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HEALTH FOR ALL
World No Tobacco Day 2023
Grow food, not tobacco

World No Tobacco Day 2023: grow food, not tobacco

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> Background

The world is confronted with a global food crisis fuelled by conflict, climate change and the pandemic of coronavirus disease

A record 349 million people are facing acute food insecurity (*1*, *2*).

Meanwhile, tobacco is grown in over 124 countries, taking up 3.2 million hectares of fertile land that could be used to grow food. These resources are diverted to support the production of a crop that kills over 8 million people every year, erodes the economy and damages the environment.

Globally, 79 countries are facing acute food insecurity. The majority are low- and middle-income countries, and over 30 are on the African continent (*1*, *2, 3*). Tobacco growing compounds the food security issues faced by these countries – scarce arable land is not being used to grow much needed food crops, and forests are also being destroyed to create room for tobacco production, as well as to provide fuel needed for curing the tobacco leaves.

But growing tobacco is not only a threat to food security and nutrition. Tobacco farmers are exposed to a number of health risks, including green tobacco sickness, a form of occupational poisoning which is caused by nicotine absorbed through the skin from the handling of wet tobacco leaves, exposure to heavy use of pesticides and exposure to tobacco dust. The environment also suffers greatly owing to deforestation, contamination of water sources and degradation of soil. Tobacco smoke emanating from curing tobacco leaves pollutes the environment. Tobacco growing is also associated with child labour and gender inequality. Because growing tobacco is labour-intensive and tobacco takes up to 8–9 months to mature, it is difficult for tobacco farmers to grow other crops, including food crops, within the same year (*4, 5*).

Globally, 79 countries are facing acute food insecurity

Tobacco is erroneously perceived to be a highly profitable cash crop, as the tobacco industry exaggerates its economic importance. In most tobacco-growing countries, the contribution of tobacco leaf imports and exports is small (<1% of gross domestic product (GDP)) (*6*).

Despite typically yielding low net returns overall, tobacco is considered a stable crop because of

an assured market that generates small windfalls of cash; this makes moving away from tobacco challenging from a farmer's perspective.

The lack of government support and viable markets for alternative crops further hampers the ability of tobacco farmers to switch to alternative livelihoods.

Evidence reveals that alternative value chains could provide at least the same, if not more, return for farmers as compared with tobacco growing, provided that the same supportive farming and marketing system is in place (*6*).

In most countries, farmers have had trouble shifting away from tobacco because of the incentives provided by the tobacco companies, such as seeds, fertilizers, construction of barns or access to finance or credits

> Tobacco is increasingly grown in low- and middle-income countries

Brazil, China and India account for over 55% of global tobacco production, and they are continuing to sustain their production without adding more acreage. The other countries in the top 10 are Indonesia, Malawi, Mozambique, Türkiye, United Republic of Tanzania, United States of America and Zimbabwe.

The list of top 50 + tobacco-growing economies is shown in Table 1.

In high-income countries, tobacco growing has decreased over time despite government support and subsidies for tobacco production. In recent decades, transnational tobacco corporations have lowered production costs by moving tobacco leaf production to low-income countries. Tobacco companies are therefore increasingly targeting these settings, particularly African countries, to scale-up tobacco leaf production (*7*).

From 2005 to 2020, the area under tobacco cultivation decreased globally by 15.8%, while in Africa it increased by 19.8%. East Africa accounts for 88.5% of tobacco leaf production in Africa, while northern African countries in the WHO Eastern Mediterranean Region have little or no role in tobacco production, though they have significant trade volumes in the import of tobacco leaf and/or cigarettes (*8*).

There are 124 tobacco growing economies across the WHO regions. The country factsheets of all WHO Member States, showing how tobacco agriculture and trade have progressed in the last 20 years are available (*9*) and should serve as an important resource for policy-makers and advocacy groups.

