



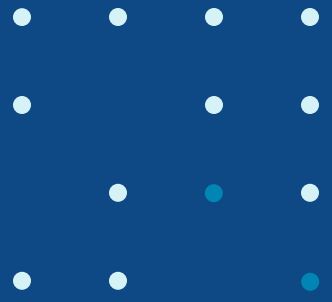
**INTERNATIONAL  
COTTON  
ADVISORY  
COMMITTEE**



# Strategic Plan 2025-2028



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# International Cotton Advisory Committee

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## The International Cotton Advisory Committee Strategic Plan 2025–2028

### Introduction

As the only intergovernmental commodity body recognized by the United Nations to represent the global cotton and textile industry, the International Cotton Advisory Committee (ICAC) has a unique mandate to serve its Members achieve their goals in the cotton sectors and along the value chain from farm to fashion. To accomplish this, ICAC has moved to a systems approach to better support cotton because it includes the entire value chain from agriculture to textiles and brands.

ICAC supports the cotton economy in our Members by providing objective and comprehensive data, strategic insights, technical expertise, and a series of activities outline in this plan designed to address the binding constraints to improved cotton value chain performance. The goal is to help a stronger global cotton economy that boosts demand for cotton, improves farm income, generates downstream off-farm employment in Member countries, and promotes economic growth and sustainability. To effectively fulfill this role in an increasingly complex and dynamic world, the ICAC has been undertaking a comprehensive effort to strengthen both its capacity and reach.

One of the first steps has been undertaking the foundational work to ensure the organization remains resilient, responsive, and capable of delivering high-impact outcomes that benefit Member governments, the private sector, and producers around the world. To advance these ends, starting in mid-2023 ICAC began with a listening tour and has continued with outreach to Members to better understand their goals. At the same time, ICAC has been renovating its internal operations by updating its most important policy documents to better align ICAC with the best practices of other international organizations in administrative matters such as procurement and personnel management.



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## Financial Sustainability

The ICAC is committed to enhancing its financial health through a combination of increased Member engagement, fundraising, and strategic resource allocation. For example, ICAC has now in place limited sponsorship packages, initially centered on activities during Plenary Meetings, to support its activities.

Other key actions include:

- **Diversifying Funding Sources:** Exploring new income streams such as project-based grants, private sector partnerships, and service fees. One example is the development of carbon credits with ICAC support on a fee for service basis.
- **Timely Member Contributions:** Strengthening mechanisms for the timely collection of Member assessments, with a focus on transparency and engagement. To support this end, ICAC is developing a series of country engagement letters to highlight the value of membership.
- **Cost Optimization:** Streamlining budgeting processes and prioritizing high-impact activities to ensure every dollar spent advances the ICAC's mission.

A strong and stable financial base will enable the ICAC to invest in innovation, expand its services, and respond more effectively to Member needs.

## Governance Enhancement

The ICAC is reviewing and refining its governance structures to align with international best practices and evolving Member expectations. The goal is to ensure the organization remains both representative and responsive in its leadership and decision-making.

Planned actions include:

- **Policy Modernization:** Continuing to update foundational documents such as staff rules, procurement guidelines, and financial procedures.
- **Board and Committee Reform:** Enhancing the clarity, roles, and functioning of the Standing and Steering Committees, advisory panels, and technical groups.
- **Transparency and Inclusion:** Expanding Member engagement in governance processes and improving communication around strategic decisions.

Stronger governance builds institutional legitimacy and reinforces the ICAC's ability to lead effectively on global cotton issues.



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Strengthening the foundation is not merely an internal exercise. It is a strategic imperative that underpins the ICAC's ability to serve as the trusted global voice for cotton. Through smarter systems, empowered staff, sustainable funding, and modern governance, the ICAC is positioning itself to meet the future with confidence and deliver results that matter for Members, producers, and the entire cotton textile ecosystem.



