



**REJAT-TOGO**

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## **MEDIA RELEASE**

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## **Tobacco control activists say no to the interference of the tobacco industry in public health policies in Togo**

The African Tobacco Control Alliance (ATCA), Alliance Nationale des Consommateurs et de l'Environnement (ANCE-Togo) and the Journalists Network for Tobacco Control in Togo (REJAT-Togo), denounce the organization by British American Tobacco (BAT) on 28<sup>th</sup> and 29<sup>th</sup> April 2011 in Lomé of a workshop on illicit trade of tobacco products and the signing of a partnership agreement between that tobacco firm and the Togolese Customs Administration.

ATCA, ANCE-Togo and REJAT-Togo, consider this as an unacceptable interference of the tobacco industry in the national policies of a sovereign state and call on the Togolese government for the cancellation of the partnership agreement signed between British American Tobacco (BAT) and the Togolese Customs Administration on April 28, 2011.

In fact, Togo has ratified the WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (FCTC) on November 15, 2005 and Article 5, paragraph 3 of this convention states that: *«In setting and implementing their public health policies with respect to tobacco control, Parties shall act to protect these policies from commercial and other vested interests of the tobacco industry in accordance with national law.»* Moreover, the Guidelines for the implementation of this same article adopted by the Conference of Parties (COP) at Durban in South Africa in November 2008, insist on the fact that the tobacco industry should not be partner in any initiative linked to setting or implementing public health policies, given that its interests are in direct conflict with the goals of public health. The same Guidelines clearly require from states to *«Reject partnerships and non-binding or non-enforceable agreements with the tobacco industry»*.

Mr. Ebeh Kodjo Fabrice, Executive Secretary of the African Tobacco Control Alliance (ATCA), said he was *«deeply shocked and outraged by this turn of events by the Togolese government after the ratification of the WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (FCTC) and the adoption of the law on production, marketing and consumption of tobacco and its derivatives in Togo by the National Assembly on December 29, 2010.»* Mr. Kogbe Yaovi Lowanou, Director of Program at ANCE-Togo went further, saying that *«this situation is totally unacceptable to the tobacco control activists and the partnership agreement between the Togolese Customs and BAT must be quashed»*. He added that, *«ANCE-Togo is a member of the Framework Convention Alliance (FCA) and the Network for Accountability of Tobacco Transnationals (NATT) and will thus never accept an action that violates the FCTC blatantly.»* As for Mr. Teou Teou Essoham, President of REJAT-Togo, *"This partnership agreement is expected to never exist."*

It is clearly established today that the tobacco industry promotes and markets a product which is scientifically proven to be addictive, causes disease and death as well as various social burdens, including the impoverishment of Togolese society. Smoking prevalence rate in Togo is around 31.3% and tobacco consumption is rising, especially among young people with a prevalence rate of 14%. It is for this reason that ATCA, ANCE-Togo and REJAT-Togo, demand and insist that the partnership agreement signed between BAT and the Togolese Customs Administration on April 28, 2011 should be canceled.

ATCA, ANCE-Togo and REJAT-Togo, invite at the same time the government to strictly implement the WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (FCTC) and the tobacco control Act of December 29, 2010 by avoiding any collaboration with the tobacco industry.

- The African Tobacco Control Alliance (ATCA) is a regional organization established in Durban in South Africa on November 19, 2008 and which is based in Lomé-Togo. ATCA is a network of 140 member organizations in 36 countries in the Afro Region of the World Health Organization (WHO).

- Alliance Nationale des Consommateurs et de l'Environnement (ANCE-Togo) is a national network of twenty six (26) affiliated associations and NGOs created on September 3, 1999 and registered with the Ministry of Territorial Administration and Decentralization of Togo.

- The Journalists Network for Tobacco Control in Togo (REJAT-Togo) is a national network of 16 media houses created on September 23, 2009 and registered with the Ministry of Territorial Administration and Decentralization of Togo.

**For more information:**

- WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (FCTC):  
<http://whqlibdoc.who.int/publications/2003/9241591013.pdf>
- Guidelines for implementation of Article 5.3 of the WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (FCTC):  
[http://www.who.int/fctc/guidelines/article\\_5\\_3.pdf](http://www.who.int/fctc/guidelines/article_5_3.pdf)
- African Tobacco Control Alliance: [www.atca-africa.org](http://www.atca-africa.org)
- Alliance Nationale des Consommateurs et de l'Environnement: [www.ancetogo.org](http://www.ancetogo.org)
- Journalists Network for Tobacco Control in Togo (REJAT-Togo):  
[http://www.smokefree-togo.org/?pg=info\\_plus&lang=fr#lien1javascript:void\(0\)](http://www.smokefree-togo.org/?pg=info_plus&lang=fr#lien1javascript:void(0))
- Framework Convention Alliance (FCA): [www.fctc.org](http://www.fctc.org)
- Network for Accountability of Tobacco Transnationals (NATT):  
[www.stopcorporateabuse.org](http://www.stopcorporateabuse.org)