



# OBSERVATÓRIO SOBRE AS ESTRATÉGIAS DA INDÚSTRIA DO TABACO

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BULLETIN 12

## *Editorial*

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### *Challenges at COP10 and Tobacco Industry Resistance*

In this special edition of the Tobacco Industry Monitoring Observatory Bulletin from Cetab/Fiocruz, we will present an analysis of some events that occurred during the Tenth Conference of the Parties to the Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (COP10) held in February 2024 in Panama.

COP10 was the stage for important debates such as the environmental impact of tobacco products, where Brazil, together with Panama and Ecuador, led discussions on the tobacco industry's responsibility and the damage caused to the environment.

Vera Luiza da Costa e Silva, the executive secretary of the national commission created to ensure the implementation of the Framework Convention on Tobacco Control in Brazil, emphasized the need to direct responsibility to the industry, which often tries to transfer this burden to consumers. However, the discussion has only just begun and already faces resistance from countries such as China, Guatemala, the Philippines, Guinea-Bissau, Malawi, and Mozambique.

Despite COP not accrediting industry representatives or their front groups, attempts at interference were evident and once again revealed the struggle between the economic interests of this industry and initiatives aimed at public health.

The tobacco industry, often portraying itself as a victim, seeks to perpetuate its interests even amidst solid evidence of tobacco's harm to public health and the environment. Maneuvers to hinder environmental debate at COP10 reflect the urgency of addressing the interference of these corporations.

By inviting our readers to explore the detailed articles in this bulletin, we urge reflection on the role of the tobacco industry in global health and the environment. It is necessary for us to be informed and engaged to confront the challenges posed by commercial interests that often clash with public health preservation. The battle at COP10 is just one chapter in this long journey, and understanding it is essential for advancing towards healthier and more sustainable policies.

Happy reading and reflection!

Luis Guilherme Hasselmann

## Unveiling the Behind-the-Scenes of the Conference of the Parties for Tobacco Control

With the conclusion of COP-10, we share a critical analysis of the events leading up to the conference, marked by concerns over potential interference from the tobacco industry, especially following its postponement, which occurred due to security concerns of the delegations caused by protests against agreements between mining companies and the government of Panama, which took place in November 2023.

### **Parliamentary Influence: A Breach in COP-10**

The tobacco industry, identifying a strategic opportunity, sought to interfere in COP-10, originally scheduled for February, taking advantage of the postponement granted after efforts by state deputy Marcus Vinícius (PP) in Rio Grande do Sul. The strategy involved strengthening the organization of the sector and influencing global discussions on smoking, turning the postponement into a window for meetings, political negotiations, and, most concerningly, the active presence of industry representatives at the event.

### **Questionable Strategies: Named Invitations and Suspicious Alliances**

The adopted tactic was based on named invitations issued by tobacco companies to parliamentarians, allowing them to request official missions to participate in COP-10 using public resources. Highlighting the case of Deputy Pezenti (MDB-SC), whose invitation purportedly came from the Council of Development and Integration of the South (Codesul). This practice, questionable in its essence, raises doubts about the integrity of the process and suggests a concerning alliance between government representatives and the tobacco industry.

### **Parliamentary Delegation and Industry Demands**

The formation of a delegation of parliamentarians, led by Heitor Schuch

(PSB-RS) and Covatti Filho (PP-RS), advocating for the interests of the industry under the guise of representing rural producers, was detailed. The state subcommittee, represented by deputies Kelly Moraes (PL-RS), Elton Weber (PSB), Zé Nunes (PT), and Marcus Vinícius (PP), expressed demands favorable to the adoption of new technologies by the tobacco industry, such as heated tobacco devices and electronic cigarettes, raising questions about the true representativeness of these demands.

### **Challenges to Public Health and Contested Presence at COP-10**

The article highlighted the disregard for Article 5.3 of the FCTC, which states that "Parties shall act to protect these policies from commercial and other vested interests of the tobacco industry in accordance with national law." The persistent pursuit of participation, even against established rules, evidenced the lobbying power of the industry, jeopardizing public health policies related to tobacco control.