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## ICAC Committees

### Technical Information

Over the next three years, the strategic focus will be to enhance value for ICAC's 24 member countries — particularly the 14 African nations — by driving sustainable, climate-resilient cotton production through three pillars:

1. **Knowledge & Innovation**, scaling regenerative agriculture, carbon farming, and technology transfer via regional networks (ACRDN, SEACF, PR-PICA, ALIDA and Mediterranean) and ICRA's 2,600 researchers, while expanding the ICAC DataBook and Web Portal to benchmark inputs, costs, and emissions across 40 countries.
2. **Capacity Building**, leveraging partnerships (GIZ, ITC, FAO, UNCTAD, CottonConnect, Solidaridad, CITI-CDRA, Beetle Regen, BCI etc.) to implement projects on climate adaptation, deliver training programs, and host the 2028 WCRC-9 in India, to foster global collaboration; and
3. **Advancing carbon-neutral cotton initiatives** (e.g., pilot project started with CottonConnect, Beetle Regen and CCI in India) and facilitating carbon payment frameworks to improve smallholder incomes and align with global sustainability standards, through targeted research, data-driven tools (initiated a collaboration with Cotton Inc. and Cotton Trust Protocol, USA), and public-private alliances to strengthen productivity, equity, and environmental stewardship across cotton value chains.

### The Expert Panel on the Social, Environmental, and Economic Performance of Cotton Production (SEEP)

Over the next few years, SEEP will continue to lead on regenerative agriculture (RA) by finalizing and promoting practical, inclusive guidelines tailored to farms of all sizes. Building on the momentum of its recent work, the panel will provide clear, science-based resources to support the adoption of feasible RA practices, highlight successful examples, and analyze associated risks and benefits. In parallel, SEEP will develop accessible fact sheets and briefs on priority sustainability topics. A central pillar of SEEP's work will be to foster inclusive international dialogue, creating space for countries to share experiences, align on principles, and co-develop approaches—rather than imposing top-down standards. This dialogue will be critical to achieving a shared understanding of sustainability in cotton and ensuring that any future frameworks reflect the realities and priorities of diverse producing regions. SEEP will also continue to strengthen its role in communicating the environmental and socio-economic benefits of cotton.



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## **Committee on Commercial Standardization of Instrument Testing of Cotton (CSITC)**

CSITC is a collaboration between the International Cotton Advisory Committee (ICAC), the USDA-AMS, and Faserinstitut Bremen (FIBRE). It has played a foundational role in advancing reliable, instrument-based cotton quality testing. Since the launch of its regular Round Trials in 2007, CSITC has helped reduce inter-laboratory variation by 30%, enhancing trust, reducing disputes, and supporting fair trade across the cotton value chain. In 2024, a record 173 instruments from 30 countries participated in the Round Trials demonstrating CSITC's global reach and relevance.

Looking ahead, CSITC will expand its strategic scope to address the evolving needs of the cotton and textile industries. A key focus will be increasing participation in the Committee from underrepresented regions, particularly African countries and spinning mills, to better align upstream fiber quality with downstream manufacturing requirements. The Committee also aims to enhance the utility of its reporting system by incorporating deeper analytics.

To further improve testing capacity, Committee will explore the launch of project-based training programs, targeting laboratories in developing countries to build skills, improve consistency, and strengthen testing infrastructure. At the same time, CSITC will deepen its engagement with instrument manufacturers to ensure that innovations in testing technology are accessible, practical, and globally relevant. In addition, the Committee will consider the creation of a global fiber quality databank from participating laboratories. Through these efforts, CSITC is poised to become a strategic enabler of quality-driven cotton trade in the years ahead.

## **The Private Sector Advisory Council (PSAC)**

Over the next few years, PSAC will continue to work on the private sector outreach, providing a forum and helping ICAC member governments interact better with the private sector organizations and businesses with the mandate of fostering communication between private sector of the cotton industry and the ICAC member governments.

The main objective will be to equip the cotton industry with enough knowledge and expertise to help them expand global cotton consumption. PSAC aims to spread knowledge and educate the cotton industry about 'how choosing cotton can help in their sustainability journey':

- Some of the areas the committee aims to work on are understanding how cotton production can be carbon neutral, does cotton sequester carbon.
- How making comparisons between natural fibers and manmade fibers are scientifically incorrect parameters to compare.





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- Does consuming cotton-based textiles have less carbon footprint compared to manmade fiber products including after life analysis and microplastics angle.
- Are there any studies that compare carbon footprint of virgin cotton textiles vs. recycle polyester based textiles. What is the percentage of cotton in the recycling fiber industry.

