

Latin America and the Caribbean Regional **Tobacco Industry Interference** Index 2025

Fourth Edition

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GGTC Global Center for Good Governance in Tobacco Control

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

This report was made possible thanks to support from Bloomberg Philanthropies. We would like to thank Laura Salgado and Mary Assunta of the Global Center for Good Governance on Tobacco Control (GGTC) for their technical and editorial advice in developing this regional Index.

The information contained is included in the Global Tobacco Industry Interference Index, which ranks countries based on a survey conducted by civil society. It assesses the impact of tobacco companies and their allies on tobacco control policies based on commercial interests, in compliance with what is stipulated in Article 5.3 of the World Health Organization Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (WHO FCTC).

The Global Tobacco Industry Interference Index, originally developed by the Southeast Asia Tobacco Control Alliance (SEATCA), is produced by GGTC with support from Bloomberg Philanthropies.

Publication Date

November 2025

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Special mention

To all the individuals and organizations who contributed their expert knowledge and time to this Index, especially to the country collaborators who, based on exhaustive research, provided the most accurate and up-to-date information possible.

We also acknowledge the valuable editorial contributions of Juan Núñez Guadarrama, coordinator of the Mexico Health-Hable Coalition and Ari Rubenstein, Keltie Vance, and Lizzie McQuillan of Corporate Accountability.

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Suggested citation

Valdivieso, D., Dorado, D., Arcila, J. IV Regional Tobacco Industry Interference Index for Latin America and the Caribbean. Implementation of Article 5.3 of the WHO Framework Convention for Tobacco Control, 2025. Corporate Accountability.

Design

Abigail Villaseñor

Published by

Corporate Accountability.

Website

https://globaltobaccoindex.org/regions/latin-america

Disclaimer

The Regional Tobacco Industry Interference Index for Latin America and the Caribbean countries is based on publicly available information obtained by collaborators in their respective countries. If the someone has information that could strengthen this report, please contact: tobaccocampaign@corporateaccountability.org

About Corporate Accountability (corporateaccountability.org)

It is a non-governmental organization that prevents transnational corporations from devastating democracy, violating human rights, and destroying our planet.

About GGTC (ggtc.world)

The Global Center for Good Governance in Tobacco Control (GGTC) collaborates with advocates, governments, and institutions worldwide to tackle the single greatest obstacle in tobacco control implementation - tobacco industry interference – by applying WHO FCTC Article 5.3.

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INTRODUCTION

"WHO FCTC, a global public health treaty, includes particular obligations on governments to protect public health from the vested and commercial interests of the tobacco industry. Governments repeatedly report that interference by the tobacco industry is among the most significant barriers to making progress on tobacco control. The Tobacco Industry Interference Index reveals the extent of this problem and how countries around the world are impacted." .

Andrew Black, acting as Head of the Secretariat of the WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (WHO FCTC).

Tobacco is responsible for more than seven million deaths annually,[1] prompting governments and public health advocates to intensify their efforts to prevent and reduce tobacco use. In response, the tobacco industry has stepped up its interference tactics, creating a direct and fundamental conflict with public health policies.

For the fourth time, national organizations, coordinated by Corporate Accountability and GGTC, publish the Regional Interference Index, which analyzes the implementation of Article 5.3 of the WHO FCTC in 19 Latin American and Caribbean countries (Argentina and the Dominican Republic are the only participating States that have not ratified the convention). This report aims to promote new measures and strengthen existing ones to address industry interference, as well as encourage governments in collaboration with civil society to accede to and implement the WHO FCTC.

In this 2025 Regional Index, Mexico, Uruguay, Chile, Panama, and Peru show significant progress in the implementation of Article 5.3 measures. In Peru and Panama, no tobacco related CSR activities are reported.

This edition of the Index shows a declining trend with more countries granting regulatory benefits to the tobacco industry (TI) such as lack of regulations, tax reductions and the repeal or delay of regulations. Most countries have granted some form of incentive to the TI, although many are not evident in publicly available official information. In this edition, in addition to the regulatory benefits, the difficulty of maintaining, applying, or improving regulations, especially in tax matters, is highlighted.[2]

RECOMMENDATIONS

A multisectoral approach involving relevant government and civil society stakeholders is essential to effectively implement tobacco control, counter industry interference, and comply with Article 5.3 of the WHO FCTC.

1. Strategic communication and intersectoral awareness

- *Develop institutional communication campaigns* targeting all government sectors (health, economy, commerce, education, justice, foreign relations) on their obligation to protect tobacco control policies from industry interference, in accordance with Article 5.3 of the WHO FCTC and its Implementation Guidelines.
- *Design sustained education and communication strategies aimed at raising awareness about:* the health, economic, and social consequences of tobacco use; the marketing, disinformation, and political influence strategies used by the TI to expand its market, including specific tactics such as sponsorship of cultural events, the promotion of electronic smoking devices, and using Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) activities to gain government endorsement.

2. Governance, institutional integrity, and regulation of interaction with the TI:

Develop and implement a transparent and restricted government policy that requires all sectors of the State to:

- *Reject alliances, agreements or arrangements* with the TI or its representatives, directly or indirectly.
- *Limit interactions with the TI to what is strictly necessary* for regulation and oversight, in accordance with public, documented, and transparent criteria.
- *Ensure the publicity* of all interactions, including meetings, correspondence, contributions or participation in regulatory processes through mechanisms for access to public information.
- *Adopt and implement a binding code of ethical conduct* that protects public officials from undue influence from the TI. This code can be added to existing regulations on public integrity or established as a specific regulation within the framework of the WHO FCTC implementation.

3. Regulation and supervision of the TI: :

Establish precise regulatory requirements on the information that must be delivered by the TI, including:

- *Product composition,* marketing strategies, distribution channels, financial contributions, prices and tax strategies.
- *Frequency* of reports, verification mechanisms and responsible supervisory entity.
- *Classification* of administrative, civil or criminal sanctions for omission, falsification or non-compliance.
- *Phase out* all forms of incentives and subsidies for the TI, including:

  - Tax exemptions.

  - Preferential tax treatment under the general business promotion scheme.

  - Incentives for CSR activities, or donations conditional on public visibility.

- *Prohibition or denormalization of all* TI-promoted CSR or CSR activities, which represent a covert form of sponsorship and social legitimization.

4. Monitoring, surveillance, and accountability:

Establish institutionalized systems for systematic monitoring and evaluation of the tobacco industry's behavior, including:

- *Public or mixed observatories* on industry interference.
- *Publicly accessible digital platforms* to receive complaints from citizens and give access to relevant information.
- *Indicators of compliance* with Article 5.3 of the WHO FCTC and its Guidelines for implementation.
- *Promotion of the active and sustained participation* of civil society, free from conflicts of interest with the TI, in the formulation, implementation, and monitoring of public tobacco control policies. This responds to the recommendation of Article 4.7 of the WHO FCTC on the essential role of civil society.
- *Application of legal accountability mechanisms and, where appropriate, legal action* against the TI when there is evidence of interference, regulatory non-compliance, illicit product promotion or institutional corruption.

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5. National cooperation:

Establish and strengthen intersectoral national coordination mechanisms (NCM) for the implementation of the WHO FCTC, with budget, legal powers and technical capacity to articulate public tobacco control policies in an effective and sustainable manner.

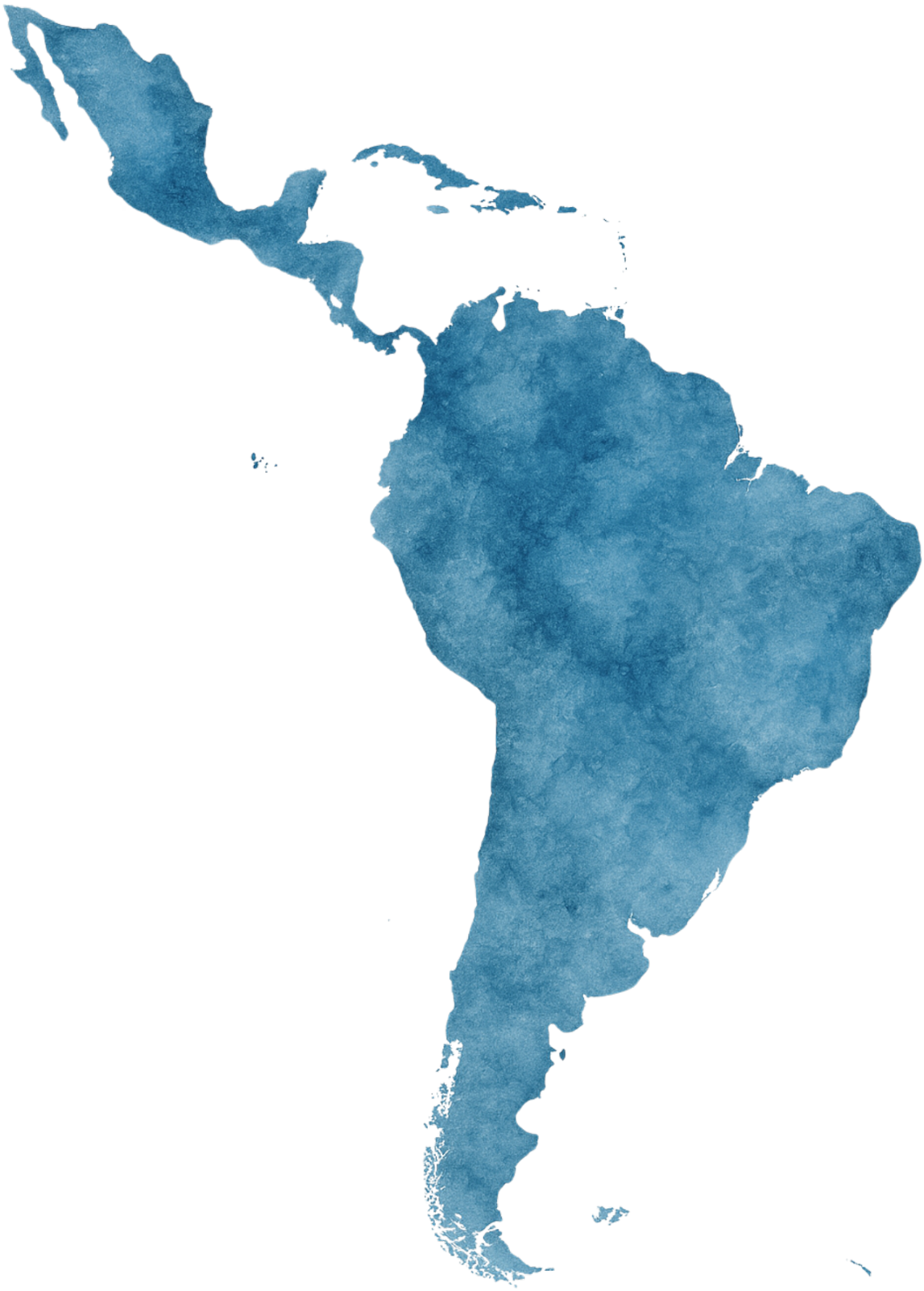
6. Ratification and strengthening of international commitments:

- *Urge states that have not yet acceded to the WHO FCTC,* which are **Argentina** and the **Dominican Republic**, to do so as soon as possible as a sign of their commitment to protect public health.

- *Strengthen regional commitment through the ratification and implementation of the Protocol to Eliminate Illicit Trade in Tobacco Products,* which will allow: strengthening traceability systems, preventing smuggling and tax evasion (in order to improve tax collection and the effectiveness of health policies.

