

COP10 News

PANAMA 5 - 10 February 2024

ITGA is in Panama to defend the interest of tobacco growers

ITGA President José Javier Aranda and CEO Mercedes Vázquez are in Panama to engage with UN agencies, embassies and permanent representations. They are also available to the media.



COP10 Focus Points

- Forward looking tobacco control measures beyond those required by FCTC
- Tobacco advertising and sponsorship
- Novel and emerging products regulation
- Accountability of the tobacco industry
- Contribution of the WHO FCTC to the promotion of human rights
- Work on guidelines on tobacco product regulations (Articles 9 and 10) which may include nicotine reduction
- Environmental matters related to climate change

WHO FCTC COP10 starts today

COP10 was supposed to take place in November 2023 but due to the security situation in Panama the event was postponed. Regardless of the quick rescheduling, many commentators expressed their concerns. Travelling to Panama is difficult and expensive which makes the presence of tobacco growers almost impossible.

ITGA did not receive an answer to its COP10 Observers application. We have sent multiple requests to WHO urging for cooperation and constructive dialogue. Letters were also sent to relevant agencies to discuss matters that impact the livelihoods of millions of tobacco growers.



ITGA President Note

Follow the link to read to full note of José Javier Aranda: <https://www.tobaccolleaf.org/sustainability/cop10/>

Since COP5 in 2012, no public sessions have been held. Radicalization and lack of transparency have set the tone. The FCTC works against its own rules of procedure.

- The FCTC has rejected or ignored the continued requests of tobacco growers' associations and representatives to take part in important discussions.
- We encourage well-intentioned agencies and institutions to persist with pragmatic approaches and to give tobacco growers' associations the opportunity to participate.
- We call for common sense to build the bridges necessary for consensus and progress on the policies we all want to see implemented in the field of citizens' health, without the sacrifice of the millions of growers who are currently unable to find a viable solution for their businesses.

ITGA in Zimbabwe

Zimbabwe Tobacco Association (ZTA):

Formed in 1928, ZTA has represented tobacco producers for nearly a century. ZTA aims to promote and sustainably develop the flue-cured tobacco industry, whilst advancing and protecting the interests of all sections and classes of producers. ZTA is a founder member of ITGA.

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

Ryan Swales (ZTA President): "I do not see any help from the WHO FCTC helping the diversification of tobacco farmers in Zimbabwe. We are on our own and a big proportion of large-scale growers have diversified on their own, with no help from anyone else, be it the tobacco companies or the WHO FCTC. If you ask many growers if they know who the WHO FCTC are, you will be met with a blank stare!"

Rodney Ambrose (ZTA CEO): "For tens of thousands of small-scale farmers, there are no diversification options. Our Ministry engaged in a study on behalf of WHO FCTC some years back which clearly concluded that there are no economic viable crops other than tobacco for our small-scale farmers. Tobacco is their livelihood. However, we are always willing to further explore diversification options that the WHO FCTC may propose."



Socio-economic impact of tobacco growing in Zimbabwe

During each day of COP10, we will be showing a snapshot of an important tobacco growing market in order to highlight the immense socio-economic impact of the crop. We start with Zimbabwe, which is the largest producer of FCV tobacco.

Toolkit for Article 17 of WHO FCTC

In 2023, the FCTC published a Toolkit for Article 17. ITGA applauds this work which shows, after more than a decade, consistency of argument, an analysis of the current situation with solid data and a commitment to this issue which is so important for growers and their communities.

"Tobacco growers and workers should be engaged in the process of policy development concerning Articles 17 and 18 and involved in implementation, in accordance with national laws, through a bottom-up and territorial approach, making sure that their involvement is insulated from the commercial and vested interests of the tobacco industry."

Toolkit for Article 17 of the WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control, p. 15

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

ITGA comment: Tobacco growers' associations are the key partners in developing impactful programs and initiatives. On local level, they work closely with governments given their first-hand knowledge and unparalleled experience. Accepting them as legitimate stakeholders in the diversification efforts will accelerate the process of achieving meaningful results. Our call to WHO FCTC is to include growers' legitimate representatives in the issue of diversification.