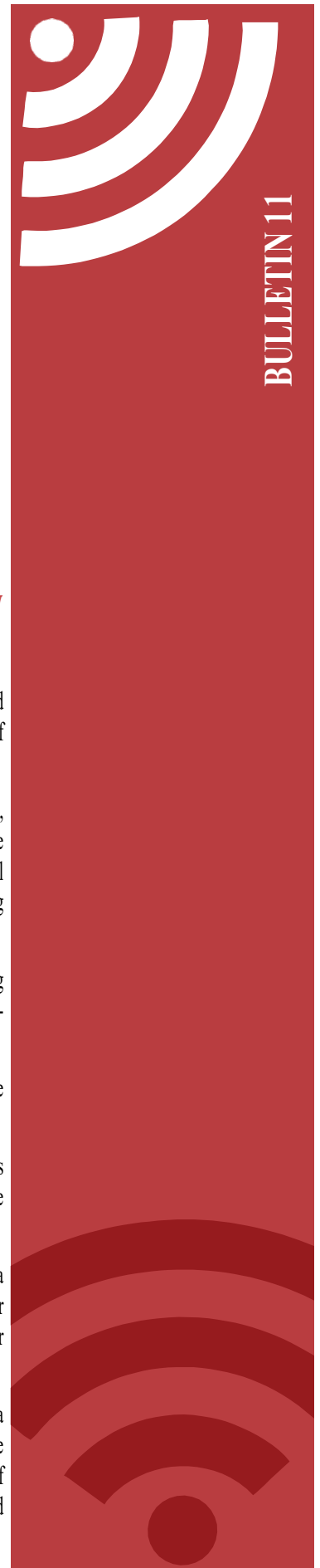




# OBSERVATÓRIO SOBRE AS ESTRATÉGIAS DA INDÚSTRIA DO TABACO

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BULLETIN 11

## *Editorial*

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### Challenges and Perspectives: Tobacco Industry, Health, and Family Farming in Brazil

In this issue of the CETAB/Fiocruz Observatory Bulletin, we present analyses and reflections on the incompatibility between the tobacco industry and public health and the role of family farming.

In an exclusive interview, Vera Luiza da Costa e Silva, Executive Secretary of CONICQ, discusses how the tobacco industry tries to influence the agenda of COP10 (Tenth Conference of the Parties to the Tobacco Control Convention) and MOP3 (Third Meeting of the Parties to the Protocol to Eliminate Illicit Trade in Tobacco Products) and highlights the challenges faced in seeking effective global tobacco control policies.

The importance of the return of the Ministry of Agrarian Development and Family Farming (MDA) and its impact on the lives of tobacco-growing farmers, offering ways to promote agro-ecologically sustainable alternatives.

Tax reform is an unquestionably relevant topic. In this bulletin, we examine the implications of special taxation for unhealthy products like tobacco products.

Additives in tobacco products are another topic deserving attention. We highlight the risks associated with the use of these substances, providing information for health policymakers and those making science-based decisions.

The Bulletin also addresses the recent condemnation of Alliance One for subjecting a farmer who has been working in tobacco production since the age of 13, characterizing child labor and exposing her to dangerous chemicals without informing her of the health risks, leading to her illness.

We invite readers to reflect on these issues and emphasize the importance of maintaining a focus on public health, environmental protection, and the interests of the population, rather than the commercial interests of the tobacco industry. We hope this bulletin serves as a valuable source of knowledge and inspiration for all those committed to a healthier future free from tobacco-related harm.

Luis Guilherme Hasselmann

## Recreation of the Ministry of Agrarian Development: A Step toward Sustainable and Diversified Family Farming

The recent recreation of the Ministry of Agrarian Development (MDA) is extremely relevant news for the agricultural sector and the promotion of family farming in Brazil because it represents a significant advancement in the pursuit of more inclusive and sustainable agricultural policies.

The MDA plays a fundamental role in focusing its actions on sustainable rural development, especially in supporting small farmers and promoting family farming.

With its recreation, there is greater attention and specific direction toward the needs and demands of these farmers, contributing to the strengthening of the sector and the reduction of social inequalities in rural areas.

Article 17 of the Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (FCTC/WHO) recommends that signatory countries of the treaty promote public policies that encourage the diversification of tobacco cultivation with sustainable farming. In the same vein, Article 18 of the FCTC recommends adopting measures to protect

the environment and people's health, which aligns with the mission of the Knowledge Center for Articles 17 and 18 of the FCTC Secretariat located at CETAB/Fiocruz.

Crop diversification is one of the main strategies to protect farmers from the observed reduction in demand for tobacco leaves in major producing countries.

In Brazil, the MDA has created the National Program for Diversification in Cultivated Tobacco Areas, where it plays an essential role in providing technical support, assistance, and incentives for farmers to transition to alternative and sustainable crops. This transition not only diversifies production but also contributes to improving the quality of life for farmers and protecting the environment.

