

COP10 News

PANAMA 5 - 10 February 2024

ITGA Daily Activities

Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) of the United Nations (UN) Webinar

Private Sector Consultation Process

Regional Conference for Latin America and the Caribbean (LARC)

“The deadline for achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) is getting closer, so it is essential that all actors involved in the food system give urgency to the efforts required to achieve them.”

ITGA took part in a FAO organized webinar. This is a consultation which represents an instance of dialogue and exchange of knowledge that aims to gather relevant information and learn about the main challenges and recommendations from the representatives of the private sector.

Key points included FAO’s 4 betters: Better production, Better nutrition, Better environment, Better life.

Second Day Impressions

- Official confirmation that ITGA’s observer status application has been denied. The Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA) application was also rejected.
- The President opened the agenda item and informed the Conference that the provisional agenda and the supplementary agenda items would be considered together.
- It was decided that agenda items 6.1 (Implementation of Articles 9 and 10 of the WHO FCTC) and 6.3 (Novel and emerging tobacco products) would be discussed consecutively in the agenda and that the proposed supplementary agenda item “the environmental concerns associated with tobacco, in line with Article 18 of the WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control” be included.

Event Highlights

On 6 February, six side events took place:

- *Making Tobacco Industry Pay (Tobacco Industry Liability): Empowering Parties to Implement Article 19 of the WHO FCTC*, organized by Brazil, Iran, Oman, Pakistan, Panama, Corporate Accountability, Global Center for Good Governance in Tobacco Control
- *Global funding gap and investment case for the implementation of the WHO FCTC*, organized by Secretariat of the WHO FCTC
- *Cross-border TAPS (Tobacco Advertising, Promotion and Sponsorship)*, organized by European Network for Smoking and Tobacco Prevention (ENSP), Secretariat of the WHO FCTC
- *The FCTC a tool to advance human rights*, organized by Action on Smoking and Health (ASH)
- *Social Secrets: Countering Big Tobacco’s Marketing in a Digital Age*, organized by Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids (CTFK)
- *State of Tobacco Taxation: Latest Global Developments and Outlook*, organized by World Health Organization

ITGA in Malawi

TAMA Farmers Trust:

TAMA Farmers Trust is a tobacco farmers body that aims at protecting and promoting growers' interest in Malawi. It was formed in 1929 and is governed by a council of farmer representatives who are elected from different growing areas every four years. TAMA provides services to farmers to enable them go through the whole cycle of production up to sales. TAMA Farmers Trust is a founding member of ITGA.

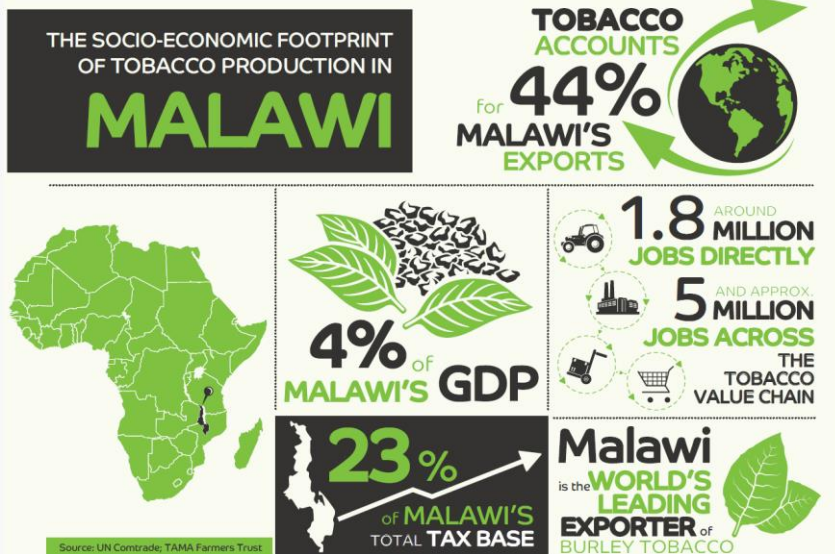
In partnership with Malawi's Government, it runs a technical wing, ARET, that runs research and extension.

Over 80% of the tobacco growers in Malawi are smallholder farmers, with farms of below 1 hectare.

How do you see the WHO FCTC helping growers in their diversification efforts in your market?

Nixon Lita (TAMA CEO): "Farmers grow tobacco as a means of supporting livelihoods. Currently there is no crop that can provide competing economic benefits to farmers in Malawi to the same level with tobacco.

FCTC initiatives need to research on such potential alternatives of farmers are to fully adopt diversification, otherwise livelihoods will be negatively affected."



