



Statement of Leonce SESSOU, Executive Secretary of ATCA on the occasion of World Health Day 2022

We can achieve good health for all if we work to attain a clean and tobacco-free world.

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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For World Health Day this year, the World Health Organization (WHO) asks if we can reimagine a world where clean air, water and food are available to all; a world where economies are focused on health and well-being; a world where cities are liveable and people have control over their health and the health of the planet. These questions are quite valid considering that the world is yet to fully recover from the COVID-19 pandemic, a worrisome addition to the plethora of major problems like industrial air pollution and poor waste management, which all have major implications on human health and the environment.

World Health Day 2022 provides an opportunity to reflect on the need to intensify actions to ensure a healthy planet. The WHO estimates that [more than 13 million deaths around](#) the world each year are due to avoidable environmental causes. We already know that tobacco is the leading cause of diseases like cancer, respiratory diseases, heart disease with [more than 8 million deaths](#) around the world.

Working toward a tobacco-free world will certainly help in achieving the WHO objective of a healthy planet. Tobacco is the risk factor for several diseases and health conditions. Its cultivation, transformation, and consumption, have dire consequences on the environment, and ultimately on our health. We must step up efforts to expose, denounce, counteract and isolate the tobacco industry, which has historically [greenwashed its reputation and products](#) through programmes such as marketing of new products as “eco-friendly” and funding of environmental and disaster-relief organizations, especially in low- and middle-income countries (LMICs).

As World Health Day is commemorated today under the theme “Our Planet, Our Health”, the African Tobacco Control Alliance (ATCA) calls on African governments, civil society, the media, and all other stakeholders to support the WHO’s efforts to safeguard a clean and healthy planet. Parties to the WHO-Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (FCTC) must ensure swift implementation of the entire treaty. This guarantees that the world is adequately protected from the devastating effects of tobacco, thereby rendering our planet good enough for our health.

Our planet is home to us all. Together, we can achieve good health for all if we work to attain a clean and tobacco-free world.

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Related links

- [Tobacco and its environmental impact: an overview \(WHO\)](#)
- [The Dirt Behind Big Tobacco and the Environment \(STOP\)](#)
- [Tobacco and the Environment \(Tobacco Tactics\)](#)
- [Greenwashing \(Tobacco Tactics\)](#)

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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 Lome, 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.