The strengthening of the MDA will enable more effective action in implementing programs and policies that encourage tobacco planting diversification, promote farmers' health, and build a more sustainable and diversified agriculture.

The recreation of the MDA is an important step toward building a fairer, more inclusive country with a more sustainable agriculture.

# Interview

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## With Vera Luiza da Costa e Silva – Executive Secretary of the National Commission for the Implementation of the Framework Convention (CONICQ)

The tobacco industry, known for its lobbying tactics and attempts to influence tobacco control measures, is once again in the spotlight in discussions leading up to the Tenth Conference of the Parties (COP10) and the Third Meeting of the Parties to the Protocol to Eliminate Illicit Trade in Tobacco Products (MOP3).

A delegation from the tobacco industry, led by Deputy Heitor Schuch, along with the president of Fentifumo, Gualter Baptista Júnior, and other industry representatives, met with the Minister of Labor, Luiz Marinho, in an attempt to persuade him of the sector's economic importance, arguing that it generates jobs and taxes in various regions. The sector is concerned about the measures that will be recommended by COP10, scheduled for November in Panama.

To better understand this context, the Bulletin produced by the Tobacco Industry Monitoring Observatory (CETAB/Fiocruz) interviewed Vera Luiza da Costa e Silva, recently appointed Executive Secretary of CONICQ.

In an exclusive interview, Vera Luiza addressed various issues related to the tobacco industry's interference in COP10 and MOP3 and the progress of tobacco control in Brazil. Her observations and knowledge contribute significantly to raising awareness and combating smoking.

### **1) After being inactive for so long, how do you view this new moment for CONICQ?**

CONICQ is an important commission for

tobacco control in Brazil. It was created in 2003 to coordinate and articulate the actions of various agencies and institutions involved in tobacco control in the country. However, CONICQ was demobilized in 2019 by the Bolsonaro government.

The recent reactivation of CONICQ is a positive step for tobacco control in Brazil. The commission should help strengthen the actions of various agencies and institutions involved in tobacco control, such as the Ministry of Health, the National Health Surveillance Agency (ANVISA), and the National Cancer Institute (INCA).

CONICQ should also help coordinate tobacco control actions between the federal government, states, and municipalities. This is important because smoking is a public health problem that affects all levels of government.

### **2) Do we have evidence that the tobacco industry has tried to interfere in the discussions leading up to COP10 and MOP3?**

Yes, the tobacco industry has tried to interfere in the discussions leading up to COP10 and MOP3. The industry has lobbied delegates, provided funding to organizations that support its agenda, and used disinformation and propaganda campaigns to confuse delegates.

The tobacco industry's interference is a problem because it can lead to decisions that are not in favor of public health. For example, the tobacco industry managed to prevent COP8 from approving stricter measures against tobacco, such as the ban

on tobacco advertising and marketing.

**3) Historically, what strategies has the tobacco industry adopted to interfere in COPs? What are the impacts of this on decisions made during these conferences? Does it hinder the progress of tobacco control?**

The tobacco industry uses various strategies to interfere in COPs, including:

- \* Sending delegations to conferences;
- \* Lobbying delegates;
- \* Providing funding to organizations that support its agenda;
- \* Using disinformation and propaganda campaigns to confuse delegates.

These strategies have a negative impact on decisions made during conferences because they can lead to decisions that are not in favor of public health. For example, the tobacco industry managed to prevent COP8 from approving stricter measures against tobacco, such as the ban on tobacco advertising and marketing.

The tobacco industry's interference hinders the progress of tobacco control because it can prevent necessary measures from being taken to reduce tobacco consumption and protect the health of the population.

**4) In the face of the tobacco industry's influence, how can we strengthen the participation of civil society and public health representatives in COP10 and MOP3 discussions?**

We can strengthen the participation of civil society and public health representatives in COP10 and MOP3 discussions in several ways, including:

- \* Organizing events and campaigns to raise awareness among the population about the dangers of tobacco;
- \* Mobilizing people to participate in conferences;
- \* Lobbying delegates;
- \* Providing information and support to

delegates;

It is important that civil society and public health representatives are present at conferences to advocate for public health and to ensure that decisions made are in favor of the population.

**5) The award granted by WHO to CETAB/Fiocruz and ACT demonstrates the recognition of these organizations for tobacco control. How do you view the importance of this award for strengthening tobacco control in Brazil and worldwide?**

The award granted by WHO to CETAB/Fiocruz and ACT is an important recognition of the work of these organizations in tobacco control. The award shows that there are organizations committed to Brazilian public health and that are resilient in solidifying their work and actions. The award is also a message of hope for those who fight against tobacco, as it shows that their work is being recognized and that it is possible to overcome the tobacco epidemic.

**6) What are the expectations regarding the outcomes of COP10 and MOP3? What are the main challenges that still need to be addressed for effective tobacco control?**

COP10 and MOP3 are important opportunities for countries to make progress in tobacco control. Expectations include:

- \* Review of the implementation guidelines for Article 13 of the Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (FCTC), to account for the advent of social media and the internet.
- \* Implementation of Article 19 of the FCTC, which holds the tobacco industry accountable for the harm it causes.

