

**Webinar: Experiences and Innovative Strategies to Protect Children and Youth from Tobacco Marketing**

***Monday, June 3, 2024, 11:00 am - 1:00 pm, EST.***

***Jointly organized by Pan American Health Organization, Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids, and Corporate Accountability***

**Objectives**

- Share with PAHO Member States, civil society organizations, and academia, under the framework of World No Tobacco Day 2024, the tobacco industry's strategies to interfere with tobacco control policies, especially those targeting children and youth, at both regional and national levels.
- Give a platform to young people across the Americas, who are calling for the tobacco industry to stop targeting them with products that are harmful to their health.
- Strengthen Member States' technical capacity on the specific guidelines recently approved at the Tenth Session of the Conference of the Parties to the WHO FCTC to address cross-border tobacco advertising, promotion and sponsorship and the depiction of tobacco in entertainment media for implementation of Article 13 (Tobacco advertising, promotion and sponsorship) of the WHO FCTC

**Target audience**

Taking advantage of the virtual format, all PAHO Member States will be invited and will nominate their representatives, whose profiles are: Government delegates from each Party State:

- The WHO FCTC or tobacco control focal point of the Ministry of Health or representative of the National Coordinating Mechanism for tobacco control (if applicable),
  - Representative of the International Cooperation Department (or similar) of the Ministry of Health (preferably involved in country representation at international meetings related to tobacco control),
  - Representative from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs involved in monitoring of the WHO FCTC; and
  - Representative from any other Ministry/Government sector partner in the WHO FCTC implementation in the country.
- PAHO country office focal points for tobacco control.
- Civil society organizations in official relations with PAHO.

**Context**

Globally, the tobacco epidemic continues to be one of the greatest threats to public health, accounting for more than 8 million deaths each year.<sup>i</sup> Particularly in the Americas, it is responsible for 16% of deaths from cardiovascular disease, 25% from cancer, 52% from chronic respiratory diseases and 11%

from diabetes.<sup>ii</sup> However, the tobacco industry has a long history of deceiving the public, including denying the harms of tobacco, such as lung cancer.<sup>iii</sup> The industry, while continuing to produce billions of cigarettes each year, persists in marketing what it calls “safer” or “reduced risk” products.<sup>iv</sup> Whilst their long-term health effects are not fully understood, current evidence shows that they release toxic substances that are carcinogenic or increase the risk of heart and lung disorders. They can also affect brain development and cause learning disorders in young people.<sup>v</sup>

The tobacco industry's efforts to market its products are not limited to captivating the adult population, as it often claims, but also targets primarily vulnerable groups, such as children and youth. Given that half of all tobacco users die, the tobacco and nicotine market heavily relies on attracting young, non-smokers. The tobacco industry employs various tactics to gain the trust and interest of this audience from an early age.<sup>vi</sup> Consequently, children 13–15-years old are using e-cigarettes at rates higher than adults in all WHO regions.<sup>vii</sup> Likewise, the average prevalence of conventional cigarette use among children 13-15-year-old in the Americas is also one of the highest in the world.<sup>viii</sup> Menthol cigarettes<sup>ix</sup> and electronic cigarettes<sup>x</sup> with eye-catching designs have further contributed to popularizing these products among the younger generations, while many consumers are largely unaware of the adverse effects on their health.

The tobacco industry invests enormous amounts of money in lobbying against tobacco control policies and funds organizations that promote its interests.<sup>xi</sup> If these interference tactics are left unchecked, immeasurable damage is inflicted on public health.<sup>xii</sup> In addition, the production and consumption of tobacco and nicotine products have a detrimental cascading effect on other critical issues such as the environment,<sup>xiii</sup> mental health,<sup>xiv</sup> and child labor.<sup>xv</sup>

WHO is committed to exposing industry attempts<sup>xvi</sup> to undermine health policies as well as urges policymakers to stand firm against tobacco industry influence and to promote proven effective measures to reduce tobacco use, as outlined in the WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (FCTC)<sup>xvii</sup> and decisions adopted by the Conference of the Parties (COP) to the WHO FCTC. Tobacco industry interference tactics encompass the use of front groups and third parties claiming no connection to the industry, social media influencers, sponsored events, funded biased scientists and research, and support for corporate social responsibility initiatives, among others.

