

somewhat less attention, creating a gap in tobacco control knowledge that needs to be addressed. To help inform future tobacco control policy, new research should focus on the behaviour and strategies of Imperial and JTI as they continue to expand, particularly in North Africa, the Middle East, and Asia and should continue to explore the similarities and differences in how the four TTCs operate. While potential changes to the industry have been highlighted above, including a potential takeover of Imperial Tobacco, the emergence of CNTC on the world tobacco market and, if regulation in the cigarette market increases further, TTCs becoming nicotine rather than cigarette companies, it remains to be seen what the next 20 years will bring for both the tobacco industry and in turn tobacco control.

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Invited commentary

The tobacco industry continues to promote products that cause a loss of over 5 million lives globally each year. Of particular concern is that the tobacco industry is vigorously shifting its marketing focus from the West to developing nations in Africa and Asia.^{1 2} This poses a challenge and a public health threat for these countries, which already have many competing priorities for the meagre resources to provide basic human needs.

Responding to this threat WHO has selected 'tobacco industry interference' as the theme of the 2012 World No Tobacco Day. The campaign aims to expose and counter the tobacco industry's increasingly sophisticated strategies that hinder meaningful tobacco control efforts and undermine the WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control. This campaign could not come at a better time. It is needed to shame the tobacco industry for turning children and young adults into walking billboards, particularly in developing countries, where many tobacco control policies are still filled with loopholes easily exploited by

the tobacco industry. The limited awareness, particularly in developing countries, of what constitutes tobacco industry interference at the political and community levels further calls for more attention to the supply-side issues of the epidemic. Poverty in developing countries has given the tobacco industry an upper hand in promoting reliance on tobacco and it is marketing tobacco as a solution. The WHO theme recognises the work of the tobacco industry over the decades in deceiving and diverting attention from its activities, as well as acknowledging the enormous energy of the tobacco industry to protect its interests when threatened by the globalisation of public health.³

The preamble of the Framework Convention on Tobacco Control notes 'the need to be alert to any efforts by the tobacco industry to undermine or subvert tobacco control efforts and the need to be informed of activities of the tobacco industry that have a negative impact on tobacco control efforts.' The big question is whether developing countries have the capacity to assess, identify and address tobacco industry activities that have the potential to negate country specific tobacco control efforts. Scrutiny of industry tactics in the developing world is necessary to be able to address the specific needs of each country.

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