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New STOP Report Reveals the ‘Dirty Tricks’ Tobacco Companies Use Around the World

Report Shows Industry Tactics at Work in Nearly 30 Countries and at the United Nations

NEW YORK (September 26, 2019) – A new STOP (Stopping Tobacco Organizations and Products) report, [*Crooked Nine: Nine Ways the Tobacco Industry Undermines Health Policy*](#), published today, describes how the tobacco industry attempts to undermine and prevent the implementation of tobacco control policies that can save lives. The ‘crooked nine’ tactics tobacco companies around the world use are:

- **Tactic 1:** Building alliances and front groups
- **Tactic 2:** Trying to weaken the public health community
- **Tactic 3:** Disputing public health facts
- **Tactic 4:** Producing and promoting misleading research
- **Tactic 5:** Lobbying
- **Tactic 6:** Influencing high-level policies
- **Tactic 7:** Litigation
- **Tactic 8:** Facilitating smuggling
- **Tactic 9:** Seeking to improve its reputation

The report shows examples of these tactics being used recently in countries on every continent, including low- and middle-income countries such as Ethiopia, India, Pakistan, Uruguay and Vietnam. Many of these countries are strategic to the industry because of the size of their populations - including large numbers of young people, their roles in the supply chain, weaker tobacco control regulations or their regional influence.

“No industry is less deserving of the trust of policymakers or the public—and now we have spelled out why.” said Prof. Judith Mackay, Senior Advisor on Tobacco Control at Vital Strategies and a partner in STOP. “The tobacco industry’s latest claims about safer products and its use of front groups like the Foundation for a Smoke-Free World fit into an established pattern of behavior to create a toothless regulatory structure.”

[According to the World Health Organization \(WHO\)](#), more than eight million people die from tobacco-related causes each year, including 1.2 million from exposure to second-hand smoke. If current trends continue, tobacco will kill 1 billion people in the 21st century.

Immediate action to implement and enforce the [MPOWER policy package](#) would reduce future deaths, but the [WHO Report on the Global Tobacco Epidemic, 2019](#), revealed that 2.6 billion people live in countries without even one tobacco control policy implemented at the recommended level. WHO cites



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industry interference as the main barrier to progress. *Crooked Nine* uses case studies from around the world to highlight this interference and the shady role of [tobacco industry allies](#) who often fail to declare their links to the industry while supporting pro-tobacco messages.

“The tobacco industry applies the same tactics regardless of political systems or economic factors,” said Bungon Ritthiphakdee, Executive Director of the Global Centre for Good Governance in Tobacco Control and a partner in STOP. “Thankfully, a growing number of low-and middle-income countries are seeing through these maneuvers and countering them. *Crooked Nine* details how India successfully reduced tobacco use in the face of all nine tactics.”

“The tobacco industry spends a lot of money and energy undermining public health. From Poland to Pakistan, their efforts to influence policy are pervasive,” said Professor Anna Gilmore, Director of the Tobacco Control Research Group at the University of Bath and a partner in STOP. “In this report, we shine a light on the tobacco industry and reveal their ‘crooked nine’ -- the tactics they use to undermine the health policies that reduce smoking and save lives.”

“Governments must be vigilant because these tactics are probably being used against them right now,” said Gan Quan, Director of Tobacco Control at The Union and a partner in STOP. “We provide recommendations for how they can protect themselves and counter such maneuvers more effectively.”

The report urges governments to fully implement the [WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control](#) and MPOWER policy package, including providing sustainable funding for tobacco control, transparency about interactions with the industry, basing policy decisions on independent evidence and keeping the industry out of policy decisions. *Crooked Nine* also calls on NGOs to do more to investigate and expose tobacco industry tactics and undertake advocacy to help counter the industry.

To read the full report, please visit <https://exposetobacco.org/resources/crookednine/>.

About STOP (Stopping Tobacco Organizations and Products)

STOP is a global tobacco industry watchdog whose mission is to expose the tobacco industry strategies and tactics that undermine public health. STOP is a partnership between The Tobacco Control Research Group at the [University of Bath](#), [The Global Center for Good Governance in Tobacco Control](#), [The Union](#) and [Vital Strategies](#).