Introduction

The critical importance of tobacco to the Zimbabwean economy is reflected by the profoundly flattering epithets deployed over the years to describe the crop: 'leaf of gold', 'most promising weed', 'crucible', 'life-blood', 'golden lining'. Tobacco is situated at the nerve centre of the body politic, central to the country's political economy. Zimbabwe is the largest producer of tobacco in Africa, and the fifth largest producer of flue-cured tobacco in the world after China, Brazil, India and the United States.[1] The crop is the country's second largest foreign currency earner after gold and contributed 15 per cent to total national export receipts in 2020.[2] During the 2017/2018 season, Zimbabwe produced what was then a record-breaking flue-cured tobacco crop of 252 million kilograms.[3] This surpassed the previous record crop of 236 million kilograms harvested in 2000 at the height of the occupation of white-owned commercial farms by landless black peasants during the Fast Track Land Reform Programme (FTLRP).[4] The 2017/2018 tobacco season was

[1] BDO Zimbabwe Chartered Accountants, 'Tobacco Industry and Marketing Board Study into Cost of Tobacco Production in Zimbabwe', 2015, 1. Also see, 'Zimbabwe major producer of tobacco in Africa', *The Herald*, 10 November 2015.

[2] Historically, tobacco was Zimbabwe's top foreign currency until production went down after the land reform programme in 2000 and it was overtaken by gold. In 2020, out of a total close to US$5 billion national export revenue tobacco contributed US$741 million and gold US$982 million. See Ministry of Finance and Economic Development, 'The 2022 National Budget Statement Presented to the Parliament of Zimbabwe by Hon. Prof Mthuli Ncube', 21.

[3] A. Matibiri, 'Tobacco Production and Marketing Trends in Zimbabwe in the Last Two Decades', Coresta conference paper, Victoria Falls, 2 April 2019.

[4] In 2000, a series of land invasions started by war veterans led to the occupation of white- owned commercial farms and the Fast Track Land Resettlement Programme (FTLRP). The land reform programme transferred over 10 million hectares of land to 146,000 black smallholder farmers. Its impact on tobacco production was profoundly felt as, up until then, about 2,000 white commercial farms had dominated tobacco production. See, S. Moyo, 'Three Decades of Agrarian Reform in Zimbabwe', *The Journal of Peasant Studies*, 38, 3 (2011), 493–531; I. Scoones

celebrated by the government and the tobacco industry in the country as a milestone and epic achievement crowning the success of the Land Reform Programme and black economic empowerment. It created an ephemeral effervesce of euphoria over the prospects of the crop to improve the economy and boost smallholder agriculture within the new agrarian dispensation. However, in the same year, the international humanitarian watchdog Human Rights Watch (HRW) cast a dark and ominous shadow on this glorious moment by releasing a damning report that chronicled a litany of human rights abuses and infractions within the tobacco farms in Zimbabwe and exposed the sinister side of the tobacco 'success story' narrative.[5] These included the prevalence of child labour, the hazardous chemicalised tobacco work environments, nicotine poisoning, exposure of workers to toxic pesticides and abuse of small-scale farmers by tobacco contracting companies.[6] This report was dismissed by the Zimbabwean government as 'not factual' and not 'independently confirmed'.[7] However, labour exploitation in the tobacco farms and the widespread use of child labour is widely documented and confirmed not only in Zimbabwe but in other tobacco producing countries in the world.[8]

et al., 'Tobacco, Contract Farming, and Agrarian Change in Zimbabwe', *Journal of Agrarian Change*, 28 (2018), 22–42.

[5] See Human Rights Watch, 'A Bitter Harvest: Child Labour and Human Rights Abuses on Tobacco Farms in Zimbabwe', (April 2018).

[6] Ibid., 28–73.

[7] S. Mhofu, 'Zimbabwe Government Dismisses HRW report on Child Labour', available on www.voanews.com/africa/zimbabwes-government-dismisses-hrw-report-child-labor, accessed on 24 July 2019.

