

**SPEECH BY THE ZTA PRESIDENT ON WORLD TOBACCO GROWERS DAY – 28 OCTOBER**

**2016- MADZIVA, ZIMBABWE.**

Pambere ne Zimbabwe, Pambere nekurima, pambere nekujara fodya nemazhvo!

Makadii Yenyu vababa na amai? Zuwa irikupisa and mune nzara nenyota, sakahanditora ngwaiakareba! Ndikumbira kutaura ne English – Shonarangu aanakukwana.

Our Guest of Honour the Permanent Secretary in the Ministry of Agriculture, Mechanization and Irrigation Development Engineer Ringson Chitsiko, here today represented by Mr. Kumbirai Nyamwena, leaders of the farmers unions - Zimbabwe Farmers Union, Zimbabwe Commercial Farmers Union, Mrs Jiti, and Zimbabwe National Farmers Union, Tobacco Industry & Marketing Board executive representative – Mr Chitsike, General Manager of Tobacco Research Board Dr Dahlia Garwe represented today by Sales and Project development manager, Mr Oswell Mharapara, representatives of the tobacco companies , ZTSA tobacco seed company represented by Mr Mubaiwa, and TSL auction floors represented by Herbert Murombo, representatives from the National Economic Consultative Forum, Mr Muzite and Mrs Musukura, district party Chairperson, Mr Kagogoda, and Chairwoman, Mrs Chisvo, Councillor Mr Sadza, ladies and gentleman and, **most importantly**, our tobacco farmers here present. Good afternoon to you all on this special day!

I would like to read out a message from our global grower body the International Tobacco Growers Association, based in Lisbon, Portugal:

**On World Tobacco Growers' Day millions of leaf farmers call on their governments to safeguard their livelihoods.**

**Growers seek:**

- Proper consultation and active participation in the development of policies directly affecting them – specifically, the upcoming WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control Conference of the Parties (CoP) meeting to be held in November in Delhi, India;
- Recognition of the significant economic contribution tobacco-growing brings to their national economies; and
- Solid impact assessments to be carried out when the Convention proposes measures.

Millions of tobacco farmers spanning fifteen countries across the globe today celebrated the Fourth World Tobacco Growers' Day (WTGD), an initiative launched by the International Tobacco Growers' Association (ITGA) in 2012 to help raise awareness of the concerns of tobacco-growing communities worldwide.

Growers from Argentina, Brazil, Bulgaria, Colombia, the Philippines, Indonesia, India, Macedonia, Malawi, Tanzania, Zambia, and of course Zimbabwe have taken part in the activities, promoting tobacco-growing and the significant contribution that it brings to their respective regions and countries.

*“Tobacco-growers provide a legal crop for a legal market -something governments need to recognize. This is not only an important, but in most cases, the main cash crop for many agriculture-based economies, and it helps to enhance the livelihoods of millions of farmers, rural workers and their families across the globe. On the occasion of WTGD, growers call on their*

*governments to assure a sustainable future for them and their families in the face of the many uncertainties facing the tobacco market which is a result of steep declines in demand and the absence of viable alternatives for farmers, to ensure the subsistence of tobacco-growing communities.”*

A number of strict regulatory measures also pose huge concerns for the tobacco sector and the summit where most of these measures are discussed, the Conference of the Parties (CoP) to the WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (FCTC), will hold its seventh meeting in Delhi, India, in a few weeks' time (7-12 November).

Recently, the Head of the Secretariat of the WHO FCTC, Dr Vera Luiza da Costa e Silva, has said that the Convention was created to address an epidemic. Growers and their associations recognize the need to try to curb tobacco consumption but, for more than a decade since its inception, despite repeated requests to participate in the biennial FCTC CoP meetings, they have not been afforded one single opportunity to present the realities of their sector. Meanwhile, the Convention continues to grossly underestimate the consequences of the measures it proposes, refusing to acknowledge that most will irreparably damage the livelihoods of millions of tobacco-growers and their families—often in the world's poorest countries –while still failing to curb consumption.

To counter-balance this lack of inclusion, a delegation of growers from important tobacco growing countries and the ITGA President, will travel to India to follow closely the COP process and to insist on their voices to be heard. Mr Rodney Ambrose, our ZTA CEO, will be representing us as part of this ITGA delegation.

In Zimbabwe:

1. Close to 80,000 farmers engage in tobacco production
2. Close to a million people are directly dependent on tobacco production
3. Tobacco is the most valuable domestic crop in Zimbabwe, bringing in over \$600mill
4. Tobacco generates 30% of the country's foreign currency
5. Tobacco contributes 50% to the agriculture GDP of Zimbabwe
6. Tobacco directly and indirectly employs over 2 million people.

Let's be proud of the crop we lawfully produce!

I'd like to thank the ITGA for today's sponsorship and Rodney and Casper and the team for all the organization of today's proceedings.

Thank you for attending and have a Happy World Tobacco Growers Day!

**Mr. Stephen Swamepoel**  
**Zimbabwe Tobacco Assoc – President**  
**28 October 2016**