From 2005 to 2020, the area under tobacco cultivation decreased globally by 15.8%, while in Africa it increased by 19.8%

Table 1. Top tobacco growing economies by WHO region and hectarage[1]

WHO region	Countries	Hectarage
African Region	Zimbabwe	112770
	Malawi	100962
	Mozambique	91469
	Tanzania (United Republic of)	80678
	Uganda	21998
	Côte d'Ivoire	15979
	Kenya	15441
	Zambia	15159
	Nigeria	9150
	Democratic Republic of Congo	7812
	Ghana	6125
	Algeria	5055
	South Africa	4933
	Togo	4357
	Cameroon	4241
Region of the Americas	Brazil	357230
	United States of America	95730
	Argentina	53840
	Cuba	16682
	Guatemala	14228
	Canada	9791
	Mexico	6754
	Dominican Republic	6659
	Colombia	5070
	Ecuador	4670

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WHO region	Countries	Hectarage
South-East Asia Region	India	431146
	Indonesia	220257
	Democratic People's Republic of Korea	56955
	Bangladesh	47523
	Thailand	21059
	Myanmar	14955
European Region	Türkiye	83166
	North Macedonia	16617
	Italy	14500
	Greece	14197
	Poland	13867
	Spain	8450
	Serbia	6510
Eastern Mediterranean Region	Pakistan	47332
	Iran (Islamic Republic of)	10571
	Yemen	10180
	Syrian Arab Republic	9207
	Lebanon	9024
Western Pacific Region	China	1014553
	Philippines	28380
	Viet Nam	12921
	Republic of Korea	11808
	Cambodia	7575
	Japan	6543
	Lao People's Democratic Republic	5534

[1] ***Source:*** Data derived from FAOSTAT: https://www.fao.org/faostat/en/.

Tobacco threatens the health of farmers and their families, especially women and children

Tobacco farming is exceptionally labour-intensive and exposes farmers and their families to severe health risks. As many as one in four tobacco farmers are affected by green tobacco sickness (*5*). The disease is caused by nicotine absorbed through the skin when handling tobacco leaves, which is then distributed throughout the body. Some of the symptoms include reflex vomiting, dizziness, headaches, abdominal pain and breathlessness, which last 1–3 days on average. The disease is particularly prevalent among younger Asian and South American tobacco farmers owing to higher nicotine sensitivity, in addition to humid conditions which increase absorption through the skin. Many tobacco farmers are not aware of, or cannot afford, appropriate protective equipment to prevent the disease, such as water-resistant clothing, chemical-resistant gloves or rain suits with boots (*10*).

Tobacco farmers are exposed daily to tobacco dust and chemical pesticides. A tobacco farmer who plants, cultivates and harvests tobacco may absorb nicotine equivalent to 50 cigarettes per day (*11*, *12*). Additionally, tobacco farmers often carry harmful substances home on their bodies, clothes or shoes, leading to harmful secondary exposure for their families, especially children (*11*, *13*).

Tobacco farmers also inhale large amounts of tobacco smoke during the curing process, which increases the risk of chronic lung conditions and other health issues (*11*).

Women and children are often the primary tobacco farm labourers and are therefore more exposed to the health risks of handling green tobacco leaves and heavy

chemicals, as well as exposure to tobacco smoke during the curing process. Children are particularly vulnerable, given their body weight relative to the proportion of nicotine absorbed through their skin. Pregnant women are also disproportionally affected by the harmful effects of tobacco farming and face a higher risk of miscarriage. People who roll bidis (hand rolled cigarettes), especially women and children, get exposed to tobacco dust, which they inhale while storing the tobacco at home and rolling bidis, resulting in respiratory diseases and other health problems (*12*). Tobacco growing is also associated with increased gender inequality, as women are obliged to work long shifts on the farm in addition to performing routine house chores and looking after children (*13*).

Children are particularly vulnerable,

given their body weight relative to the proportion of nicotine absorbed through their skin

> Tobacco is poisoning our planet

Tobacco farming accounts for about 5% of total deforestation, further contributing to CO_2 emissions and climate change

Throughout its life cycle, tobacco pollutes the planet and damages the health of all people. Tobacco growing is resource-intensive and requires heavy use of pesticides and fertilizers, which contribute to soil degradation. These chemicals escape into the aquatic environment, contaminating lakes, rivers and drinking-water. Land used for growing tobacco then has a lower capacity for growing other crops, such as food, since tobacco depletes soil fertility (*13*, *14*, *15*).

Tobacco farming accounts for about 5% of total deforestation, further contributing to CO_2 emissions and climate change. To make space for tobacco crops, trees must be cut down and land cleared. It takes roughly one tree to make 300 cigarettes. This leads to desertification and hunger as there is limited fertile land to grow food in some of these regions. Approximately 200 000 hectares (ha) of land are cleared for tobacco agriculture and curing each year, which is equivalent to the size of Mauritius (204 000 ha).

