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Kenya: Authorities should take measures to protect the young generation from online marketing of tobacco products.

Statement of Leonce SESSOU, Executive Secretary, African Tobacco Control Alliance (ATCA)

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[An investigative report published by *The Guardian*](#) reveals that British American Tobacco (BAT) is using influencers to promote its products online. The report exposes BAT's efforts to market its next generation products in Kenya, citing the East African country as one of its "most exciting trial markets". It mentions a [wide-ranging report by *The Bureau of Investigative Journalism \(The Bureau\)*](#), which also exposes how BAT has attracted younger adults, non-smokers and even children in Kenya.

[Compelling evidence](#) affirms BAT and other tobacco multinationals' historical denial of targeting the younger generation. These reports by *The Guardian* and *The Bureau*, further prove that not only does BAT lie about targeting young people, it does so deliberately, with the intention of boosting its sales even if it means getting young people hooked to tobacco, which is harmful to human health.

BAT's exciting opportunity in Kenya as noted in the report by *The Guardian* focuses on the sale of its oral nicotine pouch, Lyft, via online retailer Jumia, where it was categorized as a party product. On another website, customers were directed to products they might also like, such as Dunhill and Sportsman cigarettes.

Concerned about the report by *The Bureau*, BAT-hired public relation firm **Engage BCW** [attempted to bribe a reporter](#) for inside information on its content. Even though BAT has disengaged the agency since the incident, this situation is yet another reminder that the tobacco industry will stop at nothing to achieve its known objective of making profits, even at the detriment of public health.

Marketing tobacco products online through influencers is a flagrant violation of Article 13 of the WHO Framework Convention of Tobacco Control (FCTC) which requires parties to undertake a comprehensive ban of all tobacco advertising, promotion and sponsorship.

The African Tobacco Control Alliance (ATCA) condemns this action by British American Tobacco, as well as the bribery attempt by its former public relation agency.

We congratulate the Kenyan government for its continuous efforts to guarantee the wellbeing of its population and call for more actions to fully implement the WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (FCTC).

ATCA also calls for massive mobilization of civil society to denounce these tobacco industry tactics. We urge the tobacco control community to remain steadfast in its tobacco industry monitoring and response efforts.

Media contact: AYONG I. CALEB

Email: ayong@atca-africa.org

ATCA is a non-profit, non-political Pan-African network of civil society organizations headquartered in Lome, Togo. With membership in 39 countries, ATCA is dedicated to promoting public health and preventing the tobacco epidemic in the continent.