

Burning billboard on Empire Road, Johannesburg

PRESS STATEMENT

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Some South Africans may have noticed a “burning” billboard on Empire Road in Johannesburg. The billboard serves as a poignant demonstration of the very real damage that illicit trade has on South Africa’s society.

The illicit tobacco trade costs the South African economy an almost R6 billion per year. South Africa simply cannot afford to lose such an amount – R6 billion would go a long way in funding the shortfall government realises in funding public imperative campaigns such as free higher education; strengthening of law enforcement agencies and implementing the much-needed National Health Insurance.

British American Tobacco South Africa (BATSA) believes in the potential that SA has in attracting and retaining global players which will positively impact the South African economy. In Gauteng alone, BATSA employs over 1200 employees and has its eighth largest factory in the world in the Lesedi Municipality in Heidelberg; where it’s the single biggest employer.

To this end, we have embarked on an extensive public awareness campaign about the negative economic impact of illicit trade, and how to differentiate illegal cigarettes from legitimate goods.

We would like to encourage all South Africans to seriously consider the effect of this scourge on our society, and to commit to rejecting and reporting illicit cigarettes.

ENDS

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