

International Tobacco Accountability Bulletin

News, Updates and Analyses of Issues Related to International Tobacco

April 2002

Crazy, but True World of Big Tobacco

Around the world, Big Tobacco is used to getting away with outrageous practices that test the limits of how low corporations will go to make a quick buck. Here are some of the industry's latest, crazy, but true marketing strategies and gestures of "goodwill."

UKRAINE: Using a Pregnant Woman to Peddle Cigarettes

Philip Morris is currently running an international marketing campaign for its L & M cigarette brand. The theme? Global unity. In the Ukraine, a series of related billboards show young men and women, along with the names of famous cities like Stockholm, Bangkok, and Brasilia, and the slogan "Flavor unites the world." As part of the campaign, the company unveiled a billboard in January 2002 featuring a young couple and the message "You are linked to Luxembourg." The man's arm is wrapped protectively around the woman, his hand resting on her visibly pregnant belly. International outcry forced Philip Morris to remove the billboard.

PAKISTAN: Celebrating Ramadan with a Cigarette

In December, Muslims around the world celebrated the Eid al-Fitr, the feast marking the end of the holy month of Ramadan. In Pakistan, it is popular for families to watch special television programs during the three days of the holy celebration. Intent on capitalizing on the festive atmosphere and the high volume of young viewers, the tobacco industry marketed heavily on television during the Eid, even naming one television program after the cigarette brand "Diplomat." Pakistan's tobacco company is a subsidiary of British American Tobacco.

INDIA: Tobacco Industry Gives Award to Man Who Deals in Dead Bodies

Red & White is a popular cigarette brand in India. It is marketed by Godfrey Philips, a subsidiary of Philip Morris. For several years, the company has given out

Red & White Bravery Awards, as a means of generating positive PR. The company spends considerably more money advertising the award via newspaper, magazine, television, and film ads than on the award itself. Most recently, the first prize award was bestowed on a man who helps facilitate the transfer of dead bodies to medical colleges to aid in training and research. Not surprisingly, there was no mention of the tobacco industry's role in helping generate dead bodies.

KENYA: Medical Institute to Fight Malaria by Promoting Tobacco

British American Tobacco has donated a brand new car, bedecked with the company's logo, to the Kenya Medical Research Institute. According to Dr. Vulule, KMRI's Director for Vector Biology, the donation was made by the firm in memory of a woman who contracted malaria in Congo and later died in a Nairobi hospital. The donation, which also includes a microscope, is intended to promote malaria control in the region. Kenyan tobacco control advocates have called on KMRI to return the donation.

For more information and examples see:

<http://www.essentialaction.org/tobacco/qofm/0201a.html>

The *International Tobacco Accountability Bulletin* is produced by Essential Action, a corporate accountability group.

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