

## **On 30<sup>th</sup> October 2023, Tobacco Growers from around the world meet in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania to call on governments' support to the sector**

**Member Organizations of the International Tobacco Growers' Association (ITGA) from Argentina, Brazil, India, Malawi, Tanzania, USA, Zambia and Zimbabwe, and tobacco sector stakeholders from Bulgaria, Portugal, Poland, South Africa and Switzerland gathered in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania for ITGA's 2023 Annual General Meeting. The event was hosted by the Tanzanian Minister of Agriculture, the Hon. Hussein Bashe. During the Open Day Session, the key focus was put on environmental social governance (ESG) practices and the positive socio-economic impact of tobacco in rural communities.**

ITGA's President José Javier Aranda reaffirmed his appeal to governments to consider tobacco growers as key partners given the important contribution of tobacco production as a significant income generator and providing millions of jobs across the supply chain. Talking about Tanzania, Mr. Aranda noted: "Tobacco is among the five leading cash crops in the country, employing more than two and half million people and generating around US\$180 million per annum in export revenue. Tanzania is currently among the 10 biggest producing countries in the world." Moreover, Mr. Aranda stated: "Tobacco growers operate in a legal market and tobacco is one of the most regulated products". ITGA's President also highlighted the lack of real alternatives to tobacco production: "Tobacco is still among the main cash crops in most of the countries where it is grown. There is no room for crop substitution at this moment and only complementary crops can be considered as a way of transitioning away from tobacco in the long term, provided the right opportunities in the market exist". ITGA and partners in the value chain, are working together encouraging farmers' active involvement in social and environmental initiatives in the sector that are becoming even more important today. Being compliant and applying good social and environmental practices should be seen as an opportunity towards sustainable tobacco production for markets to remain competitive in the future.

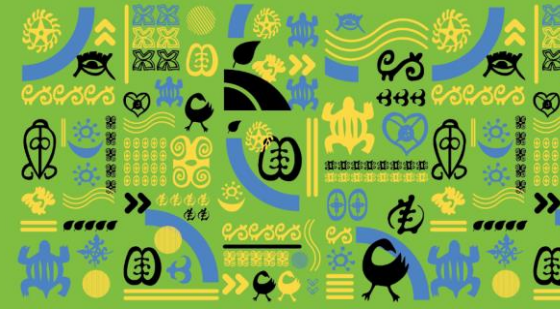
The increasing regulatory pressure on the tobacco industry was another key focus of the discussion during the conference. Among the topics, the Supply Chain Due Diligence Directive in the European Union (EU) will require total transparency in the social and environmental sourcing of products imported into the EU. The directive is currently expected to enter into force in 2024.

Regulation trends indicate that compliant markets will have better opportunities to position their products and remain stable in the long term. During this ESG session of the agenda, tobacco growers were encouraged to be active in this transformation and take ownership of initiatives in their communities. Provided the right conditions, these efforts will contribute to the long-term economic viability of the sector.

A negative approach in tobacco regulation can be expected from World Health Organization (WHO) Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (FCTC) Conference of the Parties (COP) 10 session held in Panama from 20 to 25 of November. ITGA's CEO Mercedes Vázquez emphasized the key priority messages of tobacco growers in the COP10 agenda: "On one hand ITGA, as the only worldwide tobacco growers' association is looking forward to seeing the evolution of Article 17 (economically viable



**ITGA  
ANNUAL  
GENERAL  
MEETING**  
Dar es Salaam Tanzania  
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alternatives of tobacco growing) because it has a direct impact on tobacco production and up until now, there is no evidence of any alternatives to tobacco production. On the other hand, we are insisting on the inclusion of farmers in the discussion which has been denied by the WHO FCTC for almost 20 years. Not even information disclosure is open to the public. The WHO FCTC is not running its conferences in a transparent way.” Unfounded accusations against the sector can be expected to be reinforced during COP10 underestimating the devastating consequences of unbalanced regulation for the livelihoods of millions of farmers. ITGA has applied for the observer status for COP10 but so far has received no answer. What is more, ITGA was even denied participation in the workshop run by the WHO FCTC to launch a Toolkit for Article 17.

The meeting featured a comprehensive overview of the latest tobacco consumption trends. It was a tale of two tobacco markets in 2022, as a flat overall global cigarettes volume, balanced growth in only two regions – Asia Pacific and Latin America – against very significant declines in, particularly, developed markets. In the emerging product categories, heated tobacco is expected to consolidate its position as leading category as regulatory turbulence in e-vapour continues and nicotine pouches struggle to expand. In the global leaf market, significant 2023 production growth was registered in the some of the biggest tobacco growing markets – China, Brazil, Zimbabwe, Malawi and India, while developed countries from Europe and the US continue to suffer declines. Current diversification strategies by leading ITGA organizations were put in the spotlight. In particular, how complementary crops are being essential in the long term and how engaging in wider agricultural initiatives such as the Brazilian Tobacco Growers’ Association (Afubra) Expoagro trade fair has expanded the horizons of growers and family farming.

**Editor's note:**

Follow our designated AGM webpage: <https://www.itgaevents.com/> and Social Media handles ([@TobaccoGrowers](#) on X and [itga-tobaccolleaf](#) on LinkedIn) for more details about the event.

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