Working on these issues will help make a stronger case for cotton in the fiber market industry to tackle fiber market competition and help the cotton industry market cotton fiber easily and widely with the eventual goal of increasing global cotton consumption. This will also help in bursting myths and misinformation regarding cotton.





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## Member Government Outreach

The ICAC's strength lies in its direct relationship with the governments of cotton-producing, consuming, and trading nations. As an intergovernmental organization, engaging Member governments is not only central to the ICAC's mandate — it is also the foundation for effective coordination, policy relevance, and impact across the global cotton textile value chain.

In a rapidly evolving agricultural and trade environment, proactive, responsive, and tailored engagement with Members ensures that the ICAC remains aligned with national priorities while delivering value through technical support, strategic insights, and global advocacy.

## Regular Consultations and Dialogue

The ICAC actively engages Member governments through ongoing bilateral and multilateral consultations to better understand their national contexts, challenges, and strategic priorities.

Key engagement formats include:

- **Standing Committee Meetings:** Regular quarterly convenings where Member representatives discuss strategic direction, review the ICAC's progress, and advise on emerging issues.
- **Plenary Meetings and Regional Forums:** In-depth exchanges that connect national cotton authorities with global experts, researchers, and private sector partners.
- **Country Missions:** Visits by the ICAC staff to Member countries to assess needs, exchange knowledge, and explore opportunities for collaboration to advance Member country priorities.
- **Cotton-Related Events:** Joining key global events such as ICA and ITMF enables ICAC to deepen connectivity with critical stakeholders while giving a wider platform for ICAC activities.

These consultative mechanisms ensure the ICAC remains responsive and informed, enabling it to deliver targeted technical assistance and policy support.

## Tailored Technical and Strategic Support

No two cotton economies are the same. That is why the ICAC is committed to delivering **customized, country-specific support** that addresses each Member's unique needs and ambitions.



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This tailored approach includes:

- **Policy Advice:** Supporting governments in developing strategies on cotton pricing, trade, sustainability, and smallholder support.
- **Project Collaboration:** Partnering with national ministries and research institutions to implement programs aligned with national development goals.
- **Institutional Strengthening:** Assisting with capacity-building efforts across cotton boards, agricultural extension systems, and statistical agencies.

The ICAC's ability to offer personalized technical support distinguishes it from other multilateral organizations and strengthens its role as a trusted partner to national authorities.

## Timely Data and Knowledge Dissemination

As a global center for cotton statistics and analysis, the ICAC ensures that Members receive **high-quality, relevant, and timely information** to guide policy decisions and strategy.

This includes:

- **Data Services:** Access to the ICAC's proprietary forecasts, production and trade data, and price indexes through the ICAC Data Book and other digital portals.
- **Analytical Briefs and Reports:** In-depth analysis on pressing topics such as market volatility, specialty cotton, and fiber competition. Examples include the ICAC Cotton Data Book, the Textiles Observer, Cotton This Month, Review of the World Situation, and the Specialty Cotton Report.

By equipping Member governments with actionable intelligence, the ICAC enhances their ability to craft informed policies and navigate global market dynamics with confidence.

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## Strengthening Strategic Alliances with Member States

As the global cotton economy grows more complex, the ICAC's approach to Member Government Outreach is becoming more strategic, and results oriented. The organization is committed to building long-term partnerships rooted in trust, mutual learning, and shared ambition.



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Whether supporting a smallholder initiative in West Africa, advising on trade strategy in Asia, or connecting stakeholders across the Americas, the ICAC remains deeply engaged with its Members — ensuring that the voices and interests of all are reflected in its global efforts.

## **Projects and Training**

ICAC's commitment to innovation and capacity-building is reflected in its diverse portfolio of projects and training initiatives. These efforts are designed to empower smallholder farmers, enhance sustainability, and foster resilience across the global cotton industry. By leveraging cutting-edge technologies and collaborative partnerships, the ICAC aims to address the pressing challenges faced by cotton producers worldwide.

