



COALITION QUÉBÉCOISE
POUR LE CONTRÔLE DU TABAC

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News Release

**World No Tobacco Day:
Focus Needed on Legal Market**

Montréal, May 30th 2011 — On the eve of **World No Tobacco Day** (May 31st), the **National Coalition Against Contraband Tobacco** (with represents tobacco retailers and manufacturers) issued a press release, calling on the government to focus on the fight against contraband. The organization claims that

- *“illegal cigarettes make a mockery of Canada’s tobacco control efforts”,*
- *“contraband remains in heavy use amongst kids”, and*
- *“to date there has been woefully little progress.”*

“While we support the fight against contraband, we also believe it needs to be put in its proper perspective, and it certainly shouldn’t be distorted for the tobacco industry’s benefit. Legal cigarettes account for the vast majority of tobacco products consumed by Canadian smokers and represent the main gateway to nicotine addiction for youth. Tougher restrictions on the legal market remain essential and urgent,” says **Flory Doucas, spokesperson of the Quebec Coalition for Tobacco Control.**

In order to correct any misinformation about the current tobacco contraband problem, the **Quebec Coalition** would like to highlight the following points:

1. **The Canadian contraband market has shrunk considerably over that past few years—from 33% to 19%** according to the Imperial Tobacco’s parent company, due to *“stronger government enforcement measures”*:
http://cqct.qc.ca/Documents_docs/DOCU_2011/DOCU_11_05_30_IndicateurReductionContrebande.pdf
2. **Less than 10% of cigarettes smoked by young people are identified as a “native brand” (contraband or untaxed):** http://www.smoke-free.ca/pdf_1/Tobacco%20Brand%20Choice%20of%20Young%20Canadians.pdf
3. **Restrictions on tobacco marketing and second-hand smoke remain effective despite contraband.** For example, the ban on print advertising and retail displays denormalizes tobacco for society as a whole, whether contraband exists or not.
4. **The industry privately recognizes that “increased illicit trade awareness leads to less tax increases”. In other words, it’s to its advantage to publicly sound the alarm on contraband despite remarkable reductions,** while it privately applauds the government’s progress. In fact, a recent **British American Tobacco (BAT)** document exposes the four strategic pillars of its Canadian public awareness campaign: “cash”, “crime”, “children” and “convenience”. (The campaign is being carried out by BAT’s many partners in Canada: Canadian Convenience Stores Association (CCSA), National Convenience Stores Distributors Association (NACDA), Fédération des Chambres de Commerce du Québec (FCCQ), Conseil du Patronat du Québec (CPQ), Association des marchands dépanneurs et épiciers du Québec (AMDEQ).) See page 12 and 13 of
http://cqct.qc.ca/Documents_docs/DOCU_2011/Bat_Presentation_May2011_Neil%20Withington_Anti%20Illicit_Trade_ScaleandOpportunities.pdf and page 27 of
http://cqct.qc.ca/Documents_docs/DOCU_2011/Bat_Presentation_May2011_MarkCobben_ManagingTheChallengesInAmericas.pdf

On this **World No Tobacco Day**, *“the priority should be on strengthening Canada’s laws in order to prevent the legal industry from recruiting new generations of smokers through innovations and gimmicks such as flavours, sleek and sophisticated packaging, ultra-slim feminine cigarettes and other dubious marketing strategies”*, concludes **Ms. Doucas.**