Tobacco growing contributes to loss of biodiversity and destroys our ecosystem. It is also associated with land degradation or desertification in the form of soil erosion, reduced soil fertility and productivity, and the disruption of water cycles. Leaching of chemicals into nearby water sources kills fish and affects other humans and animals, including cattle, that access these waters for domestic use and drinking (*15*).

More information is available on tobacco and its environmental impact (16).

> The tobacco industry feeds misconceptions about the profitability of tobacco growing

It is well established that the tobacco industry attempts to undermine tobacco control efforts. What is less often discussed is the misconception that tobacco farming is a highly profitable business for smallholder farmers and good for the economy in general.

The economic contribution of tobacco growing to local and national economies, employment figures and the national balance of trade is usually highlighted by the tobacco industry to prevent governments from adopting strong national tobacco control policies to protect the health of their people. In reality, there is no direct link between tobacco farming and demand for tobacco leaves in the country. In fact, the global nature of tobacco production and international trade makes it possible to import tobacco leaves from any country in the world. The economic value of tobacco as a profitable business and assured export market is also a common argument against switching to alternative crops (*6, 14*).

Growing tobacco requires access to supplies and services, such as seeds and fertilizer, at the start of the season. The tobacco industry advances the cost of these, which is then deducted from farmers' payment at the end of the season. Through this contractual arrangement, farmers end up disadvantaged, dependent and in debt to transnational tobacco companies or intermediary traders.

Smallholder farmers in low- and middle-income countries are often contracted to grow tobacco through legal agreements with large transnational companies or their intermediaries under which tobacco prices and grades (or quality) are determined by the buyer, leaving farmers little room for negotiation. The buyers most often undergrade and therefore underprice the tobacco leaf, and at the same time inflate the cost of the inputs, further disadvantaging the farmers (*6*).

Tobacco growing is a labour-intensive practice, requiring farmers and their families to spend most of their day tending to the plants. The well documented labour-intensiveness of tobacco farming largely explains why smallholder tobacco farmers generally earn very little considering the effort they expend, and why they often depend on their children's work to manage the workload. When all the days worked by every contributing household member are included, studies show that tobacco farming is less profitable than other crops. Research across several countries suggests that this labour would be more valuable growing other crops (*6*).

Additionally, the cost of seeds, fertilizers, wood for fuel and renting or buying land is high and often not factored in when assessing the profitability of tobacco growing.

It is also important to note that tobacco growing burdens farmers with health issues that can be unique to this activity, such as green tobacco sickness, which also increases overall household health-care costs.

The tobacco industry keeps farmers dependent by providing them with incentives, such as loans, or supplies needed to grow tobacco, such as seeds and fertilizers. Farmers often work under contractual arrangements with the tobacco industry, and are then trapped in a vicious circle of debt, unable to get a fair price for their product. Tobacco companies are able to do this because in most countries there is lack of rural credit programmes for other crops.

The tobacco industry tries to disguise its deceitful tobacco farming tactics

An estimated 1.3 million children globally participate in tobacco farming practices (*17*). Children from poor households miss school to support their families' tobacco farming practices. These tasks often include mixing and applying pesticides, harvesting tobacco leaves by hand and tying them to sticks to dry, and sorting and classifying dried tobacco, thereby exposing children to both harmful chemicals and nicotine (*18*, *19*). Nonetheless, the tobacco industry gives a false impression of combating child labour by undertaking so-called corporate social responsibility initiatives and self-reporting its anti-child-labour initiatives. One such initiative is the Eliminating Child Labour in Tobacco Growing Foundation, which hosts board members from British American Tobacco, Imperial Brands and Japan Tobacco International, among others (*20*). These industry tactics are largely aimed at protecting the industry from human rights groups as millions of children continue to work on tobacco farms (*17*, *18*, *19*, *21*).

The tobacco industry is also notorious for greenwashing its tactics. In 2022, Philip Morris International launched a programme of zero net deforestation of managed natural forests and no conversion of natural ecosystems to protect natural habitats, particularly biodiversity sites of global importance and protected areas. Meanwhile, tobacco growing accounts for about 5% of total deforestation.

