



**AFUBRA  
WORKSHOP**

19<sup>th</sup> to 21<sup>st</sup> May 2026  
Santa Cruz do Sul, Brazil



## **ITGA Mobilizes Americas Region Around Stronger Cooperation, Farmer Representation, and Balanced Regulation**

Growers from across the Americas, including Argentina, Brazil, Colombia, Dominican Republic, and the United States, have reinforced their commitment to act together in defense of tobacco-growing communities, rural employment, and balanced regulation.

Meeting amid an increasingly restrictive global regulatory environment, growers acknowledged that stronger regional coordination has become essential to confront common challenges threatening agricultural production, exports, and the livelihoods of thousands of farming families.

As part of this collective effort, participating organizations agreed to sign a formal declaration focused on:

- Strengthening cooperation through information exchange and coordinated regional action against growing attacks on production.
- Counterbalancing false accusations directed at tobacco growing and tobacco-producing communities.
- Publicly challenging negative narratives promoted by anti-tobacco NGOs that ignore scientific evidence and the socio-economic realities of producing regions.
- Requesting governments to pursue balanced and evidence-based regulation that protects both public health objectives and rural livelihoods.

Growers emphasized that tobacco remains one of the most important socio-economic drivers in many rural areas throughout the Americas.

In Argentina, tobacco production continues to serve as a critical economic pillar for provinces such as Jujuy, Salta, and Misiones, where approximately 20,000 tobacco growers depend directly on the sector for their livelihoods. Beyond primary production, tobacco generates substantial employment across the agricultural and manufacturing supply chain while also contributing important fiscal resources to provincial development and social programs.

In Brazil, tobacco production sustains over 135,000 tobacco producing families, particularly in the southern states, where the sector plays a critical role in rural income generation and export revenue. Brazil remains the world's largest tobacco exporter, with tobacco exports contributing significantly to employment and regional economic stability.

In Colombia, tobacco production continues to contribute to rural economic activity across traditional producing regions while maintaining a strong base of technical knowledge and production expertise developed over decades.



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The case of the Dominican Republic was highlighted as one of the clearest examples of tobacco's transformative economic impact. The Dominican tobacco sector now generates more than US\$1.3 billion annually in exports, represents approximately 10% of national exports, and supports more than 120,000 direct jobs. The country currently produces over 8.4 billion cigars annually and remains the world leader in premium cigar exports.

Meanwhile, in the United States, growers stressed the importance of tobacco as a cornerstone crop for many farming communities, particularly in states such as North Carolina and Kentucky, where tobacco revenues continue to sustain broader agricultural operations and rural economies. Discussions also highlighted the growing impact of labour costs, trade dynamics, and regulatory uncertainty on the long-term sustainability of tobacco farming operations.

Among the principal concerns raised during the meeting was the evolution of the World Health Organization Framework Convention on Tobacco Control. Growers argued that while the treaty was originally designed to address tobacco consumption, its scope has increasingly expanded into measures directly impacting tobacco production and farming communities themselves.

Participants warned that this shift has generated significant uncertainty and economic pressure for producers who have long complied with national legislation, environmental requirements, and international traceability standards demanded by export markets.

Attention was also given to the forthcoming revision of the European Union Tobacco Products Directive. While participating countries reiterated that they fully respect the regulatory and traceability requirements imposed by the European Union, they also expressed solidarity with European growers and concerns regarding the potential consequences of unbalanced regulation emerging from the review process.

The declaration concluded with a unified commitment: growers across the Americas will continue standing together regionally while strengthening cooperation with tobacco-growing organizations worldwide in defense of farmers, rural communities, and the socio-economic sustainability of the sector.

*“The evidence is increasingly clear. Excessive and unbalanced regulation has not eliminated tobacco consumption globally, but it has created serious unintended consequences across multiple markets — including the expansion of illicit trade, loss of government revenue, increased criminal activity, and growing economic instability in rural producing regions.”*

José Aranda, ITGA President

*“In several countries where restrictive policies have accelerated aggressively, illegal markets have expanded dramatically, undermining legal supply chains that comply with taxation,*



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*traceability, labor, and environmental standards. Farmers and legitimate businesses are being punished while illicit operators continue to grow outside any regulatory framework.”*

Marcílio Drescher, Afubra President