

COP10 News

PANAMA 5 - 10 February 2024

ITGA Daily Activities

ITGA President José Javier Aranda and ITGA CEO Mercedes Vázquez took part in a meeting with the official Brazilian Delegation

The Ambassador of Brazil also received in the afternoon of February 8th, Afubra, STIFA and ITGA. During this meeting Afubra and Stifa were given the opportunity to explain the socio-economic contribution of both entities to the region. Mr Romeu Schneider gave an in depth report of the multiple initiatives Afubra is running. Moreover, he insisted on the diversification projects that are taking place as part of Afubra family farming vision.

"The most important issue for Afubra in its approach is to make sure farmers continue their farming activities regardless if these activities include tobacco. Although the reality is that tobacco remains the base line of their business" Mr Schneider stated.

Fourth Day Impressions

- Focus during the day was given to Articles 9 and 10 (Regulation of contents and disclosure of tobacco products), where divergent views on the subject were registered.
- You can read on pages 3-4 an article by ITGA CEO Mercedes Vázquez about the situation with Brazil's official COP10 delegation and the committee representing the local supply chain.



Event Highlights

On 8 February, three side events took place:

- *WHO FCTC Knowledge Hubs: how they can support parties to implement the Convention*, organized by WHO FCTC Knowledge Hubs
- *Guardians of Tomorrow: Rise Against Tobacco for a Healthier Future*, organized by International Pharmaceutical Students' Federation (IPSF)
- *Impact of cigarette ventilation on cigarette use*, organized by Secretariat of the WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control

ITGA in Zambia

Tobacco Association of Zambia (TAZ):

TAZ is one of the best organized tobacco growers' association not only in Africa but globally. As such, their concentrated efforts of pursuing sustainable tobacco growing production, with realistic goals is worth highlighting.

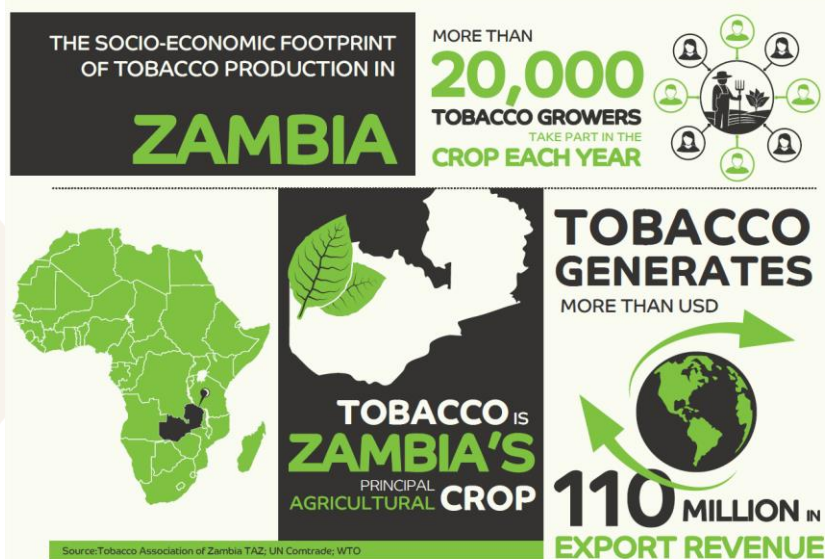
How do you see the WHO FCTC helping growers in their diversification efforts in your market?

Phonto Mumbi (TAZ Corporate Affairs Manager):

I want to once again bring the attention to the report of the working group on Articles 17 and 18 released during COP5. The three principles stated are:

- Livelihood diversification is the attempt to find new ways to raise incomes, reduce health and environmental risks and overcome social disruptions with alternative crops or economic activities for tobacco growers and workers.
- Tobacco growers and workers should be involved in policy development and implementation, in line with Article 5.3 of the WHO FCTC and its guidelines.
- Policies and programmes to promote economically sustainable alternative livelihoods should be based on best practices.

The WHO FCTC should involve the farmers to be part of this process. After all, they are the victims of this proposed change of a livelihood, and as TAZ, we are in full support of such an initiative.



Socio-economic impact of tobacco growing in Zambia

Tobacco production in Zambia represents an important economic activity in terms of livelihood, GDP, and trade in the country. The socio-economic impact on the tobacco farmers indicates that income derived from tobacco farming enables them to build up more assets compared to farmers not farming tobacco.

The local tobacco farmers' association strongly believes it contributes to Goal 2 (Zero Hunger), Goal 4 (Quality Education) and Goal 8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth) of the United Nations.

Key Takeaways: Toolkit for Article 17 of WHO FCTC

"Smallholder tobacco farmers have toiled long enough with very few benefits. The confluence of environmental degradation, overwhelming labour requirements, costly inputs and low prices characterize the smallholder tobacco-growing enterprise. In pursuing alternatives governments will play a critically important role in improving the lives of millions of families who are seeking new opportunities."

Toolkit for Article 17 of the WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control, p. 42

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

ITGA comment: ITGA also believes that governments are the key players in sustaining the livelihoods of millions of growers. This is why we are concentrating our efforts in building meaningful relationships with the authorities in order to improve the lives of the most vulnerable part of the supply chain – the small-scale tobacco growers which in many cases represent the biggest number of people involved in the sector.

COP10 in the News

COP10 agenda enters decisive day with impasses over new products

COP10 enters a decisive day in Panama City. It is on day four that the texts are finalized for submission to the plenary and, thus, become part of it or not, as a decision of the global treaty. And it is on this day at COP10 that the impasse over new tobacco and nicotine products needs to be resolved.

