

Indian farmers appeal to global community for stopping WHO's anti-tobacco agenda

AGENCIES

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The Federation of All India Farmer Associations (FAIFA), a non-profit organisation representing the cause of millions of farmers and farm workers involved in commercial crop cultivation in the country, appealed to the global farming community to come together to oppose the the World Health Organization's (WHO) agenda, 'Grow Food Not Tobacco', which advocates for the replacement of tobacco farming with alternative crops.

Farming is a significant source of employment worldwide and is experiencing robust growth. According to industry estimates, the global general crop farming market expand-

ed from \$348.08 billion in 2022 to \$381.76 billion in 2023, with a compound annual growth rate (CAGR) of 9.7 per cent. The agricultural sector is thriving and is well segmented to serve human and animal consumption, as well as grow commercial crops. Any attempts by the WHO to disrupt this equilibrium will adversely affect the economic interests of farmers across these various sectors.

FAIFA has emphasized that the WHO agenda primarily revolves around agriculture serving the food industry. However, it is crucial to recognize that agriculture also plays a vital role in supporting other sectors like the medicinal, beauty, and pharmaceutical sectors. Considering the adverse effects of climate change and the

reduction in cultivated land, it becomes imperative to strike a balance that benefits all industries as well as farmers attached to these industries and not just focus on food cultivation.

Furthermore, FAIFA has called upon the global farming communities to question the WHO assertion that tobacco crops have a detrimental impact on sustainable agriculture and contribute to the global food crisis. FAIFA has emphasized that tobacco farming accounts for only 0.25 per cent of cultivated land on a global scale. The organization asserts that the scale of tobacco production is not a substantial threat to food security when compared to other agricultural practices.