METHODOLOGY

To measure tobacco industry (TI) interference, each country completed a questionnaire based on the WHO FCTC Article 5.3 guidelines, developed by SEATCA. Publicly available information from April 2023 to March 2025 was used. The regional Index takes into account each country's individual results, and its score depends on the number, the severity, and frequency of reported interference cases.



RESULTS SUMMARY

Rank	Country	Score
21	Mexico	48
26	Chile	52
26	Uruguay	52
33	Panama	54
33	Venezuela	54
43	Peru	56
47	Nicaragua	58
48	Jamaica	59
56	Costa Rica	64
59	Brazil	65
63	Ecuador	68
63	El Salvador	68
63	Guatemala	68
68	Honduras	70
82	Bolivia	76
87	Argentina	79
87	Paraguay	79
89	Colombia	80
100	Dominican Republic	98



Graph 0. Level of tobacco industry interference. Green: lowest interference; Blue: medium interference; Red: highest interference. Corporate Accountability, Regional Interference Index for Latin America and the Caribbean, 2025.

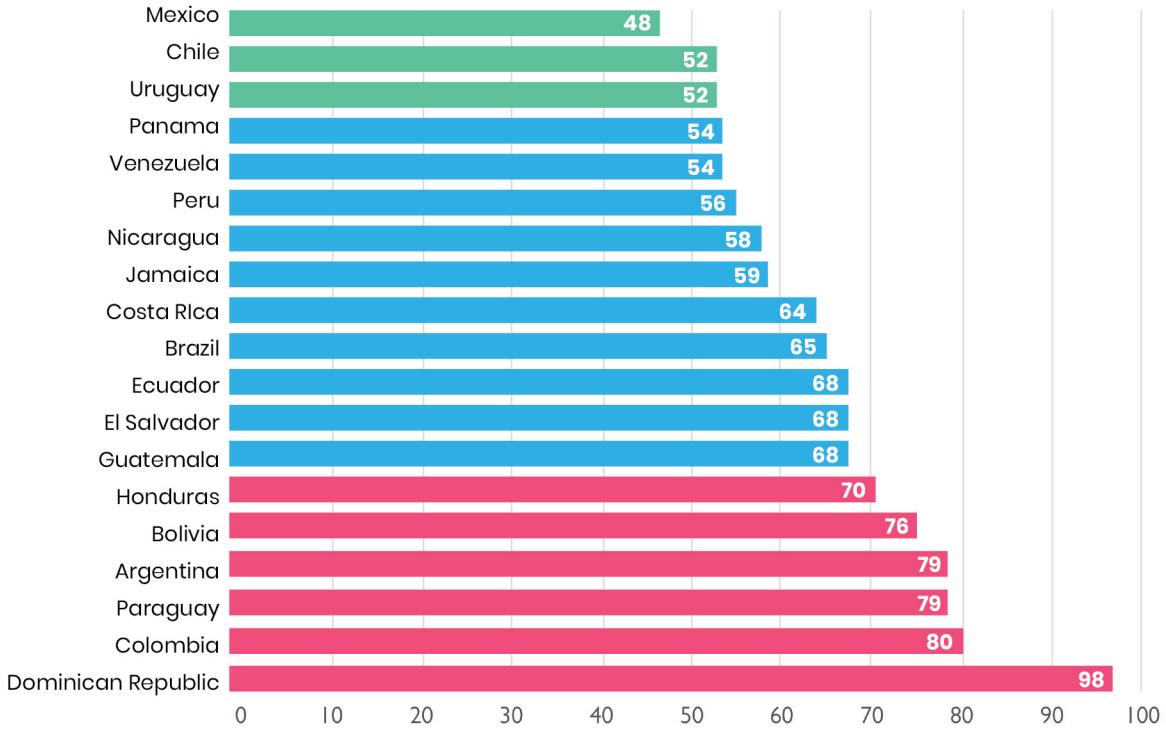
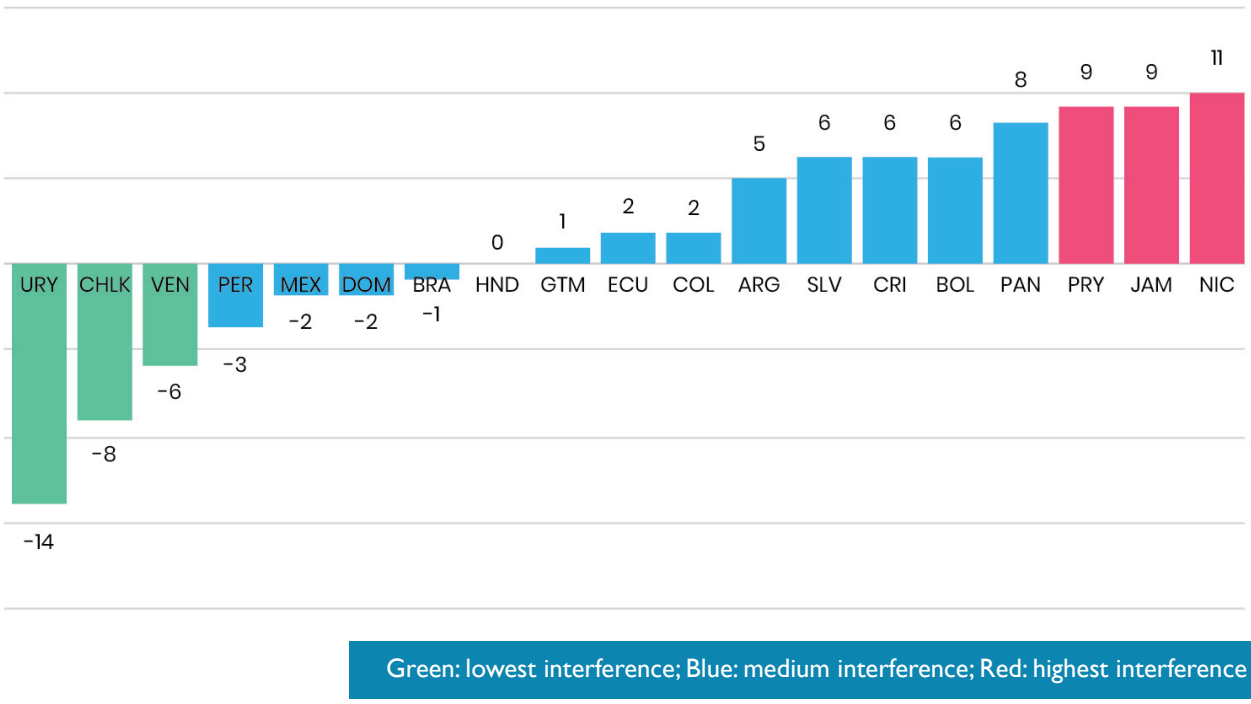


Figure 1. Total score of the Tobacco Industry Interference Index by country in 2025, the lower the score, the less interference. Corporate Accountability, Regional Interference Index for Latin America and the Caribbean, 2025.



Graph 1. Comparison of improvement and deterioration between the 2023 and 2025 Index results (graphic title translation) level of tobacco industry interference in governments in the Latin American and Caribbean region. Corporate Accountability, Regional Interference Index Latin America and the Caribbean, 2025.

1. General Results:

The results of the 2025 Index are presented in Chart 1 and Figure 1, from the lowest score, indicating low interference, to the highest interference score. The TI continues to intrude into public policy **in all countries of the Latin American and Caribbean region**. As is the case in all previous Indexes, the interference is increasing in most countries.

A comparison of scores between 2023 and 2025 (Graph 2) indicates the countries that improved and deteriorated the most.[3] Unfortunately, this year, 11 countries, more than in previous indexes, show an increase in TI interference. These countries are: **Colombia, Paraguay, Bolivia, Argentina, Ecuador, Guatemala, El Salvador, Costa Rica, Jamaica, Nicaragua, and Panama**. Overall, the difference is not as marked. Only Honduras shows the same result. The remaining seven (7) countries demonstrate better scores to curb this interference: the Dominican Republic, Brazil, Peru, Venezuela, Chile, Uruguay, and Mexico.

Overall, there isn't much difference in scores from the previous Index, either decreasing or increasing. The country with **the least industry interference is Mexico**, positioning itself as the country with the best strategies, after Panama; and **the Dominican Republic continues to have the highest score** (as in the previous two indexes).

2. Specific Results:

A summary is presented by indicator of the most relevant results of the analysis in compliance with the Guidelines for the Implementation of Article 5.3 of the WHO FCTC from the countries. For more information, see the country reports. .[4]

Level of industry participation in government policy making

The WHO FCTC Article 5.3 Guidelines prohibit the involvement of the TI in public health policy development. Although some countries have improved their compliance, **ten countries** have regressed, highlighting the growing interference of the TI. **Nicaragua** and **Uruguay** stand out for good practices, while **Colombia, Brazil**, and **Guatemala** show high levels of interference. No country included representatives of the TI in their official delegations to the COP10. **Guatemala** was singled out negatively by civil society who gave them the "Dirty Ashtray" Award.[5]

TI connects with governments through corporate social responsibility (CSR) activities

The WHO FCTC Article 5.3 Guidelines recommend regulating and denormalizing the tobacco industry's CSR activities, and Article 13 describes them as a form of promotion. In **Peru, Panama,** and **Chile**, there has been progress in limiting these practices, although in **Chile** they persist at the local level. Guatemala reduced its score despite the industry's environmental strategies. In **Bolivia**, the **Dominican Republic**, and **El Salvador**, there is close collaboration between the TI and the state. Although there is no official support in **Nicaragua**, there is tobacco promotion with government participation.

Benefits given to the TI

Although Article 5.3 of the WHO FCTC recommends against providing incentives for the TI, many countries continued to provide subsidies, concessions, or regulatory delays. Overall, there is consistent or maintenance of the status quo in the provision of incentives, especially in the tax area. **Venezuela** and **Mexico** stand out for their good practices, while others, such as **Argentina**, **Bolivia**, and the **Dominican Republic**, show high levels of interference, when applying policies that directly favor the industry, such as tax exemptions, promotion at events, or weakened regulations. Almost all countries allow duty-free tobacco products, especially cigarettes, for international travelers entering the country.

Lack of transparency when interacting with the industry

In the region, there is a persistent lack of specific regulations guaranteeing transparency. **Venezuela**, the **Dominican Republic**, and, for the first time, **Paraguay,** show high levels of opaqueness. **El Salvador** maintains the lowest score, although it still lacks clear transparency policies. **Chile** and **Mexico** show better practices by having general lobbying regulations, although not specific to the TI. In contrast, **Colombia, Bolivia, Paraguay**, and **Venezuela** show the most interference, lacking formal records, controls, or procedures to disclose their interactions with the TI, which facilitates agreements made behind closed doors.

Conflicts of interest persist

In Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC), some countries prohibit tobacco industry contributions to political campaigns, while others do not. The industry employs former officials to influence government in policy making. **Uruguay** has reduced its conflicts of interest, but **Peru, Jamaica**, and **Bolivia** have increased. The **Dominican Republic** maintains the highest level of conflicts such as having no restrictions on the TI funding the political sector. **Costa Rica** and **Venezuela** apply more precise regulations and don´t show ties between officials and the industry. While in **El Salvador**, the industry is not required to declare its financial contributions to political parties. In **Bolivia, Colombia**, and the **Dominican Republic**, there is little regulation, with officials linked to the TI openly promoting the industry, showing high levels of political interference..