[8] The International Labour Organization (ILO) in its 2009 report on commercial agriculture and child labour notes that the existence of child labour in tobacco production is rampant particularly amongst children from poor and vulnerable backgrounds. These children work under poor conditions such as long working hours, extreme heat, and exposure to pesticides and risks from injuries. The prevalence of child labour in tobacco farming is largely because the crop is labour intensive, and children are a cheap source of labour. See 'Child Labour, Commercial Agriculture and the Role of Tobacco', International Labour Organisation, Geneva, (2009). In 2014 a Human Rights Watch report, based on 141 interviews with children between the ages of 7 and 17 working on tobacco farms in the United States between 2012 and 2013, documented that there was extensive exploitation of children on the farms who worked long hours, were paid poorly and were exposed to harmful tobacco pesticides. See Human Rights Watch, 'Tobacco's Hidden Children: Hazardous Child Labour in United States Tobacco Farming', Washington, (2013). Another report by Human Rights Watch in 2010 documents similar labour exploitation practices in tobacco farms in Kazakhstan. See, 'Hellish

The negative impact of tobacco farming in Zimbabwe has also been felt outside the social and individual human body – on the natural environment. Tobacco farming has caused significant deforestation, land degradation, and both air and water pollution. The country's forestry conservation body, the Forestry Commission of Zimbabwe (FCZ) estimates that between 1998 and 2013 15 per cent of tree cover was lost to tobacco farming.[9] It further confirmed in 2016 that 50,000 hectares (ha) of forestry cover were being lost annually to tobacco farming and the crop contributed 20 per cent to total national deforestation.[10] Tobacco farmers in Zimbabwe rely almost exclusively on indigenous forestry resources to cure flue-cured tobacco and this has affected forests and woodlands in tobacco farming areas further threatening biodiversity, animal habitats and waters supplies. Environmental experts reckon that 5.3 million trees are hewed every year by tobacco farmers.[11] In 2013, for instance, an estimated 46,000 ha of forest (1.38 million cubic metres of wood) were cleared to cure 127 million kilograms of tobacco.[12] Consequently, environmental experts project that with the current rate of wood consumption in the tobacco sector the country will experience devastating desertification by 2048.[13] Ultimately, the biggest challenge faced by tobacco farmers in Zimbabwe has been the development of measures and strategies to 'maximise use of natural resources while minimising the effect of resource degradation'.[14]

Work Exploitation of Migrant Tobacco Workers in Kazakhstan', www.hrw.org/report/2010/07/14/hellish-work/exploitation-migrant-tobacco-workers-kazakhstan, accessed 25 July 2019.

9 'The Impact of Tobacco Farming on Deforestation', Forestry Commission of Zimbabwe, Harare, 2013, 6.

10 'Forests suffer amid Tobacco Record Breaking Euphoria', *The Herald*, 30 July 2018.

11 'Tobacco Farmers Must Stop Deforestation', Available at www.herald.co.zw/tobacco-farmers-must-stop-deforestation/, accessed on 4 July 2021.

12 R. V. Chivheya, 'Indigenous Forest Level of Deforestation, Forest Dependency and Factors Deserving Willingness to Participate in Indigenous Forestry Conservation: Evidence from Resettled Farmers in Shamva' (Unpublished PhD thesis, University of Fort Hare, 2016), 5.

13 'Tobacco Farmers Fuel Deforestation', *The Zimbabwe Independent*, 28 March 2014, available at www.theindependent.co.zw/2014/03/28/small-scale-tobacco-farmers-fuel-massive-deforestation/, accessed on 25 July 2019.

14 C. Chivuraise, 'Economics of Smallholder Tobacco Production and Implications of Tobacco Growing on Deforestation in Hurungwe District of Zimbabwe' (Unpublished Master of Science thesis, University of Zimbabwe, 2011), 4.

On a global scale, the socio-environmental panorama presented by tobacco production is no less apocalyptic. In 2004, the World Health Organization (WHO) released a report that revealed the causal link between tobacco farming and poverty in low-income countries.[15] The report noted that, while the profits of the big tobacco companies soar, the burden of tobacco farming on national economies in the form of the cost to public health facilities, the human toll due to pesticide exposure, the circle of debt by farmers owed to tobacco companies and the pernicious effects on the natural environment creates a 'vicious cycle of poverty'.[16] The 'Bellagio Statement on Tobacco and Sustainable Development' also concluded that in the developing world, 'tobacco poses a major challenge not just to health, but environmental sustainability'.[17] Approximate data from the mid-1980s confirmed that tobacco farming depletes between 1 million and 2.5 million hectares of woodlands annually .[18] An authoritative study by Fraser in the mid-1980s drew similar results on the negative ecological effects of

[15] See, 'Tobacco and Poverty: A Vicious Cycle', World Health Organization, Geneva, 2004.

