



Asian Tobacco Growers gather in Lombok, Indonesia to Debate Latest Industry Challenges

Lombok, INDONESIA, Mar 29, 2018 - (ACN Newswire) - Members of the International Tobacco Growers Association (ITGA) in Asia held a conference in Lombok, Indonesia to discuss the ever-increasing challenges facing tobacco agriculture and the tobacco industry.

The Tobacco Growers emphasized their commitment to Good Agricultural Practices (GAP) in an effort to produce an agricultural commodity that meets legal market standards for the over 900 million consumers spread across the world and ensures that the agricultural activity provides a proper livelihood for millions of the world's farmers, farm workers and their families.

During the conference, delegates from countries such as Azerbaijan, India, Indonesia and the Philippines, as well as representatives of other stakeholders, government officials and delegates from the United Nations, discussed several important issues related to tobacco agriculture and the industry.

ITGA Chief Executive Officer Antonio Abrunhosa said the tobacco market has changed its direction. Therefore, this transition to the future must become the industry's main agenda.

"It will be difficult to implement this strategy if we refuse to become part of the programs initiated by UN agencies such as UNDP and FAO. Therefore, ITGA and its members are committed to demonstrating our commitment to becoming involved in these initiatives and we will do whatever we can to produce tangible evidence of our intentions."

In the opening speech, the chairman of the Indonesian Tobacco Community Alliance (AMTI), Budidoyo, said that tobacco farmers have implemented agricultural practices in line with a number of objectives specified in the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG).

"For example, the number one objective of the SDG is Eradicating poverty. It has been proven everywhere that tobacco is a very profitable commodity that supports the economic stability of the farmers and their families," conveyed Budidoyo. "The tobacco sector is also aware of the importance of fulfilling our social-economic responsibilities. Therefore, we take various measures each year to improve our agricultural techniques so they become more sustainable and environmentally-friendly."

In addition to making declarations, the Indonesian tobacco farmers also continued to push for the Draft Tobacco Bill because it is the realization of efforts to protect tobacco farmers. The Draft Tobacco Bill regulates the management of tobacco, partnership programs between business owners and farmers, DBHCHT allocation, and health protection - management of advertisements, promotions, sponsorship, cigarette packs and Smoke-Free Areas (KTR).

Farmers must also remain alert to Draft Tobacco Bill rules that could potentially threaten the Tobacco Product Industry (IHT), such as:

- Restrictions on tobacco usage (80% domestic and 20% imported tobacco) and the implementation of quotas
- Implementation of an import excise tariff for imported tobacco of 60-200 percent (on processed tobacco)
- Restriction of foreign investment ownership (30 percent)

The tobacco sector has been the target of much pressure that results in decreasing tobacco product demand and exacerbates the situation of the tobacco farmers.

These challenges have never successfully discouraged us from cultivating tobacco, but have instead provided us with greater motivation to achieve better and more sustainable tobacco production.

ABOUT THE AMTI

The Indonesian Tobacco Community Alliance (AMTI) was formed on 25 January, 2010 by a joint declaration by tobacco industry stakeholders as a way to organize the efforts of tobacco and clove farmers and cigarette workers, consumers, retailers, associations and manufacturers to preserve Indonesia's quality tobacco industry.

The purpose of the alliance is to provide a forum for organizing the efforts of tobacco and clove farmers and cigarette workers, consumers, retailers, associations and manufacturers. In addition, it establishes a united front for preserving the quality of the Indonesian tobacco industry and principles for the nation, considering the Tobacco Industry as a prioritized national industry comparable to other industries, participating in formulating balanced and comprehensive concepts for tobacco regulations acceptable to legislators, and preserving the existence of the cigarette industry, especially kretek cigarettes as a national cultural heritage product, so that this industry may receive full rights in its own country, and become a global commodity.

The AMTI also wants to maintain and develop the local tobacco industry and seeks to develop Virginia, Oriental and White Burley tobacco as raw materials for the cigarette industry and import substitutes, and strives to uphold transparency in accordance with the applicable legislation. <http://amti.id>

ABOUT THE ITGA

The International Tobacco Growers Association (ITGA) is a non-profit organization representing the interests of millions of tobacco farmers around the world. The ITGA encourages the involvement of tobacco farmers in global discussions and supports farmers on the international scene, protecting their continued existence and their families. The ITGA Forum was held in Lombok, Indonesia on March 26-27. <http://www.tobaccoleaf.org>

Source: <https://www.acnnewswire.com/press-release/english/42397/asian-tobacco-growers-gather-in-lombok,-indonesia-to-debate-latest-industry-challenges>