

COP10 News

PANAMA 5 - 10 February 2024

ITGA Daily Activities

We spoke with Heliodoro Campos, Executive Director at FEDETABACO Colombia, a member of ITGA.

What is the request of Colombian tobacco growers?

HC: We want to participate in these events in our capacity as a primary sector – the farmers. I would think that making decisions behind our backs will not lead to good results. We want to be heard because farmers are of great importance and cannot be neglected. To think of ending tobacco growing is to think of ending millions of families around the world. In many cases, we do not have better options than the social and economic benefits that tobacco brings.

What is the position of the Colombian government?

HC: As far as we understand, only one official from the Ministry of Foreign Trade will participate in COP10, the one in charge of Regulations. The truth is that this worries us. The Ministry of Agriculture did not have any officials present. We believe that it is very important that the Ministry of Agriculture, as the one in charge of the national agricultural policy and taking into consideration that tobacco is a relevant crop, should be here to defend the interests of the farmers, of the country's producers, and it is not doing

First Day Impressions

- At the entrance of the COP10 convention center, growers from Honduras, Panama, Nicaragua and Colombia held a peaceful demonstration.
- Brazil's Committee, which included representatives from governments, parts of the supply chain and ITGA's member Afubra, tried to get credentials on the first day of COP10 with no success.
- Even more surprising was to see how Brazilian media were also rejected credentials. Some of these media had attended previous COPs. The Brazilian tobacco sector represented in Panama is facing strong undemocratic behaviour.
- Later in the day, a media conference was held in Global Hotel Panama to get the Brazilian Committee's first impressions. The lack of proper representation stands out. It turns out that the biggest tobacco exporter in the world is also the biggest anti-tobacco promoter.
- By request of Brazil's official delegation to COP, Article 18 may now be part of the agenda for discussion. The proposal, however, saw strong opposition by country delegations.



Source: ITGA

ITGA in Tanzania

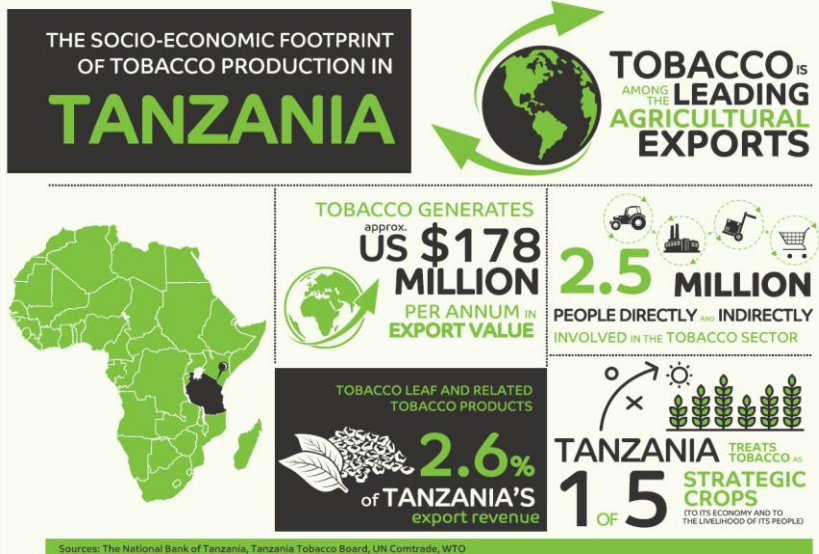
Tobacco Cooperative Joint Enterprise (TCJE):

TCJE is an entity established by Tobacco Cooperative Unions in Tanzania with the objective of promoting the common interest of its members. Among others, these include providing technical assistance, sourcing and supplying quality inputs at affordable prices, strengthening bargaining power and assisting farmers on improving their living standards through tobacco farming.

Diversification for tobacco growers in Tanzania:

Benedict Kisaka (TCJE General Manager):

Tanzanian tobacco growers do not depend solely on tobacco growing for their livelihoods. However, tobacco is often their main cash crop, which hardly has any real alternatives. Tobacco growers engage in other crops, including cotton, groundnuts, sunflower and maize, to name a few. The proper long-term diversification of tobacco growing is still to be reached as these other crops are mainly for the domestic market.



Socio-economic impact of tobacco growing in Tanzania

The government in Tanzania treats tobacco as one of its five strategic crops, highlighting the central place of tobacco in the local context. Tanzania has recently expanded production, registering significant volume increases on a yearly basis. Working to make the long-term tobacco production sustainable through the application of good agricultural practices is a fundamental focus for the sector.

ITGA conducted its 2023 Annual General Meeting in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania. The event was attended by global tobacco sector key stakeholders. A lively debate session focused on sustainable production.

Key Takeaways from WHO FCTC Toolkit for Article 17 of WHO FCTC

“The promotion of economically sustainable alternative livelihoods should be carried out within a holistic framework that encompasses all aspects of the livelihoods of tobacco growers and workers, including the health, economic, social, environmental and food security aspects.”

Toolkit for Article 17 of the WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control, p. 16

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

ITGA comment: We trust this new approach will be carried out in a realistic way. Reaching out to farmers, getting to know their challenges, understanding what keeps them growing tobacco and most notably making them an inherent part of the process. Tobacco growers embrace the holistic approach drafted by WHO FCTC. Unfortunately, they have not been given the opportunity to make a meaningful contribution.

COP10 in the News

Russia-Ukraine tensions during the first day of the conference

Ukraine, Russia and the European Union delegations exchanged accusations during the plenary session on 5 February. The exchange lasted for 10 mins before continuing with the meeting's schedule.

<https://www.elespectador.com/salud/las-guerra-de-ucrania-y-rusia-tensiona-la-cumbre-sobre-tabaco-en-panama/>

The Philippines is urged to support farmers at COP10

"Our lives are deeply intertwined with tobacco farming" Leonardo Montemayor, former agriculture secretary and board chairman of the Federation of Free Farmers.

"Tobacco farming sustains millions of farmers and their families, as well as workers in the industry" president of the Philippine Tobacco Growers Association said.

"Switching crops requires significant investment in new infrastructure. If the future of alternative products is uncertain, what about the future of farmers? We appeal for compassionate and humane policies."

The Philippine tobacco sector employs more than 2.1 million - National Tobacco Administration.

<https://tobaccoreporter.com/2024/02/02/philippines-urged-to-support-farmers-at-cop/>

Event Highlights

Dr Adriana Blanco Marquizo, Head of the Secretariat of the WHO FCTC outlined the progress made in the last two decades:

- A growing number of Parties has developed comprehensive, multisectoral national tobacco control strategies.
- Several Parties increased the size of health warnings on tobacco products and adopted plain packaging.
- Parties in four World Health Organization regions reported an increase in the average tax burden on tobacco products, although only one region meets the benchmark of taxes representing at least 75% of the total retail price of cigarettes.
- And, in hopes of reaching a new milestone, several Parties are planning to reduce national tobacco use prevalence below 5%, in what is known as an "end-game strategy".

However, there are three key challenges:

- slow implementation of the Convention
- new and emerging nicotine and tobacco products
- interference by the tobacco industry

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On 5 February, three side events also took place:

- *Towards a smoke-free generation: Options to make tobacco and related products less attractive*, organized by the Dutch National Institute of Public Health and the Environment (RIVM)
- *Implementation of Article 5.3 of the WHO FCTC*, organized by United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, WHO FCTC Knowledge Hub for Article 5.3 (Thammasat University)
- *Everyone has a role to play: Promoting a multisectoral approach to WHO FCTC implementation*, organized by Secretariat of the WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control

