

# The Tobacco Control Chronicle

Your quarterly catch up on all CTCA's tobacco control news

## Big win for Uganda's Tobacco Tax Coalition

In a landmark achievement for public health advocacy in Uganda, the Ministry of Finance, Planning and Economic Development has submitted a proposal to Parliament to amend the Excise Duty Bill with an increase in tobacco taxes to 80% of the retail price. The submission bears testament to the tireless efforts of civil society organisations under the Uganda Tobacco Taxation Coalition (UTTC), which made the proposal in September last year.

By advocating for the increase in line with the WHO recommendation of 70%, the coalition has championed fiscal responsibility and prioritised the well-being of Ugandans. The proposed tax adjustments reflect a strategic approach to reduce tobacco consumption while bolstering government revenue. For locally manufactured cigarettes, levies on softcap

varieties will rise from Shs 55,000 to Shs 65,000 per 1000 sticks, and hingelid from Shs 80,000 to Shs 90,000 per 1,000 sticks.

Imported cigarettes face even steeper increases, with softcap levies jumping from Shs 75,000 to Shs 150,000 and hingelid from Shs 100,000 to Shs 200,000 per 1,000 sticks. These measures are expected to generate an additional Shs 19.40 billion in revenue, as highlighted by State Minister for Finance Henry Musasizi, who emphasized the dual goals of addressing inflation and enhancing public coffers. Dr. Jim Arinaitwe, Centre Manager for CTCA, underscored the importance of these changes during a stakeholder meeting. He noted that the higher cigarette prices significantly reduce availability and accessibility,

particularly among vulnerable populations. Uganda's previous performance in cigarette price share and affordability had been too lacklustre, leaving room for improvement.

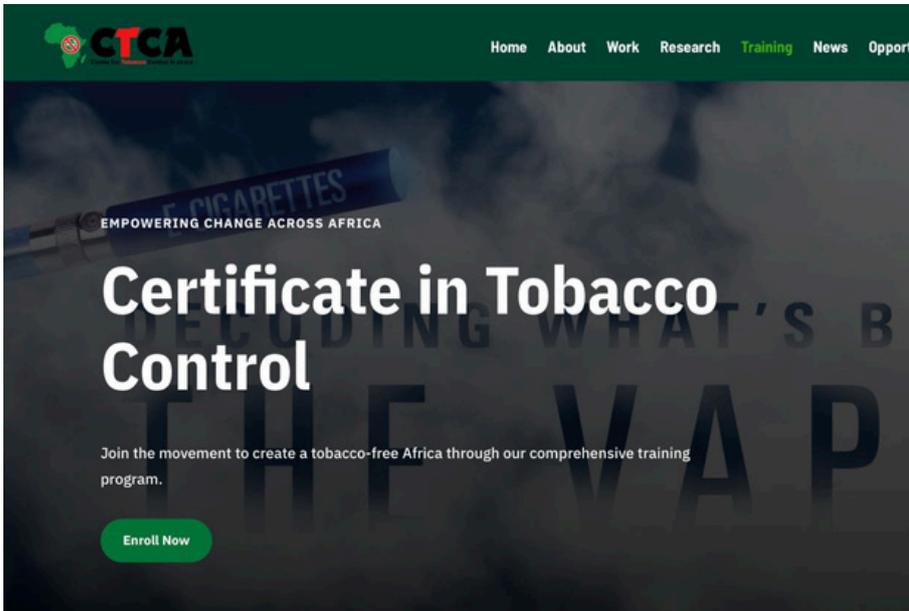
"With these new measures, we are poised to curb tobacco use, mitigate its adverse health effects, and create a healthier future for all Ugandans," he said.



### IN THIS EDITION:

- CTCA's new online TC course
- Latest board meeting
- CTCA's Zambia doccie

# CTCA sets up online TC short course training



Very soon aspiring tobacco control advocates across the continent will be able to learn about tobacco control from comfort of their own environments.

The Centre for Tobacco Control in Africa is in the process of finalising an online tobacco control short course that promises to revolutionise tobacco control training across the African continent.

With the exception of the tobacco tax course run by the University of Cape Town's REEP unit, there are no online tobacco control short courses that holistically cover tobacco control.

The centre has been working on the course since late 2023 and has included the expertise of the continent's most prolific tobacco control experts to guide the curriculum.

Content developers have worked closely with module creators to script accompanying videos, ensuring that the learning experience is both engaging and comprehensive. And the CTCA has worked with an e-adaptation team who have provided expert guidance to make sure most modules are successfully adapted for digital delivery.

The course will be uploaded onto a Moodle system and has been submitted to the board for final approval and comments.

The centre is currently finalising the last set of changes recommended by the board. The course is poised to be a dynamic and accessible training tool that promises to equip tobacco control professionals with the knowledge and skills needed to make a lasting impact.

## CTCA BOARD sharpens institutional governance

Moves are afoot to improve processes at the CTCA. At the most recent board meeting, which took place in March, three groundbreaking initiatives central to CTCA's digital transformation were tabled.

This is the Management Information System (MIS), digital finance operations, and the CTCA Online Short Course. Following robust discussions, the Board unanimously approved these initiatives, marking a significant leap forward in institutional development. The MIS is designed to enhance internal planning, reporting, and data utilization, empowering CTCA to make informed decisions and maximize impact.

Transitioning to digital finance operations will streamline processes, promote transparency, and ensure accountability in resource management.

New board members were welcomed on board, and with their wealth of professional experience and shared commitment to public health, they promise to enrich CTCA's strategic direction.

## New documentary about CTCA's Alternative Livelihood project in Zambia underway



One of the good news stories to tell in tobacco control is that of the CTCA's Alternative Livelihoods project that it has been running in Zambia since 2019.

And that's why the centre has decided to produce a documentary showcasing the successes of the project and inspiring others to also pursue alternatives to tobacco farming.

The documentary was to be recorded in 2024 but due to delayed rains and a drought in the country had to be postponed.

The documentary was then planned and shot in March and April and should be aired by June 2025.

The documentary comes in the midst of a remarkable turnaround that has taken place in the country.

After the extended delay in rains, in December the

Meteorological Department of Zambia reported that the country experienced normal to above-normal rainfall patterns. This created an opportune environment for early planting.

The Zambia Agriculture Research Institute (ZARI) stepped in with improved seed varieties tailored for soybeans and early maturing maize, ensuring that crops could be salvaged and livelihoods protected.

This critical support reached key districts such as Kaoma, Chibombo, Chisamba, and Chipangali, where technical guidance further bolstered farmer confidence.

Beyond addressing immediate needs, this also sparked forward-thinking discussions among farmers about long-term sustainability.

Many highlighted the potential of drought-

tolerant crops like sorghum to safeguard their livelihoods against increasingly unpredictable weather patterns.

February was met with abundant rainfall meaning that germination rates soared across all project sites, painting the landscape lush and green. Supported by dedicated agriculture district officers and extension staff, field visits were successfully facilitated, fostering knowledge exchange and reinforcing best practices. Farmers' enthusiasm for embracing alternative crops signals a transformative shift away from traditional tobacco farming toward more sustainable and diversified income streams.

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