Additionally, the tobacco industry has set up several organizations and programmes which aim to support the livelihoods of tobacco-growing communities through crop diversification methods and schemes that aim to improve living standards of farmers. Introducing new crops while continuing to grow tobacco does not eliminate the risks of tobacco growing. These efforts divert public attention away from the real costs of tobacco farming, such as poor health outcomes, environmental degradation and poverty (*19*).

The industry has used tobacco farmer front groups to mislead and prevent governments from adopting tougher tobacco control policies and laws aligned with the WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (WHO FCTC), a comprehensive set of evidence-based measures to reduce the supply of and demand for tobacco. One such front group, the International Tobacco Growers' Association, is largely funded and directed by tobacco companies, which attempt to influence policy-makers on the grounds that such measures adversely impact the interests of tobacco farmers.

And yet the tobacco industry and its front groups oppose tobacco control, including tobacco tax increases, by purporting to protect farmers and workers in tobacco agriculture. In reality, the decline in tobacco use is slow, and there is no loss of livelihood expected in the short-to-medium term, which allows sufficient time for farmers to diversify into alternative crops (*22*, *23*, *24*).

An estimated 1.3 million children globally participate in tobacco farming practices. Children from poor households miss school to support their families' tobacco farming practices

Direct tobacco subsidies distort the market and undermine livelihoods of farmers

Many governments provide direct and indirect subsidies to sustain tobacco cultivation and production (for a definition of "subsidy", see (*25*)). Direct subsidies include support/subsidies transferred directly into the farmer's hands (e.g. cash to farmers for growing a particular crop and/or crop loans on softer lending terms, crop insurance, etc.). Indirect subsidies are inherent in the pricing of inputs such as subsidized seeds, fertilizers and power, and may apply to all kinds of crops and not just tobacco.

Direct subsidies for tobacco growing create market distortions by "blurring" market signals, which in turn encourages farmers to grow tobacco crops only because of the subsidies.

Examples of countries offering direct subsidies for tobacco farming

The list below highlights some examples of countries providing direct subsidies for tobacco farming. Despite the fact that tobacco production is not an important driver for economic growth, a large number of Parties and signatories to the WHO FCTC continue to provide direct or indirect subsidies for tobacco growing.

Some examples of direct subsidies to sustain tobacco production include the following.

- Between 2015 and 2020, **Argentina** provided approximately US$ 244 million in direct subsidies to tobacco farmers, which is 12.2% of total agricultural subsidies (*26*).
- Despite the decision to stop subsidizing tobacco growing in the **European region**, tobacco farmers received nearly US$ 52 million in direct payments between 2015 and 2020 (*26*).
- In **Lebanon**, tobacco growing is unprofitable and it would not be possible to sustain tobacco farming without Government subsidies, which currently range from US$ 3.95 to US$ 5.88 per kilogram, depending on the type of tobacco grown (*27*).
- In 2020, the Government of **North Macedonia** spent roughly US$ 32 million on tobacco subsidies. North Macedonia is among the top 30 tobacco producing countries in the world and among the top 20 exporters of raw tobacco. Compared with animal husbandry, orchards, milk and field and garden crops, the Government is disproportionally subsidizing tobacco. For example, a wheat farmer cannot receive more than US$ 269 subsidy per hectare, whereas a tobacco producer can receive up to US$ 2507 per hectare (*28*).
- In the **Philippines**, the Government provides subsidies and support for tobacco farmers by supplying inputs such as seedlings, as well as incentives and other financial assistance (*29*).
- In **Switzerland**, tobacco farmers received US$ 32.62 million in direct subsidies between 2015 and 2020, even though tobacco farming is not considered economically profitable (*26*).
- In the **United States of America**, the Department of Agriculture provided US$ 437.44 million in direct subsidies to tobacco farmers between 2015 and 2020. Payments are calculated from the producer's eligible sales, crop insurance indemnities and payments covering losses due to certain natural disasters (*26*, 30).
- In **Zimbabwe**, as part of a range of agriculture subsidies, the Government has established commodity support fund capitalization for the Tobacco Input Revolving Fund. The Government budgeted for US$ 28 million in 2017 and US$ 70 million in 2018. However, studies from the World Bank show that these subsidies are costly and fiscally unsustainable (*31*).

