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Press Release

Include Farmers while Framing Tobacco Control Regulations: FAIFA Appeals to Government on World Tobacco Growers Day

- *More than 35% reduction in FCV cultivation resulting in loss of more than Rs 4000 crore to the FCV Tobacco Farming community in last 5 years*
- *Tobacco cultivation should not be reduced arbitrarily by forcing tobacco farmers to move to other crops*

Hyderabad, 28 October 2019: Federation of All India Farmer Associations (FAIFA), a non-profit organization representing the cause of millions of farmers and farm workers of commercial crops across the States of Andhra Pradesh, Telangana, Karnataka, Gujarat etc. today, on the occasion of World Growers Day appeals to Government to adopt consultative approach and include tobacco farmers while framing tobacco control regulations.

Due to higher taxation, smuggled, illicit and contraband cigarettes along with one sided WHO regulations, FCV production of 325 Million Kgs in 2014-15 came down to 210 million Kgs in 2019-20, resulting in loss of more than Rs 4000 crore to the FCV Tobacco Farming community.

In addition to the above, Andhra Pradesh has always been a victim of either drought or torrential and excess rainfalls. This year many crops along with FCV tobacco crop have been immensely affected by the excess rains across entire coastal region. For example, in past 2-3 days rainfall of 98.9 mm and 67.2mm was recorded in Nellore and Ongole respectively. While, Rayalaseema witnessed a significant 36% excess rainfall. FCV farmers have been victims of these excess rains as many farmers are yet to start their plantation and those who have already started has to do it all over again as their seedlings were washed out by the heavy downpours. In some areas, FCV tobacco farmers' are in extreme distress and helpless situation as the over grown seedlings will result in lower productivity.

Mr. Javare Gowda, President, Federation of All India Farmer Associations (FAIFA), said, "The farmers of such alternative crops already under huge distress. Any coercive action like forcing tobacco farmers to shift to other crops will increase the ongoing farming stress in the country and will only worsen the plight of farming community in the country.

Mr. Murali Babu, General Secretary, Federation of All India Farmer Associations (FAIFA), said, "The democratic rights of farmers to voice their concerns should not be denied by the regulatory bodies in the country, which decide the fate of the millions of tobacco farmers in India. Tobacco farmers should be invited to participate in

policy formulation discussions taking place both in the country and globally to ensure that their views on issues are considered.

India is the second largest producer of Tobacco in the world. Tobacco is cultivated in 13 States in the country and is providing livelihood to 4.5 crore people that includes crores of farmers, labourers, poor rural population and tribal people and their families.

The Government has made very harsh tobacco regulations & imposed very high taxation on Cigarettes without caring for the outcome of such measures on livelihood of crores particularly the farmers, retailers, rural poor and tribals engaged in tobacco and who do not have any other source of income.

India is now the 4th largest illegal cigarette market in the world with illicit cigarettes more than doubling from a level of 12.5 billion sticks in 2005 to 26.5 billion sticks in 2018. It is estimated that the Government loses Rs.13,000 crores in tax revenues per annum on account of illegal cigarette trade.

Tobacco products give huge revenue to the country on which Government collects tax of more than Rs.40,000 crores annually. Also, exports of tobacco and tobacco products earn the country foreign exchange of about Rs.6,000 crores every year.

We, the farming community appeals to Government that tobacco cultivation should not be reduced arbitrarily by forcing tobacco farmers to move to other crops. Tobacco Policies should be reasonable and fair so that they do not affect the legal domestic Industry with severe consequences on tobacco farmers livelihood.

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