

**69th PLENARY SESSION OF THE ICAC**

**DECLARATION OF THE AFRICAN COTTON ASSOCIATION (A.C.A)**

**23 SEPTEMBER, 2010, LUBBOCK.**

Your Excellency, Honourable President,

Distinguished Delegates,

I thank you very much for kindly granting us the opportunity to address the 69<sup>th</sup> Session of the International Advisory Cotton Committee (ICAC). The African Cotton Association (A.C.A) warmly thanks the authorities of the host country, the United States of America, as well as the authorities of Texas State and the City of LUBBOCK, for their kind hospitality. The Association also thanks the Secretariat of ICAC for the perfect organisation of the Session's proceedings.

The African Cotton Association (A.C.A), congratulates all the experts, panelists and speakers for their enriching contributions and analyses, since the beginning of the ICAC's 69<sup>th</sup> Plenary Session. There is no doubt they will keep showing the same keen interest in the proceedings right to the end of the Session.

Set up eight years ago, the African Cotton Association (A.C.A) is based in Cotonou, Benin. It is visible throughout Africa and consists of 26 active members spread across 16 countries.

It is made up of three groups of members, namely: Active Members (Cotton Ginning Companies or Associations of Cotton Ginning Companies), Associate Members (Cotton Farmers or Associations of Cotton Farmers, Grinders, Textile Mills, etc.) and Correspondent Members (Marketers, Bankers, Insurers, Clearing and Forwarding Companies, Maritime Companies, etc.).

The African Cotton Association (A.C.A) was set up for the following purposes:

- To bring the continent's cotton professionals together and harness their potentials;
- To actively develop opportunities for exchanges and synergies between African cotton professionals, as well as between the latter and their counterparts in other continents;
- To defend African cotton, ensure its promotion and sustainability.

Present in all the geo-economic regions of the continent, it is happy to boast of the ICAC's support as extended by the Secretariat. In this connection, we warmly thank the

Executive Director of ICAC, Dr. Terry TOWNSEND, for his extreme goodwill and personal commitment to the cause of the African cotton. The African Cotton Association (A.C.A) has fostered fruitful partnership relations with the International Trade Centre (ITC), the European Union, COS Cotton. Very soon, it will also enter into a similar partnership with the West African Economic and Monetary Union (UEMOA). The supports granted by these partners have made it possible to develop South-South Partnerships. Thanks to the latter, we have been able to learn a lot from the operator's cotton and textile sectors in other continents, while also modestly sharing our knowledge and various experiences with them. These partners also provided our Association with the needed support in the efforts to boost the African cotton quality, fight against contamination and develop the instrumental classification of our cotton. May we avail ourselves of this opportunity to express our heartfelt gratitude for their unflinching support to the African cotton. The African Cotton Association (A.C.A) is delighted about the bright prospects for cooperation and hereby promises to fully assume its own responsibility in this cooperation drive.

With the regard to the use of “Cotton Made in Africa” label by an NGO, in collaboration with a few cotton companies operating on the continent, to promote the cotton brands it is marketing, which was extensively debated yesterday, I would like to seize the opportunity of this Session, on behalf of A.C.A. and in full agreement with the African Cotton Producers’ Association (AProCA), to formally and strongly condemn such a practice.

There has never been any interaction or discussions amongst all the African cotton producers as a whole in connection with the label, nor any decision to adopt it. The issue should be subjected to a common think-tank exercise towards a clear and consensus definition of the label.

Using “Cotton Made in Africa” label to present a cotton fibre type produced by a minority of African producers may cause serious prejudice to the reputation of the African cotton as a whole, in the event of a trade-related incident or dispute on that cotton fibre.

We therefore entirely reject the use of this label and request that it be changed, to avoid an adverse effect on the African cotton reputation.

We hereby wish to state that we have nothing against the philosophy or actions of the project using this label. Rather, we highly appreciate all the actions it is conducting in favour of small producers in particular and African cotton segments in general.