

PRESS RELEASE on the occasion of World No Tobacco Day 2021

Commit to quit: Women have a Right to a Tobacco-free World

Joined by 16 organisations working on public health, sustainable development and addiction prevention, Unfairtobacco and FACT e.V. publish a factsheet on women's rights and tobacco control. It highlights the consequences of poor tobacco control and how women and girls are particularly affected.

Berlin, Germany, 26.5.2021 - Tobacco production and tobacco use are linked to numerous human rights violations and impede achieving the sustainable development goals (SDGs). Women's rights are violated in tobacco cultivation, for example in Bangladesh: by exploitation, lack of occupational health and safety, and high health risks. Tobacco products and their marketing, in turn, violate women's rights to health and preventive care in Germany and worldwide.

In the reproductive phase of life, women and girls are particularly affected by the consequences of tobacco consumption and production. However, it is precisely then that the right to health and preventive care is important in order to give (unborn) children a healthy basis for life. Therefore, the theme of this year's World No Tobacco Day "Commit to Quit" applies equally to (passive) female smokers in our country and to women in tobacco farming in the global South.

Prof. Dr. Sabina Ulbricht, Chairwoman of Women Against Tobacco ([Frauen Aktiv Contra Tabak FACT e.V.](#)), sums up the developments in female tobacco smoking prevalence in recent years: "The encouraging decline in tobacco consumption in adolescence has not yet been reflected among adults. In fact, the number of quit attempts, an important sign to achieve tobacco abstinence, is actually declining." She calls to policymakers: "In order to counteract the perpetuation of health inequalities, offers are needed that primarily reach women with a lower social status, since they make up the majority of female smokers and have evidentially benefited much less from existing support offers."

Sonja von Eichborn, Director of Unfairtobacco, draws attention to the violation of women's rights in Bangladesh and other tobacco-growing countries: "Women smallholder farmers in the Global South can hardly earn their living from the labour-intensive cultivation of tobacco and are exposed to serious health hazards due to a lack of occupational safety." She emphasizes, "Germany, as one of the world's largest importers of raw tobacco, also bears responsibility for this. In addition to adopting an effective supply chain law, the German government must step up its efforts to provide support for women tobacco farmers in countries like Bangladesh to quit growing tobacco as part of development cooperation."

An accelerated implementation of the WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control is part of the Sustainable Development Goals. The UN Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) is the basis for both instruments. It enshrines the right to

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Wir zeigen, wie die Tabakindustrie Menschen schadet und die Umwelt zerstört

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health and preventive care as well as the right to occupational health and safety.

As a result, women and girls worldwide have a right to a tobacco-free world in which tobacco use has been reduced to an insignificant level and the tobacco industry is highly regulated.

These days, the German government has to report to the United Nations on the implementation of women's rights. We accompany this process with a view to the tobacco industry and inform the CEDAW Committee about the status of tobacco control with regard to women.

The factsheet is available here: <https://unfairtobacco.org/en/material/factsheet-womens-rights/>

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Supporting Organisations

Action on Smoking and Health (US) | AKF Working Group on Women's Health in Medicine, Psychotherapy, and Society | Ärztlicher Arbeitskreis Rauchen und Gesundheit | European Network for Smoking and Tobacco Prevention (ENSP) | Fachstelle für Suchtprävention Berlin gGmbH | Friedensband | German NCD Alliance (DANK) | German Lung Foundation | German Cancer Research Center (DKFZ) | German Network for Tobacco free Healthcare Services (DNRfK) | Health Care Plus | Institute for Therapy and Health Research (IFT Nord) | Smokefree Partnership (SFP) | UBINIG - Policy Research For Development Alternative (Bangladesh) | Unfairtobacco | Vivantes Hospital | VIVID - Institute for the Prevention of Addiction (Austria) | Women Against Tobacco (FACT e.V.)