifying efforts for greater impact. Her message underscored the importance of intergenerational cooperation for a healthier, tobacco-free Africa.


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