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**CHALLENGING BIG  
TOBACCO**

## PRESS RELEASE

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### **Colombia Takes on Big Tobacco Advertising Tactics Nation Celebrates as Tobacco Control Law Enters into Force**

Today, Colombia celebrates the triumph of public health over corporate interests when one of the most effective measures to reduce tobacco addiction enters into force: the comprehensive ban on tobacco advertising, promotion and sponsorship.

In municipalities around the country, public health organizations are recognizing this day by launching a broad education campaign to raise awareness about the national law. This law is a roadmap for Colombia to meet its obligations under the global tobacco treaty, formally known as the World Health Organization Framework Convention on Tobacco Control, and to counteract the alarming rates of youth addiction and tobacco-related death and disease.

Tobacco use in Colombia is alarming: the smoking prevalence among youth is nearly 30% and there are 25,000 preventable deaths per year caused by tobacco. In response, in 2009, Colombia enacted sweeping legislation to curb tobacco industry advertising and sponsorships, make all public buildings smoke free, provide health warnings on tobacco packaging and ensure advancements in tobacco control policies and public education programs.

“Big Tobacco lobbied aggressively against the bill’s passage,” said Gigi Kellett, Corporate Accountability International’s Challenging Big Tobacco Campaign Director. “In response, Colombia passed a strong national tobacco control law. Today, the international community joins citizens of Colombia to celebrate an affirmation of public health coming before tobacco industry profits.”

Tobacco is the leading cause of preventable death, killing nearly 6 million people around the world each year – increasing to more than 8 million people a year over the next several decades, with 80% of these deaths in low- and middle-income countries. Full implementation of the treaty, however, could save hundreds of millions of lives.

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Given the impact of the treaty's lifesaving measures, through Article 5.3 of the treaty, countries developed and adopted tools to support their efforts to meet treaty obligations, curb the influence of this deadly industry and safeguard public health policymaking.

"Today we celebrate our country's achievements in protecting public health," said Yul Francisco Dorado, Corporate Accountability International's Latin America Campaign Director. "We also call on our national and local authorities for even greater commitment to the management and implementation of our national tobacco control law. Colombia's federal government must to adhere to its obligations under the tobacco treaty and terminate its agreements with the tobacco industry that encourages increased tobacco crop production."

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*[Corporate Accountability International](#), formerly Infact, is a membership organization that protects people by waging and winning campaigns challenging irresponsible and dangerous corporate actions around the world. For 30 years, the organization has compelled corporations—like Nestlé, General Electric and Philip Morris/Altria—to halt a range of abuses. Corporate Accountability is an NGO in Official Relations with the World Health Organization (WHO) and the WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control and has Special Consultative Status with the UN Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC).*