[16] This report critiques the narrative often promoted by tobacco companies to farmers in low-income countries that tobacco farming brings prosperity. It points out that in 2002 the Chief Executive of the largest tobacco company Philip Morris earned US$ 3.2 million in salaries and bonuses. The reports note that it would take six years for an average Brazilian farmer to earn what the Executive earns in a day and 2140 years to earn his annual salary. Also, in 2002 the net revenue of the three top tobacco companies in the world Philip Morris, Japan Tobacco and British American Tobacco was US$ 121 billion, which was more than the combined GDP of Zimbabwe, Zambia, Cameroon, Botswana, Albania, Bahrain, Belize, Bolivia, Cambodia, Estonia, Georgia, Ghana, Honduras, Jamaica, Jordan, Macedonia, Malawi, Malta, Moldova, Mongolia, Namibia, Nepal, Paraguay, Senegal, Tajikistan, Togo and Uganda. The report also pointed out that in high income countries the cost of health care attributed to tobacco stood at between 6 per cent and 15 per cent of the total national health care bill. Finally, according to the report in southern Africa, 1400 km^2 of indigenous woodland are destroyed annually because of tobacco farming, which accounts for 12 per cent of overall annual deforestation.

[17] Representatives of twenty-two scientific organisations from across the world had a meeting in Bellagio, Italy in 1995 to examine the global impact of tobacco production and consumption. The meeting reached consensus that tobacco cultivation posed a major threat to sustainable development in low-income countries. For the full report see, 'Bellagio Statement on Tobacco and Sustainable Development', *Canadian Medical Association Journal*, 153, 8 (1995), 1109–1110.

[18] H. J. Geist, 'Global Assessment of Deforestation Related to Tobacco Farming', *Tobacco Control*, 8, 1 (1999), 18–28.

tobacco production.[19] Tobacco farming contributes to siltation of rivers, water reservoirs and the extinction of species due to habitat overexploitation.[20] Relative to other crops, tobacco facilitates accelerated soil erosion and imposes excessive demands on soil nutrients. Tobacco depletes more than ten times as much nitrogen, twenty-four times as much potassium and thirty times as much phosphorous as cassava, for example.[21] Farmers growing tobacco also use a lot of fertilisers, chemicals and insecticides. Run-off from these fertilisers and pesticides usually contaminate water bodies.[22] Thus, the exceptionality of tobacco farming relative to other crops is that it depletes soils, causes extensive deforestation, requires a lot of (frequently coerced) labour and uses a lot of agrochemicals and pesticides that contaminate both human and natural environments. The consumption of tobacco is also harmful to human health and is responsible for diseases such as lung cancer which has caused millions of deaths.[23]

In 2005, WHO came up with a Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (FCTC) to restrict 'the globalisation of the tobacco epidemic' by limiting tobacco demand and supply through multi-lateral cooperation in reducing consumption and counteracting the tobacco

[19] Alastair Fraser, in his 1986 study, revealed that tobacco growing areas are in parts of the developing world that are identified by FAO as being wood deficient. He also argued that most forests in Asia and Africa are now below the levels of meeting the current and future wood fuel needs on a sustainable basis. See, A. Fraser, *The Use of Wood by the Tobacco Industry and the Ecological Implications* (Edinburgh: International Forest Science Consultancy, 1986).

[20] N. Lecours et al., 'Environmental Health Impacts of Tobacco Farming: A Review of the Literature', *Tobacco Control*, 21, 2 (2012), 191–196. A recent report published in 2018 confirmed that tobacco farming contributes to climate change through acidification, high fossil energy consumption and soil and water depletion. The report noted that the global production of 32.4 million megatons of green tobacco contributed 82 megatons of carbon emissions which was 0.2 per cent of global emissions in 2014. See M. Zafereidou, N. Hopkinson and N. Voulvoulis, 'Cigarette Smoking: An Assessment of Tobacco's Global Environmental Footprint Across Its Entire Supply Chain', *Environmental Science and Technology*, 52, 15 (2018), 8087–8094.

[21] R. J. A. Goodland, C. Watson and G. Ledee, *Environmental Management in Tropical Africa* (Boulder, 1984), 78.

[22] R. J. Tobin and W. I. Knausenberger, 'Dilemmas of Development: Burley Tobacco, the Environment and Economic Growth in Malawi', *Journal of Southern African Studies*, 24, 2 (1998), 405–424.