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Precautionary measures prevent industry influence

Brazil, Panama, and **Peru** demonstrate some good practices for addressing tobacco industry interference, such as applying codes of conduct, information requests, and enacting specific laws, although they still have regulatory gaps. In contrast, **Guatemala, Honduras**, and the **Dominican Republic** lack clear rules requiring transparency in industry interactions or limiting them, which facilitates industry influence over authorities and weakens compliance with Article 5.3 of the WHO FCTC.

Latin America and the Caribbean Regional Tobacco Industry Interference

Index 2025

Fourth Edition

The WHO FCTC, which entered into force in 2005 (whereby this Index coincides with the commemoration of its 20th anniversary of the agreement), was the first international treaty promoted by the WHO, based on the premise that all people have the right to the highest attainable standard of health. Article 5.3 establishes that signatory states must protect their public health policies against the commercial and other interests of the tobacco industry, in accordance with their national legislation.[6]

In 2008, the Guidelines for Implementing this Article were adopted to guide countries in fulfilling their commitments. These guidelines include eight key recommendations for addressing industry interference, organized into three main areas: communication, governance, and regulation.[7]

Below are examples of tobacco industry interference in **17 Latin American and 2 Caribbean countries** on how they are responding to this challenge in their tobacco control policies.

1. Level of industry participation in government policy making

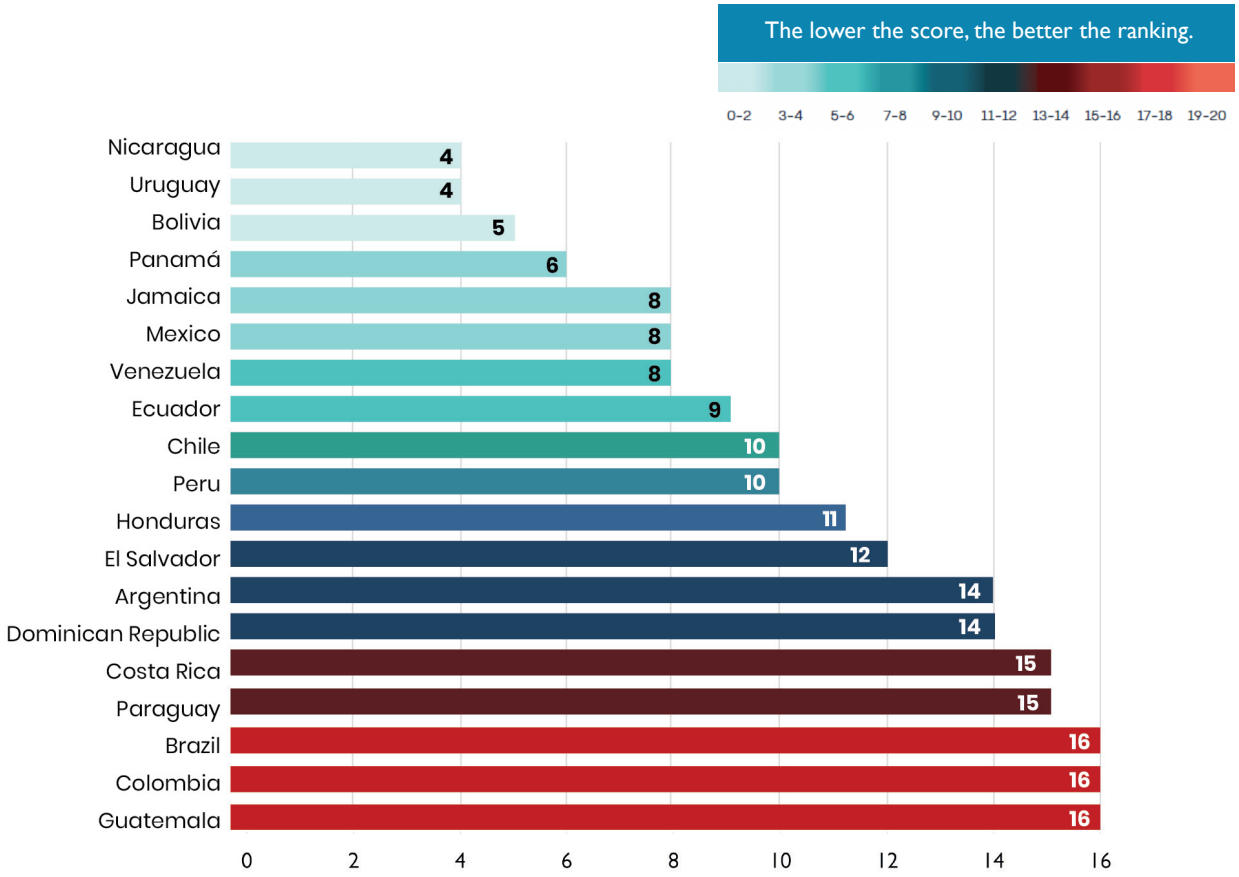
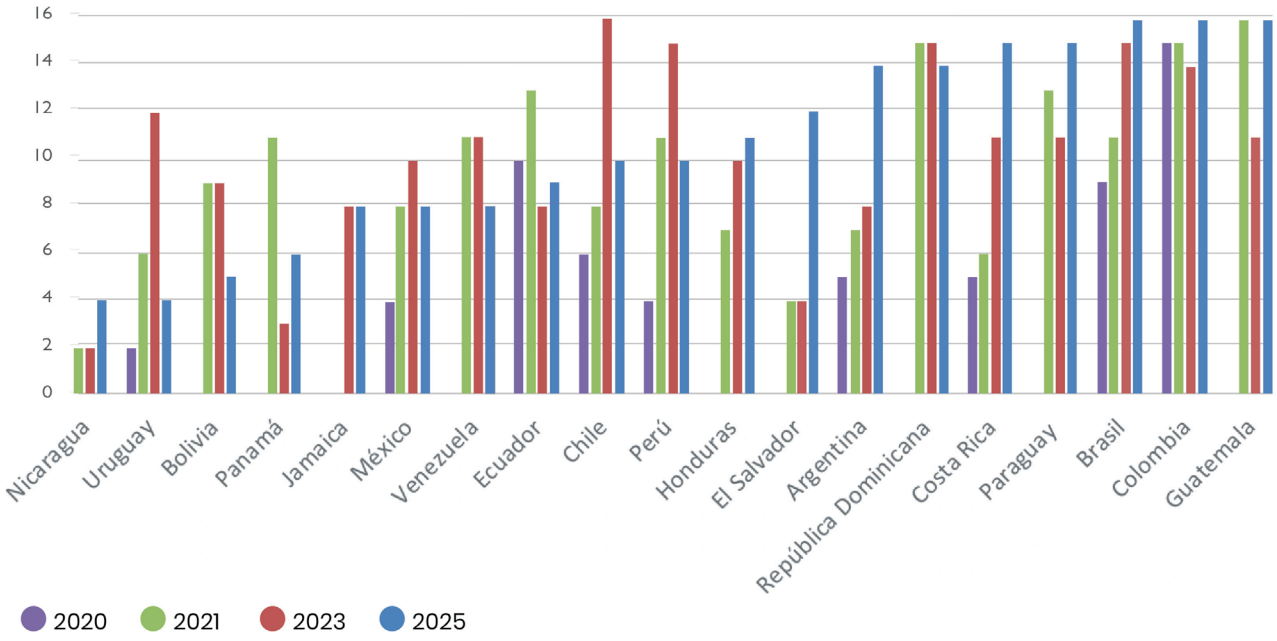


Figure 2. Level of TI participation in policy development. The lower the score, the lower the level of industry participation. *Corporate Accountability, Regional Interference Index Latin America and the Caribbean, 2025*



Graph 2. Level of TI involvement in policy development (see appendix). Comparison across countries and years. *Corporate Accountability, Regional Interference Index Latin America and the Caribbean, 2025.*

The WHO FCTC Article 5.3 Guidelines **recommend against allowing the tobacco industry to be a member of any governmental body, committee or advisory group that establishes or implements tobacco control or public health policies**.[8]

A review of the previous Indexes, since 2021, shows almost all countries had increased their scores on this indicator, but in **2023** the variations were diverse, showing a slightly more encouraging scenario.[9] In **2025**, the countries maintain this diversity, but those that have improved vary greatly from those that have deteriorated, and they are no longer the same. In this case, only **Jamaica** maintains the same score as the previous index. Those that improved (lower score) were **Uruguay** (considerably), **Bolivia, Mexico, Venezuela, Chile, Peru**, and the **Dominican Republic.** There is still a greater upward trend, in ten countries (see Graph 3).

This phenomenon is due to the marked interference of the TI in public policy on tobacco control.

Best performing

In **Nicaragua**[10] and **Uruguay**[11] there is no evidence that the government accepts, supports, or receives assistance from or in collaboration with the TI in public health policies related to tobacco control. **Uruguay**[12] managed to resolve two decrees that were enacted after the law that weakened regulations on the marketing of heated tobacco and plain packaging (lowering their score compared to the 2023 Index).
An important milestone for the region in 2024 was achieved by **Panama**[13] through their hosting of the **COP10** and **MOP3 meetings**.
.

Increased interference

The highest levels of TI interference in the development of public policies are reported by **Colombia**[14], **Brazil**[15] **y Guatemala,**[16] who do not vary much from the previous Index, except **Guatemala**. In **Colombia**,[17] policy-makers, such as members of Congress, maintain links with the TI, and they allow them to present regulatory projects and actively participate in public hearings without observing Article 5.3 Guidelines. **Brazil** and **Guatemala** reported that while there is no publicly available evidence, the TI has tried to interfere in regulations and promotion. In **Brazil**,[18] for example, the TI promoted electronic smoking devices,[19] the presentation of bills, a proposal for special taxes in its Tax Reform, the Minimum Price policy,[21] the regulation of cigarette packaging[22] and the COP10 negotiations. On the other hand, in **Guatemala**[23] there have been no changes to the law that strengthens tobacco control since 2019. The **República Dominicana**[24] protects the tobacco industry through the "Law that declares tobacco and cigars as cultural heritage…" of the nation.

None of the governments of the countries participating in this report allow or nominate representatives of the TI to be part of their delegations to the COP or other subsidiary bodies.[25]

There has been an increase in tobacco industry interference through the promotion of alleged "harm reduction" or reduced-risk products, such as electronic devices and nicotine products. The TI uses them to position itself as an ally in public health, despite the lack of independent evidence of their efficacy and safety. This strategy has influenced legislative debates, delayed strict regulations, and cause confusion among decision-makers, weakening tobacco control policies in the region..

