

**WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (FCTC) Article 5.3**

“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.”

## Solomon Islands – A deliberate plan to derail and delay Implementation of the Tobacco Control Act 2010

On 29 December 2011, Solomon Islands Prime Minister Gordon Darcy Lilo ordered the ministries of finance and health to stop work on the budget for an awareness-raising campaign on the Tobacco Control Act 2010, which was to come into force on 1 January 2012. The Act, which includes graphic health warnings that would cover 85 percent of the front and 100 percent of the back of cigarette packages, had been met with fierce opposition from the tobacco industry.

After getting a copy of the Act’s draft regulations, the industry, namely the Solomon Islands Tobacco Company, SITCO (a subsidiary of British American Tobacco) lobbied the Government and Prime Minister relentlessly. It requested consultations with the Ministry of Health’s Tobacco Control Task Force, and submitted a 24-page response to the regulations to the Office of the Prime Minister and the Taskforce, indicating that it would consider legal action if provisions were not deleted or revised.

SITCO also claimed that as the biggest stakeholder in the process it should have had input into development of the Act and regulations. However, permitting the tobacco industry to have such influence would violate FCTC Article 5.3 and its Guidelines.

The Tobacco Control Act 2010 includes not only graphic warnings but also smoke-free areas, restrictions on advertising and licensing fees for tobacco traders.

Resistance to the tobacco industry’s campaign against the Act is being led by the Tobacco Control Taskforce, which is adamant that it will resist the industry’s challenges and ensure full implementation of the Act and its regulations. The Taskforce has developed information on how all Government bodies must protect against industry interference, based on FCTC Article 5.3 and its Guidelines.

However, the Taskforce is struggling to overcome a lack of awareness about Art. 5.3 at all levels of Government and in the private sector. It must also try to counter the industry’s lobbying of the legislative and executive branches. For example, in 2005 the industry convinced the Ministry of Finance to agree to an MOU preventing any tobacco tax increase greater than 2.5 percent for the next 10 years.



The tobacco industry also has tremendous influence on Solomon Islands society via so-called 'corporate social responsibility' initiatives, including in schools, culture and tourism activities, sports, political parties, and community and youth-related programmes.

The tobacco control regulations are currently under consideration in the Attorney General Chambers Office (AGCO).

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**Queries or comments? – [editor@fctc.org](mailto:editor@fctc.org)**



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