We thank Vera Luiza da Costa e Silva for sharing her expertise and valuable insights into the tobacco industry's interference in COP10 and MOP3, as well as the

importance of these events for the future of tobacco control. Her contributions are

essential for advancing public health and combating smoking.

## Do you know what additives are used by the tobacco industry to mask the irritation caused by smoke?

Additives in tobacco products represent another strategy adopted by the tobacco industry to attract consumers, especially young people, and increase nicotine dependence.

These substances are incorporated into tobacco products, such as cigarettes and electronic cigarettes, with the aim of masking the raw tobacco's unpleasant taste and odor, making them more palatable. However, this tactic is accompanied by serious health risks.

A report prepared by the Tobacco Additives Working Group of the National Health Surveillance Agency (ANVISA) demonstrates that additives have the potential to make tobacco products more palatable and less repulsive, resulting in greater acceptance, especially among young people.

In 2012, ANVISA published RDC 14/2012, prohibiting the use of flavor and aroma additives in cigarettes, recognizing the risks of this practice, which can lead to early initiation of smoking and more intense nicotine dependence.

The Pan American Health Organization (PAHO) also emphasizes that additives in tobacco products, by disguising the harmful effects of tobacco, can contribute to a false perception of safety. Additionally, the Federal Supreme Court (STF) recognizes that banning these compounds is an important measure for public health.

Paumgarten et al. (2017) published a study

on "The Impact of Tobacco Additives on Cigarette Smoke Toxicity: A Critical Assessment of Industry-Sponsored Studies," where they discuss the effects of additives, including preservatives, flavorings, enhancers, humectants, sugars, and ammonium compounds, on cigarette smoke toxicity and highlight the need for rigorous evaluation of these additives, especially considering studies funded by the tobacco industry.

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## Do you know what additives are used by the tobacco industry to mask the irritation caused by smoke?

The recent proposal for tax reform has sparked discussions across the country, with one of the key topics being taxes related to "sin" products, such as cigarettes. The central idea behind these changes is to promote public health and reduce the consumption of these harmful products.

The tax reform proposes a significant increase in taxes on cigarettes, aiming not only to increase revenue but also to discourage consumption. This measure has the potential to improve the health of the population by making cigarettes less financially accessible, thereby reducing the harm caused by smoking.

However, these changes also raise questions about social and economic impact, especially for tobacco producers and industry workers. Therefore, it is important for the reform to be implemented in a balanced manner, considering not only fiscal aspects but also social implications.

Tax reform on tobacco products represents a significant step in the quest for a healthier society, but it also highlights the need for complementary policies to support those who will be affected by these changes.

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## Alliance One Company Ordered to Pay Compensation for Moral Damages in Case of

## Child Labor and Exposure to Pesticides

The recent court decision in a case involving Alliance One has brought to light crucial issues related to child labor and pesticide exposure, resulting in a significant award for moral damages. The company was found gravely at fault for triggering a debilitating disease in one of its former employees.

The crux of the matter revolves around the exploitation of a worker from the tender age of 13 in tobacco planting activities. This practice, considered child labor, would, on its own, be condemnable. However, the severity of the company's conduct did not stop there.

Alliance One, possessing technical knowledge of the aggressiveness of pesticides, enforced the use of these dangerous substances without adequately informing workers of the health risks. This resulted in workers' exposure to toxic substances without their full knowledge, which is considered a grave violation of the principles of Prevention and Precaution.

The victim developed a condition known as "late-onset organophosphate-induced polyneuropathy" due to exposure to pesticides. This debilitating and incapacitating condition permanently affected her quality of life. The company was found guilty of neglecting its duty to safeguard the physical and mental health of its workers, as established in the CLT (Consolidation of Labor Laws) and the Federal Constitution.

The court decision also relied on legal principles and international conventions. The Principle of Polluter-Pays Responsibility, based on the Eco 92 conference, Law 6.938/81, and Article 225 of the Federal Constitution of 1988, was invoked to hold the company responsible for workplace environmental degradation. Furthermore, ILO Convention 155, ratified by Brazil, clearly states that the final taker in the production chain must assume responsibility for the workplace environment. In this context, Alliance One



was held responsible for the harm caused to the worker's health.

The court considered various specific factors in the case, including the causal link between pesticide exposure and the disease, total and permanent work incapacity of the victim, the company's economic capacity, and the fact that the worker had been engaged in tobacco planting since the age of 13. Based on these elements, the judgment awarded moral damages in the amount of R\$ 400,000.00.

The court decision represents a significant milestone in the fight against child labor and exposure to toxic chemicals in the workplace. It reinforces companies' responsibility to protect the health and safety of their workers and serves as a reminder that irresponsible practices will not be tolerated under the law.

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