2. Corporate social responsibility (CSR) activities of the TI

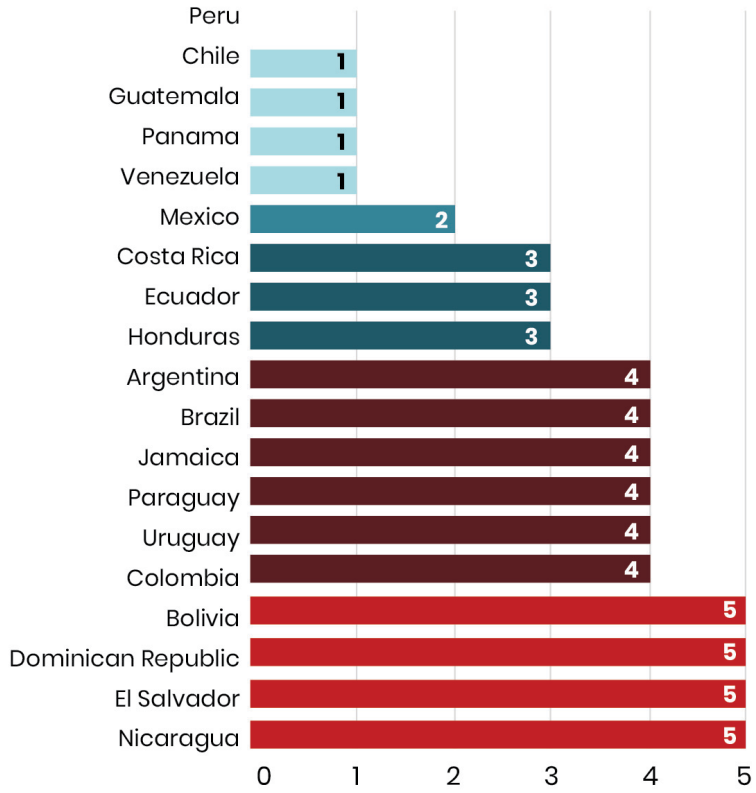
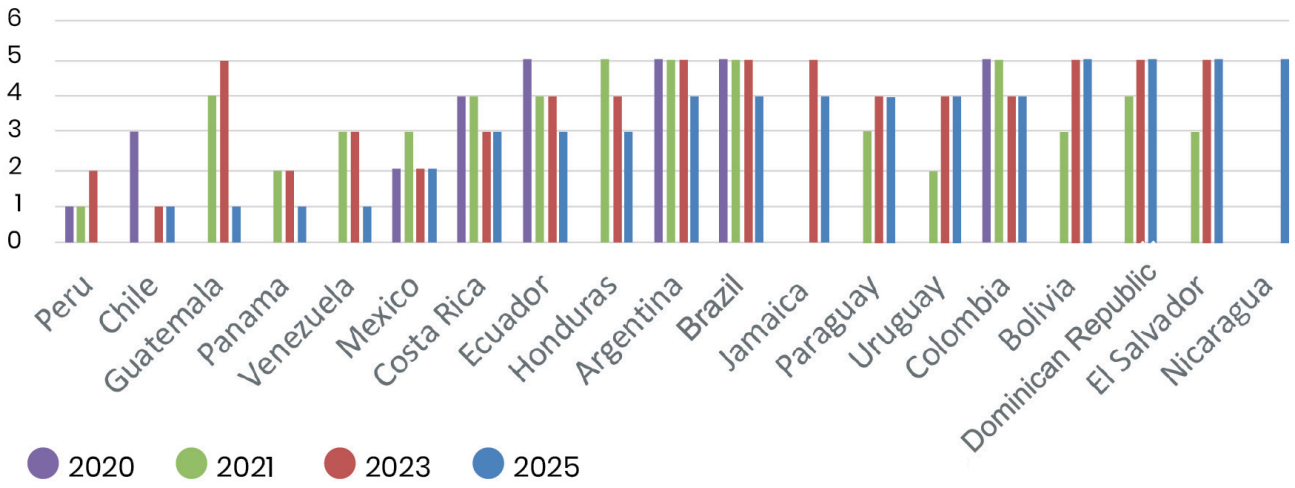


Figure 3. CSR activities of the tobacco industry. The lower the score, the fewer the CSR activities. *Corporate Accountability, Regional Interference Index Latin America and the Caribbean, 2025.*



Graph 3. CSR activities of the tobacco industry. Comparison between countries and years. (See annex 1). *Corporate Accountability, Regional Interference Index Latin America and the Caribbean 2025.*

The WHO FCTC Article 5.3 Guidelines recommend **denormalizing and, to the extent possible, regulating activities that the TI describes as "socially responsible"**.[26] Although governments can make the TI pay for health damages through compensatory taxes, socially responsible (CSR) activities should not be permitted by the TI to repair those damages. Companies leverage the concept as a publicity strategy.[27]

Best performing

In **Peru**[28] **and Panama**[29] no tobacco-related CSR activities were detected during the reporting period, nor were any government support or partnerships established with the TI. In **Chile**[30] tobacco advertising, promotion, and sponsorship are not permitted; however, it says nothing about companies that engage in CSR practices in local areas.

Guatemala[31] deserves special attention, as it registered 1 point in this Index when they had 5 points in the previous one, because there is no evidence that their government endorses or accepts any kind of assistance from the TI in setting public health policies.

In **Venezuela**[32] sthe activities of several non-governmental organizations previously associated with Chimo manufacturing plants were halted; a company that has registered links to environmental issues.

Increased interference

The tobacco industry in **Bolivia**[33] carried out CSR activities to address problems it created (such as environmental problems and forest fires), collaborating with state ministries, embassies (such as that of Japan), and non-governmental organizations (NGOs). These actions include environmental programs, water supply, support for firefighters, and job creation, demonstrating a partnership between industry and the Bolivian state. The **Dominican Republic**[34] openly supports tobacco industry initiatives, such as the creation of a training school and participates in events such as a festival officially sponsored by the Santiago City Council.[35] The tobacco industry, through Philip Morris International (PMI) maintains ties with government and civil entities in **El Salvador,**[36] promoting technological innovation, public services, entrepreneurship, and environmental projects, projecting an image of solidarity with the population. In **Nicaragua** tobacco companies promote environmental activities (ecological brigades) endorsed by the Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources.[37]

In the region, the TI has focused many of its CSR activities on environmental issues, such as access to water, environmental awareness, sustainability, and ecosystem restoration. These actions seek to project a positive and responsible image in the public eye, while diverting attention from the negative environmental impact of tobacco cultivation, production, and consumption. Through environmental campaigns, local alliances, and community projects, the TI attempts to position itself as an actor committed to sustainable development, which represents a subtle but effective form of interference in public health policies.

3. Benefits for the TI

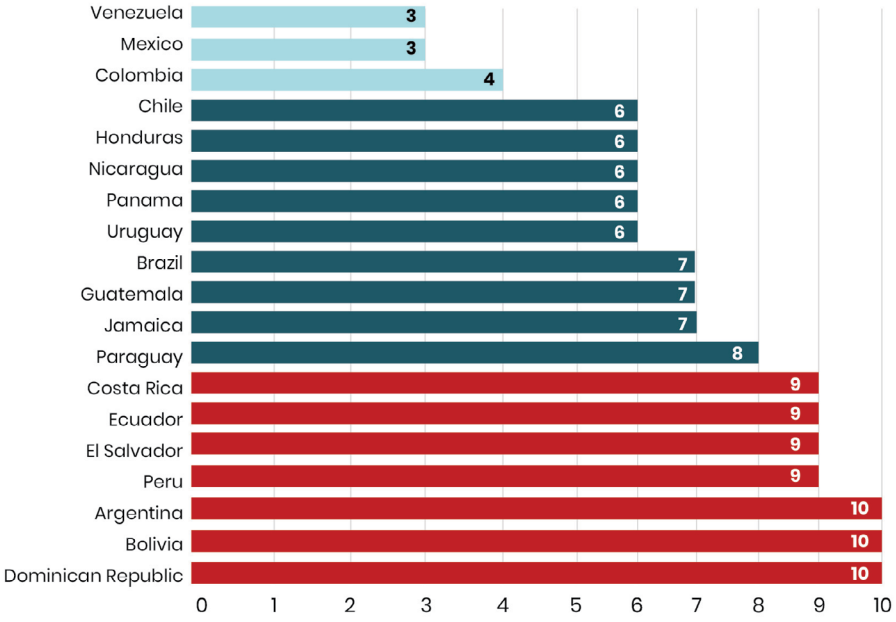
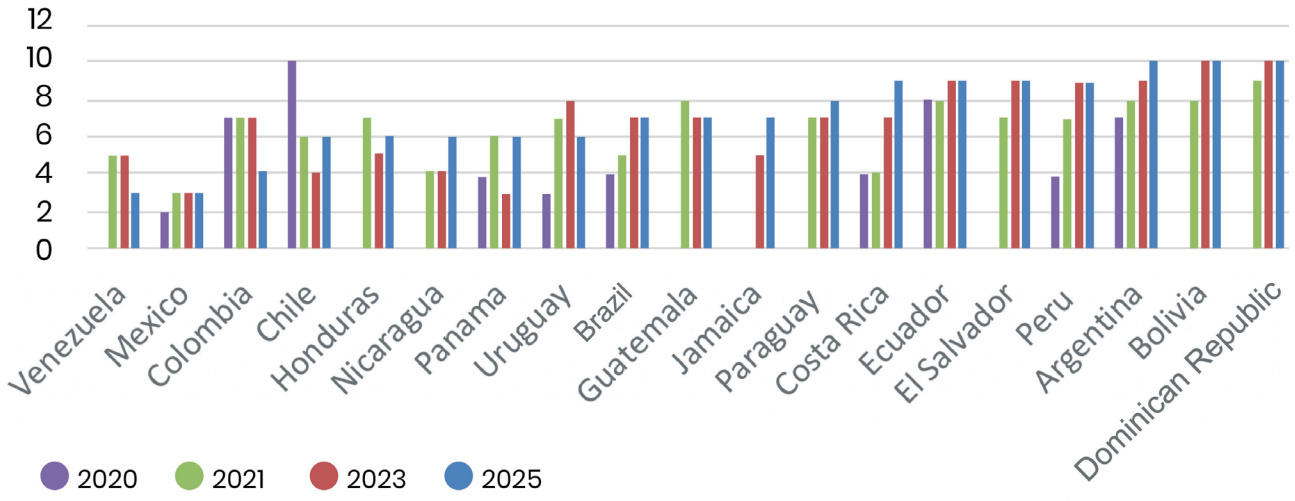


Figure 4. Benefits for the tobacco industry. The lower the score, the fewer benefits the industry receives. *Corporate Accountability, Regional Interference Index Latin America and the Caribbean, 2025.*



Graph 3. Benefits to the tobacco industry. Comparison between countries and years (see appendix 1). *Corporate Accountability, Regional Interference Index Latin America and the Caribbean, 2025.*

The WHO FCTC Article 5.3 Guidelines a**dvise against giving any type of incentive or special treatment to the TI**, due to the serious impacts of its products on health, the economy and society.[38] However, **in several countries**, tobacco companies are still granted privileges, subsidies, concessions, trade agreements, or other support. Even delays in implementing tobacco control measures is considered an advantage to the TI that favors their commercial interests.

Almost all countries have provided some type of incentive to the TI, and most remain unchanged from 2023; although in many of them there is no publicly available official or public government information. In the previous Index, a strong trend towards regulatory benefits was observed.[39] However, in this edition, a general trend is observed towards granting regulatory benefits, especially in tax matters (a special section has been attached at the end of the report).

Best performing

Venezuela[40] has strong tobacco control laws, including a total ban on tobacco advertising and promotions since 2019 and pictorial warnings covering 100% of the surface area of tobacco packages. In **Mexico**, no direct benefits were granted to the TI, but its interference in 2022 is acknowledged to have delayed the implementation of a key rule, hampering the enforcement of the tobacco control law and raising concerns about potential challenges. Civil society organizations had warned about this fact.[41]

Increased interference

In **Argentina** the TI has obtained tax benefits through judicial measures, especially from medium-sized businesses that presumably evade taxes, affecting provincial revenues. In 2024, the minimum tax on cigarettes was eliminated, which favored large tobacco companies with lower prices and greater market share.[43] In **Bolivia**[44] consumer studies report a supposed reduction in tobacco product consumption; however, they also regulations each year and register no penalties, cancel or reverse seizures related to smuggling, facilitate the opening of tobacco marketing companies, and negotiate to block tax increases. The government of the **Dominican Republic**[45] indirectly incentivizes the tobacco industry with state funds and favorable tax policies, while promoting the sector at public events, reflecting high interference.

