



International Youth Day 2022

African Tobacco Control Alliance (ATCA) in solidarity with youth call to make Big Tobacco pay.

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Lomé, 12 August 2022

On the occasion of International Youth Day on August 12, global organizations representing the youth have released a [statement condemning the tobacco industry's creation of a new generation of addiction](#) and calling for governments to make the tobacco companies pay for past, present and future harms.

The youth spoke on behalf of themselves as well as the future generation to seek justice and compensation and to ensure that the tobacco industry does not get a seat at the table. The statement outlined the tobacco industry's hand in the tobacco epidemic, [digital marketing](#), [sports sponsorship](#), [child labor](#), [environmental harms](#), including accumulated [toxic single use plastics](#) in the oceans, which are covered up by fake philanthropies and dubious grants.

ATCA joined the call of the global youth. "When governments allow the tobacco industry to influence tobacco control or control of electronic delivery systems, they are serving the heads of our children to the tobacco industry in a platter. We should not allow this," says Leonce SESSOU, the Executive Secretary of the Alliance.

According to the statement, policies on the use of electronic delivery systems should consider primarily the risks of youth addiction / recreational use. The youth also wants governments to ensure tobacco industry accountability and liability, which can come in the form of revocation of licenses, compensation for harms, financial guarantees for future harms, and even court cases, tobacco surcharges, penalties, fees or taxes, [among others](#).

Tobacco causes 8 million deaths a year in addition to causing addiction and environmental harm. In Africa, 13% of young adolescent girls use tobacco products. Recent trends show an increase in tobacco use among girls. In the past, the prevalence of tobacco use among girls was lower than the rate for boys. But recent studies have shown the prevalence rate among girls (4.6% to 36.6%) has become as high as for boys (7.8% to 36.5%). Also, single use plastics in cigarette packs and butts alone cause at least [20B USD annually in marine resource](#) losses.

Overall, the losses outweigh any economic gains of the tobacco industry, costing an estimated USD 1.4 trillion annually. We call on governments to act immediately to protect young people.

Media contact: AYONG I. CALEB

Email: ayong@atca-africa.org

[Read other ATCA statements](#)

The African Tobacco Control Alliance (ATCA) is a non-profit, non-political Pan-African network of civil society organizations headquartered in Lomé, Togo. With membership in 39 countries, ATCA is dedicated to promoting public health and curbing the tobacco epidemic in the continent. The alliance is an Observer to the WHO-FCTC Conference of Parties. It has a Special Consultative Status with the UN ECOSOC and is certified as a Public Charity organization by NGOsource.