## **Innovations for Resilience**

Recognizing the impacts of weather events on cotton production, ICAC has initiated projects focused on enhancing climate resilience. These initiatives aim to develop and disseminate practices that help farmers adapt to changing environmental conditions, ensuring the sustainability of cotton farming in vulnerable regions.

## **Boosting Farmer Yields**

In collaboration with local partners, the ICAC has implemented programs aimed at increasing the yields of smallholder cotton farmers. By introducing improved agricultural practices and providing targeted training, these projects have significantly boosted productivity and income for participating farmers.

## **Sustainable, High-Yield Training**

The ICAC offers comprehensive training modules that promote sustainable and high-yield cotton farming practices. These programs cover a range of topics, including soil health, pest management, and efficient water use, equipping farmers with the knowledge and skills needed to enhance their productivity sustainably.

To bridge the information gap among farmers with limited literacy, the ICAC has developed a voice-based mobile application. This innovative tool provides audio guidance on best farming practices, enabling broader access to essential agricultural information and support.

## **Virtual Reality: Seeing Is Believing**



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Embracing technological advancements, the ICAC has introduced virtual reality (VR) training programs. These immersive experiences allow farmers to visualize and understand complex farming techniques, facilitating better learning outcomes and adoption of improved practices.

The ICAC has developed a suite of training modules that encapsulate best practices in cotton farming. These resources are designed to be accessible and practical, providing farmers with step-by-step guidance to enhance their farming operations effectively.

## **On-the-Ground Impact**

In its history, the ICAC's legacy of transformational projects demonstrates the organization's ability not only to produce cotton and textile statistics and information, but also to change people's lives. The "train the trainers" model — in which the ICAC experts hold smaller sessions with local professionals, who then spread out and pass their newfound knowledge to others throughout the country. The projects and training frequently utilize the ICAC innovations listed previously.

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## **Empowering the Cotton Community**

Through these projects and training initiatives, the ICAC continues to play a pivotal role in transforming the cotton industry. By fostering innovation, building capacity, and promoting sustainable practices, the ICAC empowers farmers and stakeholders to navigate the evolving challenges of cotton production and trade.





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## Global Cotton Promotion

Cotton is more than a commodity — as a Global Public Good, it is a catalyst for sustainable development, rural livelihoods, and environmental stewardship. As the only United Nations-recognized intergovernmental body dedicated to cotton, ICAC plays a pivotal role in promoting global cotton consumption. Through strategic initiatives, the ICAC aims to enhance the visibility of cotton's benefits, counter misconceptions, and stimulate demand across diverse markets.

## World Cotton Day

Launched in 2019 at the World Trade Organization headquarters, World Cotton Day (WCD) is celebrated annually on October 7. This global event underscores cotton's significance in alleviating poverty, providing employment, and fostering economic growth, especially in developing countries. In August 2021, the United Nations passed a resolution that reserved October 7 as "World Cotton Day" on its permanent calendar. In 2024, ICAC and the Government of Benin held the first WCD conference in Africa.

Key objectives of WCD include:

- **Raising Awareness:** Highlighting cotton's role as a natural, biodegradable fiber that supports millions of livelihoods worldwide.
- **Fostering Collaboration:** Encouraging stakeholders—from farmers to fashion brands—to engage in dialogues and activities that promote sustainable cotton practices.
- **Celebrating Cotton as a Global Public Good:** Showcasing the cultural and economic importance of cotton across different regions and communities.

The ICAC actively supports WCD by providing promotional materials, coordinating events, and facilitating partnerships to amplify the day's impact globally.

## #TruthAboutCotton Initiative

In response to the proliferation of misinformation about cotton's environmental and social impacts, the ICAC launched the **#TruthAboutCotton** campaign. This initiative aims to:

- **Dispel Myths:** Address misconceptions by sharing factual, science-based information about cotton production and its benefits.
- **Educate Consumers:** Inform the public about cotton's role in sustainable agriculture, its biodegradability, and its contribution to rural economies.



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- **Engage Stakeholders:** Collaborate with media, influencers, and organizations to spread accurate narratives about cotton.

By leveraging digital platforms and strategic communications, the #TruthAboutCotton initiative seeks to reshape public perception and reinforce cotton's position as a fiber of choice. It is primarily done through weekly “#TruthTuesday” posts on social media, which has created an expectation in people's minds and results in increased engagement with them each week.

