



## MINUTES

### **4<sup>th</sup> BREAKOUT SESSION Perspectives in value addition MONDAY, 4 DECEMBER, 16:30 TO 18:30**

Chair: Mr Narendra Goenka, Chairman, Apparel Export Promotion Council  
Co-chair: Mr Raman Dutta, Founder and National General Secretary, Brand and Sourcing Leaders Association, India

The session opened at 16:30.

Dr SK Shukla from ICAR-CIRCOT in India presented on the utilisation of cotton stalks, emphasising their potential as a hardwood alternative for energy production. He noted that India produces approximately 13 million tonnes of cotton stalks annually, representing a significant income opportunity for farmers through their sale for briquetting and pelleting. Highlighting the economic and ecological advantages of these stalks over coal, Dr Shukla pointed out the potential for substantial revenue generation and sustainable resource use for smallholder farmers. In terms of the investment required for setting up a briquetting plant, he mentioned the cost to be between \$62,500 to \$125,000, with an energy requirement of about 35 units per hour.

Dr Mohamed Negm, Professor of Spinning Research, Cotton Research Institute, ARC, Giza, Egypt, explained that Egypt was one of the main producers of extra long staple cotton (< 35 mm in length). He stated that managing cotton for high fibre quality is complex and requires understanding the plant's response to environmental conditions. This complexity is acknowledged by researchers, who emphasise the importance of regional effects, which encompass not just the environmental and climatic conditions but also the crop management practices and technologies used by cotton growers in those regions.

Mr Rahul Mehta, Chief Mentor of the Clothing Manufacturers Association of India, emphasised the critical role of traceability in the textile industry's supply chain. He pointed out that understanding the origin of materials is fundamental to ensuring adherence to compliance and ethical standards throughout the entire value chain. He advocated for the industry to prioritise collective benefit over individual profitability, underscoring the importance of shared technological advancements and collaborative research and development efforts to enhance economic feasibility. Mr Mehta also stressed the significance of globally inclusive ethical standards and labour practices, acknowledging

the diversity of regional and national norms. He called for an inclusive approach that respects and integrates these cultural and regional differences. According to him, this inclusive and holistic strategy is vital for successfully meeting global standards and practices in the textile industry, thus ensuring a more sustainable and ethically responsible sector.

Dr Manoj Kumar Puniya, a scientist at ICAR-CIRCOT, India, presented on DNA-based technologies in the textile industry, focusing on the role of DNA markers in enhancing fabric traceability. These markers, essential for identifying DNA concentrations, must be versatile, safe, and durable. However, Dr Puniya highlighted challenges like data complexity and privacy concerns, along with the risk of mislabelling. He emphasised the need for careful management of DNA technology to ensure effective and reliable traceability in the textile supply chain.

Mr Anil Jauhri, Former CEO of the National Accreditation Board for Certification Bodies (NABCB), stated that the future of sustainability in textiles involves compliance with both sustainability regulations and private standards, a practice already seen in the food sector and others. He emphasised the need for international standards and methods of demonstrating compliance to be accepted in the global market. Using the example of gold hallmarking, it was explained that locally accepted standards might not be globally recognised due to differences in accreditation systems. Mr Jauhri suggested that globally compatible regulations are necessary, with standards written flexibly to incorporate local conditions. The aim is to meet global requirements through various acceptable methods. The speaker recommended creating a regulators forum within the International Cotton Advisory Committee (ICAC) to harmonise regulations, similar to initiatives in the pharmaceutical and medical device industries. This harmonisation could lead to a single audit system that is universally accepted, reducing costs and increasing efficiency.

Meeting was adjourned at 18:30 hrs.

### **Summary Paragraph**

Utilising cotton by-products in addition to the fibre can provide significant revenue to farmers and benefit the environment as well. The importance of regional effects, which encompass not just the environmental and climatic conditions but also the crop management practices and technologies used by cotton growers in those regions, can have a major impact on fibre quality. Traceability is crucial to understanding the origin of materials and is fundamental to ensuring adherence to compliance and ethical standards throughout the entire value chain; DNA markers can assist with that. Globally compatible regulations will be required, with standards written flexibly to incorporate local conditions.