FARMERS DEVELOPMENT TRUST SUBMISSION TO WHO’S FIRST PUBLIC HEARING ON TOBACCO CONTROL

Farmers Development Trust is a community based organization whose prime functions are to train, resettle and fund smallholder commercial farmers. These farmers are mostly located in the poor sandy soils of Zimbabwe where maize can be grown as a staple food while tobacco can be grown as the only cash crop due to semi arid conditions.

About 3 million people benefit from tobacco production for their livelihood.

Zimbabwe benefits $20 billion which helps fund health, education, industry etc.

In terms of gross returns per unit area, tobacco has performed very well as compared to other cash crops grown by the small holder farmers. The revenue has managed to improve the standard of living of the farmers and their dependents.

EMPLOYMENT
More than 15000 smallholder farmers earn a direct living through tobacco production. These farmers employ more than 1 500 000 people per season with the down stream industries employing even more people. Many people will be rendered jobless.

FOREIGN CURRENCY GENERATION
Tobacco is the major foreign currency earner in Zimbabwe and the proposed tobacco control measures will result in serious repercussions on the macro - economic environment and will only result in social instability and reducing the per capital income.

Therefore in imposing these regulations there has to be a number of issues to be looked at and each country’s conditions, merits and demerits will have to be considered.

The production of tobacco should be allowed to continue otherwise if banned it will continue to be produced illegally, as a dangerous drug.

Kindest regards

Lovegot Tendengu
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR