

Plea to allow tobacco farmers to take part in Geneva Convention

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Hyderabad, August 10

The Federation of All India Farmer Associations (FAIFA), a tobacco farmers' lobby, has demanded that it should be allowed to take part in the Framework Convention on Tobacco Control Conference of Parties (COPS) at the Centre International de Conférences Geneva (CICG) to be held in Geneva from October 1 to 6.

It has accused the WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (WHO-FCTC) of

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not allowing tobacco farmers to the meeting, at least as observers, at the crucial negotiations.

FAIFA met Union Commerce and Industry Minister Suresh Prabhu and appealed to him to ensure the participation of tobacco farmers in the convention.

"Participation of farmers will help them present their view point on the issue. This will result in a reasonable and balanced policy adoption and prevent the formulation of extreme one-sided decisions by the parties to the conference," Murali Babu, General Secretary, FAIFA, said in a statement on Friday.

"Tobacco farmers in India are under extreme duress due to heavy taxation and the adverse regulatory environment on the legal cigarette industry," he said.