

# Sri Lanka

Overall score:

58

## I. Industry participation in policy development:

Despite the commendable efforts by the Ministry of Health and Presidential Task Force to implement strong tobacco control measures, there has been strong opposition from the Ministry of Finance (MoF). Some issues raised by the officials from MoF suggest they depend on industry arguments for decision-making over scientific evidence and data. The opposition from the MoF on tobacco control has resulted to a favorable year for the industry in 2018.

**II. Tobacco industry-related CSR activities:** There is no publicly available record of government officials participating in CSR activities in 2018. In 2018, Ceylon Tobacco Company (CTC) made donations worth 32 million rupees (US\$180,760) towards CSR activities.

**III. Benefits given to the tobacco industry:** Several proposed tobacco control measures such as the ban on cigarette sales within 100m of schools, ban on single stick sale, introduction of standardized (plain) packaging, ban on tobacco cultivation, were not implemented for more than a year of being proposed. Additionally, the MoF has given permission for more operators to import cigarettes into Sri Lanka.

**IV. Unnecessary interaction with the tobacco industry:** Senior ministers took part in an event headed by the CEO of CTC. There have been several instances where the CEO of CTC, who is also the Chairman of American Chamber of Commerce (AmCham), met senior government officials through events organized by AmCham. Smuggled cigarettes confiscated by Sri Lanka customs is destroyed at the crushing unit of the CTC.

**V. Procedure for transparency measures:** Interactions with tobacco industry are not disclosed publicly. The government does not require registration of


tobacco industry entities, affiliated organizations and individuals acting on their behalf including lobbyists.

**VI. Avoiding conflicts of interest:** The government does not prohibit contributions to political parties from the tobacco industry or any entity working to further its interests. Dinesh Weerakkody (non-Executive Director of CTC) is as an advisor to the Prime Minister and to the Ministry of National Policy and Economic Affairs (MNPEA). He serves as the Chairman of National Human Resource Development Council of Sri Lanka, a public entity which comes under the MNPEA. However, Dinesh Weerakkody resigned from CTC with effect from July 15, 2018.

**VII. Preventive measures:** The government does not have a procedure in place for disclosing the records of any interaction with the tobacco industry, nor has it adopted a code of conduct for officials to guide them in their interactions with the tobacco industry. While there is no sustained program to consistently raise awareness on Article 5.3 within government departments, the National Authority on Tobacco and Alcohol has initiated the development of a plan to implement Article 5.3 in 2019.

Tobacco production, imports and the quantum of manufactured cigarettes must be disclosed for taxation purposes. However, there is no procedure to report lobbying, philanthropy and political contributions. While there is a general code of conduct for government officials to restrict acceptance of gifts and contributions for their service other than what is already allowed in the establishment code or departmental protocols, this does not restrict government officials from taking part in events or study visits sponsored by the tobacco industry.



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## Recommendations

1. Policies regulating tobacco must put health as a priority and be based on evidence to avoid interference from the tobacco industry.
2. Implement a full ban on all forms of tobacco related CSR activities as recommended in the FCTC.
3. The government must put in place a procedure for interactions with the tobacco industry and disclose all records of interaction, and adopt a Code of Conduct for its officials when dealing with the tobacco industry.
4. Awareness programs on FCTC article 5.3 should be conducted regularly for government officials and ministers.