



# OBSERVATÓRIO SOBRE AS ESTRATÉGIAS DA INDÚSTRIA DO TABACO

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*Editorial*

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## **TOBACCO CONTROL AS A FIELD OF PUBLIC HEALTH ACTION**

Smoking is a serious public health problem as it affects not only smokers, but also people exposed to tobacco smoke. In recent decades, governments around the world have been adopting tobacco control measures to reduce their harm to human health and to the environment.

In response to the tobacco epidemic, the first international public health treaty, the Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (FCTC), was proposed at the 52nd session of the World Health Organization (WHO) in 1999. The agreement came into force in 2005 and its main objective is:

"To protect present and future generations from the devastating health, social, environmental and economic consequences of smoking and of exposure to tobacco smoke."

Brazil adhered to the treaty that same year. To date, it has been ratified by 181 countries that have assumed the commitment to implement a comprehensive set of cost-effective measures to reduce the number of smokers, morbidity and mortality from smoking-related diseases, and to develop measures to contain the devastating social, economic and environmental effects caused by the cultivation of tobacco and by the consumption of its products.



Because of its intersectoral nature, tobacco control policy has become state policy involving different ministries and government organizations, such as Fiocruz, which is linked to the Ministry of Health, as well as non-governmental organizations, such as the Aliança para o Controle do Tabaco (Alliance for Tobacco Control) and the Fundação do Cancer (Cancer Foundation).

Fiocruz, that ever since its foundation has been "contributing to the prevention and promotion of health in Brazil, in order to improve the quality of life of the Brazilian population and to effectively reduce social inequalities, having the right to health and broad citizenship as core values", created, in 2012, the Centro de Estudos Sobre Tabaco e Saúde (Center for Tobacco and Health Studies) (Cetab), at the Escola Nacional de Saúde Pública Sérgio Arouca (National School of Public Health Sérgio Arouca) (ENSP).

Cetab's objective is to develop research and to act in teaching and in technical cooperation in the field of tobacco control. Ever since, the center has been developing relevant projects, such as the Observatory on Tobacco Industry Strategies in Brazil.

Launched in 2016, the Observatory is a pioneer in the world as, so far, it is the only one operating under the auspices of a public institution, and its primary objective is to work towards compliance with Article 5.3 of the WHO FCTC, which states that "treaty signatories shall establish and implement public health policies related to tobacco control with the aim of protecting tobacco control policies from tobacco industry interests, in accordance with national legislation".

Despite the significant reduction in the prevalence of smoking among those over 18 years of age, from 34.8% (PNSN-1989) to 14.7% (PNS-2013), there is nothing to celebrate, since the industry, in the name of freedom of expression and individual rights, leads to the death of more than 200 thousand people per year and withdraws annually from the public safe around 20 billion reais in order to ensure that individuals have access to the treatment of tobacco related diseases in Brazil.

The Observatory gathers and analyzes documents, provides information on what strategies the tobacco industry uses to compromise public policies for tobacco control and presents the legislative measures adopted by Brazil in order to comply with WHO FCTC.



In this first edition (Bulletin zero), we collected testimonies from experts, researchers and scientists, such as Dr. Vera Luiza da Costa e Silva, head of the Secretariat of the Framework Convention on Tobacco Control of the World Health Organization, that whilst emphasizing the relevance of the Observatory, also makes reference to the importance of

Fiocruz in the development of tools capable of regulating the interests of this industry. Following in the same direction, Tania Cavalcante, executive secretary of the National Commission for the Implementation of the Framework Convention (Coniq), and Paula Johns, director of the Alliance for Tobacco Control, speak about the need to monitor, vigilate and publicize the tactics adopted by the Tobacco industry, which, over the years, act to compromise public policies.

*Nisia Trindade Lima,  
President of Fiocruz*

## SENTINELS OF HEALTH



*Vera Luiza da Costa e Silva,*  
Head of the Secretariat of  
the Framework Convention  
on Tobacco Control

At the end of the 20th Century, it became clear for a growing number of specialists and public health professionals that the tobacco epidemic was caused by a transnational actor – the tobacco industry. A global problem emerged, and as such it needed a coordinated response. In this context, in February 2005, the WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control came into force as the most important instrument to face one of the most serious public health problems in the world.

Within the comprehensive measures included in the Convention is Article 5.3. This proposition affirms the fact that the 180 countries that have ratified the Convention, including Brazil, must protect public health policies from the influence of the tobacco industry. Although it seems a less important aspect of the global battle against smoking, it is in fact one of the most critical aspects of our work.

