

Tobacco Companies Use Malawi to Lobby Against Global Tobacco Control

Marty G Otañez PhD, American Cancer Society Postdoctoral Fellow
Hadii M Mamudu PhD, American Legacy Foundation Postdoctoral Fellow
Stanton A Glantz, PhD
Center for Tobacco Control Research and Education
University of California, San Francisco

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Tobacco farm workers, Nkhotakota, Malawi, 2003



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US: CA: UCSF: CTCRE: Big Tobacco Has Big Influence in California Source: [California Progress Report](#)

Big Tobacco Has Big Influence in California: Effective Anti-Smoking Advertising, Research, and Legislation All Blunted by Campaign Contributions and Lawsuits - California Progress Report November 4, 2007

- Report Criticizes Schwarzenegger and His Predecessors
- 95% of Contributions to Parties and Candidates Went to Republicans in Last Election Cycle

By Frank D. Russo

Malawi (Nyasaland)

Population of 13 mill (85% rural)

70% foreign earnings from tobacco

Tobacco employs 2 million pp

2 US leaf companies buy 95% of Malawi's tobacco

Malawi's tobacco is found in Marlboros and Camels



Background

Tobacco companies and their surrogate groups interfere in tobacco control policymaking.



Tobacco companies used developing countries economically reliant on tobacco to oppose global tobacco control.



In October 2000, the WHO launched the first of six negotiations of the Intergovernmental Negotiating Body (INB) to complete the FCTC. Malawi sent delegations to all INB meetings in Geneva, Switzerland, between October 2000 and February 2003

Malawi sent delegations to all INB meetings (Malawi's delegations averaged 7 members with five members working for the tobacco industry) [Handout]

Methods

Tobacco documents research

Ethnographic research



- Participant observation, semi-structured interviews, life-event histories, videography
- 19 months of fieldwork
- 7 visits (1995-2006)
- Semi-fluent in Chichewa (Bantu language group)
- 120 workers and officials in trade unions, state ministries, and tobacco companies

CIGARETTE MANUFACTURES AND LEAF BUYING COMPANIES, 2006

	Revenues (US\$ Billion)	Number of Markets	Number of Factories	Cigarette Production in Billions	Share of Global Cig Market (%)
Cigarette Manufacturers					
Philip Morris	66.8*	160+	50+	1,014.8*	18.7
British American Tobacco	49.5	180+	81+	689	17.1
Japan Tobacco	36.4*	120+	40+	925**	7.7
Leaf Buying Companies					
Universal Corporation	3,511	90+	40+	N/A	N/A
Alliance One Int'l	2,113	90+	50+	N/A	N/A
+, Over; N/A, Not applicable; * Total for domestic and international tobacco segments; **2005					

Many tobacco households receive little or no money for 9 months of work and remain Indebted to farm landlords



Cash shortages and demands of tobacco growing force parents to send children to the fields

Table 1 Members of Eliminating Child Labour in Tobacco Growing Foundation, in 2005^{24 76}

Type of group	Date joined	Member
Cigarette manufacturers	2001	British American Tobacco (founding member), Philip Morris International, Japan Tobacco International, Scandinavian Tobacco Company, Imperial Tobacco Group
Leaf buying companies	2002	Altadis, Gallaher Group, Philip Morris USA
	2001	Dimon, Standard Commercial Corporation, Universal Leaf Tobacco Corporation
Tobacco industry organisations	2002	Tribac Leaf Limited
	2001	International Tobacco Grower's Association (founding member)
International trade union	2001	International Union of Food, Agricultural, Hotel, Restaurant, Catering, Tobacco and Allied Workers' Association (founding member)
Global development group (advisory role)	2001	International Program to Eliminate Child Labour (a program of the International Labour Organization)

Otañez M, Muggli M, Hurt R, Glantz G, "Eliminating Child Labour in Malawi: A British American Tobacco Corporate Responsibility Project to Sidestep Tobacco Labor Exploitation," *Tobacco Control*. 15: 224-230, 2006

Key Events

Criticism of BAT practices in developing countries (deforestation, food insecurity) in 1978

In an internal document, BAT reported that the negative media attention of 1978 raised “doubts in the minds of the uniformed by the anti-smoking lobby about the ethical stance” of BAT, forcing the company to rethink “the fairly low profile which [BAT] has until now adopted”

Beginning then, BAT would play a prominent role in industry efforts to lobby government and tobacco farmer officials in Malawi to argue to health policymakers that tobacco control would cut job, increase dependence on foreign aid, and worsen poverty in Malawi.

