

**JEAN TODT**

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Re: STOP Tobacco Sports Advertising and Sponsorship

**We, members of civil society, earnestly call on you put an end to all tobacco advertising and sponsorship in Formula 1.** The sport represents one of the last vestiges of Big Tobacco's global marketing to lure young people into addiction through sports. Continued tobacco sponsorship in Formula 1 and the promotion of tobacco brands on and off the track is a violation of public health laws and United Nations (UN) norms.

Federation Internationale de l'Automobile's (FIA's) continued tolerance of this situation defies good governance and is inconsistent with the commitments the FIA has made to UN global road safety and climate change initiatives.

**Complicity in Marketing to Youth**

A recent report revealed that Philip Morris International (PMI) and British American Tobacco (BAT) spent almost \$100 million in 2019 and will spend \$115 million in the 2020 season to target Formula 1's 500 million global fans. PMI and BAT are pursuing a global campaign to present themselves as "transformed" in order to sell more of their harmful and addictive products. F1 is knowingly supporting this addiction strategy: the tobacco brands on the racetracks stream across border and in computer games into the youth's consciousness. The sport has the second-highest proportion of fans under age 25 of all global sports leagues. FIA's failure to remove tobacco advertisements from the sport could make it complicit in tobacco company marketing to youth.

**Complicity in Violating Cross Border Advertising & Sponsorship Bans**

It has been nearly 20 years since the FIA made its initial commitment to wean itself off tobacco money. Since then, significant progress has been made to stop the tobacco epidemic. A total of 182 countries have ratified the World Health Organization Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (WHO FCTC) mandating a comprehensive ban on tobacco advertising and sponsorship. WHO FCTC implementation has become engrained in the UN Sustainable Development Goals (UN SDGs). Tobacco companies have been found guilty of fraud and racketeering. A majority of governments, including most country hosts, have banned sports advertising<sup>1</sup> and governments have held the tobacco industry liable for violating laws through Formula 1 ads. FIA's continued failure to take responsive action to prevent violations could make it complicit with the tobacco industry.

**Failure to Take Responsibility Despite Being Called Out by WHO**

Last year, the WHO particularly called out Formula 1 but FIA provided only patronizing and dismissive responses<sup>2</sup>. FIA's failed to take responsibility; instead it hid behind a legal cloak, uncharacteristic of an organization that promotes sports integrity<sup>3</sup>. Simply asserting that it has no control over the sport's participants' actions is a lame excuse and a shameful response. If FIA's rules allow for teams to run on money that kills millions, then it should change the rules. It is not deserving of its governance position unless it does so.

**Inconsistency with Climate and Road Safety Commitments**

FIA's global commitments start to ring hollow *despite your* initiatives as UN Special Envoy for Road Safety, and efforts to sign Formula 1 up to join the UN Sports for Climate Action Framework<sup>4</sup>. FIA's commitment to protect the planet and promote safety is a sham if it continues to be a vehicle for

tobacco sponsorships that contribute to killing people and destroying the planet.<sup>5</sup> Even if FIA manages to reduce Formula 1's 256,551 tons of carbon footprint (2019), it continues to contribute to 845,000 tons of cigarette butts per year. This staggering amount of waste kills animals, pollutes land and sea, slows sustainable consumption and undermines the basic principles of the UN framework.

### **Inappropriate Engagement with the UN**

The UN specifically recognizes the fundamental conflict of interest between the tobacco industry and public health which is incorporated in the UN SDGs. Rather than aligning with the UN, FIA is furthering the tobacco industry's interests by receiving annual payments from teams funded by tobacco companies and allowing the teams to advertise tobacco brands. A resolution of the UN Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) urged agencies of the UN System to reject partnerships with organizations furthering industry interests.

### **Driving Past Addiction and Toward Health**

As you know, the Olympics, which recognized FIA in 2012,<sup>6</sup> is tobacco-free.<sup>7</sup> All other major global sports series have ended tobacco sponsorships. FIA represents the last major hurdle to complete a sweeping change that shows tobacco has no place in sports.

No matter what they say, tobacco companies are still responsible for 8 million deaths and USD 1.4 trillion in economic losses annually. It is shameful that Formula 1 has made USD 4.4 billion over the years from tobacco companies culpable for this disaster. FIA must put a stop to this and prevent complicity in violating laws and UN standards.

*We are confident that as a UN Special Envoy, you fully comprehend the values of the UN, and recognize your duty to drive the FIA towards supporting sustainable development by ending tobacco industry involvement in Formula 1.*

Thank you

[cc letter to UNSG, UNFCCC and WHO]

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<sup>1</sup> WHO Regional Office for the Eastern Mediterranean and WHO FCTC Secretariat's Knowledge Hub for Article 5.3 (2019). Tobacco industry tactics: advertising, promotion and sponsorship. Retrieved from <https://applications.emro.who.int/docs/FS-TFI-202-2019-EN.pdf?ua=1&ua=1> (accessed on 23 July 2020)

<sup>2</sup> Steven Impey (15 March 2019). FIA president backs WHO call to ban tobacco firm sponsorship. SportsPro. Retrieved from <https://www.sportspromedia.com/news/fia-president-who-ban-tobacco-f1-sponsorship> (accessed 03 August 2020).

<sup>3</sup> United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, International Olympic Committee, Interpol (1 July 2020). Preventing corruption in sport and manipulation of competitions. Retrieved from <https://stillmed.olympic.org/media/Document%20Library/OlympicOrg/News/2020/07/COVID-19-and-Anti-Corruption.pdf> (accessed 03 August 2020).

<sup>4</sup> Fédération Internationale de l'Automobile (22 January 2020). The FIA and Formula 1 Sign the United Nations' Sports for Climate Action Framework. Retrieved from <https://www.fia.com/news/fia-and-formula-1-sign-united-nations-sports-climate-action-framework#:~:text=The%20FIA%20and%20Formula%201%20have%20today%20announced%20they%20have,as%20a%20sport%20by%202030> (accessed 23 July 2020)

<sup>5</sup> United Nations Climate Change (n.d.). Sports for Climate Action Framework. Retrieved from [https://unfccc.int/sites/default/files/resource/Sports\\_for\\_Climate\\_Action\\_Declaration\\_and\\_Framework\\_0.pdf](https://unfccc.int/sites/default/files/resource/Sports_for_Climate_Action_Declaration_and_Framework_0.pdf) (accessed on 23 July 2020).

<sup>6</sup> International Olympic Committee recognises FIA (12 January 2012). Autosport. Retrieved from <https://www.autosport.com/f1/news/96965/olympic-committee-recognises-fia> (accessed on 23 July 2020).

<sup>7</sup> Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (n.d.). Smoking & Tobacco Use: Tobacco-Free Sports Initiatives, archived URL: <https://web.archive.org/web/20100409220530/http://www.cdc.gov/tobacco/youth/sports/index.htm> (accessed on 23 July 2020).

See also: WHO Tobacco Free Initiative (n.d.). Tobacco Free Sports. Retrieved from [https://www.who.int/tobacco/free\\_sports/en/](https://www.who.int/tobacco/free_sports/en/) (accessed 04 August 2020).

See also: WHO Tobacco Free Initiative (n.d.). Tobacco Free Olympics. Retrieved from [https://www.who.int/tobacco/free\\_sports/olympics/en/](https://www.who.int/tobacco/free_sports/olympics/en/) (accessed 04 August 2020).