



## Statement of Leonce SESSOU, Executive Secretary of ATCA on the implementation of Pictorial Health Warnings in Mauritania

Pictorial Health Warnings will adequately sensitize Mauritians on the dangers of tobacco, thereby helping to reduce consumption

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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The African Tobacco Control Alliance (ATCA) is pleased with news of implementation of Pictorial Health Warnings on tobacco packs in Mauritania. Mandated by the country's [2018 tobacco control law](#), a [February 2020 Order by the Minister of Health](#) gave the tobacco industry nine months to conform to a new requirement of graphic warnings covering at least 70% of the principal surfaces of each tobacco pack.

ATCA notes with satisfaction that despite tobacco industry attempts to stall implementation of the Order, it has indeed become a reality.

The WHO states that large pictorial health warnings, including plain packaging, with hard hitting messages [have the potential to encourage more people to quit tobacco use](#).

African governments have the responsibility to protect the health and wellbeing of their populations. Adoption of such protective laws and policies is great for public health, but they serve no purpose if they are not effectively implemented.

ATCA applauds the government of Mauritania for ensuring that pictorial health warnings on the packs of tobacco products is implemented and calls on authorities to ensure the measure is respected by all concerned parties. The alliance also commends its civil society partners in the country who despite several challenges, including apparent tobacco industry interference, continued to strive for this great accomplishment.

This is an example worth emulating by other African countries.

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*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 preventing the tobacco epidemic in the continent.*