### **Ministerial Pressures and Industry Defense**

The ministers of the Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock (Mapa) and the Ministry of Agrarian Development (MDA) pressured the Ministry of Health to maintain a "neutral" position regarding Electronic Smoking Devices (ESDs), banned in Brazil since 2009. The letters signed by Carlos Fávaro and Paulo Teixeira suggested a worrying influence of the industry on Brazil's position at COP-10.

### **Attacks on Conicq and the Industry's Victimhood Narrative**

The article revealed how some parliamentarians attacked the National Commission for the Implementation of the Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (Conicq), seeking to weaken it. These attacks, often unfounded, aimed to undermine the commission's participation

in COP, favoring the interests of the tobacco industry.

### **Conclusion: A Warning for Public Health**

Amidst these events, we emphasize the importance of society being aware of the behind-the-scenes of COP-10 and the insidious attempt by the tobacco industry to influence public policies that directly affect public health. Transparency and vigilance are crucial to preserving the true purpose of

the conference: tobacco control for global health.

### **Source**

[https://ojoioeotrigo.com.br/2024/02/parlamentares-interferencia-industria-tabaco-cop-10/?fbclid=IwAR2kvfrNTh5VoohqivThICI5W1\\_weFNM5ITw-qdPKu4vPNaeMqZZriVxgbA](https://ojoioeotrigo.com.br/2024/02/parlamentares-interferencia-industria-tabaco-cop-10/?fbclid=IwAR2kvfrNTh5VoohqivThICI5W1_weFNM5ITw-qdPKu4vPNaeMqZZriVxgbA)

## **MDA Reinforces Commitment to Crop Diversification Program after Deliberations at COP 10**

During the 10th Conference of the Parties to the Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (FCTC), held recently in Panama, the Ministry of Agrarian Development and Family Agriculture (MDA) officially reaffirmed its commitment to the Crop Diversification Program in Tobacco-Producing Areas. This move was highlighted as a significant step towards promoting more sustainable and healthier agricultural practices.

The decision, made in the context of the FCTC led by the World Health Organization, aims to address the challenges associated with tobacco consumption and mitigate its health impacts. The emphasis on crop diversification represents an effort to provide economically viable alternatives to family farmers who historically depend on tobacco production.

The economic importance of tobacco for farmers, especially in the Southern and Northeastern regions of Brazil, was recognized during the deliberations. However, the decision to resume and strengthen the Diversification Program highlights a commitment to sustainability and the pursuit of solutions that reconcile the preservation of the local economy with the promotion of more balanced agricultural practices.

The MDA, responsible for this initiative, emphasizes the international recognition received by the Diversification Program, highlighting the commitment to revitalize and further strengthen it. Open dialogue with society is emphasized as a crucial element for the success of the project, inviting all interested sectors to contribute with opinions, suggestions, and concerns.

The COP 10 event provided a scenario where important decisions were made regarding tobacco control and its ramifications. By reiterating its commitment

to the Crop Diversification Program, the MDA highlights the intersection between public policies, health, and agriculture.

### **Source**

<https://www.gov.br/mda/pt-br/noticias/2024/02/posicionamento-oficial-do-mda-na-10a-conferencia-das-partes-da-convencao-quadro-para-o-controle-do-tabaco-cqct?fbclid=IwAR1hUhvgX2BahKJFZxc-vEjuGaY5lqhNvZGjLbd6myGWvb7gsQWlQ6DpO9g>

## **COP-10: Deliberations on Rural Workers and the Tobacco Industry with Involvement of the Brazilian Ambassador**

The participation of Brazilian Ambassador Carlos Henrique Moojen de Abreu e Silva in the Conference of the Parties to the Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (COP-10) brought crucial discussions to the forefront regarding the interests of rural workers and the tobacco industry. The meeting focused on the representations of these sectors, generating pertinent reflections.