[23] Tobacco has been dubbed by WHO the single largest cause of death during the last century estimated to have claimed more than a hundred million casualties through sickness.

industry's lobbying and advertising activities.[24] The convention also recommends the development of sustainable models that ameliorate tobacco production's social and environmental costs.[25] However, current global tobacco-control intervention regimes have not been very effective.[26] The Zimbabwean government has been an outspoken and harsh critic of this convention and of several tobacco-control measures. In 2000, during the WHO public hearings on a global tobacco-control regime in Geneva, the Zimbabwe Tobacco Association (ZTA) criticised the work of the FCTC as arrogant and iniquitous, 'representing an attack on Zimbabwe's national sovereignty'.[27] The country also refused to ratify the Tobacco Control Convention when it entered into force in 2005, declaring that the convention would harm its tobacco industry.[28] Although Zimbabwe eventually ratified the treaty in December 2014, it has remained highly critical of global tobacco-control initiatives and aloof from much of the efforts to reduce tobacco consumption such as curtailing marketing of tobacco products, illicit trade of cigarettes, limiting tobacco production and searching for alternative crops. This policy negligence raises critical questions about the long-term social and environmental sustainability of tobacco farming in Zimbabwe and the economic prospects for smallholder tobacco farmers within the context of changing global and local pressures such as public health advocacy, falling consumption trends, stochastic market dynamics and socio-ecological factors.

[24] J. Chung-Hall et al., 'Impact of the WHO FCTC Over the First Decade: A Global Evidence Review Prepared for the Impact Assessment Expert Group', *Tobacco Control*, 28 (2018), 119–128.
[25] This is contained in Article 18 of the convention.
[26] Tobacco companies (specifically BAT and Philip Morris) created supply chains in the 1990s to improve production and access to markets. These supply chains were used in the 2000s to legitimate the portrayal of tobacco as socially and environmentally friendly instead of taking meaningful steps to eliminate child labour and deforestation, with the result that the companies benefited to the tune of US$ 64 million annually in money that would have been used to avoid tobacco related deforestation in the top 12 global tobacco-producing countries, including Zimbabwe. See, M. Ortenez and S. Glantz, 'Social Responsibility in Tobacco Production? Tobacco Companies Use of Green Supply Chains to Obscure the New Costs of Tobacco Farming', *Tobacco Control*, 20, 6 (2011), 403–411.
[27] A. Lown et al., 'Tobacco Is Our Industry and We Will Support It: Exploring the Potential Implications of Zimbabwe's Accession to the Framework Convention on Tobacco Control', *Globalisation and Health*, 12, 2 (2016), 1–11.
[28] Ibid., 1–11.

The FTLRP changed the tobacco farming landscape in Zimbabwe as the whole infrastructure of white commercial production that had sustained tobacco production since the colonial days collapsed and black smallholder farmers took over.[29] Smallholder production has grown exponentially over the years with the number of black smallholder flue-cured tobacco farmers rising from 8,537 in 2000 to 140,895 in 2018.[30] The production dynamics have also radically shifted in terms of net contribution of smallholder farmers to national output as they have outperformed the commercial sector.[31] While production figures have been impressive and show a growth trajectory, accelerated production of tobacco has generated anxieties amongst environmental experts over the long-term sustainability of tobacco farming based on the current common property resource use models in the resettlement farming areas and the limits imposed by the availability of such resources in the future.[32] Although palliative measures such as afforestation, using fast-growing exotic trees, has been espoused by the tobacco industry as an alternative, implementation of that policy has been weak. A forest control law was introduced through a statutory instrument in 2012.[33] Subsequently, an afforestation levy was imposed on tobacco farmers by the state in 2015.[34] However, these regulations are yet to be institutionalised. In July 2016, tobacco farmers confronted the government over the allocation of the funds generated under the

[29] By July 2001 half the approximately 2,000 white owned tobacco farms had been designated for resettlement purposes. See D. Cole and J. Cole, 'Tobacco Research and Development', in M. Rukuni et al. (eds.), *Zimbabwe's Agricultural Revolution Revisited* (Harare, 2006), 405.

[30] Tobacco Industries Marketing Board Annual Report, 2018, 26.

[31] Statistics from the Tobacco Industries and Marketing Board show that small-scale farmers produce well over 90 per cent of total national output of flue-cured tobacco. In 2018, small-scale production contributed 91 per cent to national output. See, Tobacco Industries and Marketing Board (TIMB) Annual Report 2017.

