



## Philippines gets Dirty Ashtray award at UN health treaty conference for tobacco control



# PHILIPPINES

## DIRTY ASHTRAY

To the Philippines for its brazen use of tobacco industry tactics of obstinate dispute and delay throughout the COP



**Panama City, 10 February** – Civil society watchdog [Global Alliance for Tobacco Control \(GATC\)](#) again awarded the notorious Dirty Ashtray to the Philippine delegation on this last day of the tenth session of the Conference of Parties ([COP10](#)) to the WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (WHO FCTC), held in Panama City from 5-10 February.

GATC gave dishonor to the Philippine delegation for its brazen use of tobacco industry tactics to dispute and delay throughout COP10. The Philippines received its first [Dirty Ashtray award at COP4](#) in 2010 but was redeemed by an [Orchid Award at COP5](#) when it excluded tobacco industry representatives from its delegation. At COP9 in 2021, the Philippines was given [three Dirty Ashtray awards](#).

The WHO FCTC is a global health treaty ratified by 183 Parties to address the global tobacco epidemic and uphold the people's right to the highest standard of health.

Senior Deputy Executive Secretary Hubert Guevarra from the Office of the President led the largest government delegation at COP10 with more than 30 officials and staff composed of Congress Representative Rodante Marcoleta and his staff and representatives from the Presidential Legislative Liaison Office, Department of Agriculture, National Tobacco Administration, Department of Trade and Industry, Department of Foreign Affairs, Department of Health, Department of Education, Department of the Interior and Local Government, and the Food and Drug Administration.

After almost three days of deliberations, Parties failed to achieve consensus to establish an Expert Group to facilitate implementation of FCTC [Articles 9 and 10](#) on the regulation and disclosure of the contents and emissions of tobacco products, with the Philippines joining a minority of Parties blocking consensus.



The Philippines proposed a compromise option that further muddled the discussion and caused more delay. With no more time left to continue deliberations, this agenda item was deferred to COP11.

The Philippine delegation also touted the country's retrogressive Vape Law as a landmark legislation, as if it led to declining smoking rates, when in fact it reversed key public health protections provided in the Sin Tax Law, which was the main driver of the drops in smoking prevalence since tax reforms were implemented in 2013.

"It is every government's mandate to protect the right of its population to utmost health and well-being. I hope that our delegates at the COP10 will take this dishonor as a wake-up call that they must stand for public health, rather than the vested interests of the tobacco industry," underscored former Department of Health Secretary Esperanza Cabral.

"The Conference of Parties of the WHO FCTC is our chance to demonstrate our commitment, as a Party that has ratified it, that we support the achievement of the Conventions's goals. It is alarming to note that we have a Dirty Ashtray Award, as we should be contributing constructively to discussions on the floor, rather than causing confusion or delay," said former Department of Health Undersecretary Alexander Padilla.

"As a Filipino, I am ashamed that the Philippines was given its fifth Dirty Ashtray. I expect government officials participating in a global health treaty conference to promote public health interests, but the Philippine delegation demonstrated to the world that it is a willing mouthpiece of a harmful and duplicitous industry," noted Southeast Asia Tobacco Control Alliance Executive Director, Dr Ulysses Dorotheo.

## Contact Information:

Val Bugnot, Media and Communications Manager, SEATCA

Email: [val@seatca.org](mailto:val@seatca.org)

Mobile: +63917312460

## About SEATCA

*SEATCA is a multi-sectoral non-governmental alliance promoting health and saving lives by assisting ASEAN countries to accelerate and effectively implement the tobacco control measures contained in the WHO FCTC. Acknowledged by governments, academic institutions, and civil society for its advancement of tobacco control in Southeast Asia, the WHO bestowed on SEATCA the World No Tobacco Day Award in 2004 and the WHO Director-General's Special Recognition Award in 2014.*