4. Forms of unnecessary

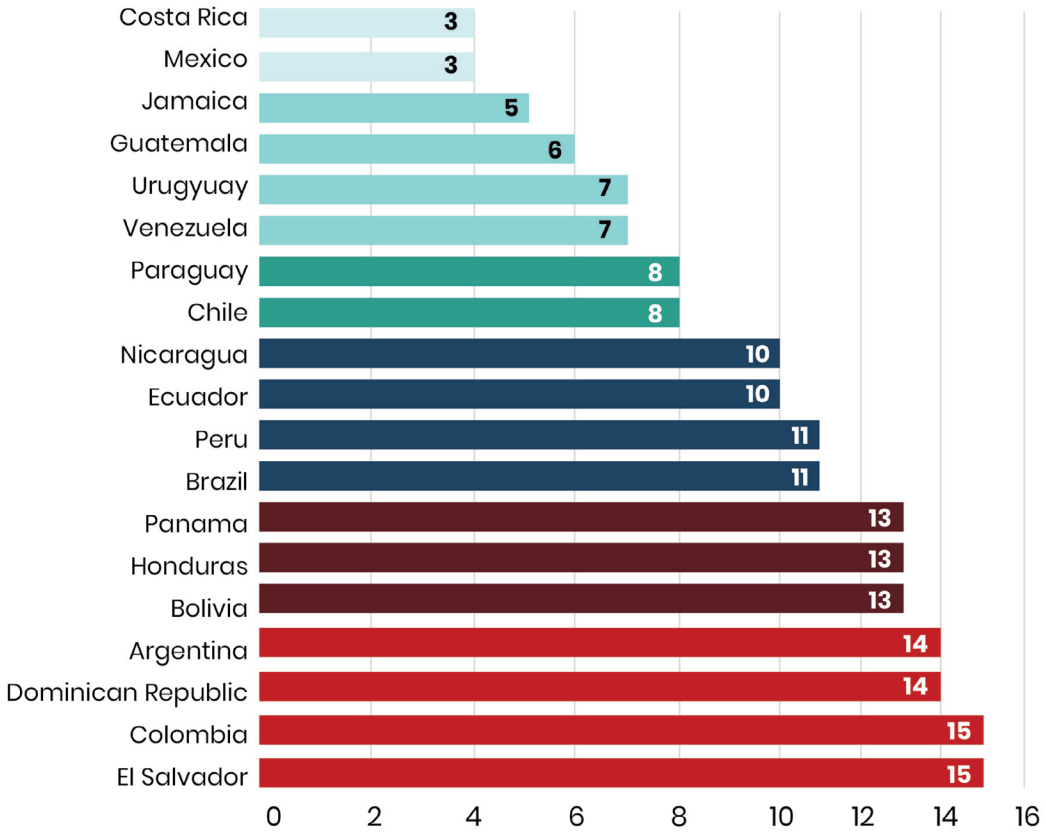
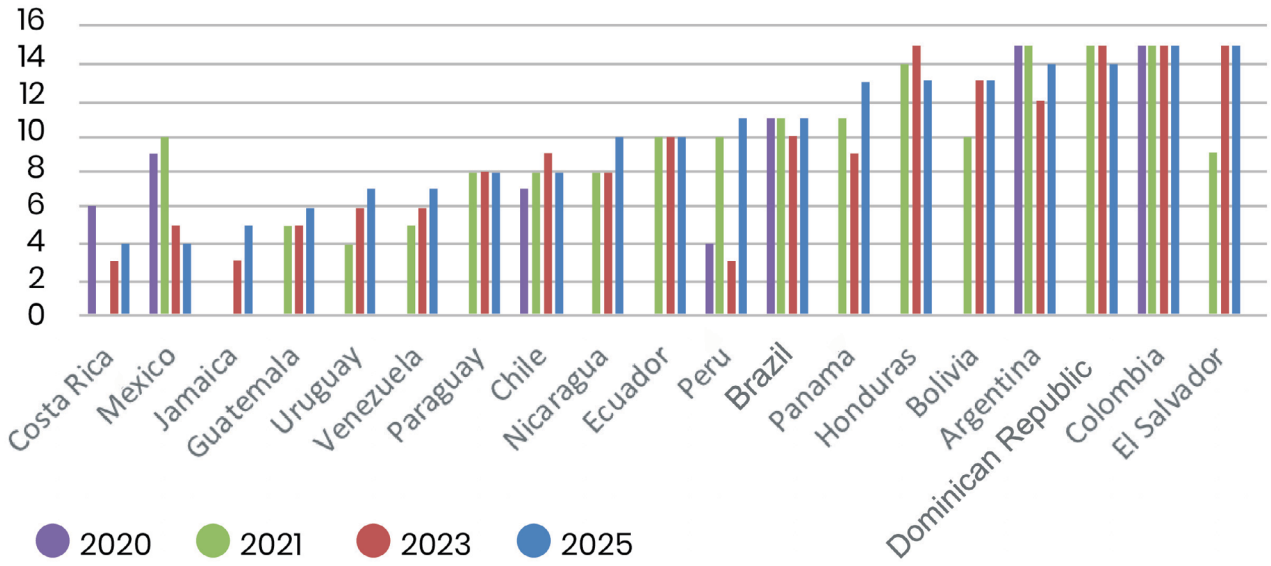


Figure 5. It shows how countries performed in terms of interaction with the TI. The lower the score, the less interaction. *Corporate Accountability, Regional Interference Index Latin America and the Caribbean, 2025.*



Graph 5. Unnecessary forms of interaction with the TI (see annex). Comparison across countries and years. *Corporate Accountability, Regional Interference Index Latin America and the Caribbean, 2023.*

The WHO FCTC Article 5.3 Guidelines **recommend interacting with the TI only when strictly necessary to enable effective regulation of the TI and tobacco products.**[46]

Multiple forms of unnecessary interaction between governments and the TI persist in the region, undermining the commitments made under the WHO FCTC. In this period, the meetings between public officials and TI representatives increased, many of them aimed at expanding the e-cigarette market. These relations occur through CSR events (as mentioned above), links with business leaders, and contacts between authorities and small and medium-sized tobacco businesses. In **Bolivia**[47] Japan Tobacco International (JTI) supported the Ministry of Water's drinking water projects and advised the Ministry of Productive Development on its strategic plans. In **Brazil**[48] authorities at various levels have maintained unnecessary links with tobacco companies in institutional meetings, visits to corporate headquarters and social events, alliances with industries to receive donations in the health sector to help in cases of climate problems, reflecting a pattern of communication incompatible with health obligations.

The TI held events which included the government, with industry representatives to assist in certain cases; partnerships to combat illicit trade; as well as concessions to cultivate tobacco, giving the industry opportunities to interfere in the development of regulations and give opinions or form alliances on environmental issues. **Colombia**[49] continues to rank among the countries with the highest scores (with the same score as in the three previous indexes). It is similar to **Salvador**[50] denoting evidence of interaction with the TI. A significant increase is noted in **Perú**[51] in relation to the previous Index (see graph 5).

Best performing

Costa Rica[52] continues showing best practices by registering a low score, as there is no evidence that the government accepted the participation of the TI in the implementation of tobacco regulations, nor that the government collaborated or accepted any agreements with tobacco companies. However, instances have been identified where public officials participated in discussions about illicit trade where TI representatives were present; in addition to having participated in PMI's CSR events. In **Mexico**[53] ha sido significativo el descenso de puntaje, comparado con Índices anteriores, igualmente por no the drop in scores compared to previous indexes have been significant, also due to no publicly available evidence of TI participation in regulations or the government's acceptance of partnerships. Nevertheless, government participation in events where the TI has been present has been recorded. **Jamaica**[54] recorded no evidence of government involvement in activities organized or funded by the TI. The country has regulations governing unnecessary interaction between public officials and the TI.

Increased interference

Colombia[55] once again has the highest score in the region, as in all previous indexes. Unfortunately, the score remains high because high-ranking officials and their families have ties to the TI, and the government accepts their support to fight smuggling, and its officials attend industry events. A similar situation is seen in **El Salvador**[56] with evidence of interactions between public officials and the TI, mainly with activities on preservation of the environment, such as cigarette butt collection, or government institutions accepting support in accessing technology.[57]

5. Lack of transparency

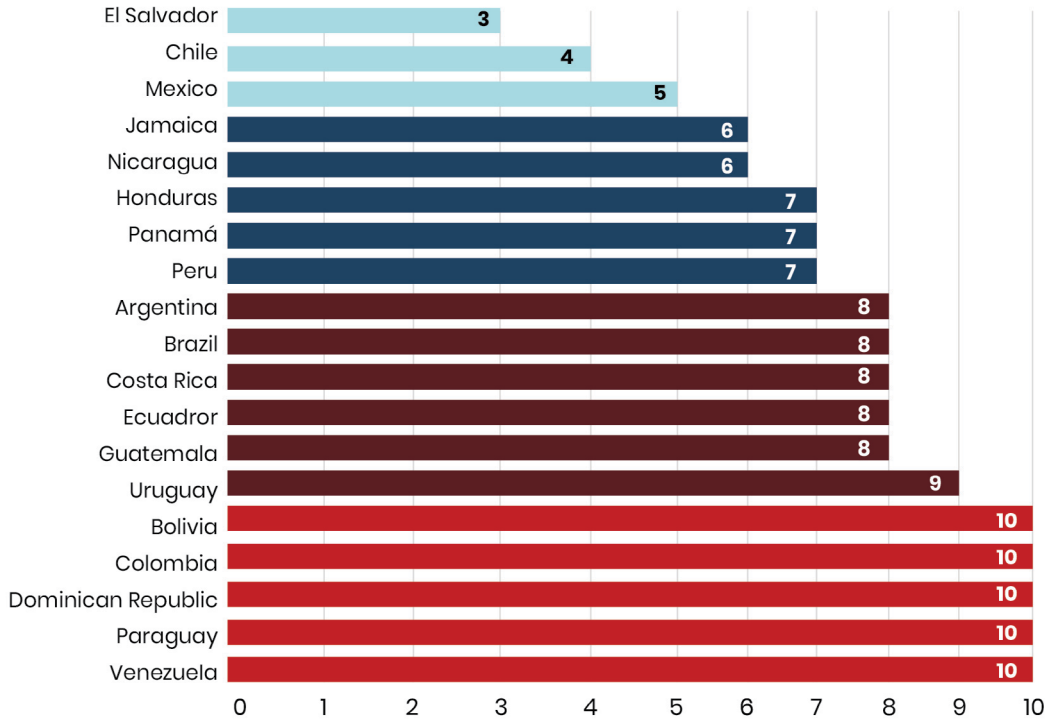
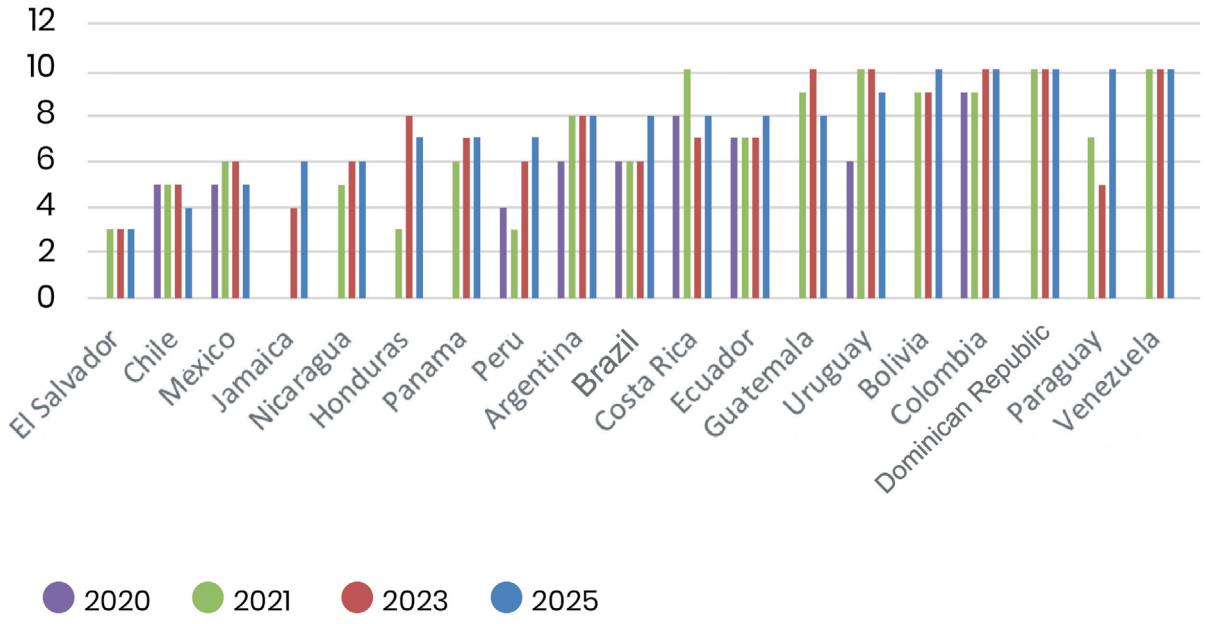