[32] The Zimbabwe Forestry Commission has constantly pointed out the long-term unsustainability of current tobacco production models on forestry resources. In 2018, a Forestry Commission official noted that 20 per cent of national forestry cover lost was a result of tobacco farming. She added that during the year tobacco farmers had destroyed 60,000 hectares of forests wood to cure tobacco. See 'Forests suffer amid tobacco record breaking euphoria', The Herald, 30 July 2018.

[33] This was passed under the Control of Timber and Forests Produce Regulations.

[34] This was effected by the Tobacco Afforestation Levy.

afforestation levy.[35] The state had collected US$12 million but had not channelled anything towards supporting afforestation in tobacco-growing areas.[36] During the presentation of the 2019 budget statement the Minister of Finance ordered the fund to be shared between the Forestry Commission and the Tobacco Industries and Marketing Board (TIMB) and to be invested in afforestation within tobacco farming areas.[37] Also, more worryingly for tobacco farmers, other alternative energy sources for tobacco curing such as coal and fast-growing *Eucalyptus* trees have also come under new global environmental scrutiny.[38]

Moreover, the social costs of tobacco to the country are ominous. In 2019, the prevalence of tobacco use in Zimbabwe was estimated to be between 19 per cent and 35 per cent of the population.[39] A study by WHO in 2016 worryingly revealed that 20 per cent of young people between the ages of 13–15 in Zimbabwe were smokers and 12.5 per cent of children started smoking at the early age of seven.[40] There is

[35] 'Farmers Cry Foul over Levy', *The Zimbabwe Independent*, 29 July 2016.
[36] Ibid.
[37] The 2019 National Budget Statement by Hon. Prof. Mthuli Ncube Minister of Finance and Economic Development, 22 November 2018, 63.
[38] Scientific studies have established that *Eucalyptus*, which is the ideal afforestation tree for the tobacco industry, rapidly depletes the water table and threatens water security. See J. M. Albaugh, P. J. Dye and J. S. King, 'Eucalyptus and Water Use in South Africa', *International Journal of Forestry Research*,(2013), doi.10.1155/2013/852540; 'Mounting Pressure Against Eucalyptus in Kenya Described as a Water Guzzler', World Rainforest Movement, Bulletin 147, October 2009, available at https://wrm.org.uy/articles-from-the-wrm-bulletin/section2/mounting-pressure-against-eucalyptus-in-kenya-described-as-the-water-guzzler/, accessed on 22 August 2019; V. Engel et al., 'Hydrological Consequences of Eucalyptus Afforestation in the Argentine Pampas', *Water Resources Research*, 41 (2005), 1–14. Another alternative source coal has high carbon emissions and greenhouse gas effects. As a result of these concerns major global cigarette manufacturers such as Philip Morris have resolved to eliminate the use of coal in tobacco curing processes by 2020 under the sustainable tobacco programme by not purchasing tobacco cured with fossil fuels. This is a serious threat to Zimbabwe's tobacco industry and prompts more proactive and cost-effective renewable energy sources for tobacco curing. This becomes even much more imperative considering that the country has struggled with a huge energy deficit since 2000 and relies on electricity imports from its neighbours particularly South Africa, Mozambique and Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC).
[39] S. Hayson, 'The Illicit Tobacco Trade in Zimbabwe and South Africa', Working paper, Scowcroft Centre for Strategy and Security, (March 2019), 4.
[40] 'Waking Up to Teenage Smoking in Zimbabwe', www.dw.com/en/waking-up-to-teenage-smoking-in-zimbabwe/a-19026965, accessed 24 November 2019.

also laxity in regulations to reduce demand for tobacco products as well as limited central government investment in tobacco-control agencies and public awareness on the dangers of smoking. The global health body pointed out that existing laws designed to curb smoking amongst school children were not being implemented.[41] The long-term public health burden that the escalating use of tobacco might impose on the country's health sector will be substantial. The financial gains from tobacco farming will not be able to cover these social costs. Even more, farm incomes from tobacco have declined year-on-year, to the point that 'tobacco success story narratives' have become contested. The country's economic decline over the past twenty years or so has also affected tobacco farmers whose earning has significantly dwindled with the result that many are not growing the crop profitably.[42] Between 2000 and 2010, the country experienced an unprecedented inflation rate of 231,000,000 per cent and an unemployment rate of over 90 per cent.[43] Although the economy significantly improved between 2010 and 2020, the country is still burdened by high inflation rate, cash shortages, arbitrage in forex exchange regulations and high cost of goods and services. Despite selling their crops in United States Dollars, tobacco farmers get part of their incomes in local currency at official exchange rates which are usually undervalued. This has snuffed out the prospects for capital investments in afforestation, agricultural innovation and diversification. In the end, tobacco-growing communities have been caught in the vicious cycle of indebtedness to tobacco contracting companies, while failing to sustain themselves.[44]

[41] Ibid.

