

Safeguarding public health from Big Tobacco



Tobacco industry infiltration of years of WHO FCTC meetings led Parties to adopt a precedent-setting decision at COP8 (pictured here) and MOP1 to ensure transparency of delegations and protect policymaking from industry interference.

Parties should submit Declaration-of-Interest forms to protect against industry interference

THE GLOBAL TOBACCO TREATY

This year marks the 20th anniversary¹ of the Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (FCTC). This influential World Health Organization (WHO) treaty has had an outsized impact on tobacco control globally.

Article 5.3 of the FCTC and its guidelines, combined with Articles 4.1 and 4.2 of The Protocol are particularly groundbreaking: they prohibit the tobacco industry from having any role in policymaking.^{2,3} Article 5.3 specifically is widely recognized as the backbone of the treaty's success.

Yet, year after year, the industry interferes to protect its profits.

A POWERFUL SOLUTION TO INDUSTRY INTERFERENCE

At COP8 and MOP1, Parties agreed on groundbreaking decisions to maximize transparency of treaty negotiations and eliminate industry interference.^{4,5} These decisions enhance Article 5.3 of the FCTC, helping guide Parties to protect negotiations from the undue influence of the tobacco industry. Specifically, Parties decided to require themselves, members of the public, the media, and accredited observer organizations attending negotiations to submit forms of declarations of any conflicts of interest (DOI) with the tobacco industry.⁶ See the reverse for how-to.

PARTIES LEADING BY EXAMPLE

Since COP9 and MOP2, more and more Parties have joined together for regional interventions to declare they have submitted their DOI's and build momentum. At COP10 and MOP3, three regions (AMRO, AFRO and SEARO) urged the rest of the world to join them in submitting DOIs.

BIG TOBACCO INTERFERENCE AT COP AND MOP

More than 7 million people die every year at the hands of the tobacco industry.⁷

Cigarettes — still the industry's primary product — are deadly to people and extremely profitable for corporations.⁸ The tobacco industry does everything in its power to protect its profits by undermining tobacco control policy, at the expense of people's lives.

Industry interference has been notable in several instances.⁹

Some examples include:

- **Lobbying via secret meetings:** At COP7, Philip Morris International (PMI) executives held secret meetings with government delegates to influence negotiations.¹⁰ Most recently, PMI allegedly recruited the Philippines, a former tobacco control champion, to advance its agenda at COP10.¹¹
- **Hiding behind front groups:** PMI wholly funds the organization Global Action to End Smoking, which was rebranded in 2024 from the Foundation for a Smoke-Free World.¹²
- **Infiltrating policy meetings:** At COP8, tobacco representatives registered as journalists to access sessions.¹³
- **Noise around COPs:** Industry representatives have attacked COPs in the media and promoted their talking points via social media and street demonstrations.¹⁴
- **Undermining progress via "corporate social responsibility" (CSR) schemes:** PMI attempted to form a vaccine partnership with Canada.¹⁵ Thankfully, this was thwarted by advocates exposing the blatant "health-washing" scheme.

SUBMIT A DOI FORM NOW

It's crucial that all delegations to COPs and MOPs submit DOI forms — to protect the negotiations from industry interference and enhance public trust in the treaty's integrity. The submission process is quick and simple, thanks to the tools and templates available.

Tools & templates available:

This template is an optional resource for submitting a DOI form. Parties can use any format they prefer. Scan the QR code or enter the link to access DOI templates for IGOs, NGOs, the media, and the public:

CorporateAccountability.org/FCTCDOI

When to submit a DOI to the Secretariat:

Parties should submit DOIs at the time of registration. Please review the Guide for Participants for more information or reach out directly to the FCTC Secretariat.¹⁶



Spread the word:

Once you've submitted your DOI form, pick up a button to show other delegates that you're committed to transparency and accountability at COP11/MOP4.



PARTIES MUST PROTECT PUBLIC HEALTH POLICY FROM INDUSTRY INTERESTS

Be vigilant — familiarize yourself and your fellow delegates about what tobacco industry interference looks like. Alert WHO FCTC officials if you witness interference of any kind from industry interests.

Accredited observers like non-governmental organizations (NGOs) can also be a resource to Parties in countering industry interference.¹⁷

Ensure that you and other delegates from your country vet your delegations and submit a DOI form.

LEARN MORE

Visit our COP11 resource hub at CorporateAccountability.org/COP11 or contact us at COP11@CorporateAccountability.org, for more information or support.

ENDNOTES

- 1 <https://fctc.who.int/newsroom/news/item/25-02-2025-first-ever-who-treaty-marks-20-years-of-saving-millions-of-lives-worldwide>
- 2 <https://corporateaccountability.org/resources/keep-big-tobacco-out-of-public-health-parties-should-protect-cops/>
- 3 <https://blogs.bmj.com/tc/2023/01/30/goodbye-pmi-philip-morris-removed-from-canadian-covid-19-vaccine-collaboration/>
- 4 <https://fctc.who.int/who-fctc/governance/conference-of-the-parties/eighth-session-of-the-conference-of-the-parties>
- 5 <https://fctc.who.int/protocol/meeting-of-the-parties/sessions>
- 6 <https://fctc.who.int/convention/conference-of-the-parties/declaration-of-interest>
- 7 <https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/tobacco>
- 8 <https://exposetobacco.org/news/what-is-the-tobacco-industry/>
- 9 <https://www.tobaccotactics.org/article/cop10-mop3-interference/>
- 10 <https://www.reuters.com/investigates/special-report/pmi-who-fctc/>
- 11 <https://www.theexamination.org/articles/how-industry-capture-of-philipino-officials-helped-deadlock-global-tobacco-control-negotiations>
- 12 <https://www.tobaccotactics.org/article/global-action-to-end-smoking/>
- 13 <https://www.nytimes.com/2018/10/07/health/tobacco-e-cigarettes-treaty.html>
- 14 <https://www.tobaccotactics.org/article/cop10-mop3-interference/>
- 15 <https://blogs.bmj.com/tc/2023/01/30/goodbye-pmi-philip-morris-removed-from-canadian-covid-19-vaccine-collaboration/>
- 16 <https://fctc.who.int/resources/publications/i/item/information-kit-for-delegates-to-the-conference-of-the-parties-to-the-who-framework-convention-on-tobacco-control>
- 17 <https://fctc.who.int/convention/conference-of-the-parties/observers/nongovernmental-organizations>