From start to finish, the tobacco life-cycle is an overwhelmingly polluting and damaging process. Tobacco devastates the environment. It is responsible for: large-scale deforestation (1); catastrophic carbon emissions (2); loss of biodiversity, including wildlife (3); depletion of the planet’s water, fossil fuel and metal resources (3); desertification, depleting soil fertility (3); exuberant emission of greenhouse gases (4); contamination of drinking water (3); emission of toxicants in the air via direct, second- and third-hand smoke (3); non-biodegradable cigarette butts (5,6); and degradation of terrestrial and aquatic ecosystems (7,8).
DOUBLED-THREAT TO THE ENVIRONMENT

The tobacco industry uses tactics to so-called greenwash its reputation and build an image of itself as a sustainable and eco-friendly industry (12). These greenwashing activities are a guise perpetrated by corporations and a public diversion.

Examples of greenwashing activities (12):

→ funding beach clean-ups
→ marketing new products as “eco-friendly”, “natural”, “healthy” and “organic”
→ funding environmental and disaster relief organizations.

Tobacco companies save a lot of money by not having to pay the full cost of the environmental impact of the tobacco cycle.

NOVEL AND EMERGING NICOTINE AND TOBACCO PRODUCTS ARE NOT ECO-FRIENDLY.
They can potentially be more environmentally harmful than conventional cigarettes (6).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>More environmentally intensive manufacturing processes</th>
<th>Single-use products</th>
<th>Non-biodegradable and non-recyclable materials</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Contain hazardous substances, such as heavy metals</td>
<td>Nicotine salts and heavy metals can leach into soil and water, or be ingested by wildlife</td>
<td>Generate toxic emissions that can pollute the environment</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
TOBACCO’S THREAT TO THE ENVIRONMENT

WHAT ACTION CAN BE TAKEN?

SPREAD THE WORD
Raise awareness that tobacco harms the environment. Don’t fall for the tobacco industry’s attempt to greenwash its products.

QUIT TOBACCO TO SAVE OUR PLANET
Protect the environment by not being a part of the destructive tobacco life-cycle that poisons our water, soil, beaches and city streets.

MAKE THE TOBACCO INDUSTRY CLEAN UP THEIR MESS
Hold the tobacco industry accountable for the environmental damage and the physical and financial costs of disposing waste.

HELP TOBACCO FARMERS SWITCH TO SUSTAINABLE CROPS
Support sustainable livelihoods to reduce the environmental impact of tobacco-growing and promote better and healthier working conditions for tobacco farmers.

SUPPORT THE IMPLEMENTATION OF COMPREHENSIVE TOBACCO-CONTROL POLICIES
Support the implementation of the WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control to reduce the environmental impact of tobacco.

For more information and guidance, visit: https://www.who.int/campaigns/world-no-tobacco-day/2022/calls-to-action

Tackling tobacco from the perspective of promoting economically viable alternatives for tobacco workers, as well as advancing the protection of the environment, would contribute to the achievement of numerous goals of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (13):

Goal 2 (Zero hunger), Goal 3 (Good health and well-being), Goal 6 (Clean water and sanitation), Goal 8 (Decent work and economic growth), Goal 12 (Responsible consumption and production), Goal 13 (Climate action), Goal 14 (Life below water), Goal 15 (Life on land).
REFERENCES


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