

## Tobacco giant 'breaks youth code'

**A British tobacco giant is breaking its own marketing code covering the sale of cigarettes to young people in Africa.**

An investigation for the BBC has found evidence in Nigeria, Malawi and Mauritius of rules being broken.

In particular, BBC Two's This World found single cigarettes - which campaigners say are attractive to young people - were being promoted and sold.

The company involved, British American Tobacco (BAT), says it does not encourage the sale of single "sticks".

During the investigation carried out for BBC Two's This World programme, British businessman Duncan Bannatyne also discovers tactics used by BAT which circumvent bans on advertising and raise the profile of cigarettes in countries where doctors are warning of a potential epidemic of smoking-related diseases.

In Malawi, the programme found evidence of the London-based tobacco firm providing sponsorship for a music event, which was held at a venue that had no formal age checks on the door.

This breaks BAT's own marketing code.

Chris Proctor, head of science and Regulation at BAT, told the programme that: "If that was the case, that is disappointing, it's certainly not what we would wish to happen."

Celebrities had also appeared at the music event wearing Embassy and Pall Mall branded goods.

### Lavish events

Campaigners say that such events - which often feature competitions offering lavish prizes - are succeeding in making cigarettes attractive in a country where less than 10% of the population smoke and where smoking is still considered taboo.

BAT's marketing code acknowledges that single cigarettes are particularly attractive to young people, who may not be able to afford a whole packet of cigarettes.

The company claims it does not promote the sale of single sticks on this basis. Yet in Mauritius, Mr Bannatyne discovers special pots which BAT has distributed to shops to make it easier for them to sell single cigarettes.

In Malawi and Nigeria, he discovers posters that BAT has produced depicting single cigarettes and showing the price of a single cigarette.

BAT's Mr Proctor said existing posters advertising single sticks would not be used after June 2008.

And he said that the pots to promote single sticks should have been withdrawn.

## Flouting bans

The programme features children as young as 11 who are buying the single cigarettes and are already developing a nicotine habit.

Dr Sunil Gunness, a cardiac surgeon in Mauritius, reports a huge rise in smoking-related diseases.

The World Health Organization (WHO) predicts that the number of smoking-related deaths in Africa is 100,000 a year, but that that figure is set to double in the next 20 years.

**British American Tobacco is the unacceptable face of British business**  
Duncan Bannatyne

The programme shows clear evidence of BAT flouting existing bans on advertising.

In Mauritius, where cigarette advertising is banned, BAT has painted shops the same colour as Matinee, one of their leading brands.

One shopkeeper told the programme that BAT painted it for him to advertise its cigarettes three years ago.

That is six years after the ban on advertising was introduced in 1999.

Mr Proctor conceded that the shops should not have been painted by BAT.

"There were a series of shops that had been painted a yellow, the same colour as one of our brands there," he said. "We had a look at it recently. It wasn't against the law but it didn't look right, so we have been back in there and we've been making sure those are repainted."

Mr Proctor said the company would be looking at the issues raised by the programme.

Duncan Bannatyne described BAT as "the unacceptable face of British Business".

**Bannatyne takes on Big Tobacco: This World is broadcast on Tuesday 1 July on BBC TWO at 2100BST.**

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