



Cotton Value Chain:  
"Local Innovations for Global Prosperity"

## MINUTES

### FIFTH BREAKOUT SESSION

#### Panel Discussion: Sustainability in Small Farms: Can Farmer Producer Organisations Lead the Way?

TUESDAY, 5 DECEMBER, 11:00 TO 13:00

Moderator: Mr Manish Daga, President, All India Cotton Farmer Producer Organization Association

The session opened at 11:00.

Ms P Alli Rani of the Sardar Vallabhai Patel International School of Textiles and Management mentioned that women's empowerment plays a pivotal role in the global cotton economy, fostering sustainable development and social progress. As integral contributors to cotton cultivation, women are essential in various stages of the cotton value chain, from planting and harvesting to manufacturing, processing, and marketing. Access to education and training programmes enables women to adopt modern agricultural practices, improving crop yields and quality. By addressing gender inequalities, the cotton industry not only promotes social justice but also unlocks the full potential of its workforce, contributing to increased productivity and competitiveness on the global stage. She highlighted that women empowerment in the world cotton economy is a catalyst for sustainable development, fostering economic growth, and advancing social equality throughout the cotton value chain.

Mr Mamadou Berte, Deputy Director General, Le Conseil du Coton et de l'Anacarde, Côte d'Ivoire, said that small farmers are trying to form cooperative groups, which can increase farmer productivity. As many as 13,000 farmers are currently involved with the cooperatives but there is no government funding available. Advantages of cooperatives are that the management is very good, and they increase productivity and farmer income. The main challenge is the competition with the big companies.

Cotton Connect's Mr Hardeep Desai stated that despite the challenges faced by smallholder cotton producers, farmer collectives are showing a route to enhanced sustainable returns and contributing to the economies of many Asian countries. CottonConnect supports farmers by, among other things, providing training; supply chain linkages and traceability; and creating value all along the supply chain. He said

success depends on factors such as knowledge transfer, forming partnerships, implementing traceability, and supporting on-the-ground initiatives that have a global impact for all value chain stakeholders.

Mr Shivaprasad Shetty of GIZ said that extra-long staple cotton production has been declining because the crop is becoming non-remunerative for the farmers because it has a longer crop duration, lower yields, poor price support, and a lack of traceability. GIZ developed a program that involved issues including research into breeding, fast-tracking technology transfer, focusing on the seed supply, and marketing with brand linkages.

In the panel discussion, progressive farmers Mr Balaji Dhobe Mrs Savita Dhavas both spoke about their areas of work. Ms Dhavas indicated that the main challenges include exposure to hazardous chemical emissions of petroleum, soil depletion, declining yields, and loss of income. In particular, women suffer from chemical exposure as well as a lack of support and awareness amongst families and peer groups.

The session closed at 13:00.