Figure 6. The lower the score, the more transparent the interaction. *Corporate Accountability, Regional Interference Index Latin America and the Caribbean, 2025.*



Graph 6. Lack of transparency in interaction with the TI (see Annex). Comparison between countries and years. *Corporate Accountability, Regional Interference Index Latin America and the Caribbean, 2025.*

The WHO FCTC Article 5.3 Guidelines, **recommend ensuring transparency of State meetings with the TI only when strictly necessary.**[58]

The lack of regulations requiring transparency on the prohibition of meetings of the TI with the State, specifically on tobacco, is the main problem in the region. **Venezuela and the Dominican Republic** again rank highest in the indexes for three consecutive years. **Paraguay** los alcanza, por primera vez, demostrando poca transparencia entre el gobierno y la IT. En cambio, **El Salvador** on the other hand, once again shows the lowest transparency as it maintains the same score as in previous indexes.

Best performing

Countries do not have specific regulations on interactions with the TI that require transparency in all areas. Although **El Salvador**[59] achieved the best score, interactions between the State and the TI lack transparency, since content is not published nor meetings or negotiations formally recorded, and there is no regulation on lobby groups representing the industry. **Chile y Mexico** redujeron sus puntajes con respecto al Índice anterior (ver gráfico 6). In **Chile,**[60] reduced their scores compared to the previous Index (see Graph 6). **Mexico** remained stable due to the application of general transparency and lobbying rules that limit and monitor relations with the tobacco industry.[61]

Increased interference

Countries with the highest score for industry interference are: **Colombia, Bolivia, Dominican Republic, Paraguay y Venezuela**. In **Colombia**[62] there is no formal or mandatory procedure for disclosing interactions with the tobacco industry, which facilitates unchecked interference. The government of **Bolivia**[63] has no policies or records that require transparency in meetings with the TI, which facilitates closed-door agreements to be drawn up. In **República Dominicana**,[64] a non-Party to the WHO FCTC, the government has no policies or publicly available records of its meetings with the tobacco industry. In **Paraguay**[65] interactions with the TI are not reported or recorded.[66] In **Venezuela**[67] the government also does not disclose their interactions with the TI, or require recording interactions with the TI, nor does it regulate its representatives or lobbyists, even when necessary for regulatory purposes.

6. Conflicts of interest

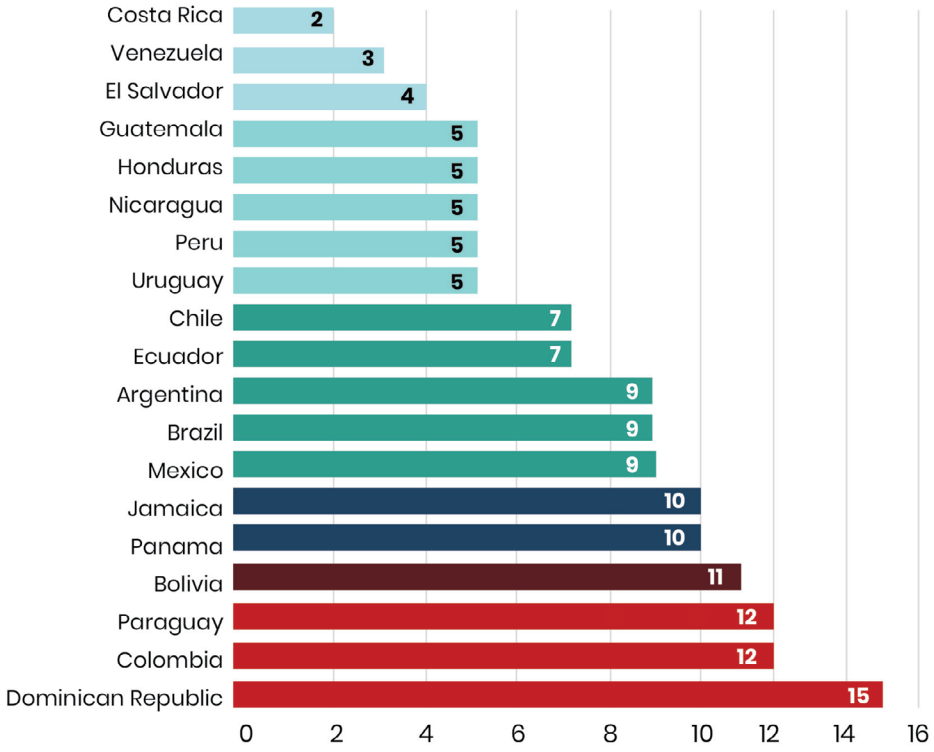
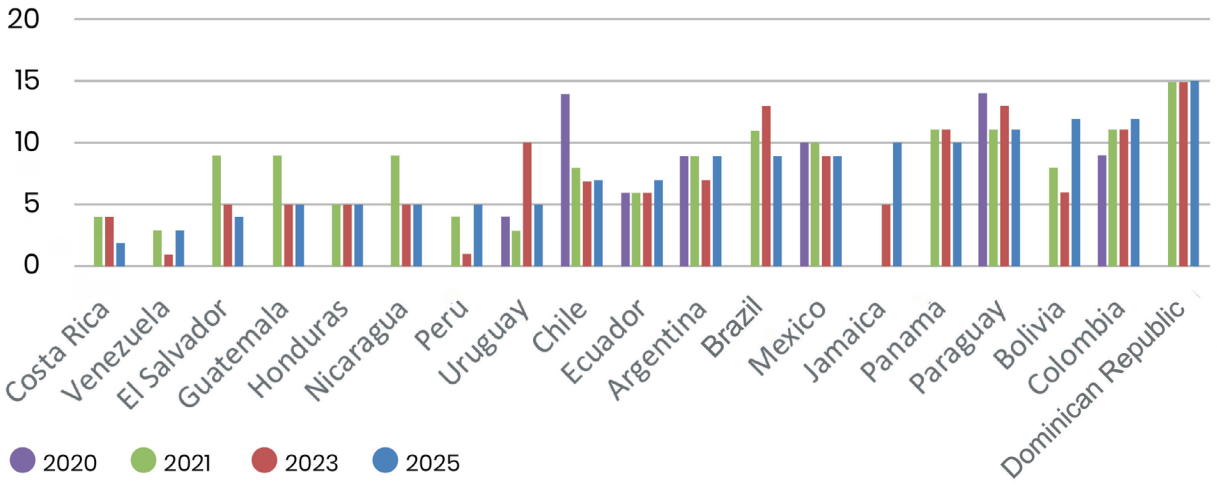


Figure 7. The lower the score, the lower the conflict of interest. *Corporate Accountability, Regional Interference Index Latin America and the Caribbean, 2025.*



Graph 7. Conflicts of interest on the part of government decision-makers (see Annex). *Comparison across countries and years. Corporate Accountability, Regional Interference Index Latin America and the Caribbean, 2025.*

The WHO FCTC Article 5.3 Guidelines **advise avoiding conflicts of interest in the public sector, which may arise from financial, social or employment ties with the industry.**[68] This Regional Interference Index assessed two aspects: i) whether governments had policies that rejected contributions from the tobacco industry, even on public policy issues, and ii) whether current or former officials joined the industry.

Some countries in the region employ mechanisms to prohibit contributions or gifts from the TI to political campaigns, but other countries do not. The TI also employs former high-level officials to facilitate lobbying and influence government decisions. .

Graph 7 shows that **some countries where scores have reduced (Uruguay** has seen a significant decrease), **others that have improved** (some considerably, such as **Peru, Jamaica, and Bolivia**), and **only two have remained the same over the past three indexes (Honduras and the Dominican Republic**). The **Dominican Republic** maintains the top spot for three consecutive reports as the country with the highest scores for conflicts of interest in the region (Figure 7).

Increased interference

In **Costa Rica**[69] no evidence of events with conflicts of interest were found, and its Electoral Code regulates and prohibits contributions from foreign persons and national and foreign legal entities[70]. The **Venezuela**[71] has a resolution which completely bans any form of industry contributions—including CSR—with no reports of violations. There was also no evidence of links between officials—active or retired—or their families, with the tobacco industry. In **El Salvador**[72] the tobacco industry is not prohibited from financing political parties or candidates, which allows for political influence. However, the law requires transparency about the source of funds and the disclosure of donor names.

