British American Tobacco response re how alleged corruption may have risked lives in Africa

Business & Human Rights Resource Centre invited British American Tobacco to respond to the following item:

* <https://www.stopcorporateabuse.org/press-release/bat%E2%80%99s-annual-meeting-met-global-demands-accountability-prosecution>

British American Tobacco sent the following response:

We are puzzled by Corporate Accountability International’s (CAI) suggestion in its press release from 27th April 2016 that our financial results have been lack lustre. The day before the CAI issued its press release, British American Tobacco plc issued its Q1 interim management statement to the London Stock Exchange (<http://bat.com/group/sites/UK__9D9KCY.nsf/vwPagesWebLive/DOA9CJBU>) highlighting the Group’s performance for the first three months of the year. It highlighted:

* Cigarette volume from subsidiaries increased by 3.6% to 158 billion
* Continued organic market share growth of 20 basis points (bps)2
* Revenue increased by 7.5% at constant rates of exchange
* Revenue was up 1.7% at current rates of exchange
* Global Drive Brands’ cigarette volume grew by 10.5%

Far from lack lustre, we believe this performance demonstrates good momentum and we remain confident that we will deliver another year of good earnings growth at constant rates of exchange. The accompanying commentary from media and financial analysts was also complementary and can be found online.

However, we are also committed to growing our business in a responsible and sustainable way.

Towards the end of 2015 a number of allegations were made regarding historic misconduct in Africa. We are a company that prides itself on its culture and governance and will not tolerate corruption in our business anywhere in the world.

In the light of this, we are, not surprisingly, taking these allegations extremely seriously. In this context the Board has appointed an external law firm to conduct a full investigation and appointed a sub committee to oversee this investigation. We have also informed the UK’s Serious Fraud Office of our approach and are continuing to liaise with them. I hope you will appreciate that while this investigation is ongoing it wouldn’t be appropriate for us to prejudge its outcome or answer questions about what may, or may not, have occurred.