



## **‘Give us a voice in WHO FCTC CoP7’: FAIFA to Government**

### **Tobacco Farmers appeal to the Government seeking their Inclusion in the Official Indian Delegation to FCTC COP7 to be held in India in November 2016**

**Hyderabad, August 22nd, 2016:** The WHO is holding the Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (FCTC) Conference of Parties (COP7) Meeting in India from 7-12 November, 2016. The decisions on tobacco control at this Conference, as in previous such Meetings, will affect the livelihood of millions of tobacco farmers and farm labour connected with tobacco cultivation in the country.

Commenting on the absence of Indian tobacco farmers from WHO’s CoP7 session Shri B.V. Javare Gowda, President, Federation of All India Farmer Associations (FAIFA) said, “As representatives of the tobacco farmers in India and in view of the fact that the COP7 is being hosted by India, we wish to make an urgent appeal that farmers should be allowed to participate in the deliberations of the Conference. Our participation will help us understand the future course of actions being proposed by the WHO on tobacco control and the impact of these measures on the tobacco crop cultivated by us and the livelihood of millions that are dependent on tobacco in the country.”

Mr. Murali Babu, General Secretary, Federation of All India Farmer Associations (FAIFA), added, “In this connection, we have written to the Government that FAIFA as representatives of Tobacco Farmers be included in the official Indian Delegation to COP7. Allowing tobacco farmers, access to the COP 7 to take part in the deliberations will underline the principle of transparency which is required in any public policy-making process and underscore the inclusiveness and fairness of the global health body.”

FAIFA as a representative body of farmers and Farmer Associations in the country has also applied to the FCTC Secretariat to allow it to attend the COP7 and take part in the Conference deliberations.

The inclusion of farmers in the official Indian delegation to the FCTC COP7 and giving them the right to participate in the policy-making process will be consistent with the Constitution of India, principles of transparency as adopted by the United Nations and in consonance with a statement made by Margaret Chan, Director General of the WHO on the occasion of a Health Summit at Washington, DC, USA, on 9 June 2015.

It is a matter of great concern for us that FCTC decisions in the past are made behind closed doors, with media, the public and tobacco farmers excluded from the process. It is clear that the interests of tobacco growers are not represented in the debates especially when the decisions arrived at during the Conference have direct bearing on the lives of tobacco growers.

It is unfortunate that the FCTC has become an instrument in the hands of anti-tobacco NGOs and Activists who are funded by vested interests and have no knowledge of tobacco growing or any concern for the livelihood of farmers and many others dependent on tobacco for their livelihood.

We are confident that the Government of India will ensure that the representatives of the tobacco farmers are able to attend the COP7 deliberations as part of the official Indian delegation to the COP7 Meeting and thereby uphold India's high democratic principles.

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