

COP10 News

PANAMA 5 - 10 February 2024

ITGA Daily Activities

ITGA President José Javier Aranda met with Colombian tobacco growers led by Fedetabaco in Panama

Colombian growers are in a crossroads after the two biggest companies operating in the market have withdrawn. With no time to prepare a proper transition and no support from their government, they are still trying to find ways of keeping the sector alive and to preserve the livelihoods of people in rural communities.

José Javier Aranda presented an in-depth overview of the global tobacco market through the insights from ITGA's 2023 Annual General Meeting held in Tanzania, which was followed by a lively debate. New tobacco products were among the key points of discussion. These categories have less tobacco (in the case of heated tobacco products) to no tobacco at all (e.g. e-cigarettes and oral products).

Another important part of the discussion was related to WHO FCTC COP10 and the potential threats related to decisions taken this week. By the end of the meeting, it was agreed that ITGA will participate virtually in Fedetabaco's Annual Assembly in March to provide further support.

Third Day Impressions

- Heliodoro Campos, Executive Director of Fedetabaco, expressed his concerns on behalf of the remaining two thousand growers in Colombia about the Colombian official delegation to COP10: "They are here neither to defend tobacco growers nor to protect them". "We are not taken into consideration because we are considered a small group in the national context. Nevertheless, we were and still are the base of the livelihoods in these rural areas where anything else besides tobacco is possible to be grown to provide decent incomes."
- New Report on Plain Packaging: <https://cancer.ca/-/media/files/about-us/media-releases/2024/international-warnings-report/ccs-international-cigarette-packaging-report-2023-english.pdf>
- New Report Addressing the Environmental Toll of Tobacco: <https://iris.who.int/bitstream/handle/10665/354579/9789240051287-eng.pdf>



ITGA President Jose Aranda and ITGA CEO Mercedes Vázquez with Colombian tobacco growers in Panama

Event Highlights

On 7 February, three side events took place:

- *Forward-looking tobacco control measures*, organized by Canada
- *Dialogues to advance in the implementation of Articles 17 and 18 of the WHO FCTC*, organized by WHO FCTC Knowledge Hub for Articles 17 and 18 (Oswaldo Cruz Foundation, Brazil)
- *Measuring tobacco control sustainability across the years: Findings and implications from LMICs*, The International Union against Tuberculosis and Lung Disease (The Union)

ITGA in Argentina

Camara del Tabaco de Salta: Established in 1963

CTM – Coop. Tabacalera de Misiones: Established in 1984

CTJ – Coop. Tabacaleros de Jujuy: Established in 1969

COPROTAB: Established in 1972

ITGA President José Javier Official COP10 Note:

JJA: We encourage well-intentioned agencies and institutions to persist with pragmatic approaches and to give tobacco growers' associations the opportunity to participate.

We also need, for the sake of transparency throughout the process, to admit that the negative impacts of tobacco production are not exclusive to our product but extend to all areas of agriculture.

With this we want to demand that the stigmatization that has been done so far by the FCTC gains the necessary balance in which the information shared publicly is reliable and scientifically proven.

Read the full document: <https://www.tobaccoleaf.org/sustainability/cop10/>



Socio-economic impact of tobacco growing in Argentina

Argentina began tobacco growing in the 19th century. Nowadays, it has established itself among the top producers and exporters in the world.

ITGA's current President José Javier Aranda is the first Member of Camara del Tabaco de Salta, founding organization of ITGA. Salta is one of the three main tobacco growing regions in the country. More than 250,000 people depend directly or indirectly on the sector in Salta.

Key Takeaways: Toolkit for Article 17 of WHO FCTC

“Tobacco-Free Farms is a joint project of WHO, FAO and the World Food Programme (WFP) in collaboration with the Government of Kenya. The main purpose of the project is to create an enabling and supportive crop production and marketing ecosystem to help tobacco farmers shift from tobacco growing to alternative crops.”

Toolkit for Article 17 of the WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control, p. 31

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

ITGA comment: ITGA follows closely the development of this important project in Kenya. However, it is implemented in a market where tobacco has no significant economic footprint. Bringing farmers from other countries to learn about this project could shed a light to their own efforts and could make this project a replicable format provided the right conditions.

The question is, would WHO FCTC be willing to engage with farmers' associations from other countries?

COP10 in the News

Anvisa director says COP10 won't influence decision on e-cigarettes in Brazil

The director of the National Health Surveillance Agency (Anvisa), Daniel Meirelles Fernandes Pereira, said that COP10 will not influence the agency's decision on electronic cigarettes. The assurance was given on Wednesday during a meeting between the Brazilian delegation and the Brazilian ambassador to Panama, Carlos de Abreu e Silva, accompanied by the Brazilian delegation to the Convention.

"There will be no overnight decision without going through the regulatory process."

<https://olajournal.com.br/diretor-da-anvisa-afirma-que-cop10-nao-influenciar-a-decisao-sobre-cigarros-eletronicos/>

Conicq's executive secretary details Brazil's proposal at COP10 that seeks to hold the tobacco industry responsible for environmental damage

<https://olajournal.com.br/setor-executivo-da-conicq-detalha-proposta-do-brasil-na-cop10-que-busca-responsabilizar-industria-do-tabaco-por-danos-ambientais/>

Brazilian Ambassador to Panama states that there are no plans to restrict tobacco production

<https://olajournal.com.br/cop10-embaixador-do-brasil-no-panama-afirma-que-nao-ha-previsao-de-restricao-a-producao-de-tabaco/>

"I don't understand what Brazil does at COP"

ITGA President José Javier Aranda for Gazeta do Sul newspaper

Disbelief. *This is the term that the world's leader of tobacco growers uses to express his feelings about the Brazilian presence in the FCTC.*

In an exclusive interview with Gazeta do Sul, Aranda revealed his amazement to the fact that the Brazilian representation had a strong and active voice at the conference, which was frankly against tobacco, and even as a proponent of measures that could have a direct impact on the production chain.

In the interview, Aranda mentioned that his country, Argentina, has never ratified the global agreement, nor does it intend to do so. Just like the United States, another major tobacco producer, which was the leading exporter before Brazil took over in 1993. These two nations are in no way committed to the terms debated or proposed for implementation or to the restrictions imposed by the COP.

"I'm of the opinion that the last country in the world that should be at the FCTC and the COP is Brazil. And, to my incomprehension, it's the one that has some of the most influential and uncompromising people against tobacco here at the COP. These people should be declared 'non grata' in their own country!"

Aranda says that the tobacco chain in the world currently involves around 40 million producers. Directly or indirectly, more than 380 million people earn their living from this activity. It is present in very populous countries such as China, India and Bangladesh. In Brazil, there are around 130,000 producers, producing around 600,000 tons, of which around 90% is exported to more than 100 countries.

In Argentina, Aranda says, there are more than 20,000 growers. Current production is around 100,000 tons, a sixth of what is harvested in Brazil. Around 60% of Argentine tobacco is of the Virginia variety, which accounts for over 90% of the Brazilian production, while the rest in Argentina is Burley and a small part Criollo.

Aranda also cites the avant-garde profile of Brazil's integrated production system, a benchmark for the entire planet. **"No other country has implemented a more efficient model than this one, with extensive quality control and an example in environmental management for everyone else".** "And this country ratifies the FCTC and sends people here to combat this activity, which is so important for the economy as a whole and for small producers? How can we understand something like that?"