According to the secretary of the Commission for the Implementation of the Framework Convention in Brazil, Vera Luiza Costa e Silva, the countries did not reach a consensus on whether to maintain the working group or whether they would create a group of experts. The draft decision must address this direction and, as there was no consensus, two subgroups were created, one in favour of the working group and the other in favour of the group of experts, so that they could negotiate among themselves the language to be used in the project.

<https://olajornal.com.br/pauta-da-cop10-entra-em-dia-decisivo-com-impasses-sobre-novos-produtos/>

Harm reduction could be on the COP10 agenda in Panama and be part of the tobacco control treaty

The topic of harm reduction could become part of the tobacco control treaty. *(continues on next page)*

Brazil at the spotlight, unfortunately not for the good reasons

by Mercedes Vázquez (ITGA CEO)

By the third day of COP10 meetings, the Brazilian official delegation's approach is catching all the attention.

Last year, a committee composed of different parts of the supply chain in Brazil was formed to assess COP10's potential issues. Having in mind the long history of anti-tobacco activism in Brazil, it comes to no surprise that this committee took the preparation very seriously. However, despite all the efforts made to secure a minimum of balance in the Brazilian position at COP10 with regards to measures that will ultimately affect tobacco production and thus growers, the Brazilian official delegation to COP10 is bringing never ending surprises and, by the way, not the good ones.

Early in the week, Brazil made a formal proposal to introduce Article 18 as an extra point of the agreed COP10 agenda. According to the legal advisers of the COP10 Secretariat, the proposal followed the procedures accordingly. Therefore, Article 18 was consented even though not unanimously. Talking about procedures, the ones of WHO FCTC COP are widening the loopholes on every occasion and the attention paid from democratic governments attending COPs to this issue is very concerning. The Secretariat is holding the power to decide whether applicants to the observer's status are eligible or not and they are only presented to COP10 delegations when the decision is already made.

In the Brazilian case, media was appointed by fingers' signalling. Whose fingers were this, we can only imagine. What explanation was the rejected media coming all the way from Brazil given? Rules have changed. The stigma is carried on the shoulders of everyone's business in Santa Cruz do Sul, Brazil, because they happen to be in the most productive tobacco region in Brazil and that means, a high percentage of the adult population in this region relates to tobacco in one way or another. Article 5.3 is activated by showing your ID if you come from Santa Cruz do Sul.

Talking to Romeu Schneider, Afubra's Vice President, and long-time follower of COPs you could sense his frustration: "The tobacco sector in Brazil feels under attack by its own government's position and we are the second biggest producer and exporter of tobacco in the world. This tobacco production is meeting a legal demand for Brazilian tobacco. Whatever the impact of potential measures in tobacco reduction for Brazil, it will happily be received in other tobacco producing countries."

Brazil at the spotlight, unfortunately not for the good reasons (continued)

COP10 in the News

The subject is defended by experts as a way of presenting smokers with alternatives for consuming less harmful electronic devices. The information was confirmed by the executive secretary of the National Commission for the Implementation of the Framework Convention (Conicq), during a meeting between the Brazilian delegation of deputies and the state secretary for Rural Development, Ronaldo Santini.

<https://olajournal.com.br/reducao-de-danos-pode-entrar-na-pauta-da-cop10-no-panama-e-fazer-parte-do-tratado-de-controle-do-tabagismo/>

MEP Tobacco Working Group reveal white paper on occasion of COP10 and MOP3

At the end of February 2024, in Strasbourg, a group of MEPs will present a white paper setting out concrete proposals for the revision of Directives 2011/64/EU on the taxation of excisable products including tobacco, and 2014/40/EU on tobacco products, known as the Tobacco Products Directive (TPD). With the World Conference on Tobacco Control (COP10) and the 3rd session of the Meeting of the Parties (MOP3) to the WHO Protocol taking place this week in Panama, the European Parliament's Parliamentary Working Group on Tobacco presents its recommendations.

<https://www.eureporter.co/health/tobacco-2/2024/02/07/on-the-occasion-of-cop10-and-mop3-european-members-of-the-tobacco-working-group-reveal-the-main-points-of-their-white-paper/>

This comment came after the official statement of the Ambassador of Brazil in Panama, also head of Brazilian Delegation at COP10. Carlos Henrique Moojen de Abreu e Silva. Apparently referring to tobacco area reduction and increase of taxes which was mentioned during his speech, provides no reason for the tobacco sector in Brazil to be worried.

There are two unreconcilable facts inherent to the Brazilian issue at every COP: one is the vision of Brazil outside of Brazil which holds recognition for their early steps to assess the negative impact of tobacco production by generating pioneering social and environmental initiatives, promoting family farming and carrying probably the most advanced approaches towards diversification; the other one is the own internal vision of anti-tobacco activists which unfortunately happen to be the ones passing the message at every COP to the 182 countries participating.

More distressing is to learn that this vision seems to lean on one individual making the anti-tobacco fight her banner. You ask growers in Rio Grande do Sul, Panamá and Santa Catarina how many times Dr Vera Luiza Costa e Silva has visited them to apply pragmatism in her very powerful position, you will get a blank stare. Still, she acts and makes statements with total impunity denigrating and defaming the solemnity of institutions like Afubra, an institution that has honestly contributed to the wellbeing of the whole Santa Cruz do Sul region for sixty-nine years and created positive impact not only in the region but also in Brazil as a whole. Numbers are out there for those willing to learn about Afubra.

We might have reached a point of inflection at COP meetings, otherwise one might think this makes little sense specially with regards to article 5.3. At the end of the day, what does this article exactly mean? What explanations are given to the filters applied to include or exclude people? The level of intimidation and pressure to those parties in disagreement raise the point of the 'dirty ashtray' label. Are we talking about a United Nations treaty? For those still in disbelief: yes, we certainly are.