> Switching to other food crops could feed millions of families

The growing of food crops instead of tobacco will contribute to efforts to address food insecurities and shortages. However, in order to achieve this, it is important to adopt an ecosystem approach and identify economically sustainable alternatives to tobacco growing that will not only enable farmers to earn as much as, if not more than, what they earn from tobacco, and at the same time achieve better health and a better environment for themselves and their land and forests (*32*).

A few examples of healthier, more sustainable alternatives to tobacco include high-iron beans, sweet potatoes, maize, sorghum, rice and green vegetables (*33*). In some countries, such as Bulgaria, despite the subsidies given by the European Union to sustain tobacco production, a large number of farmers have successfully transitioned to growing nuts, berries or animal husbandry. Since the transition, tobacco now plays a marginal role in Bulgarian agricultural production. Some of the big villages in established tobacco regions in south-western Bulgaria underwent a remarkable boom of economic activity and improved standards of living after moving away from tobacco farming and shifting to other agricultural activities (*34*).

Similarly, in Indonesia, a number of tobacco farmers have successfully shifted to alternative crops such as cashew, sweet potato, corn and green vegetables and increased their profits, which proves that successful transitions away from tobacco are feasible and already happening (*7*, *35*).

China

In the Yunnan province of China, the tobacco planting area has decreased significantly since 2012 and thousands of farmers have begun shifting to vegetables and fruits, as they were able to get a higher net income directly linked to the tobacco crop substitution initiatives (*36*).

Malaysia

As in New Zealand, in Malaysia, the Government has been supporting tobacco farmers to shift to cultivation of kenaf (*Hibiscus cannabinus* L.), used for high-quality paper, biocomposites and bioplastics, with very little investment of time, money and labour; the results have shown good returns on investment (*37*).

New Zealand

In the Motueka region of New Zealand, the Government removed incentives for tobacco growing and farmers have successfully shifted to growing hops, kiwis and apples (*38*).

Philippines

In the Philippines, there are successful national and local government initiatives such as beekeeping that have helped to direct tobacco farmers into other livelihood programmes. The "sin tax" introduced for alcohol and tobacco in 2015 also created an additional funding mechanism to help any tobacco farmer to shift to alternative livelihoods (*39*, *40*).

Sri Lanka

In 2021, the National Authority on Tobacco and Alcohol in Sri Lanka initiated a pilot project in Anuradhapura and Monaragala districts to promote alternative crops for tobacco farming. The project had a significant impact on the cultivation area of tobacco in both districts, resulting in a 91% reduction in Anuradhapura and a 57% reduction in Monaragala. In Anuradhapura, 30% of farmers made the shift to vegetable farming, while 16% opted for paddy cultivation. On the other hand, in Monaragala, most farmers switched to growing crops such as peanuts, sesame and cowpeas. The success of this pilot project is a testament to the potential for sustainable agriculture practices to promote economically growable alternatives to tobacco farming (*41*).

Türkiye

In Türkiye, removal of direct subsidies led to more tourism and diverse livelihoods. In 2002, the Government abolished the subsidy programme and tobacco growers largely moved to a quota-based contracting system. The Government channelled funds into a programme to support alternative crops. Without Government subsidies, many tobacco farmers were unable to sustain production, which led to a decrease in the number of farmers growing tobacco. The Government implemented a quota system that limited the amount of tobacco that could be produced and sold, provided financial support to grow alternative crops on retrieved land, and provided direct cash support for lost income during the transition. The programme led to 30% of the land where tobacco was once cultivated being used for other agricultural purposes. It also led to an increase in tourism, greenhouse production, cattle stock and dairy farming, with many farmers migrating to provinces where industry was being developed.

Source: Ministry of Agriculture, Türkiye.

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What is WHO doing?

In a joint United Nations initiative, WHO, along with the World Food Programme, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), the United Nations Capital Development Fund (UNCDF) and the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD), supported by the Secretariat of the WHO FCTC in collaboration with ministries of health and agriculture, is supporting countries to create enabling and supportive crop production and marketing ecosystems to help farmers switch from tobacco growing to alternative livelihoods. This support enables farmers to avoid tobacco-growing contractual agreements and switch to alternative food crops that will help feed their communities instead of harming their health, in the confidence that a long-term market exists (*23*).