Increased interference

In **Bolivia**[73] TI sponsorship of electoral campaigns is not prohibited, and there is evidence that former officials are now part of a confederation that defends the economic interests of the TI. In **Colombia**[74] there are no laws limiting tobacco industry donations to political campaigns, and several officials—active or retired—have had direct or family ties to the industry, facilitating their influence. In the **Dominican Republic**[75]. high-ranking officials, such as a former vice president, have held senior positions in the tobacco sector.[76] Current officials, such as the Minister of Industry, promote the TI, demonstrating their privileges and their alignment with the government.[77]

7. Precautionary measures

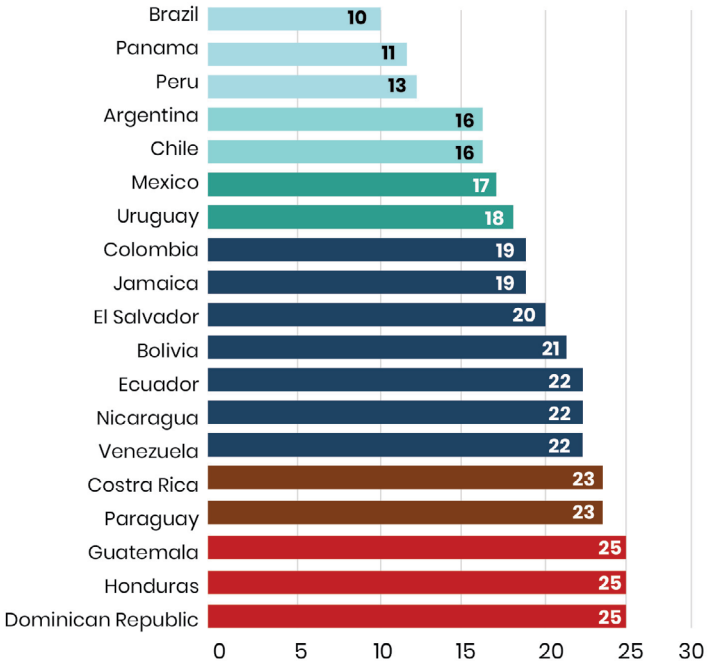
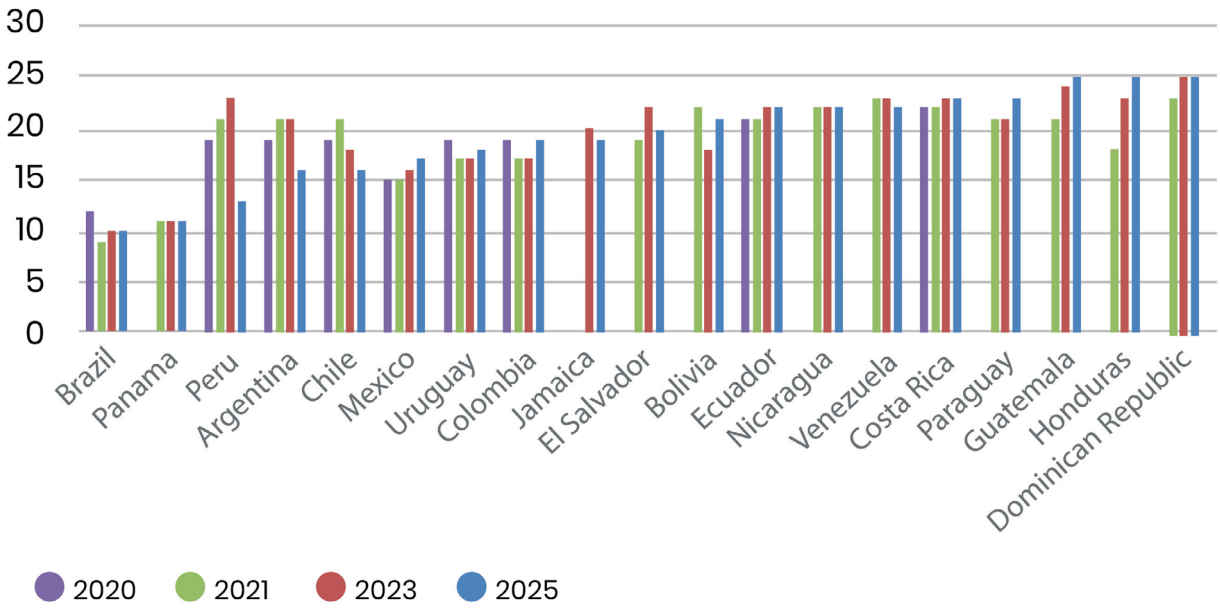


Figure 8. Governments that have preventive measures to protect themselves from industry interference. The lower the score, the better the protection. *Corporate Accountability, Regional Interference Index Latin America and the Caribbean, 2025.*



Graph 8. Governments that have preventive measures to protect themselves from TI interference (see appendix). Comparison between countries and years. *Corporate Accountability, Regional Interference Index Latin America and the Caribbean, 2025.*

According to the WHO FCTC Article 5.3 Guidelines, **governments need to be aware of TI activities in order to make effective decisions and prevent their interference. To ensure transparency, it is suggested that codes of conduct be established for public officials that guide how they should conduct their interactions with the TI.**[78]

The Index questionnaire makes an assessment of five types of measures that enable governments to protect themselves from interference from the TI and effectively strengthen tobacco control policies in country: 1) Recording interactions with the TI; 2) A code of conduct to guide interactions; 3) Requiring transparency and accurate information from the TI; 4) Creating awareness of Article 5.3; and 5) Rejecting any contributions from or collaboration with industry representatives..

Best performing

In **Panamá,**[79] there are no specific procedures to regulate the TI, however, if information is needed, a *Habeas Data* process is carried out which dictates the data is available.[80] They also have a specific code to guide interactions with the TI, regulated for central government entities.[81] In addition, information is requested from the industry. Finally, some institutions undertake joint actions to raise awareness about the dangers of tobacco.

In **Brasil,**[82] flederal executive branch officials follow general ethical standards, such as the Code of Conduct for Senior Management. However, the lack of explicit references to the TI, creates significant gaps in the regulation of the way they act. The government publishes industry data, but only basic ones. Standards of conduct exist for public officials to follow, but there is no policy clearly prohibiting accepting gifts or donations from the TI, which makes it difficult to prevent conflicts of interest and highlights the urgent need to have stronger and more specific regulations..

Peru has a new law regulating TI interference, but the method for requesting periodic information related to tobacco production has not yet been implemented.[84] It also maintains a Code of Ethics for Public Service that prohibits conflicts of interest.[85]

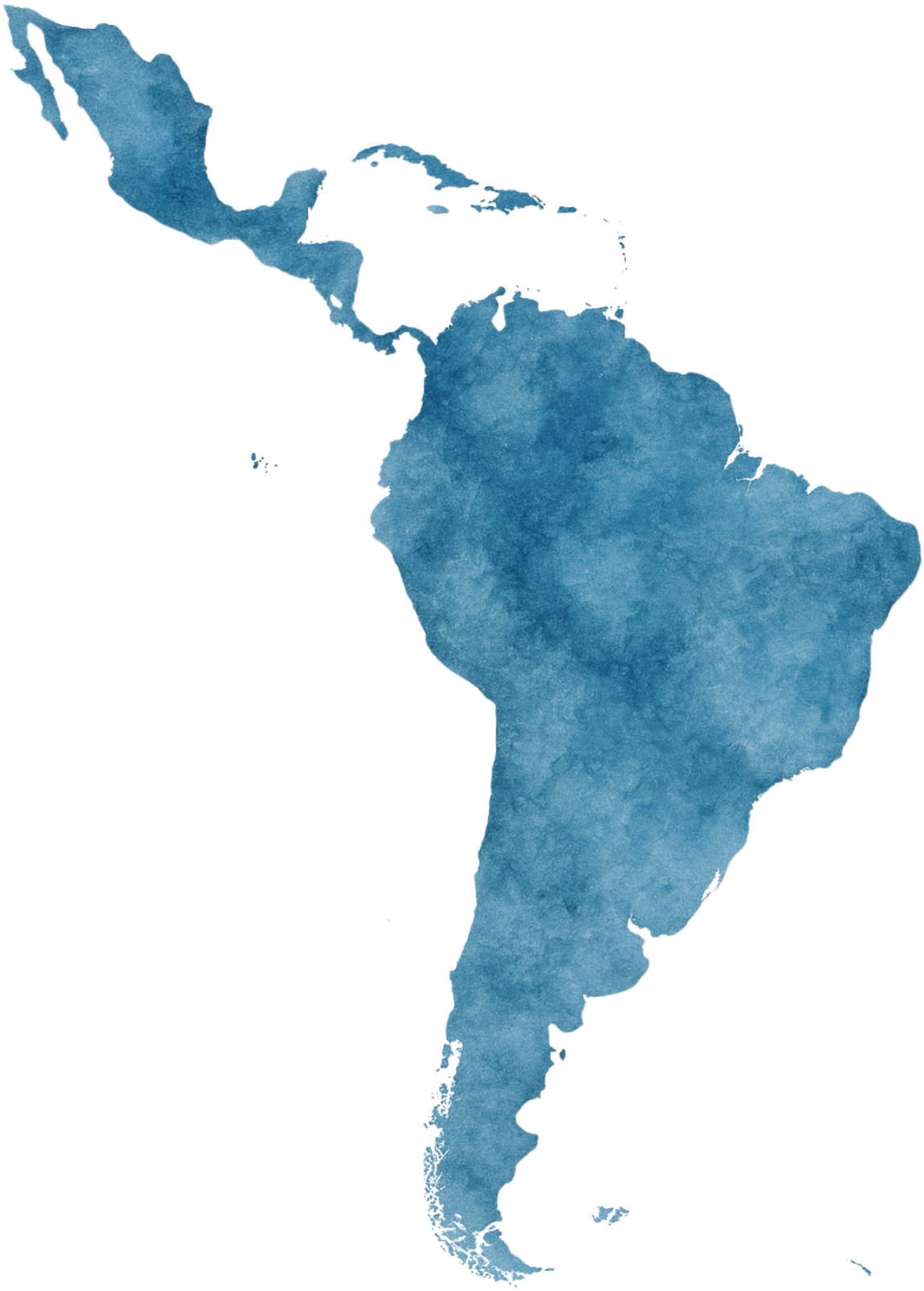
Increased interference

Most countries have not instituted procedures to regulate interactions with the TI, or established codes of conduct, which has facilitated more interference from the industry.

In **Guatemala**,[86] for example, there are no mechanisms for disclosing interactions with the TI, nor a specific code of conduct. They do not have regulations requiring the TI to report its revenue, marketing activities, lobbying, or CSR activities. Furthermore, they have not required procedures for reporting to authorities regarding Article 5.3 of the WHO FCTC.

In **Honduras,**[86] there are no specific mechanisms to make interactions with the TI transparent, nor are there clear regulations in this regard. The Tobacco Control Act does not require disclosure of information or prohibit industry contributions to government agencies, and there are no institutional actions aimed at implementing Article 5.3 of the WHO FCTC.

In the **Dominican Republic,**[88] there are no specific rules governing interactions with the TI, allowing the government to have meetings and freely receive contributions, while the government actively promotes the sector. It also lacks a code of conduct to guide interaction with the TI. Although the TI is required to provide production and marketing information, there is no evidence of lobbying activities.



CONCLUSIONS

The IV Regional Interference Index for the period 2023-2025, reaffirms that TI interference continues to be one of the main obstacles to develop and effectively implement tobacco control policies.

Despite progress observed in **Mexico, Uruguay, Chile and Peru,** the overall trend remains worrying. TI interference persists, and in many cases has become more sophisticated and expanded, adapting to new platforms, products, and mechanisms of influence, that cover emerging technologies and environmental discourse. However, there are countries that have higher rates than the previous indexes, such as **Costa Rica**.

Among the most relevant findings are:

Positioning favorable environments mthrough the absence of regulations, the reduction or elimination of taxes, the annulment of existing legal frameworks, or the employment of strategies to delay the approval of new regulations.

High levels of unnecessary interaction between governments and industry, especially through CSR initiatives, alliances to combat smuggling, and participation in official events.

Persistence of tax and regulatory benefits granted to the TI, expressed in exemptions, subsidies, differential tax treatment or deliberate delays in the implementation of regulations.