The president of Fentifumo, Gualter Baptista Júnior, expressed the sector's apprehension regarding the 40,000 direct jobs generated by the tobacco industry in the Southern Region of Brazil. Recognizing the economic importance of tobacco for these regions, the debate on reducing planted areas and its impacts on employment highlights the complexity of the situation, especially considering the public health issues linked to tobacco consumption.

CETAB reiterates its commitment to comprehensively address the reality surrounding the tobacco industry. Understanding the economic concerns raised by sector representatives, the focus remains on seeking solutions that harmonize economic needs with the promotion of public health.

Ambassador Abreu e Silva clarified his leadership role in the Brazilian delegation at COP-10, without the capacity for direct interference in the event. Committing to report the data and concerns of the workers to the federal government, CETAB hopes that these concerns will be weighed fairly and balanced, considering not only immediate economic interests but also the health of the population.

The representativeness of tobacco producers, as highlighted by the vice president of Afubra, Romeu Schneider, is considered imperative. However, the encouragement to seek sustainable alternatives is emphasized, promoting economic diversification and the well-being of communities dependent on tobacco production.

### **Source**

<https://folhadomate.com/livre/embaixador-do-panama-levara-pleito-dos-trabalhadores-do-tabaco-ao-itamaraty/?fbclid=IwAR2vjQQ9SiZkVu9uPbyMpnKRk2EspakboGO5yDBgTt5XF8BMwqmPoj7Oq3k>

### **The Role of Vera Luiza da Costa e Silva in Tobacco Control: A Look at the Facts**

Recently, Gazeta do Sul, a publication associated with the tobacco industry, highlighted Vera Luiza da Costa e Silva's tireless efforts in tobacco control. This is a crucial moment to analyze and understand the context amidst accusations made by sectors with specific interests in maintaining the status quo.

Vera, the current Executive Secretary of the National Commission for the Implementation of the Framework Convention (Conicq), is globally recognized in the fight against tobacco, with a four-decade-long trajectory. She held the position of Head of the Secretariat of the Framework Convention alongside the World Health Organization (WHO) during her leadership, and the Framework Convention on Tobacco Control was established in 2003 when Brazil ratified its participation in the treaty.

Returning to Brazil, Vera continues to lead innovative proposals in combating tobacco use, now as part of Conicq. Her contributions at COP-10 addressed relevant issues, including environmental concerns associated with tobacco production. The Brazilian delegation brought this topic to light, reflecting Vera's view on the need to rethink tobacco production in light of environmental concerns.

Vera emphasizes the importance of policies that promote diversification on tobacco-producing properties, providing viable alternatives to families involved in this culture. Her vision of anticipating market changes is crucial, considering that, as she points out, "the market for tobacco is shrinking worldwide."

However, we face resistance from the tobacco industry and its representatives, who challenge Vera's assertions. The Gazeta do Sul article, committed to the interests of the tobacco industry, attempts to discredit her position by contrasting recent data indicating stability in production and consumption. Vera reinforces that tobacco's days are numbered, citing the example of the typewriter, which was widely adopted in the past and is now part of history.

It is essential to highlight that, even in the face of protests, Vera remains steadfast in her commitment to public health and the promotion of sustainable alternatives. The numbers presented by Gazeta do Sul do not reflect the entirety of the global situation and cannot be used to discredit Vera Luiza da Costa e Silva's dedicated work.

At this moment, it is crucial to objectively analyze the facts and recognize the need to address the challenges posed by tobacco use. Vera's vision and commitment to public health deserve an analysis supported by data and a reflection on the future of tobacco control.

### **Source**

<https://www.gaz.com.br/vera-luiza-da-costa-e-silva-uma-brasileira-que-milita-contra-o-tabaco/?fbclid=IwAR21VBY-FfJ97yiDMipUJadorS2cgm9S->

## **Countries United in New Agreement to Finance the Fight Against Tobacco**

During the Third Meeting of the Parties to the Protocol to Eliminate Illicit Trade in Tobacco Products of the Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (MOP3), the signatory countries of the Framework Convention on Tobacco Control reached an agreement to establish an investment fund aimed at financing the global fight against tobacco. The initiative was announced by the head of the Secretariat of the Framework Convention on Tobacco Control of the World Health Organization (WHO), Adriana Blanco Marquizo.