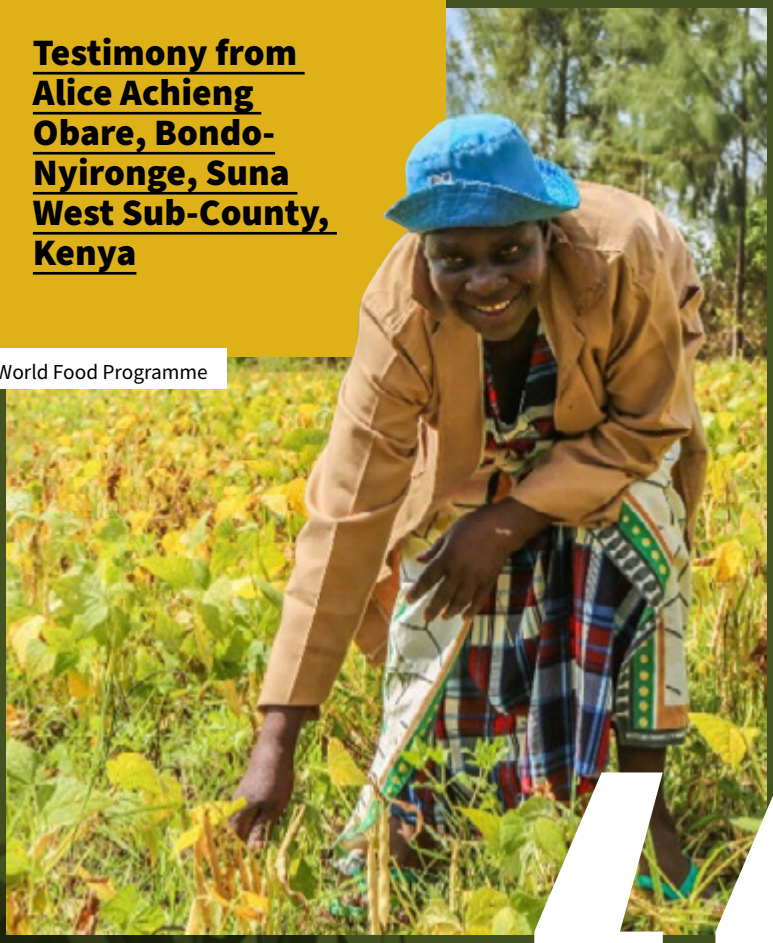
In Migori County, Kenya, where over 2000 farmers have already shifted to growing high-iron beans, moving away from tobacco growing has also meant that children can go to school instead of growing tobacco, and has increased access to healthy and protein-rich foods which, in turn, is fostering healthier communities.

In stark contrast to the tobacco industry's narrative that tobacco farming is a lucrative business, evidence shows that tobacco farmers consistently experience higher rates of poverty than non-tobacco farmers. Tobacco actually contributes to 0.03% of the GDP of Kenya (*42*). These and similar initiatives are raising awareness among the farmers, general public and policy-makers of the successful transition of tobacco farmers into alternative livelihoods (*32*).

The WHO FCTC Secretariat has developed a toolkit on alternative livelihoods that Parties can use to explore best practices and successful examples of shifting away from tobacco growing (*43*).

In Migori County, Kenya, where over 2000 farmers have already shifted to growing high-iron beans, moving away from tobacco growing has also meant that children can go to school instead of growing tobacco

Testimony from Alice Achieng Obare, Bondo-Nyironge, Suna West Sub-County, Kenya



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Beans farming does not involve a lot of labour

When we were farming tobacco, it was tiresome, and we used to start in October and worked until August. It was a lot of work for my children and myself, and the children weren't able to attend school. Once you start tobacco work, you have to cut down the trees and the tobacco leaves. Then you start to gather the leaves. When it's time to put the tobacco leaves into the curing room [kiln], it's always full of smoke, which you inhale. Even if you don't smoke cigarettes, you're already a smoker", said Obare. "Beans farming does not involve a lot of labour. You can do it and go on with other business engagements [...] Right now, my children have time for homework. During tobacco growing they were not able to get time for homework.

I would also like to tell tobacco farmers that they should come and see my X-ray health report from my doctor. My chest is full of smoke [damage]. I can't carry heavy items, and I can't walk for long distances. But for beans farming, there is no stress."

