

# Tobacco Control in Plastics Policies



## KEY MESSAGES

1. Cigarette butts are one of the most littered items on the planet. Cigarette filters, from which cigarette butts are derived, are deemed a deceptive deadly design feature for giving smokers the false impression of safety when in fact plastic fibers fall out and filters are linked to a more aggressive form of lung cancer. Furthermore, cigarette filters contain some of the toxic constituents of tobacco products.
2. Cigarette butts and tobacco's plastic waste are within the scope of plastics policies including the upcoming global plastics treaty negotiations. While policy development in the environmental sector encourages broad multi-stakeholder involvement, including the private sector, the tobacco industry should be excluded in line with existing global tobacco control treaty obligations (Article 5.3 of the WHO FCTC), United Nations principles and policies (HLM NCDs, UN global Compact, WHO FENSA, etc.), as well as corresponding practices.
3. Although many national policies have been adopted on regulating plastics, only a few address cigarette butts/tobacco products, including those implementing the European Union (EU)'s Single-Use Plastics Directive which applies the Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) policy. EPR policy intends to make tobacco companies pay for managing tobacco product waste, but also gives the industry an obligation to raise awareness about littering and its impact on the environment.
4. EPR implementation in some parts of the EU has resulted in undermining tobacco advertising and promotion bans. It has enabled the tobacco industry to partner with governments or to promote itself as a socially responsible actor. Cases of active lobbying by the tobacco industry in the environmental sector have also been observed.
5. NGOs and the WHO have called for a ban on cigarette filters and for making the tobacco industry accountable for its environmental harms. Cigarette butts and the plastics in tobacco packaging are estimated to cost governments USD 1 billion a year in waste management costs and USD 20 billion a year in loss of marine ecosystem services.

Measures to address plastics/single use plastics would have a health impact and should align with the global tobacco control treaty, the WHO FCTC. Cigarette butts are ubiquitous, toxic, single use plastics that should be banned, and the tobacco companies should be held to account for all the harms caused to health and the environment.