

FAIFA flays WHO-FCTC COP11 for barring tobacco farm representatives

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[By BL Hyderabad Bureau](#)

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The Federation of All India Farmer Associations (FAIFA), which represents the tobacco farming community in the country, has criticised the deliberate exclusion of tobacco farmers and their representatives from participating in the upcoming 11th Conference of the Parties (COP11) to the WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (FCTC). The conference is scheduled to be held from November 17 to 22, 2025, in Geneva (Switzerland).

The request was reportedly denied on the grounds that farmers' interests are not aligned with FCTC objectives. FAIFA said that this reasoning was illogical and discriminatory. "Since Article 17 and 18 of the FCTC explicitly mandate protection of tobacco farmers' livelihoods and promotion of viable alternatives."

India ranks as the world's second-largest tobacco producer, trailing only China. For Flue-Cured Virginia (FCV) tobacco, India is the fourth-largest producer globally, after China, Brazil, and Zimbabwe.

In terms of volumes, India is the second-largest exporter of unmanufactured tobacco after Brazil. The country's tobacco exports stood at ₹12,006 crore during 2023-24.

“Despite repeated appeals by farmer organisations, including FAIFA, the COP Secretariat continues to deny participation to legitimate stakeholders whose livelihoods are directly impacted by the outcomes of these discussions,” FAIFA President P S Murali Babu has said.

Terming the move undemocratic and one-sided, he alleged that the approach undermined the very principles of inclusivity and transparency that the United Nations and WHO stood for.

“They are victims of policy decisions taken without their voice. It is deeply disappointing that COP11 once again shuts its doors on the farming community, whose livelihoods depend on the tobacco crop and who deserve to be heard before any anti-farmer measures are adopted,” he observed.

He said that the federation had made several representations, requesting inclusion of farmers as stakeholders or observers at the Geneva conference.

FAIFA warns that the ongoing trend of policy isolation could pose a severe risk to the livelihood of over 36 million people dependent on tobacco cultivation, curing, trading, and allied sectors.

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