

**Title:** Need to protect the interests of tobacco industry in the country particularly in Andhra Pradesh.

SHRI Y.V. RAO (GUNTUR): Sir, the tobacco industry is contributing Rs. 7,000 crores of excise duty to Government of India and earning around Rs. 1,000 crores of foreign exchange through exports which is a consistent high-yield revenue contributor to our country. It is a fact that there are no buyers either in the domestic or international market and, therefore, it is the primary duty and responsibility of the Government of India to come to the rescue of tobacco farmers of Andhra Pradesh for sustaining the country's agricultural economy.

The accumulated stock of 1999-2000 production by the farmers is 150 million kilograms. Out of this, domestic manufacturers and exporters have indented the Tobacco Board 103 million kilograms. The 1998-99 excess crop still unsold and held by the traders is about 50 million kilograms and 6 million kilograms are with STC and Tobacco Growers' Society. The farmers are willing to accept declaration of crop holiday for 2000-2001 season because of the above reasons. Both the State Government and the Central Government should give all possible incentives to the FCV Tobacco Farmers in Andhra Pradesh for planning alternative crops for the success of crop holiday.

A price Stabilising Corporation should be established immediately by the Government of India for the purpose of excise revenues and to act as a statutory corporation. A delegation of MPs and Chief Minister of Andhra Pradesh have represented to the hon. Prime Minister, Union Ministers of Finance and Commerce in this regard.

I request the Government of India to give concrete directions to the STC and the Tobacco Board to resolve the present crisis and control the crop as resolved by the tobacco industry. I also request that steps be taken for export of the said accumulated stocks to foreign countries which may be approached for buying the stock by barter deal or by credit system.