Calls to action

Governments

- Governments should stop providing direct tobacco subsidies to tobacco farming and reallocate it for tobacco control programmes including, where applicable, support to alternative livelihoods to tobacco programmes and agriculture extension services.
- Governments should dismantle the tobacco boards and not promote tobacco growing, or repurpose these boards to support alternative livelihood programmes.
- Governments should explore a multisectoral approach and develop viable alternatives to tobacco growing, provide in-country agricultural support, engage communities/farmer cooperatives and facilitate access by farmers to local and national markets for alternative livelihoods such as food crops.
- Parties to the WHO FCTC should leverage their commitment to supporting tobacco farmers in switching to alternative, sustainable livelihoods, in line with Articles 17 and 18 of the WHO FCTC and its guidelines to free up land from tobacco crops to improve food security and nutrition. For additional information on implementing Article 17, please visit the WHO FCTC website (*22*).
- Support efforts to recognize and combat desertification, deforestation and environmental degradation due to tobacco growing.
- Hold the tobacco industry accountable for the risks posed to the environment and the adverse health effects of tobacco growing and manufacture, and impose costs.
- Recognize the tobacco industry's tactics when it comes to its support for tobacco farmers in switching to alternatives, including child labour projects and other corporate social responsibility projects.
- For high-income countries, which mostly import tobacco leaves from low- and middle-income countries and least developed countries: recognize the environmental and ecological footprint of the crops they import and expand their development cooperation agenda to support alternative livelihood programmes instead of tobacco growing in least developed and low- and middle-income countries as part of development cooperation agreements.

Article 17 of the WHO FCTC states that Parties "shall, in cooperation with each other and with competent international and regional intergovernmental organizations, promote, as appropriate, economically viable alternatives for tobacco workers, growers and, as the case may be, individual sellers" (*44*).

Article 18 states that Parties "agree to have due regard to the protection of the environment and to health with respect to tobacco cultivation and manufacture".

Note: the WHO FCTC does not aim to penalize tobacco growers and workers, but instead to promote economically viable alternatives for tobacco workers, growers and, as the case may be, individual sellers who will be affected by a reduction of tobacco consumption (*22*).

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Farmers

- Raise awareness among farming communities and farmer cooperatives about the harms of tobacco growing for their health and the environment.
- Make tobacco-growing farmers aware and inform their support groups/communities about viable alternative livelihoods and the benefits of switching to other value chains.
- Make use of government-supported programmes for switching to alternative crops.

General public

- Recognize the harms caused by tobacco growing in their environment and economy. Pledge support for government or civil society activity to help tobacco farmers in switching to alternative livelihoods.
- Call out governments that are supporting the tobacco industry and its front groups in tobacco farming, especially the countries faced with food insecurity and hunger issues.
- Call on governments in high-income countries that import tobacco leaf from least developed and low- and middle-income countries to take responsibility for the adverse health, economic and environmental impact of tobacco in these countries.
- Call on all governments to support tobacco farmers in switching to other crops, end tobacco growing subsidies and reallocate resources to support alternatives to tobacco growing.

Civil society

- Advocate with governments and policy-makers about their commitments under the WHO FCTC, and urge them to support alternative livelihood programmes to replace tobacco growing.
- Expose industry greenwashing tactics aimed at subverting tobacco control programmes and misleading governments/the public on the industry's supposed support for tobacco farmers and their children working on farms.
- Expose industry efforts to impede alternative livelihood initiatives by lobbying with governments/ policy-makers and/or interfering with the supply of inputs required for tobacco farmers to switch to alternative livelihoods, or offering to pay off partners.
- Disseminate global and regional best practices and lessons learned from successful alternative livelihood programmes to other countries /regions, and prevent any attempt by the tobacco industry to misinform farmers about the perceived challenges to alternative livelihoods. For example, various initiatives under the Digital India programme by the Indian Government, such as Digital Village, common service centres, e-Health, e-education etc. exist and could be used for education, awareness and advocacy of tobacco farmers.

Private sector including banking/financial institutions

- For private-sector market players: help to shape the market for sustainable alternative crops by incentivizing farmers to switch and providing support along the value chain, including on inputs, post-harvest handling, aggregation and offtake.
- Ensure that farm credit/loan programmes benefit tobacco growers who are looking to switch so they can be supported to purchase the inputs needed to grow alternative crops.