Key Events

“[T]he Malawi government can definitely be gained to oppose WHO recommendations, guidelines or resolutions”

- Nick Hauser, tobacco industry consultant, on meeting with Kambauwa, the undersecretary of the Malawi Ministry of Agriculture, in Rome, Italy, in June 1983

Attack on WHO for paying for expensive bureaucracies such as the WHO program “Tobacco or Health” when WHO should have been paying for programs focused on “real public health threats such as cholera and malaria”

- “Who benefits from the WHO?” 1993 report; BAT funded Robert Tollison, an economist at George Mason University in Virginia and director of the Center for Study of Public Choice, and Richard Wagner, an economist at George Mason, to write the report

Key Events

In March 2000, Hallmark, BAT-funded public relations company, organized a two-week “Roadshow” in Malawi, Zimbabwe, South Africa, Kenya, and India “to encourage governments and opinion leaders in key developing countries to stand up for the interests of their nations' tobacco growers in the WHO

Key Events

- discredit World Bank evidence of the public health benefits of tobacco control
- install industry representatives on Malawi's delegations to World Health Organization meetings
- introduce resolutions or made amendments to tobacco-related resolutions in UN organizations focused on tobacco control policymaking to conduct research on the economic implications of tobacco control in tobacco growing countries

Key Events

At the end of INB6 in February 2003, the tobacco industry in Malawi concluded that the draft FCTC did not represent an immediate threat to Malawi's tobacco sector

“I think by virtue of the fact that they [Malawians] haven't had an imposition of 'you will stop growing tobacco in ten years' – if it [FCTC] doesn't state that, in other words if [Malawians] are not given a timeframe within which they must stop growing tobacco, then I think it is a victory”

- Charles Graham, general manager of Universal Corporation subsidiary Limbe Leaf in Malawi, March 2003

Key Events

Malawi had not signed or ratified the FCTC due to “technical reasons;” Malawi should sign because Malawi “could take advantage of this framework [Convention] to diversify our economy” (Sangala, 2004)



Dr. Sangala, chief technical advisor, Ministry of Health and Population, Malawi, March 2003

Marty

Some people think the tobacco sector is going to sink with the passage of the FCTC. Is this a real issue?

Sangala

[video excerpt]

[insert video excerpt]

Q: Some people think the tobacco sector is going to sink with the passage of the FCTC. Is this a real issue?

That was our fear as we started negotiating from INB1 through up to [INB]4. But, at INB 6 a new aspect has come up. I understand there has been a study by the World Bank [*Curbing the Epidemic*] which has shown that in fact the demand is going to increase because the population overall will increase, so the population of prospective tobacco smokers.

Therefore, the demand for tobacco leaf is still going to be there. But at the beginning our view was that there would be a drastic reduction in the demand for the tobacco leaf and therefore our economies would suffer.

We therefore put in the Convention programs that would assist countries like Malawi to diversify away from tobacco industry to possible alternative crops or possible economically viable options.



Malawi Tobacco Industry Going Up in Smoke

Pilirani Semu-Banda on 30 March, 2007 20:00:00

The crop is treasured because of historical associations. Commercial production can be traced back as far as 1889 when it was introduced by settlers from Virginia in the United States.

However, in recent years the tobacco industry has been struggling for survival. It is fighting global anti-smoking campaigns led by public health activists, backed by the World Health Organisation. Poor auction prices and a dearth of buyers are also among the challenges that Malawian tobacco producers are grappling with.