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STATUS OF

# Tobacco Production and Trade in Africa

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World Health  
Organization

## Status of tobacco production and trade in Africa

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Data on tobacco production and trade used in this report is a subset of the publicly available data provided by the governments to UN COMTRADE, World Integrated Trade Solution (WITS), FAOSTAT and other WHO and United Nations statistical data sources.



## FOREWORD

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We are pleased to present the second Report on Tobacco Production and Trade in Africa. This report updates the 2015 publication and highlights the trends in tobacco leaf cultivation and production, as well as tobacco leaf and cigarette trade to and from the African continent.

WHO is committed to supporting Member States in accelerating the implementation of the WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (WHO FCTC), which is Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) target 3.a under SDG Goal 3, and combatting climate change and its impacts under SDG Goal 13. This includes support for economically viable alternatives for tobacco workers, growers and, as the case may be, individual sellers, as well as protection of the environment and health of persons in relation to the environment of tobacco cultivation. There is, however, limited information on tobacco growing and tobacco trade, and this has often been a concern for policy-makers looking to advance supply-side tobacco control policies in the countries.

In recent years, tobacco cultivation has shifted to Africa for a number of reasons, including a more favourable regulatory environment, as well as an increasing demand for tobacco. As per the *WHO global report on trends in prevalence of tobacco use 2000–2025* (third edition, 2019), the number of tobacco users in the WHO African Region increased from an estimated 64 million adult users in 2000 to 73 million in 2018. This increase contrasts with a decline in the number of tobacco users globally, from 1397 million to 1337 million over the same period. While the use of tobacco in the African Region is still less than most other regions, the use is increasing in a number of African countries due to aggressive marketing by the tobacco industry.

We hope this report will support policy-makers, researchers and public health advocates by increasing awareness of tobacco production and trade in Africa and enable them to utilize the knowledge to advocate for accelerating implementation of tobacco control measures, including the WHO FCTC.

Data on tobacco production and trade used in this report are a subset of the publicly available data provided by the governments to the United Nations Commodity Trade Statistics Database (UN COMTRADE), World Integrated Trade Solution (WITS), FAOSTAT and other WHO and United Nations statistical data sources, covering the period 2010 to 2020.

**Dr Ruediger Krech**

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World Health Organization



## ABBREVIATIONS

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<b>CIF</b>	cost, insurance and freight
<b>CTS</b>	consolidated tariff schedules
<b>FAO</b>	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
<b>FAOSTAT</b>	FAO Statistical Database
<b>FOB</b>	free on board
<b>GDP</b>	gross domestic product
<b>HS</b>	harmonized system
<b>MFN</b>	most-favoured nation
<b>NTM</b>	non-tariff measures
<b>UN</b>	United Nations
<b>UN COMTRADE</b>	United Nations Commodity Trade Statistics Database
<b>UNCTAD</b>	United Nations Conference on Trade and Development
<b>UNCTAD-TRAINS</b>	UNCTAD Trade Analysis and Information System
<b>WHO</b>	World Health Organization
<b>WHO FCTC</b>	WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control
<b>WITS</b>	World Integrated Trade Solution
<b>WTO</b>	World Trade Organization



## INTRODUCTION

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The tobacco epidemic is one of the biggest public health challenges the world has ever faced, killing more than 8 million people around the world every year. The WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (WHO FCTC) provides a strong, concerted response to the global tobacco epidemic and its enormous health, social, environmental and economic costs (1). Despite significant global progress since the adoption of the WHO FCTC, many countries are still not adequately implementing policies that can save lives from tobacco, and progress in meeting the global target set by governments to reduce the prevalence of tobacco use by 30% by 2025 remains off-track. A recent trend in this sector is the shift of tobacco cultivation to Africa. This increase in localized cultivation is also translating into increased prevalence of tobacco use – a trend which is amplified by a weaker infrastructure for monitoring of tobacco use in a majority of sub-Saharan African countries. In fact, according to the Tobacco atlas, between 1980 and 2016, the WHO African and Eastern Mediterranean Regions witnessed the largest increases in cigarette consumption – 52% and 65%, respectively (2). We intend to highlight such trends in this report.

Additionally, the country profiles of the present report have been developed with the objective of supporting policy-makers, researchers and public health advocates in:

- increasing awareness of tobacco production and trade in Africa as a result of trade liberalization;
- using evidence from the country profiles towards advocacy for implementation of tobacco control measures, including the WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (WHO FCTC), that are led by the World Health Organization.

The country profiles on tobacco production and trade present summary statistics on tobacco production and trade in 54 African countries<sup>1</sup> for the periods 2010–2012 and 2016–2018.<sup>2</sup> Average values of production and trade data from 2010–2012 and 2016–2018 are reported as 2012 and 2018 data, respectively. This is done to buffer against year-to-year fluctuations and provide a more accurate representation of facts and trends. Data on tobacco production and trade used in this report are a subset of the data provided by the African countries to the United Nations Commodity Trade Statistics Database (UN COMTRADE), the World Integrated Trade Solution (WITS), the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) Statistical Database (FAOSTAT) and other WHO and United Nations statistical data sources, covering the period 2010–2018.

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<sup>1</sup> Of the 54 African countries included in this report, 47 are in the WHO African Region and the remaining seven are in the Eastern Mediterranean Region. Country distribution in the WHO system is shown in Annex.

<sup>2</sup> The summary statistics presented in the present report are based on actual figures, not adjusted for increases in population or inflation.



## I. TRENDS IN TOBACCO PRODUCTION

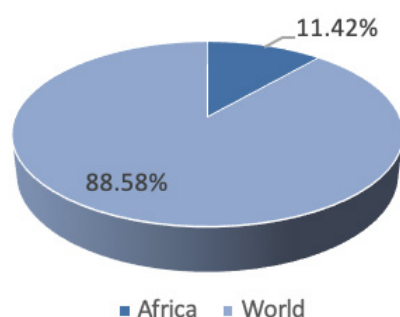
**Table 1.** Area under tobacco cultivation, in hectares

Region	Year	
	2012	2018
World (total)	4 111 818	3 468 101
Africa (total)	609 687	630 432

From 2012 to 2018, the area under tobacco cultivation decreased globally by 15.66%, while in Africa it increased by 3.40% (Table 1).

Source: FAOSTAT. Rome: Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations; 2020 (<http://www.fao.org/faostat/en/#home>, accessed 30 August 2020).

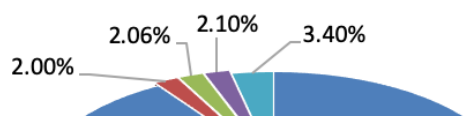
**Fig. 1.** Africa's share of world tobacco leaf production, 2018



During this period, tobacco leaf production decreased globally by 13.9%; in Africa, however, it increased by 10.6%. In 2018, global tobacco leaf production was 6.3 million tonnes and in Africa it was 722 187 tonnes, representing 11.4% of global production (Fig. 1).

Source: FAOSTAT. Rome: Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations; 2020 (<http://www.fao.org/faostat/en/#home>, accessed 30 August 2020).

**Fig. 2.** African tobacco leaf production by region, 2018



East Africa<sup>1</sup> accounts for 90.43% of tobacco leaf production in Africa (Fig. 2).

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