The creation of the fund stands out as an innovative approach to generate essential resources for the implementation of international anti-tobacco agreements, considering that the consumption of tobacco products is related to over 8 million deaths annually worldwide, including 1.3 million victims of passive smoking, according to WHO data from 2023.

An initial capital of 25 million dollars will be considered for the Protocol and double for the Framework Convention. These resources will be deposited in the World Bank, where they will be invested, with the proceeds available to finance research and other actions. After a few years, the original capital will be returned to the donors.

The confidentiality of the process prevents the disclosure of the donors at the moment, but Adriana assured that when formalized, this information will be shared. Additionally, she highlighted that estimates from the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO), a WHO member, indicate that around 10% of the global cigarette market is illicit, exceeding 50% in some countries. Adriana emphasized that the tobacco industry is documentedly involved in illegal trade, despite claiming to be a victim of this practice.

### **Source**

<https://oglobo.globo.com/saude/noticia/2024/02/16/paises-vao-criar-fundo-para-financiar-luta-contra-o-tabaco.ghtml>

## Integrating Tobacco Control into Global Demands at COP10

**Breno Gaspar**

COP10 focused centrally on integrating tobacco control into the pressing demands of the current world, with a highlight on Article 18 of the FCTC. Initially absent from the agenda, the inclusion of tobacco in environmental discussions was the result of a joint effort led by Brazil, Ecuador, and Panama. This decision aims to align the actions of the Parties under the auspices of the FCTC with the principles of other international agreements without compromising its implementation, reflecting the importance of not jeopardizing ongoing negotiations in international environmental forums.

The attempt to reaffirm the risks of tobacco to the environment throughout its life cycle and strengthen the provisions of Article 18 of the FCTC underscores the need for integrating tobacco control policies with broader environmental considerations. This can potentially propel the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee on Plastic Pollution to promote comprehensive regulations related to plastic in tobacco products. International and inter-ministerial cooperation will be crucial in addressing these challenges and putting tobacco control at the forefront of the global commitment to protecting health and the environment.

COP10's decision on Article 18 reflects the importance of collaborative efforts in pursuit of a healthier planet and sets a new tone for COP11. The inclusion of tobacco on the environmental agenda highlights a significant shift in the concerns of the Parties, demonstrating a movement towards a more integrated approach to addressing public health and environmental issues. This multilateral effort may give renewed momentum to the neglected articles of the FCTC, which rely on inter-ministerial cooperation for their effective implementation.



# Interview

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## Exclusive Interview with Vera Luiza da Costa e Silva: Exploring the Environmental Impact of Tobacco at COP10

We are pleased to present an exclusive interview with Vera Luiza da Costa e Silva, the key figure behind the Brazilian proposal to discuss the environmental impact of tobacco at COP 10. As the Executive Secretary of the National Commission for the Implementation of the Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (CONICQ), she has been an unwavering voice in advocating for holding the tobacco industry accountable for the environmental damage caused by the production and consumption of tobacco.

Vera Luiza da Costa e Silva has been leading Brazil's efforts to raise awareness about the environmental impact of tobacco. The Brazilian proposal, which received support from Ecuador and Panama, was embraced by the majority of the 183 participating countries, highlighting the urgent need to separate the environmental issue of tobacco into a specific agenda item in the full implementation of the treaty.

By exploring the harmful effects of tobacco production, such as the extensive use of pesticides that contaminate soil and water reservoirs and cause deforestation of native forests, Vera Luiza underscores the importance of a comprehensive approach to addressing these challenges. She emphasizes that the environmental impacts of tobacco are not limited to the production phase but also extend to post-consumption, including the improper disposal of cigarette filters and electronic cigarettes, which are made of plastic, as well as the batteries containing heavy metals that require special treatment.