We need to understand the ways through which the industry acts, what its strategy is, what its tactics are, how far it is willing to go and in what way. In sum, the focus on monitoring the sordid tactics of the tobacco industry is a crucial part of the work on Article 5.3 and on the guidelines for its implementation, endorsed by all countries that have ratified the Framework Convention.

Exactly one year ago, we had the privilege of inaugurating the Brazilian Observatory on the Strategies of the Tobacco Industry at the Oswaldo Cruz Foundation (Fiocruz), one of the most important Latin American institutions in international public health. Its Center for Tobacco and Health Studies (Cetab), a member of the National School for Public Health (ENSP), has established, in partnership with the Convention Secretariat and with the University of Bath, the first observatory of a global network of interconnected centers, which are being inaugurated in countries such as South Africa, Lebanon, Russia and Sri Lanka. Together, these observatories - all of which belong to academic institutions - will monitor evidence-based behavior of the tobacco industry through methodologies that stimulate scientific studies, while encouraging governments to establish public health measures and civil society advocacy, based on reliable information.

These new units will act as surveillance towers for the public health movement, which will help us look at tobacco control mappings in more detail. They will relate to national institutions, but will also have an international role in communicating with each other and in creating a network that will outline the behavior of the tobacco industry globally. Each observatory will have a singular contribution to make; Brazil, for example, is one of the three largest tobacco producers in the world, as well as a major exporter.

Our observatories will become important sentinels, acting as watchmen in a tower looking for threats that may sound the alarm when they notice anything that endangers our communities. Such observatories will also develop the skills to understand the environment to be monitored and to detect subtle changes, so that by demonstrating the strategies of the tobacco industry, they can show beyond that which is evident at first sight.

## REDUCTION OF HIGHLY AVOIDABLE DEATHS

In 2001, WHO published an analysis of tobacco companies' internal documents that had been judicially confiscated. This action demonstrates the industry's unfair consumer-related practices and its strategies to prevent smoking-reduction actions in different countries. In response, the 54th World Health Assembly issued a Resolution on "Transparency in the Tobacco Control Process" urging WHO and its Member States to remain vigilant and to protect these policies from the action of the tobacco industry.

At present, there is a broad understanding that consumption of tobacco products has been progressively built up by market strategies over the last two centuries (WHO, 2008).

For this reason, the WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (FCTC) has recognized that Country Parties, in fact, "need to be alert to the activities of the tobacco industry that aim to weaken or subvert efforts of tobacco control policies". As determined by Article 5.3, "in establishing and implementing their public health policies for tobacco control, the Parties shall act to protect these policies from commercial interests and other interests of the tobacco industry in accordance with national law."



*Tania Cavalcante*  
Executive Secretary  
for the National  
Commission for the  
Framework Convention  
(Coniqc)

Consequently, these companies, as well as their strategies to subvert measures to reduce tobacco consumption, need to be monitored and observed. With this in mind, about two years ago, the idea of an instrument that would complement the Observatory of National Tobacco Control Policy - now hosted on the Inca (Instituto Nacional do Cancer – National Institute for Cancer) website with the aim of monitoring the implementation of the FCTC - arose. We soon thought of Fiocruz, through its School of Public Health and its center of excellence that invests in the Organization

of the Center of Studies on Tobacco (Cetab) in order to house and coordinate the Observatory on the Strategies of the Tobacco Industry in Brazil. In its first year of existence, the Observatory provided the National Program for Tobacco Control

with valuable information for compliance with Article 5.3 of the FCTC and it will certainly continue to contribute to the goal of helping Brazil to achieve the main objective of this treaty: to reduce highly avoidable tobacco related diseases and deaths.

## THE OBSERVATORY ON STRATEGIES OF THE TOBACCO INDUSTRY



*Paula Johns*  
Executive Director  
of the Alliance for  
Tobacco Control

The initiative of the Center for Tobacco and Health Studies of Fiocruz's National School of Public Health to launch the first Observatory on Strategies of Tobacco Industry in Brazil, in 2016, paved the way for the important initiative for us to have a repository of documents that offer information to researchers, journalists and activists regarding the analysis and verification of strategies and tactics used by the tobacco industry in Brazil.

The Observatory's format addresses not only the specific theme of tobacco, but also functions in an analytical framework model, which places market actors in the spotlight as determining actors in the power relations that govern public policies.

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**FCTC**  
WHO FRAMEWORK CONVENTION  
ON TOBACCO CONTROL  
SECRETARIAT-OBSERVATORY



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