



Uganda Prohibits Smoking in Public Places

A lack of tobacco legislation in African countries is making Africa a target of multinational tobacco companies.



E-LAW advocate Phillip Karugaba is taking on the tobacco giants in Africa, and winning! "The truth needs to be told," he says. "Tobacco is the world's leading cause of preventable death."

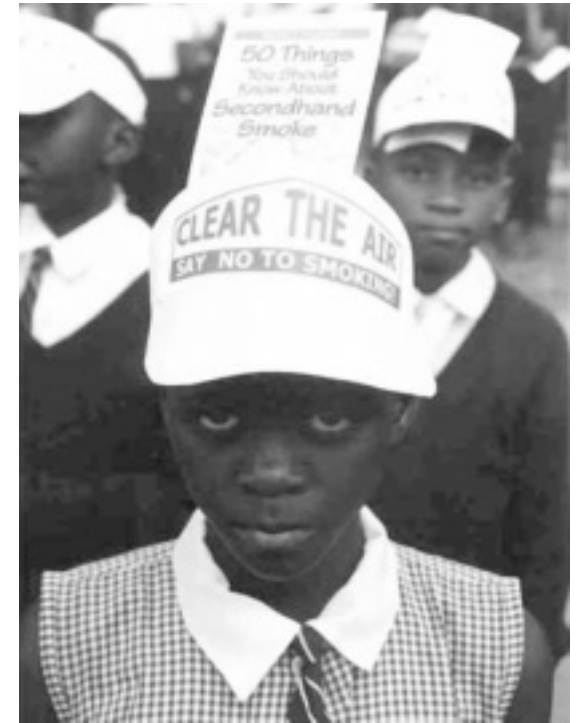
Phillip worked with The Environmental Action Network (TEAN) to win a landmark victory in December, 2002, in Uganda's High Court declaring smoking in public places a violation of non-smokers' constitutional rights to life and to a clean and healthy environment.

The judge ordered Uganda's National Environment Management Authority to make regulations to prohibit smoking in public places within one year. Those regulations are now in place and Uganda's Minister of Water, Lands, and Environment has given police instructions on how to handle offenders.

E-LAW U.S. and E-LAW advocates around the world provided TEAN with court cases to support their constitutional arguments and TEAN's right to bring the case to court. E-LAW U.S. also provided scientific proof of the dangers of tobacco and launched an electronic conference to help Ugandan lawyers, doctors, journalists, and others coordinate their efforts to challenge tobacco usage.

E-LAW U.S. alerted the New York Times to TEAN's stunning victory and Nairobi Bureau Chief Marc Lacey met with Phillip and filed his report: "No-Smoking Signs Spread Slowly Across Africa" (February 2, 2003).

Lacey reported that the more destitute a country, the less likely that smoking is controlled. Phillip and his colleagues around the world agree that a lack of tobacco



legislation in African countries is making Africa a target of multinational tobacco companies.

Uganda's President, Yoweri Museveni, had said his prayers would be answered if a thousand major cigarette companies operated in Uganda instead of just one (British American Tobacco). TEAN was undeterred and moved forward to protect Ugandans from the dangers of tobacco.

On receiving news of the High Court victory, Phillip wrote: "E-LAW is where it all began. You gave me the cases and the support. You made it happen."

For more information about this E-LAW Impact or The Environmental Action Network, contact the U.S. office of the Environmental Law Alliance Worldwide at elawus@elaw.org.