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## Advancing Cotton's Global Presence

The ICAC's global cotton promotion efforts are integral to its mission of fostering a healthy world cotton economy. Through initiatives like World Cotton Day, the PSAC, and the #TruthAboutCotton campaign, the ICAC not only champions cotton's virtues but also galvanizes collective action among stakeholders. These endeavors ensure that cotton remains a vital, sustainable, and competitive fiber in the global marketplace.



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## Textiles

The textile sector represents the critical downstream engine of value creation in the cotton value chain. For many cotton-producing countries, particularly in the Global South, the ability to process raw cotton into yarns, fabrics, and finished goods holds transformative potential—not only for boosting national income but also for generating employment, increasing export earnings, and reducing poverty in rural and peri-urban communities.

Recognizing this, ICAC is placing renewed emphasis on strengthening the cotton-based textile sector as a central component of its strategic vision. By fostering value addition, supporting innovation, and facilitating market access, ICAC is helping Member governments unlock the full potential of cotton—from field to finished product.

## Driving Inclusive and Sustainable Industrial Growth

The ICAC's textile strategy is not only about promoting industrial competitiveness, it is about reshaping the cotton economy to be more equitable, sustainable, and resilient. By integrating cotton with textile value addition, innovation, and trade facilitation, the ICAC is enabling its Members to transition from primary commodity exporters to drivers of industrial and economic transformation.

Whether it's a small ginning company upgrading its technology or a national government crafting a textile industrialization strategy, the ICAC is committed to supporting the textile sector as a cornerstone of the global cotton future.

## Value Addition

The ICAC encourages countries to move beyond raw cotton exports and invest in domestic processing industries, thereby capturing more of the economic value from cotton production. The organization provides technical guidance, hosts peer-learning platforms, and shares case studies from successful textile industrialization efforts.

Key activities include:

- **Promoting integrated value chains** that link cotton production to spinning, weaving, dyeing, and garment manufacturing.
- **Supporting feasibility studies and investment facilitation** for local processing infrastructure.



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- **Advising governments on policy instruments**—such as tax incentives and industrial zones—to attract textile sector investment.
- **Launching the first Global Cotton-Textile Investment Summit** in 2026 to promote economic development in value chains in ICAC Members.

By helping countries develop domestic and regional textile ecosystems, the ICAC supports inclusive industrial development and reduces over-reliance on volatile global raw fiber markets.

## Innovation Support

The ICAC actively fosters a culture of innovation in textile manufacturing, recognizing that competitiveness in global markets depends on efficiency, quality, and sustainability.

Focus areas include:

- **Promoting adoption of new technologies** in spinning, dyeing, and finishing processes to reduce water use, improve fiber performance, and lower costs.
- **Facilitating partnerships with universities**, textile research centers, and private firms to drive R&D in areas such as technical textiles and smart fabrics.
- **Encouraging Members to adopt circular economy practices** and invest in environmentally friendly production methods aligned with global sustainability standards.

Through initiatives such as the **Cotton Innovation Platform (CIP)** and the **ICAC Textiles Portal**, the organization serves as a bridge between innovation and implementation, ensuring that advances in technology reach producers and manufacturers where they are needed most.

## Market Access and Trade Facilitation

Navigating the complexities of international trade can be a barrier to textile sector growth in many producing countries. The ICAC supports Member governments and textile industry stakeholders in accessing new markets and complying with trade requirements.

Ongoing efforts include:

- Providing data and analytics on global cotton and textile trade flows.
- Providing Member analytical and data support as they look to develop policies related to cotton-related value chains.





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- Supporting Members in understanding and responding to non-tariff barriers, including sustainability certifications, traceability requirements, and labor standards.
- Facilitating trade dialogues and knowledge exchange with multilateral partners, such as the WTO and UNCTAD.
- Highlighting opportunities for regional trade expansion through South-South cooperation and intra-African trade under AfCFTA.

In an increasingly regulated and sustainability-driven global textile landscape, the ICAC ensures that developing country Members are not left behind — but are empowered to compete and succeed.



