



The ICAC's 80th Plenary Meeting

80th Plenary Meeting – Virtual

MINUTES

Government Members Plenary Session

What Climate Smart, Sustainability Policies/Initiatives Have you Put in Place for Cotton and Textiles, for Example to Respond to COP26?

10:45 am – 12:00 pm (GMT-5); Australia (Perth, AW): 11:45 pm – 00:30 pm; Europe: 15:45 – 16:30 (GMT)

Chairman: Patrick Packnett

Mr Patrick Packnett opened the session at 10:45 by inviting Mr Matthew Looney, Data Scientist at the International Cotton Advisory Committee, to provide introductory remarks for this session.

Mr Looney explained the goals and the importance of the United Nations Climate Change Conference - COP26 for the cotton industry. He noted that COP26 was a major event, held in Glasgow in November 2021, that had brought together leaders from all countries in the world to discuss, review and agree on how to step up global action to solve the climate crisis. He highlighted that the main objectives of the COP26 meeting were to commit to more ambitious targets to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 2030; discuss measures to adapt to the inevitable impacts of climate change; and increase funding for climate action, in particular for developing countries.

Mr Looney stated that like any other crop, cotton is sensitive to the effects of climate change and its response to soil, pests and diseases. Climate change causes extreme fluctuations in temperature, rainfall, solar radiation and carbon-dioxide (CO₂) concentration. These fluctuations influence crop growth, pathogens that cause diseases, and insects that occur in the cotton eco-system.

Cotton producing and consuming countries have invested in research to understand the influence of climate change effects on cotton physiology and productivity. Although some studies have shown that the cotton crop in some regions may benefit from increases in temperatures and carbon-dioxide, climate change is likely to affect agriculture very significantly through the alteration or aggravation of biotic stress. Some studies indicate that a shift in temperature can have significant effects on each insect species – mainly distribution and abundance – but it could also influence interactions between insect species within different ecosystems. This could lead to an aggravation of the pest problem and thus an increasing use of pesticides.

The Chair gave the floor to the Delegate of the EU to present her report. She stated that development cooperation in the cotton sector remains an important element of the European partnerships agenda. The delegate mentioned that the EU and its Member States have increased their support to the cotton industry through national and regional programmes in order to boost the transformation of the sector.

The EU and its Member States have provided more than 200 million euros in ongoing projects, 97% of which are in Sub Sahara Africa (90% to the C4, Cameroon and Côte d'Ivoire).

The delegate stated that the EU has established four priorities related to smallholder production and resilience, namely the development of local value addition and cotton by-products; environmental sustainability and natural resource management, including agro-ecological practices and the promotion of organic cotton production; policy dialogue with national and regional governments on sustainable and inclusive value chains; and issuing sustainable production and consumption policies (the Commission has recently issued a legislative proposal for a Corporate Sustainability Due Diligence Directive).

The EU delegate also noted that the European Commission plans to contribute to improving global market transparency in the use of fertilisers and plans to initiate discussions on the avoidance of export restrictions on the fertiliser trade. The green financing programme was launched to support research, development and innovation in face of the negative impacts of climate change, as the green economy is the tool for sustainable development.

The Chair gave the floor to the Delegate of Egypt to present her report. The delegate noted that in light of COP26, Egypt has developed educational programmes to ensure awareness of how climate change affects sustainability in the cotton sector. Egypt has focused on eco-friendly sustainable development plans in addition to supporting national breeding programs as well as developing the eco-friendly textile industry. The main policies adopted to combat climate changes impacts in Egypt are the development of new cotton varieties to ensure early maturing, high yields and salinity tolerance; reviewing the crop sowing and harvest dates; efficient utilization of irrigation water; encouraging the recycling of cotton textiles and garments; and partnering with cotton initiatives such as BCI and Cotton Connect.

The Chair gave the floor to the delegate from the USA to present his report. In his remarks, the delegate informed that the Biden-Harris Administration is investing up to \$2.8 billion in 70 selected projects under the first pool of the 'Partnerships for Climate-Smart Commodities' funding opportunity. As a part of this initiative, \$90 million of funding will be allocated to the U.S. Climate Smart Cotton Program. This investment will enhance the industry's voluntary environmental stewardship efforts to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, soil loss, water loss, and energy use, while increasing land efficiency and soil carbon. The programme is a multi-stakeholder initiative that includes the National Cotton Council, Cotton Council International, Cotton Incorporated, the Soil Health Institute, the Soil and Water Outcomes Fund, Texas A&M AgriLife Research, Agricenter International, Alabama A&M University and North Carolina A&T State University. The US Climate Smart Cotton Program will conduct farmer education, applied research, demand-building efforts, monitoring and reporting, and finally to develop verification platforms.

The Chair gave the floor to the delegate of Pakistan to present his report. He noted that erratic weather has been a big issue for the cotton industry of Pakistan in recent years. The government is addressing climate change implications with a consolidated and comprehensive framework. The four agricultural-producing provinces in Pakistan have implemented a monitoring system and allocated funds to combat climate change effects. The government has issued a climate change policy for the agriculture sector, which addresses issues such as crop insurance; protection and management of ground water, deforestation; digital simulation models for climate change effects on agriculture production systems; developing new cotton varieties resistant to heat stress and drought tolerant; increase input and energy efficiency, and improve extension systems.

The Chair then gave the floor to the delegate of Taiwan to present her report. In her remarks, the delegate informed that Taiwan is committed to establishing actions to combat climate change and carbon reduction. The delegate highlighted the sustainability policies developed by the government

for the cotton and textile sector. Amongst those policies are that the country has implemented a 'Climate Change Response Act'; a long-term reduction goal to reduce emissions by 2050 to below 50% of the level of 2005; achieve net zero emissions by 2050; and that all government agencies will work together to promote GHG reduction, develop negative emission technologies and promote international cooperation.

The Ministry of Economic Affairs of Taiwan has put forward a net zero transition structure from low to zero carbon by providing renewable energy to industries in need, introducing grain production technology and creating grain jobs and growth. The delegate stated that Taiwan's companies and suppliers are aligning their carbon emission targets with the targets of their international clients. In 2023, the Ministry will launch two programmes on low carbon emissions in the textile industry. The first programme has a budget of around \$2.6 million, involving around 20 companies with the goal of reducing CO2 emissions by 46,000 tonnes. Additionally, the Ministry has commissioned the Taiwan Textile Research institute (TTRI) and the Taiwan Textile Federation (TTF) to be responsible for the programme. TTRI will focus on four strategies including material substitution, process, equipment optimisation and energy substitution; TTF will focus on designing easily recyclable sustainable textiles and the forming of low carbon textile supply chain alliance. The second programme will be led and carried out by textile companies themselves, with seven projects to be announced within the next two years. The government's funding for this programme is about \$2.1 million.

Additionally, this year the Ministry of Economic Affairs launched a three-year research programme on energy saving in textile processing. The overall goal is energy-saving efficiency at 1,080 kilolitres of oil equivalence and carbon emissions will be reduced by 3,300 tonnes.

The Chair thanked all delegates close the session at 12:03 pm.