

Technical Meeting to Promote an Exchange of Views on the Further Development and Implementation of the Integrated Strategy to Address Decent Work Deficits in the Tobacco Sector

ITGA Closing Statement ILO meeting

We reiterate our thanks for this invitation which we hope will initiate a phase for discussions related to tobacco growing, growers and workers, where all key players are represented, including tobacco farmers through their associations at national and global level.

We do insist on this point because this has not been the case up to now and tobacco farmers do not feel represented at these discussions.

Regarding diversification, while admitting that the ILO might not be the most appropriate UN agency to approach diversification issues, the way we see it is that it can be and maybe should be the platform to articulate this discussion.

When Article 17 of the FCTC was brought under the scope of this Convention's mandate, growers around the world welcomed it and waited for officials in charge of this Article to come to and consult with them so they could share their expertise and experience in matters that are directly related to their livelihood. After more than ten years of this UN Treaty, such an approach has not been made and Article 17 is the least implemented of all FCTC articles, a fact that even the FCTC Secretariat has admitted. Nonetheless, the approach remains the same and growers are not consulted.

Ladies and gentlemen, this market is changing very fast. Three years ago we could not imagine that one of the biggest tobacco companies would state that its goal is to stop producing conventional cigarettes by 2050. The discussion has to be taken to a different level, to the level of action, particularly to field action. We put our trust in the ILO to be the driving force of this initiative to bring all key players together at once and in the best interest of farmers, workers, their families, and their communities.

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