

Federation of All India Farmers Associations

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Press Release

FAIFA Condemns WHO-FCTC COP11 for Excluding Tobacco Farmers and Ignoring Livelihood Concerns

Guntur, 10, November 2025:

The Federation of All India Farmer Associations (FAIFA), representing millions of tobacco farmers across India, strongly condemns the deliberate exclusion of farmers and their representatives from participating in the upcoming 11th Conference of the Parties (COP11) to the WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (FCTC) scheduled to be held from 17th November 2025.

Despite repeated appeals by farmer organisations, including FAIFA, the COP Secretariat continues to deny participation to legitimate stakeholders whose livelihoods are directly impacted by the outcomes of these discussions. This undemocratic and one-sided approach undermines the very principles of inclusivity and transparency that the United Nations and WHO stand for.

FAIFA President PS Murali Babu said, *“Farmers are not the problem; they are victims of policy decisions taken without their voice. It is deeply disappointing that COP11 once again shuts its doors on the farming community, whose livelihoods depend on the tobacco crop and who deserve to be heard before any anti-farmer measures are adopted.”*

FAIFA has made multiple formal representations requesting inclusion of farmers as stakeholders or observers at COP11. Yet, the COP Secretariat continues to exclude farmer voices — violating both the spirit of participative governance and the text of the FCTC itself, which calls for the protection of economically dependent communities. The request was denied on the grounds that farmers’ interests are “not aligned” with FCTC objectives — a reasoning FAIFA calls illogical and discriminatory, since Article 17 and 18 of the FCTC explicitly mandate protection of tobacco farmers’ livelihoods and promotion of viable alternatives.

India is one of the world’s largest producers and exporters of Flue-Cured Virginia (FCV) tobacco, alongside countries such as Brazil, Zimbabwe, the U.S.A., and China. While the U.S.A. has not ratified the FCTC and China continues to safeguard its domestic growers, Indian farmers are being targeted by restrictive international policies that threaten their income, push them into debt, and destabilize rural economies in major tobacco-growing states such as Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, and Telangana.

FAIFA warns that the ongoing trend of policy isolation—where decisions are taken in closed rooms without stakeholder consultation—poses a severe risk to the livelihood of over 36 million people dependent on tobacco cultivation, curing, trading, and allied sectors. The federation stressed that

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sustainable transition cannot be achieved by **exclusion, but only through participation** and constructive engagement with those whose lives are directly affected.

FAIFA reiterating the **Government of India's delegation to COP11** to firmly uphold the interests of India's farming community and ensure that no policy or decision emanating from COP11 results in:

- Loss of livelihood for tobacco growers,
- Disruption of legal and export-driven tobacco value chains, or
- Unilateral decisions taken without stakeholder participation.

"The spirit of FCTC lies in cooperation and protection of livelihoods, not in coercion and exclusion. FAIFA appeals to the WHO and FCTC Secretariat to recognize the rights of farmers to be heard in all decisions affecting their future," the statement concluded.

Yours Sincerely,

For Federation of All India Farmers' Associations [FAIFA]

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