

CPCR NEWS

CENTRE FOR PRIMARY CARE RESEARCH.

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Delays in domesticating Tobacco and Nicotine Products Control Bill into Law shocks Dr. Kalila

Lukulu East Member of Parliament, Dr. Christopher Kalila says it is shocking for Zambia to be amongst the five African nations which have not domesticated the Tobacco and Nicotine Products Control Bill into Law.



He said despite having ratified to the World Health Organization Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (WHO/FCTC) in 2008, the only step made was the prohibition of smoking in public places under Statutory Instrument SI 39 of the Local Government Act of 2008.

The parliamentarian expected the tobacco control bill to be among the urgent bills which were supposed to have been passed in the previous National Assembly sitting.

Dr. Kalila is shocked that the tobacco control bill again, is not among the bills which are to be debated for enactment into law during this second session of the thirteenth (13th) National Assembly of Zambia.

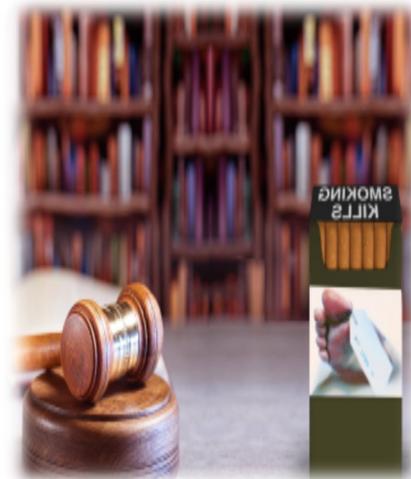
“It is disappointing that from 2008, we have had different Ministers of Health as a country and yet tobacco Control law has not be passed to protect the general citizenry” said Dr Kalila.

Most lawmakers, according to him, support passing the Tobacco Control Bill after it is brought up on the house floor.

The lawmaker however said the Tobacco Control Bill does not even need to be debated, because it is a public health concern as Zambia loses over 7000 people from tobacco related deaths every year and over 800 as second hand smoke victims which include women and children.

“Tobacco has over 7000 chemicals which are harmful and life threatening to the health of a consumer”, Dr. Kalila said.

This news comes barely a few days after Zambia Media Network against Tobacco Zamnat Chairperson Ms. Paxina Phiri issued a media statement that the New Dawn Administration indulgence with Tobacco Industry was a worrying concern.



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Ms. Phiri appealed to President Hakainde Hichilema to protect the people from the harms of tobacco consumption by acting wisely through the enactment of the Tobacco Control Bill into law.

And Dr. Kalila says it is Government's responsibility to protect the people of Zambia, therefore, knows most executive members need to understand and push for Tobacco Control bill as a stand-alone law, as opposed to be under the Public Health Law Act.

He is confident and expressed hope that the Health Minister Sylvia Masebo was champion of Tobacco Control as she was the one who passed the Local Government Act SI 39 which bans smoking in public.

Zambia Alliance for Tobacco Control disappointed with government on Tobacco Control Bill.

Zambia Alliance for Tobacco Control (ZATC) Secretary General Teddy Mulenga has expressed disappointment in Government for having tabled the Pro-Tobacco-Industry Tobacco Bill before Parliament sidelining the Tobacco Control Bill that has been ignored for some years now.

Zambia Alliance for Tobacco Control (ZATC) is a coalition of the Anti-Tobacco Civil Societies in Zambia whose mandate is to curb the use of tobacco and ensure public health is attained in the country.

Mr. Mulenga added that the Bill tabled before parliament is all about strengthening the Tobacco Industry activities in Zambia, with measures to redesign the Tobacco Board of Zambia in its quest to promote the growth, sale and promotion of Tobacco in the Country.

He stated that it is disappointing that the Tobacco Industry seems to have been given priority over the Tobacco Control Bill that seeks to limit production, promotion and sale of tobacco in Zambia.

Mr Mulenga cited that Tobacco Control Bill was tailored as a response to World Health Organization (WHO) Framework Convention for Tobacco Control (FCTC), to which Zambia signed in 2008.

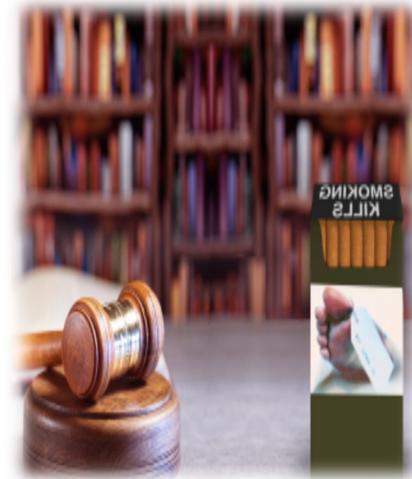
"The idea was to domesticate the recommendations within five years of signing and we are now entering the fifteenth year and the Bill is still gathering dust somewhere in some Government office," he said

Mr. Mulenga noted that Zambia loses about 1% to 2% of its GDP towards the costs to treating tobacco related diseases and along with this, Zambia loses close to 8,000 people each year because of tobacco related illnesses, such as, Lung Cancer, Stroke, Heart disease, Hypertension, Diabetes, Chronic Obstructive Airway disease.

He noted that this health burden outweighs the perceived economic benefits some claim tobacco provides and the contribution of tobacco to the Country's GDP is paled in relation to the expenditure related to mitigating the health ailments because of tobacco use.