[42] These are perennial concerns that haunt every tobacco marketing season. See 'Zimbabwe Tobacco Sector Booming but Farmers Growing It Are Not', Voice of America, 30 May 2017, available at www.voanews.com/africa/zimbabwe-tobacco-booming-farmers-growing-it-are-not, accessed on 22 August 2019; 'Tobacco Farmers Cry Foul over Forex Payments', *The Herald*, 23 April 2019; 'Farmers Cry Foul over Pricing of Golden Leaf', www.zbc.co.zw/farmers-cry-foul-over-pricing-of-golden-leaf/, accessed on 22 August 2019; 'Tobacco Farmers Cry Foul over Cash Withdrawal Limits', accessed on 22 August 2018; 'Tobacco Prices Go up in Smoke', available at www.businesslive.co.za/fm/features/africa/2019-06-13-tobacco-prices-go-up-in-smoke-in-zimbabwe/, accessed 22 August 2019.

[43] C. Munangagwa, 'The Economic Decline of Zimbabwe', *The Gettysburg Economic Review*, 3, 9 (2009), 110–129.

[44] R. Chingosho, C. Dare and C. Van Walbeek, 'Tobacco Farming and Current Debt Status among Smallholder Farmers in Manicaland Province in Zimbabwe', *Tobacco Control*, 30, 6 (2021), 610–615.

However, despite these apparent negative socio-environmental effects the expansion of the country's tobacco sector continues to be framed largely in terms of livelihoods and rural incomes for small-scale tobacco producers.[45] These triumphalist discourses permeate much of the discussions on tobacco production in Zimbabwe where tobacco is a political crop inextricably tied to the successes of the political status quo. These dominant and hegemonic narratives gained traction and momentum after the Land Reform Programme when the state conscripted tobacco farming within the script of national survival, black empowerment, and national sovereignty.[46] Within this political landscape responsible environmental policy interventions in tobacco farming have been neither effectively nor robustly articulated.

[45] Literature on contemporary tobacco farming in Zimbabwe after the year 2000 generally falls into two categories. The rural livelihoods and accumulation approach examine the changing patterns of production from dominance by white commercial farmers to the rise of black smallholder producers (which intensified after the land invasions in 2000) within the context of increased incomes and new patterns of rural accumulation. See, I. Scoones et al., 'Tobacco, Contract Farming, and Agrarian Change', 22–42; J. Masvongo, J. Mutambara and A. Zvinavashe, 'Viability in Tobacco Production Under the Smallholder Farming Sector in Mount Darwin District', *Journal of Development and Agriculture Economics*, 5, 8 (2013), 295–301; D. Magadlela, 'A Smoky Affair: Challenges Facing Some Smallholder Burley Tobacco Producers in Zimbabwe', *Zambezia*, XXIV.I, (1997), 13–30. The environmental scholarship emphasises the ecological disruptions instigated by the surge in the number of tobacco producers on the limited land and natural resources. See P. Nyambara and M. Nyandoro, 'Tobacco Thrives, but the Environment Cries: The Sustainability of Livelihoods from Small-Scale Tobacco Growing in Zimbabwe, 2000–2017', *Global Environment*, 12, 2 (2019), 304–320; T. G. Nhapi, 'Natural Resource Degradation through Tobacco Farming in Zimbabwe: CSR Implications and the Role of the Government', *South African Journal for Communication Theory and Research*, (2019), 1–15.

[46] On 27 October 2017, *The Patriot* newspaper, which is a mouthpiece for the ruling party ZANU PF, published an article in which it attacks WHO for policies against tobacco farming. The article eulogises (then) President Robert Mugabe for his stance in defending the black-dominated tobacco farming industry and protecting the interests of his nation and people. The article points out that tobacco is key to the economy as it brings in billions in foreign currency and capital investments, supports 1.2 million people directly and another 4.8 million who are dependent on the crop. It adds that tobacco production 'testifies to the success story of the Land Reform and Resettlement Programme which empowered 400,000 indigenous families from the previous 4,000 commercial white farmers'. See, 'WHO can't change Mugabe standing', *The Patriot*, 27 October to 2 November 2017.