



A GLOBAL
TOBACCO
INDUSTRY
WATCHDOG

Global Tobacco Industry Interference Index 2023

Virtual Press Briefing, Tuesday, November 14, 2023

Speaker Biographies

Moderator:

Dr. Vera da Costa e Silva



Vera da Costa e Silva is medical doctor and PhD in Public Health and Epidemiology. She has worked globally as Head of the Secretariat of the WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (WHO FCTC) and as director of WHO Tobacco Free Initiative. In Brazil she coordinated for national tobacco control and cancer prevention efforts at the National Cancer Institute and established the Center for Studies on Tobacco and Health at Oswaldo Cruz Foundation (Fiocruz). She is currently the Chief of the Brazilian Commission for the Implementation of the WHO FCTC & Protocols at the MOH.

Speakers:

Dr. Ahmad Abbadi



Dr. Ahmad Abbadi is the EMRO Regional Coordinator for GATC. He works with the EMR tobacco control NGOs, government focal points and WHO EMRO regional coordinator. Dr. Abbadi is a medical doctor, and holds a Master's in Medical Sciences in Public Health Epidemiology from Karolinska Institutet. He is currently conducting his PhD in Epidemiology at Karolinska Institutet. He has been working with NGOs from Jordan and EMR since 2013, and worked with the Ministry of Health of Jordan and WHO Jordan country office. He is based in Stockholm, Sweden.

Ahmad co-authors the Jordan Tobacco Industry Interference Index Report and has worked and produced reports on FCTC Articles 5.3, 6, and 8-14 at the level of Jordan and EMR.

Ms. Roslizawati Ali, President, MyWATCH



Liza is President of Malaysian Women's Action on Tobacco Control & Health (MyWatch), an NGO that advocates for the strengthening of tobacco control policies as well as other health policies in Malaysia. Through various initiatives, MyWatch has effectively mobilized a number of NGOs and other organizations to participate and create awareness of the dangers of tobacco, which has led to advocating for stronger governmental policies and more effective tobacco control strategies. Liza is an author of the Malaysia Tobacco Industry Interference Index Report.

Dr. Mary Assunta



Mary is Head of Global Research and Advocacy at Global Center for Good Governance in Tobacco Control (GGTC), a Partner in STOP, and principal author of the Global Tobacco Industry Interference Index. She is a Luther Terry Awardee (2003) and recognized for her outstanding leadership in tobacco control, representing low- and middle-income countries (LMICs) in many platforms that counter and debunk tobacco industry tactics. With more than 20 years of experience in international tobacco control advocacy, Mary has a doctorate in public health from the School of Public Health at the University of Sydney, where she currently serves as an adjunct senior lecturer. Mary is the principal author of the Global Tobacco Industry Interference Index Report.

Mr. Dmytro Kupyra



Dmytro Kupyra is executive director of NGO Advocacy Center "Life," which has been working in the field of tobacco control for more than 10 years. Dmytro Kupira joined the team in 2017 and during this time the team managed to advocate for a significant increase in excise taxes on tobacco products in Ukraine, to synchronize excise taxes on HTP to the level of cigarettes and to promote the adoption of a comprehensive anti-tobacco law based on the FCTC and EU TPD. All these steps faced interference attempts by the tobacco industry, which were repelled. Dmytro holds a Masters in Political Science. Dmytro is an author of the Ukraine Tobacco Industry Interference Index Report.

Mr. Samuel Ochieng



Samuel Ochieng is Chief Executive Officer of the Consumer Information Network (CIN), Kenya, a national consumer organisation dedicated to protecting consumer rights and promoting consumer responsibility. CIN has over 10,000 members countrywide and works mainly on the areas of food, health, trade, financial services and the environment. Samuel is the former President of Consumers International (CI) 2007 – 2011, prior to which he served as the CI Honorary Secretary from 2003 to 2007. Sam has undertaken a number of research projects on issues relating to consumer protection. He is a member of the Kenya Consumer Protection Advisory Committee (KECOPAC), the government agency responsible for consumer protection in Kenya. Sam is the author of the Kenya Tobacco Industry Interference Index Report.

Ms. Lilia Olefir



Lilia Olefir was appointed Director of the Smoke Free Partnership (SFP) and GATC Coordinator for the Euro region in 2022. SFP is a coalition of over 50 NGOs working on policy analysis and advocacy to implement the WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control at European level. Prior to joining the SFP team, she worked as Executive Director of the tobacco control NGO Advocacy Center “LIFE” in Kyiv, Ukraine from 2017-2021. Under her leadership at Advocacy Center “LIFE,” the team conducted two successful advocacy campaigns to increase tobacco taxes and successfully advocated for the adoption of the comprehensive bill on EU TPD measures, 100% smoke-free policies and harmonising legislation of heated tobacco products and electronic cigarettes. Lilia holds a Masters in Management of Organizations (in public health). From 2019-2021, she was a consultant on tobacco control policy to the Member of Parliament of Ukraine and served as Board Member of the Coalition Reanimation Package of Reforms. Lilia is an author of the Europe Tobacco Industry Interference Index Report.

Mr. Leonce Dieudonne Sessou



Leonce is the Executive Secretary of the African Tobacco Control Alliance (ATCA), a Pan African a civil society network, with more than one hundred organization members in 39 African countries in Sub-Saharan Africa dedicated to the prevention of tobacco epidemic on the continent and its overarching impact on the health, economy, environment and well-being of the population. He oversees and contributes to the execution of various activities undertaken by the alliance such as monitoring, exposing and countering tobacco industry interference, building the capacity of tobacco control stakeholders, providing technical assistance during the drafting, adopting and implementation of tobacco control policies.

Leonce is an author of the Africa Tobacco Industry Interference Index Report.