

NGO's in Brazil Launch Campaign Against Big Tobacco

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An international coalition of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) has launched a campaign today to call on the governments of Brazil, Ecuador and Costa Rica to ratify the global tobacco treaty.

Corporate Accountability International is working closely with the Zero Tobacco Network (Brazil), Tribuna Ecuatoriana de Consumidores y Usuarios (Ecuador), ALERTA (Costa Rica) and other members of the Network for Accountability of Tobacco Transnationals (NATT) to coordinate a Latin American Ratification Campaign Tour from May 24 through June 4.

At each stop on the tour, public health, consumer and corporate accountability advocates from around the Americas will urge government officials to support the world's first public health treaty, formally known as the Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (FCTC). The tour coincides with the World Health Organization's World No Tobacco Day on 31 May 2005.

"Brazil played a key role throughout the negotiating process on the global tobacco treaty. Now the treaty is stalled in Senate. The eyes of the world are upon us, and people's lives are at stake. The Brazilian government must stand firm in the face of tobacco industry pressure and swiftly ratify the Framework Convention on Tobacco Control," says Dr. Tania Cavalcante of the Brazil's National Cancer Institute, an organ of the Health Ministry.

The global tobacco treaty protects public health policy from tobacco industry interference and bans tobacco advertising, promotion and sponsorship. The treaty took effect on 27 February 2005.

More than 65 countries have ratified the treaty, including Mexico, Peru and Uruguay in Latin America, as well as Canada, France, India and South Africa. NATT members expect many more ratifications in the coming months.

"This treaty will save millions of lives and change the way giant tobacco corporations operate around the world," says Yul Francisco Dorado Mazorra, Latin America Coordinator for Corporate Accountability International.

"It demonstrates that working together, the nations of the world and their NGO allies can protect people from irresponsible and dangerous practices of corporations like British American Tobacco (BAT) and Philip Morris."

Since negotiations on the tobacco treaty began, global tobacco corporations have attempted to water down and delay it.

NATT members have raised concerns about attempts by British American Tobacco and Philip Morris/Altria to interfere in the treaty ratification process around the world.

Just last month at the Philip Morris/Altria annual shareholders' meeting, CEO Louis Camilleri spoke about the corporation's aggressive attempts to influence Ministers of Health around the world.

Through the Latin American Tour, NATT members are exposing and challenging tobacco industry interference in public health policy.

"In the next two decades, 70% of the lives claimed by the tobacco epidemic will be in the Global South. With the global tobacco treaty, it is no longer business as usual for Big Tobacco," says Maria Jose Troya of Tribuna Ecuatoriana de Consumidores y Usuarios from Ecuador.

"Countries around the world are banning tobacco advertisements, like the Marlboro Man, and excluding the tobacco industry from public health policy-making. It is critical that Ecuador ratify the treaty as quickly as possible."

NATT members are encouraging Latin America countries to ratify swiftly and to take a lead role implementing and enforcing the global tobacco treaty.

Corporate Accountability International, formerly Infact, is a membership organization that protects people by waging and winning campaigns challenging irresponsible and dangerous corporate actions around the world.

For over 25 years, CAI says, they have forced corporations - like Nestlé, General Electric and Philip Morris/Altria - to stop abusive actions.

Corporate Accountability International, an NGO in Official Relations with the World Health Organization (WHO), played a key role in development of the global tobacco treaty-formally known as the Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (FCTC).

The Network for Accountability of Tobacco Transnationals (NATT) includes more than 100 NGOs from over 50 countries working for a strong, enforceable global tobacco treaty.

Corporate Accountability International
www.stopcorporateabuse.org

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