

Tobacco farmers want to be part of delegation attending WHO event

Laiqh A. Khan | Mysuru, August 11, 2018

They want to be heard at The Tobacco Control Convention in Geneva

Tobacco farmers in the country have urged the Union government to include their representatives in the Indian delegation attending the Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (FCTC) Conference of Parties that is being organised by the World Health Organisation (WHO) at Geneva in October.

Meeting with Minister

The office-bearers of the Federation of All-India Farmer Associations met Union Commerce Minister Suresh Prabhu in New Delhi earlier this week to seek the inclusion of tobacco farmers' representatives, who are key stakeholders in the tobacco industry, in the delegation.

The conference to be held from October 1 to 6 will be chaired by Union Minister for Health J.P. Nadda.

Fearing that FCTC is a forum “dominated by anti-tobacco NGOs” from countries with “no dependence on tobacco farming and hence have no concern about the impact on the people dependent on tobacco”, the federation, in a memorandum, said lack of knowledge is bound to negate the “just rights” of tobacco farmers and farm labourers and would adversely affect their livelihood as well as the Indian economy.

“Our participation will ensure that the farmers’ view point on issues are taken into account resulting in reasonable and balanced policy adoption,” the memorandum signed by federation general secretary P.S. Murali Babu said.

The conference is expected to discuss steps to bring down tobacco consumption and cultivation.

Federation president Javare Gowda, who is also the president of the Federation VFC Tobacco Growers of Karnataka, said Article 17 and 18 of FCTC deal with suitable alternatives to tobacco cultivation, which should also be discussed extensively at the conference.

He said exclusion of farmers’ representatives from previous FCTC Conference of Parties held in New Delhi two years ago had triggered a massive protest by the International Tobacco Growers’ Association in the national capital.

Source: <https://www.thehindu.com/news/national/karnataka/tobacco-farmers-want-to-be-part-of-delegation-attending-who-event/article24667798.ece>