



## MINUTES

### 4<sup>TH</sup> OPEN SESSION

#### **Global Efforts in Branding, Sustainability, and Quality Assurance SUNDAY, 3 DECEMBER, 13:30 TO 15:30**

Chair: Mrs Prajakta Verma, Joint Secretary, Ministry of Textiles, Government of India  
Co-chair: Mr Sunil Patwari, Chairman, the Cotton Textiles Export Promotion Council

The session opened at 13:30.

The first speaker of the session was Mr Peter Wakefield, who explored the transformation of the promotion of raw cotton in the global market, not merely as an individual entity but as a collective force working towards a unified landscape. The raw cotton market is multifaceted, diverse in its origins, and rich in its potential. However, this very diversity, while enriching, often leads to fragmented branding and commercialisation strategies. The evolution of traceability requirements in the cotton industry reflects a growing emphasis on transparency, ethical sourcing, and sustainability. With various countries and stakeholders recognising the need for improved traceability, there's a dynamic shift towards implementing robust systems to track cotton from farm to finished product. The coexistence of large-scale, mechanised farms and smallholder farms within the cotton industry presents a stark contrast in agricultural practices, production capacities, and socio-economic landscapes. This contrast significantly influences branding strategies and traceability requirements within the cotton supply chain. The utilisation of cotton blends in the market holds substantial significance, representing a fusion of cotton with various fibres to enhance fabric properties. Blending cotton with other materials like certain polyesters, rayon, or spandex not only offers versatility in textiles but also can address consumer preferences in certain performance factors.

The second speaker was Ms Alison Ward, CEO, Cotton Connect, London, UK, who stated that improving traceability has become a priority for retailers, as incoming regulation and increased consumer demand make it a business-critical issue. Achieving this in complex cotton supply chains is challenging. She added that in cotton textile supply chains, traceability is the essential process that helps retailers know the conditions in which garments were produced, manufactured, and processed. A new t-shirt may have travelled a long way on trucks, boats, and airplanes and was touched by a lot of hands before it reaches the consumer. Traceability tells this story, showing this journey.

Ms Alexandra Perschau, Head of Standard and Outreach, Cotton Made in Africa, AbTF, elaborated on the experiences of the Cotton made in Africa (CmiA) Initiative. More than 15 years ago, the supply chain was not transparent, and for several years, the branding challenges related to misconceptions about global availability and quality aspects of sustainable African smallholder cotton. CmiA provides brands and retailers with comprehensive information both in the form of marketing materials and robust studies, such as an LCA or independent studies on the impact of training measures. However, the level of detail of all possible production data in a smallholder context required by brands due to different legal requirements now poses a risk of once again making it difficult for these producers to access the market.

Shri Kulin Lalbhai, Executive Director, Arvind Ltd, Mumbai, talked about the importance of the cotton value chain to the Indian textile industry. The Kasturi cotton initiative is a ground-breaking initiative by the government of India that will help transform the cotton procurement. The Kasturi project will not only brand Indian cotton but will also provide a full traceability into its journey, putting sustainability at the heart of the cotton value chain.

Mr Khaled Schuman of Cotton Egypt indicated that the Cotton Egyptian Association (CEA) promotes sustainability along the value chain in Egypt and globally. Egyptian cotton is renowned for its exceptional quality, softness, and durability. In recent years, challenges such as climate change, water scarcity, and fluctuating market demands have posed significant threats to the sustainability of Egyptian cotton industry. Therefore, CEA has been proactively integrating actions to support sustainability from farming to buyers. Through the partnership with Better Cotton, CEA is promoting the uptake of sustainable cotton in trade fairs, implementing awareness campaigns with traders, manufacturers, and retailers.

Mr Shreyaskar Choudhary of Pratibha Syntex Ltd said there is a need for a 45% absolute reduction across all sectors to meet the Paris Climate Agreement goals. The apparel sector has the potential to deliver the 60% reduction of emissions needed for a 1.5-degree Celsius pathway. Major contributors include material production (over 50%) and raw material extraction (about 25%). Six major interventions have been recommended by experts to achieve 45% absolute reduction in carbon emissions: collaborate; ramp up efforts on manufacturing energy efficiency; invest in renewable energy; scale up the use of sustainable materials; invest in R&D for next generation; and address consumption. The three strategies that we need to focus on to bring us closer to net zero are maximising material efficiency, accelerating the development of next-generation materials, and scaling sustainable materials and practices. The regenerative cotton philosophy advocates practices that revitalise the earth, reduces emissions, and redefine sustainability.

The sessions was closed at 15:30.

## **Summary Paragraph**

There should be a transformation of the promotion of raw cotton in the global market — not merely as an individual entity but as a collective force working towards a unified landscape. The raw cotton market is multifaceted, diverse in its origins, and rich in its potential. However, this very diversity often leads to fragmented branding and commercialisation strategies. The benefits of harmonisation in this arena are vast and impactful. Improving traceability has become a priority for retailers in the move towards a more sustainable and ethical apparel industry, as incoming regulation and increased consumer demand make it a business-critical issue. However, achieving this in complex cotton supply chains is challenging. The apparel sector, pivotal for developing countries, has the potential to deliver the 60% emissions reduction needed to meet the 1.5-degree Celsius requirement of the Paris Climate Agreement.