

World Tobacco Growers' Day 2019

Tobacco growers in various parts of the world observed the World Tobacco Growers' Day (WTGD) on 28th October 2019. Since 2012, members of the International Tobacco Growers' Association (ITGA) have embraced the celebration of this Day around the world on 28th October every year in recognition of tobacco growers' valuable contribution to their communities and economies.

This year's WTGD theme #togetherwegrow highlighted the many examples where tobacco growers are in line with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) or Global Goals set out by the United Nations.

With every passing year the WTGD has acquired increasing significance with tobacco growers' need to counter media and activist campaigns against the sector, waged without any appreciation or knowledge of the sector's ground realities and challenges. In fact, the international drive towards a new sustainable agricultural revolution can become a reality only if the voices of farmers are heard by the Policy Makers.

While the entire farm sector is witness to rapid changes worldwide, tobacco growers are the most aggrieved lot amidst a growing push for harsher tobacco regulations across the world. Besides various farming and environmental woes, that are common to agricultural crops, tobacco growers face the unwarranted threats and challenges posed by stringent tobacco regulations that do not take into account the huge livelihood dependency on tobacco.

Importantly, small farms with a total land holding of less than 10 hectares and family farms together account for the production of over 70% of the world's food supply. The role of small farms is even more important in nations that are highly dependent on agriculture for their economic growth.

According to a recent report by COMESA [The Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa], smallholder farmers form the basis of the tobacco growing sector as well. These farmers greatly contribute to the economies of the tobacco growing nations with tobacco exports bringing in vital foreign exchange that in turn, fund many developmental activities.

In view of the strong reliance of many developing nations on agriculture, particularly tobacco, Policy Makers should give due importance to resolving the issues and challenges being faced by tobacco farmers in order to ensure sustainable development of these nations.

Indian Farmers Celebrate Growers' Day

Hundreds of tobacco farmers from various tobacco growing regions in India joined their counterparts in other parts of the world to celebrate World Tobacco Growers' Day on 28th October 2019.

The Federation of All India Farmer Associations (FAIFA) which represents millions of farmers and farmworkers of various commercial crops grown in India organized an event to mark the occasion in association with the International Tobacco Growers' Association (ITGA).

Farmers participating in the Growers' Day event appealed to the Indian Government to develop a consultative approach and include tobacco farmers while framing tobacco control regulations. According to the farmers, they should be invited to participate in policy formulation discussions within the country and at global conferences to ensure that their views on issues concerning them are taken cognizance of.