To contribute global efforts aimed at protecting children and youth from tobacco industry strategies, PAHO/WHO, Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids, and Corporate Accountability jointly organize this regional webinar. The event facilitates the exchange and reflection on “Experiences and innovative strategies to protect children and youth from tobacco marketing”, in commemoration of World No Tobacco Day 2024.<sup>xix</sup> Simultaneous interpretation in Spanish, English and Portuguese will be provided during the event.



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- i WHO, Tobacco, <https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/tobacco>
- ii PAHO, Virtual Technical Training on Tobacco Control: Accelerating the MPOWER Package Implementation during COVID-19 in the Americas, <https://www.paho.org/en/virtual-technical-training-tobacco-control-accelerating-mpower-package-implementation-during-0>
- iii STOP, Decades of Lies Show Tobacco Companies Can't Be Trusted, <https://exposetobacco.org/news/tobacco-industry-lies/#:~:text=For%20decades%2C%20Big%20Tobacco%20publicly,was%20causing%20to%20their%20bodies.>
- iv STOP, Is PMI Really Creating a 'Smoke-Free Future?', <https://exposetobacco.org/news/pmi-smoke-free-future/>
- v WHO, Urgent action needed to protect children and prevent the uptake of e-cigarettes, <https://www.who.int/news/item/14-12-2023-urgent-action-needed-to-protect-children-and-prevent-the-uptake-of-e-cigarettes>
- vi WHO, Tobacco, <https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/tobacco>
- vii WHO, Tobacco use declines despite tobacco industry efforts to jeopardize progress, <https://www.who.int/news/item/16-01-2024-tobacco-use-declines-despite-tobacco-industry-efforts-to-jeopardize-progress>
- viii OMS, WHO global report on trends in prevalence of tobacco use 2000–2030, <https://iris.who.int/bitstream/handle/10665/375711/9789240088283-eng.pdf?sequence=1>
- ix OMS, WHO global report on trends in prevalence of tobacco use 2000–2030, <https://iris.who.int/bitstream/handle/10665/375711/9789240088283-eng.pdf?sequence=1>
- x Campaigning for Tobacco-Free Kids, Sistemas Electrónicos de Administración de Nicotina (SEAN), <https://www.tobaccofreekids.org/es/productos-nuevos>
- xi WHO, World No Tobacco Day 2020, <https://www.paho.org/en/campaigns/world-no-tobacco-day-2020>
- xii Corporate Accountability, INFORME: Las grandes tabacaleras intensifican su interferencia en la formulación de políticas públicas en América Latina y el Caribe, <https://corporateaccountability.org/media/reporte-las-grandes-tabacaleras-intensifican-su-interferencia-en-la-formulacion-de-politicas-publicas-en-america-latina-y-el-caribe/>
- xiii OMS, WHO raises alarm on tobacco industry environmental impact, <https://www.who.int/news/item/31-05-2022-who-raises-alarm-on-tobacco-industry-environmental-impact>
- xiv OMS, Tobacco use and mental health, [https://www.who.int/europe/publications/m/item/tobacco-use-and-mental-health-\(2021\)](https://www.who.int/europe/publications/m/item/tobacco-use-and-mental-health-(2021))
- xv OMS, Tobacco use and mental health, [https://www.who.int/europe/publications/m/item/tobacco-use-and-mental-health-\(2021\)](https://www.who.int/europe/publications/m/item/tobacco-use-and-mental-health-(2021))
- xvi OMS, New WHO campaign highlights tobacco industry tactics to influence public health policies, <https://www.who.int/news/item/16-11-2023-new-who-campaign-highlights-tobacco-industry-tactics-to-influence-public-health-policies>
- xvii WHO, Framework Convention on Tobacco Control, <https://fctc.who.int/publications/i/item/9241591013>
- xviii OMS, Decisions of the Conference of the Parties, <https://fctc.who.int/es/who-fctc/governance/conference-of-the-parties/decisions-of-the-conference-of-the-parties-to-the-who-fctc>
- xix OMS, World No Tobacco Day 2024, <https://www.who.int/campaigns/world-no-tobacco-day/2024>