Entities of the United Nations system

- Work together to prioritize health, environment and food security issues.
- Address Sustainable Development Goal targets 2.1, 2.2, 2.3 and 2.4 (improve food security and nutrition), target 3a (implementation of the WHO FCTC), target 13 (combat climate change) and target 17 (strengthen partnership for sustainable development). This can be achieved by establishing and enabling crop production and marketing ecosystems in supporting farmers in switching from tobacco to alternative crops.

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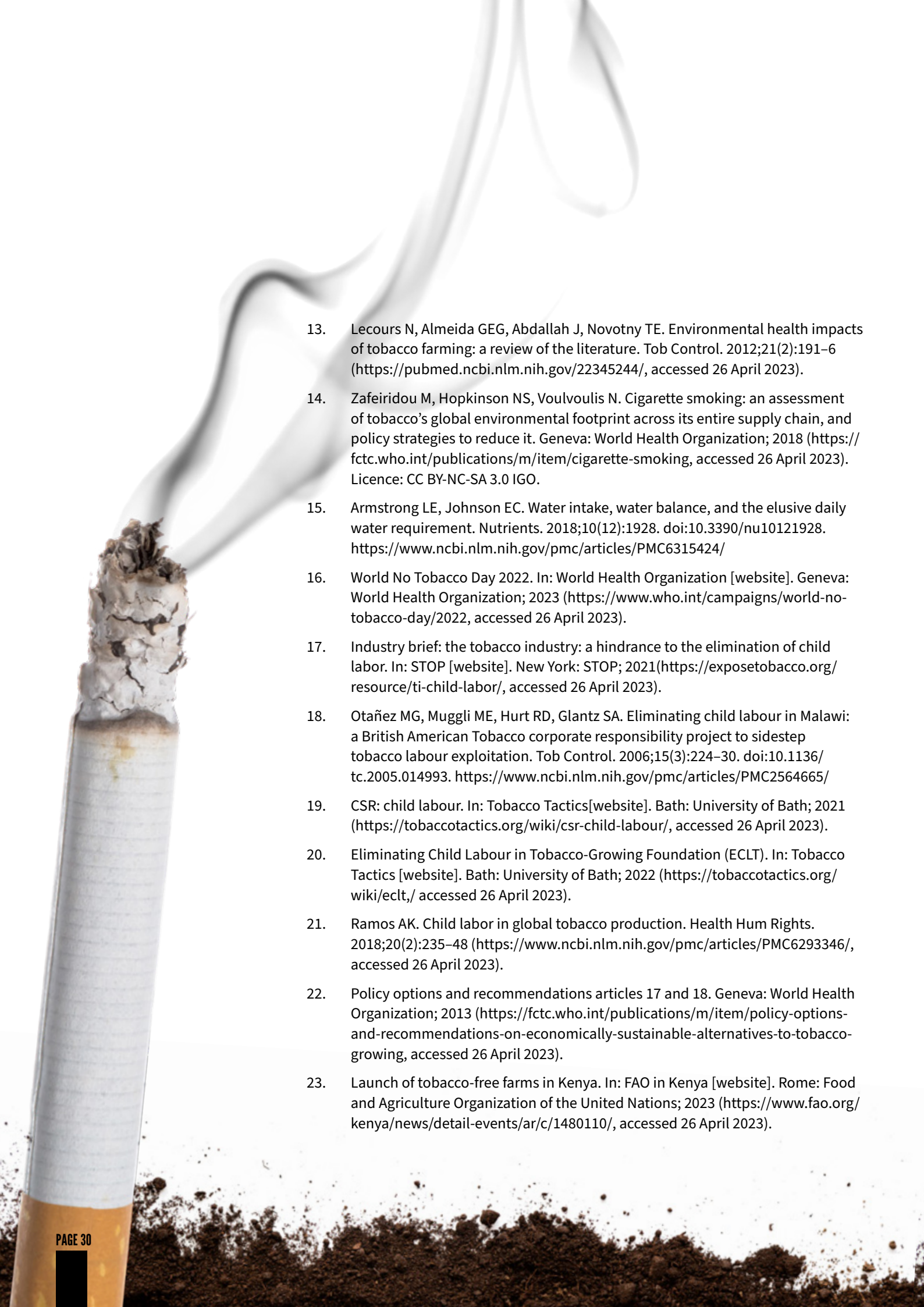

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