In this interview, Vera Luiza shares her insights on the importance of addressing the environmental impact of tobacco, the challenges faced in implementing this proposal, and opportunities to promote effective global

cooperation. She emphasizes the need to create specific guidelines to assist countries in formulating public policies aimed at environmental protection related to tobacco. She also highlights the need to involve all sectors of society, including governments, civil society, and research institutions, to address these challenges comprehensively and effectively. She emphasizes that the Brazilian proposal at COP10 was an important step in the right direction to protect the environment and the health of future generations.

Read the full interview with Vera Luiza da Costa e Silva and gain insights into global efforts to control tobacco and protect the environment.

### **1. Could you share more details about the Brazilian proposal at COP10 to discuss the environmental impact caused by tobacco consumption? How was this proposal received by representatives from other countries?**

In the context of COP10, Brazil proposed a more comprehensive approach to the environmental impact of tobacco, highlighting the need to separate this issue into a specific agenda item, in addition to integrating Article 18 independently. This proposal gained significant support and was recognized as a historic step. By expanding the debate beyond tobacco-producing countries, we were able to highlight how tobacco affects not only during production but also after consumption. For example, the waste generated by cigarette filters and electronic smoking devices (ENDS) is a major environmental concern, with visible impacts on oceans and wildlife. By bringing this discussion to the COP agenda, we hope to promote more effective implementation of Article 18, which has historically been underutilized.

**2. In the context of a recent statement of yours, where you highlight the responsibility of the tobacco industry for environmental damage, how do you believe this accountability could be effectively implemented?**

The tobacco industry often attempts to distance itself from the environmental problems it creates. On one hand, we see corporate social responsibility campaigns, but in practice, there is extensive use of pesticides in tobacco production, affecting the health of farmers and causing environmental damage. Additionally, the strategy of shifting responsibility for cigarette butt disposal to end consumers is insufficient and overlooks the environmental impact of this waste. It is essential for the industry to be held accountable for these issues, which may involve legal measures, such as the ongoing civil actions in Brazil to reimburse healthcare costs. We need to closely examine how the industry can be held accountable for these single-use disposable products and their environmental impacts.

**3. Regarding the need to adopt policies that allow for diversification on tobacco-producing properties, how do you see this transition, and what viable alternatives would there be for families dependent on this culture?**

Diversification of crops is a crucial solution for farmers who rely solely on tobacco. With international demand declining, it is urgent to provide viable alternatives for these farmers. This is not just about changing the type of crop but also creating new business models and sales channels to ensure the economic sustainability of these changes. For example, we can explore the production of agroecological crops or other commodities, such as cotton and yerba mate, which can be targeted for different markets, including local consumption and even use in government programs, such as school meals. Embrapa and other research institutions play a fundamental role in the development and implementation of these alternatives, ensuring the success of these transitions.



Foto: Vera Luiza da Costa e Silva

**4. You stated that "tobacco's days are numbered" and made a comparison with the typewriter. Could you elaborate more on this vision of a tobacco-free future and what challenges do you anticipate in this process?**

We are witnessing a significant shift in tobacco consumption patterns worldwide. While traditional cigarette consumption is declining, the industry is increasingly investing in alternative products, such as nicotine devices. This transition suggests that the days of conventional tobacco are numbered. Governments need to prepare for this change by implementing policies that encourage crop diversification and reduce dependence on tobacco. It is important to recognize that, although the tobacco industry may resist these changes, the global trend is clear: tobacco consumption is decreasing, and alternative products are gaining ground.

**5. Despite the industry releasing data indicating stability in tobacco production and consumption, official data makes it clear that there is a decrease in the global market for tobacco. How do you assess the**

**industry's attempt to distort data and the prospect of a decline in the tobacco industry?**

The tobacco industry has a documented history of manipulating data and information to promote its commercial interests. A clear example of this is the use of the smuggling argument to promote the legalization of electronic smoking devices.

However, we know that smuggling is not solely caused by product illegality, and legalizing new nicotine products will not solve this problem. It is essential for public policies to be based on solid, independent evidence, avoiding being influenced by commercial interests. Transparency and integrity of data are essential to ensure that public health policies are effective and promote societal well-being.

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