Socio-economic impact of tobacco growing in Malawi

Malawi's position in the global tobacco supply chain is unique. The country is heavily reliant on its agricultural sector, mainly tobacco.

Malawi is a leading producer of Burley, the second largest leaf variety in the world. Developments in Malawian Burley impact global trade every year.

Key Takeaways: Toolkit for Article 17 of WHO FCTC

"Creating community involvement helps transferring ownership of the project to the farmers, which is key to create a local culture around the intervention. Moreover, united farmers have better chances to vertically integrate their business and to capture more value along the supply chain."

"To ensure the sustainability of alternative crops when farmers decide to switch from tobacco to other crops it is critical for communities to organize their efforts and be systematically linked to markets, whether they be local, national or international. When communities are organized they are better positioned to ensure fair prices for their products."

Toolkit for Article 17 of the WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control, p. 26

<https://fctc.who.int/publications/m/item/toolkit-for-article-17-of-the-who-framework-convention-on-tobacco-control>

ITGA comment: Among ITGA's strategic priorities is strengthening the local farmers' representation. The nature of this objective is simple. There are cultural linkages inherent to every step of the process and we need to rely on the well-established farmers' bodies for the better understanding of local issues.

COP10 in the News

Tobacco growers in Pakistan are worried

Mushfiq Khan, a tobacco grower and Head of the All Pakistan Tobacco Farmer Association, mentioned that the reduction of demand and supply of tobacco would cause a loss to the national exchequer and result in tobacco farmers resorting to criminal activities to make a living. Pakistan's corruption and crime index is already in the top 10 countries, and this will further escalate the crisis Pakistan is going through. In all cases, tobacco growers consider that they should not be excluded from the discussions and should be invited to sit at the table when their future is being discussed.

<https://tradechronicle.com/pakistan-cop-10-tobacco-growers-share-concerns-over-who-decisions/>

Botswana Awarded for Tobacco Control Efforts

"The award was in specific recognition of Botswana's efforts to safeguard public health by ensuring that there was no undue influence or pressure from the tobacco industry, in any of its public health policy formulation or implementation processes, in line with the WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control" said Christopher Nyanga, Botswana's health ministry spokesperson.

<https://english.news.cn/20240205/b18d7026d6dd4fd7980716e01d2a2bdc/c.html>

COP10 Coverage

Brazil's speech at COP10: reducing tobacco area and replacing it with alternatives

Brazil's speech at COP10 was about reducing the planted area and replacing it with alternatives such as food crops. The Brazilian Ambassador to Panama, Carlos de Abreu e Silva, who heads the Brazilian delegation noted: "Brazil takes into account the decrease in cultivated areas and the number of families involved in tobacco production. As a result of the decrease in international demand for tobacco, in this context, Brazil seeks to explore viable and sustainable economic alternatives for tobacco farmers."

The speech addressed one of the most sensitive issues in the production chain, which potentially casts a shadow on agricultural activity. Although he attributed the decrease to the drop in demand for tobacco caused by lower consumption, the speech sheds light on the government's action to seek to replace the crop.

The text read by the ambassador also included tax increases linked to the approval of the tax reform. "The new tax reform approved by the National Congress creates a unique opportunity for tobacco control." The speech also addressed the new nicotine products being debated in the country. "Brazil is carrying out a public consultation process to define the ban on sales, imports and publications of electronic smoking devices." All the measures are attributed to the work of the National Commission for the implementation of the Tobacco Framework Convention (Conicq) and its protocols in what it calls "Brazil's main priorities".

<https://olajournal.com.br/discurso-do-brasil-cop10-fala-em-diminuir-area-de-tabaco-para-plantio-de-alimentos/>

Africa: Tobacco Growers' Share Concerns Over WHO Decisions

In Malawi, tobacco growing has been a backbone of the economy – yet the country finally ratified WHO's FCTC in August 2023. Growers in Malawi fear that the FCTC ratification could be Malawi's economic suicide. However, they hope that Malawi being part of the discussions will offer viable economic solutions as the livelihood of millions of families and domestic economy will be impacted if tobacco production is terminated.

Nixon Lita, TAMA CEO, told Health Policy Watch in November 2023, that they encourage farmers to diversify alongside tobacco, however, tobacco production makes a lot of economic sense to farmers unlike most of the alternatives. "Ratification does not demand a stop to growing". Most farmers that have been encouraged to try other crops for one farming season are likely to return to tobacco growing the next because of the loss of profitability they would have experienced the past season.

<https://allafrica.com/stories/202402060430.html>