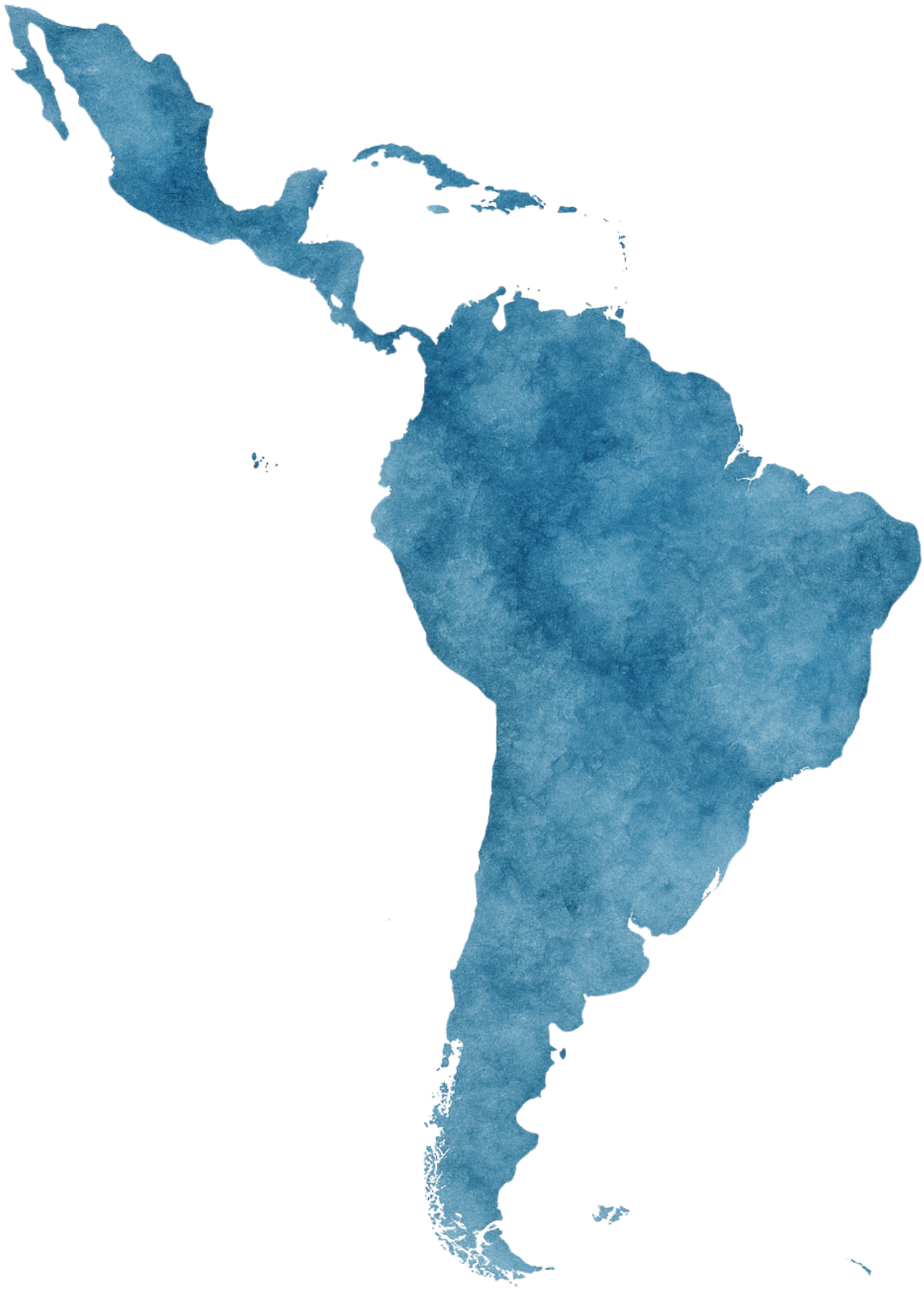
Absence of preventive measures, such as codes of conduct, interaction logs and effective accountability systems, which facilitates opaqueness and reduces the capacity for citizen oversight.

Unregulated conflicts of interest and links between public officials and the TI, which weaken the integrity of public policy decisions. There is a lack of transparency and limited civil society participation in regulatory processes, as well as deficiencies in intersectoral communication regarding the obligations of Article 5.3 of the WHO FCTC.

These results highlight the **urgent need for States to strengthen their regulatory and institutional mechanisms** to protect public policymaking from the commercial interests of the TI, as established in Article 5.3 of the WHO FCTC, its Implementing Guidelines, and relevant COP decisions.

Effective compliance with the above regulatory instruments requires the political will to assume tobacco control as a public health priority, as well as active collaboration between governments, civil society free from conflicts of interest, international organizations and the academe.

Finally, the need for all countries in the region to **ratify and implement both the WHO FCTC and its Protocol to Eliminate Illicit Trade in Tobacco Products is reaffirmed.** Only through robust legal frameworks, comprehensive governance mechanisms, and ongoing monitoring will it be possible to sustainably reduce tobacco industry interference and guarantee populations' right to the highest attainable standard of health.



ANNEX

Annex 1: Score table by country and indicator

Countries/ Indicators	ARG	BOL	BRA	CHL	COL	CRI	DOM	ECU	SLV	GTM	HND	JAM	MEX	NIC	PAN	PRY	PER	URY	VEN
PARTICIPATION IN POLICY DEVELOPMENT	14	5	16	10	16	15	14	9	12	16	11	8	8	4	6	15	10	4	8
The government accepts, supports, or endorses offers for assistance by or in collaboration with the tobacco industry in implementing tobacco control policies.	5	1	4	3	4	5	4	4	4	5	1	3	1	1	1	4	2	1	3
The government accepts, supports, or endorses legislation drafted by/in collaboration with the tobacco industry.	5	2	3	3	5	4	5	3	4	5	3	1	3	1	3	5	4	1	1
The government allows the tobacco industry to sit on multi-sectoral committees/advisory groups that set public health policy.	4	1	5	3	5	5	5	1	3	1	3	3	3	1	1	5	3	1	3
The government nominates or allows representatives of the tobacco industry (including state-owned tobacco companies) to be part of the delegation to the Conference of the Parties (COP) or other subsidiary bodies, or accepts sponsorships for delegates.	0	1	4	1	2	1	0	1	1	5	4	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
TOBACCO RELATED CSR ACTIVITIES	4	5	4	1	4	3	5	3	5	1	3	4	2	5	1	4	0	4	1
The government receives contributions from the tobacco industry (including so-called CSR contributions). The government agencies/officials endorse; forms partnerships with/participates in tobacco industry CSR activities.	4	5	4	1	4	3	5	3	5	1	3	4	2	0	5	4	0	4	3

The government receives contributions from the tobacco industry (including so-called CSR contributions). The government agencies/officials endorse; forms partnerships with/participates in tobacco industry CSR activities.	4	5	4	1	4	3	5	3	5	1	3	4	2	5	1	4	0	4	1	
BENEFITS TO THE TOBACCO INDUSTRY	10	10	7	6	4	9	10	9	9	7	6	7	3	6	6	8	9	6	3	
The government accommodates requests from the industry for longer implementation times or postponement of tobacco control laws.	5	5	3	3	0	5	5	4	4	3	1	4	1	3	2	4	4	1	1	
The government gives privileges, incentives, exemptions, or benefits to the tobacco industry.	5	5	4	3	4	4	5	5	5	4	5	3	2	3	4	4	5	5	2	
FORMS OF UNNECESSARY INTERACTION	14	13	11	8	15	4	14	10	15	6	13	5	4	10	13	8	11	7	7	
Top-level government officials meet with/foster relations with tobacco companies such as attending social functions and events sponsored or organized by the tobacco companies.	5	5	5	2	5	4	4	3	5	5	5	0	2	5	4	4	1	5	1	
The government accepts assistance/offers of assistance from the tobacco industry on enforcement.	5	4	3	5	5	0	5	4	5	1	3	2	1	0	4	1	5	1	5	
El gobierno acepta, apoya, recibe o participa en alianzas o acuerdos no vinculantes con la industria tabacalera u otra entidad que trabaja en función de sus intereses.	4	4	3	1	5	0	5	3	5	0	5	3	1	5	5	3	5	1	1	
TRANSPARENCY	8	10	8	4	10	8	10	8	3	8	7	6	5	6	7	10	7	8	10	
The government does not publicly disclose meetings/ interactions with the tobacco industry where such interactions are strictly necessary for regulation.	3	5	5	1	5	3	5	4	0	3	3	1	3	3	3	5	5	3	5	
The government requires rules for the disclosure or registration of tobacco industry entities, affiliate organizations, and individuals acting on their behalf, including lobbyists.	5	5	3	3	5	5	5	4	3	5	4	5	2	3	4	5	2	5	5	

CONFLICTS OF INTEREST	9	12	9	7	12	2	15	7	4	5	5	10	9	5	10	11	5	5	3
The government does not have a policy (whether or not written) to prohibit contributions from the tobacco industry or any entity working to further its interests to political parties, candidates, or campaigns, or to require full disclosure of such contributions.	5	5	5	5	5	1	5	5	4	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	1	1
Retired senior officials work for the tobacco industry.	0	3	2	1	4	1	5	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	4	5	0	3	1
Current government officials and their relatives hold positions in the tobacco business including consultancy positions.	4	4	2	1	3	0	5	1	0	0	0	5	3	0	1	1	0	1	1
PREVENTIVE MEASURES	16	21	10	16	19	23	25	22	20	25	25	19	17	22	11	23	13	18	22
The government has a procedure for disclosing records of the interaction with the tobacco industry and its representatives.	2	5	2	1	4	5	5	5	5	5	5	3	3	5	3	5	3	5	5
The government has formulated, adopted, or implemented a code of conduct for public officials, prescribing the standards they should comply with when dealing with the tobacco industry.	5	3	1	2	5	5	5	4	5	5	5	5	3	5	2	5	1	5	5
The government requires the tobacco industry to periodically submit information on tobacco production, manufacture, market share, marketing expenditures, revenues, and any other activity, including lobbying, philanthropy, and political contributions.	2	4	2	3	2	3	5	4	3	5	5	3	5	2	2	3	5	2	2
The government has a program/system/plan to consistently raise awareness within its departments on policies relating to FCTC Article 5.3 Guidelines.	5	5	3	5	4	5	5	5	4	5	5	4	4	5	2	5	3	5	5

The government has a policy prohibiting the acceptance of all forms of contributions from the tobacco industry (monetary or otherwise) including offers of assistance, policy drafts, or study visit invitations to the government, officials, and their relatives.	2	4	2	5	4	5	5	4	3	5	5	4	2	5	2	5	2	1	5
TOTAL	75	76	65	52	80	64	93	68	68	68	70	59	48	58	54	79	56	52	54
TOTAL FINAL (with penalty for NPs)	79						98												

* **Note 1:** Argentina and Dominican Republic have an additional penalty for not having ratified the WHO FCTC.

* **Note 2:** Abbreviations:

AR - Argentina, BO – Bolivia, BR - Brazil, CL - Chile, CO - Colombia, CR - Costa Rica, DO –Dominican Republic, EC - Ecuador, GT – Guatemala, HN – Honduras, JM – Jamaica, MX - Mexico, NI – Nicaragua, PA – Panama, PE – Peru, PY – Paraguay, SV – El Salvador, UY – Uruguay,VE - Venezuela.

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