Mr. Mulenga highlighted that in the same vein, ZATC would like to implore Government to curb the rapid spread of the use of Shisha and Electronic (vapour giving) devices among our Urban Youth.

"It should be noted that one hour of Shisha smoking is equivalent to smoking 100 cigarettes all at once, and as for E-Cigarettes, our youths are misled in thinking that they are safer since they don't involve cigar smoke," he noted



He added that the truth is these gadgets contain a very high Nicotine level and ZATC proposes that the importation of these novel Nicotine products be stopped before having a serious outbreak in their use.

Mr. Mulenga noted that in some States in United States of America (USA), E-Cigarettes have been banned and that several African Countries like Botswana, Namibia, Ghana and Kenya are way ahead of Zambia in domesticating the World Health Organization (WHO) Framework Convention for Tobacco Control (FCTC) recommendations.

Mr. Mulenga has questioned the major reason that is stopping the country from taking similar action, and he suspects that the invisible hand of the Tobacco Industry interference in these matters and therefore, urges the Government to be alert to these Tobacco Industry conspiracies. "Pass the Tobacco Control Bill," he cited

The Tobacco Control Draft Bill Act provides for the declaration of tobacco products, tobacco devices, nicotine products and nicotine devices as a restricted product, and protection of present and future generations from the devastating health, social, consumption, nicotine addiction, and exposure to the harmful emissions of both tobacco and nicotine products and devices to the prevention of use initiation, continually and substantially reducing consumption of tobacco and nicotine products and devices.

While the Pro-Tobacco-Industry Tobacco Bill provides for the strengthening of the Tobacco Industry activities with a plan to promote the growth of tobacco, while putting in place sale and promotion strategies and taking in measures to redesign the Tobacco Board of Zambia.

Walking The Talk By Budgeting For Tobacco Control-Nigeria Africa News

Beyond flowery rhetoric and grand promises, the will of a government to act on a policy is first re-lected in its financial plan. Activities for the implementation of such policies are provided with a budget line followed by a full dis-bursement of the budgeted sum to empower execution.

Tobacco control in Nigeria has made commendable progress despite the observed funding crunch. The enactment of the National Tobacco Control Act, 2015; the slow but eventual approval of its regulations in 2019, and the few pockets of implementation of the Graphic Health Warning (GHW) policy are testament to the thorny path of tobacco control efforts in the country.

However, with this progress and the seeming pro-tobacco-control posturing of the Federal Government, the establishment of a dedicated Tobacco Control Unit within the Federal Ministry of Health (the primary executor of the National Tobacco Control Act 2015) has been a glimmer of light. Unfortunately, like a financial orphan, tobacco control is left out when it comes to adequately implement the budget.

The 2022 Tobacco Atlas indicates that nearly \$2 trillion is spent annually in health care costs worldwide, causing production loss from premature death and sickness as a result of tobacco.



Nigeria has a smoking population of over 7 million people and an estimated 246 deaths weekly because of tobacco consumption. This grave public health problem continues to fester, and ordinarily should cause policymakers to lose sleep until it is wholly addressed through adequate and sustained funding of tobacco control to nip the problem.

Also, an estimated 526.4 billion Naira is spent annually on the treatment of tobacco-related illnesses. All these worrisome figures present a strong case for special budgetary provisions for tobacco control.

Within the Federal Ministry of Health, it is unclear what priority is given to tobacco control. It is however perceivable to the extent that there is a lukewarm attitude towards the inclusion of tobacco control as a line item in the yearly budget proposal – causing a critical funding gap for the important work. While it is expedient to allot funds for issues such as cancer, it also makes simple sense to adequately apportion funds for tobacco control, with evidence that tobacco is one of the leading causes of several kinds of cancer.

The tobacco market in Nigeria is estimated to be worth 74.90 million USD and is projected to reach 228.36 million USD by 2025, easily making it a multi-billion naira market. A market that has left sickness and death in its wake.

A major share of tobacco control funding is sourced externally through foreign aid. According to the strength of these foreign donors, the aid provided is generous, yet they are a trickle of the sheer size of the country and are easily spread thin when a national implementation drive of the National Tobacco Control Act is attempted. Note also that the government cannot and should not abdicate its responsibility of funding tobacco control or other developmental issues to foreign aid. The yawning funding gap makes the ill-intentioned dollars of the tobacco industry alluring.

The institutionalization of tobacco control funding will make agencies of government saddled with tobacco control full proof and inoculated from possible inducement and industry interference, thus strengthening tobacco control.

The full operationalization of the Tobacco Control Fund is a quick first step towards sustainable funding. However, to control the products and activities of

the humongous tobacco industry in Nigeria, the Tobacco Control Fund alone will fall short.

Progressively increasing tobacco taxes must be earmarked for tobacco control efforts, while also making special budgetary provisions for the same.

The most probable effects of adequate and sustained state funding of tobacco control will be a significant decrease in the smoking population, a consequent decrease in tobacco-related illnesses and a drop in tobacco-induced health costs.

The Federal Government must demonstrate good faith in tobacco control through its inclusion of a robust line item in the annual Appropriation Act. It is also pertinent to remark that the implementation of the National Tobacco Control Act, 2015, which is modelled on the recommendations of the WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (WHO-FCTC) requires a national application to be truly effective.

Finally, the National Assembly must prioritize the allotment of adequate resources for tobacco control and duly extend its oversight to ensure that funds assigned and disbursed are judiciously used.

Source: [Independent](#)

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