



Tobacco Growers Ask for Voice in WHO Debate, Urge FCTC to Maintain Focus on Original Mandate

Proposals must be Reconsidered Before They're Left to a Handful of People Running a 'Fantasy Revolution,' Abrunhosa Says

SEOUL, KOREA—At the World Health Organization's Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (FCTC) biennial Conference of the Parties (CoP5), which begins today at the COEX Center, delegates from more than 170 governments will decide the fate of more than 30 million tobacco farmers and their dependents when they vote on recommendations to artificially reduce, and eventually eliminate, tobacco growing.

“The FCTC is putting the livelihoods of millions of growers at risk while refusing to hear our perspective and failing to address their original mandate,” said Antonio Abrunhosa, CEO of the International Tobacco Growers' Association, at a press conference this morning at the COEX Center. Abrunhosa is in Seoul this week with more than two dozen growers from around the world. He pointed out that those being affected by the proposals could include the more than 25,000 Koreans who are dependent on tobacco farming.

“On the table are absurd measures, such as regulating the seasons tobacco can be grown and limiting or reducing the land on which it can be grown,” Abrunhosa said. “Even tobacco control advocates call these ideas ‘simply impractical.’”

“Not one smoker will quit if these proposals are enacted because supply will not go down. They simply represent an unnerving mission creep from the FCTC's original mandate of promoting alternative crop strategies,” he said. “These recommendations have not received even a moderate level of open scrutiny. They must be reconsidered before they're left to a handful of people running a fantasy revolution.”

More information about COP5 and Articles 17&18 is available at <http://protectfarmers.tobaccoland.org/the-issue.aspx>

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