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## Portals

As part of its commitment to transparency, innovation, and service to Members, the ICAC has developed and launched a suite of digital portals to enhance access to critical data, analysis, and industry resources. These platforms are designed to support policy makers, researchers, traders, and other stakeholders by providing real-time insights and facilitating informed decision-making across the cotton value chain.

### [The Statistics Portal](#)

The ICAC Statistics Portal serves as the central repository for cotton sector statistics, offering one of the most comprehensive and up-to-date datasets available globally. The portal includes detailed historical and forecasted data on production, consumption, trade, and stocks across more than 100 countries. Information is updated throughout the month to ensure the most accurate and current information is available at all times.

Key features include:

- Time-series data on key cotton indicators,
- Country-specific dashboards,
- Downloadable datasets in user-friendly formats, and
- Interactive charts and comparison tools.

By consolidating decades of the ICAC expertise into a modern digital interface, the Statistics Portal enables Member governments and researchers to perform robust analyses and track global trends with precision.

### [The Production Portal](#)

The Production Portal expands the ICAC's commitment to transparency by offering free access to core datasets and real-time visualizations. Built on the R Shiny platform, this dashboard provides a dynamic and interactive user experience that complements the more in-depth Cotton Data Book.

Key highlights:

- Open-access to high-impact statistics (global mill use, lint production),
- Country-level comparisons and export-import trends,
- Filterable indicators and customizable data views, and



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- Regularly updated visuals to support public and media use.

This portal is ideal for external audiences, journalists, NGOs, and academics who need instant access to reliable cotton data in a visual and an easily understood format.

## The Textiles Portal

The ICAC Textiles Portal is a forward-looking platform focused on strengthening the cotton textile sector, especially in developing economies. It provides targeted tools and knowledge resources to support industrial growth, facilitate technology transfer, and promote value-added production.

Features include:

- Profiles of national and regional textile industries,
- Technical resources for manufacturers and policy makers,
- Updates on textile innovation and market trends, and
- Support materials for sustainable practices.

The portal also aligns with the ICAC's broader textile strategy by serving as a resource hub for initiatives such as the Cotton Innovation Platform (CIP), which is aimed at improving competitiveness in global markets.

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These three portals exemplify the ICAC's modernization strategy, ensuring Members and stakeholders are equipped with actionable intelligence and the tools they need to thrive in an increasingly complex global cotton economy.



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## Plenary Meetings

The annual Plenary Meeting is the flagship convening event of the International Cotton Advisory Committee and a vital pillar of its multilateral engagement. Each year, this high-level conference brings together a diverse set of stakeholders—Member governments, private sector actors, researchers, and development partners—to shape the global cotton agenda.

In 2025, the 83rd Plenary Meeting will be hosted by the Government of Tanzania, taking place November 17–20 at the Malaika Beach Resort in Mwanza, on the shores of Lake Victoria. Theme — “Leveraging Sustainable Cotton and Textiles for Industrial and Rural Development” — captures a forward-looking vision that aligns with the ICAC’s strategic goals of strengthening rural economies, advancing climate resilience, and enhancing global competitiveness through sustainable value chains.

The meeting will conclude with a Technical Tour showcasing Tanzania’s cotton and textile ecosystem. This hands-on experience will highlight practical innovations, farmer-led success stories, and public-private initiatives that embody the future of sustainable cotton.

Importantly, the growing interest among multiple Member governments in hosting future Plenary Meetings signals renewed commitment to the ICAC’s work and the rising value of cotton as a lever for inclusive development.

The Plenary Meeting serves as the ICAC’s primary cornerstone for global collaboration by:

- **Holding Strategic Discussions**

High-level policy dialogues on key issues such as trade, sustainability, climate adaptation, and innovation help shape the priorities and workplan of the ICAC and its Members for the year ahead.

- **Facilitating Global Networking**

The Plenary creates space for relationship-building across sectors and geographies, connecting ginners with government officials, researchers with entrepreneurs, and development partners with farmers’ representatives.

- **Driving Policy Formulation and Resolution Adoption**





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Delegates collectively negotiate and adopt recommendations, resolutions, and action frameworks that help inform national policy decisions and guide the ICAC's operational direction.

- **Showcasing Member Initiatives and Best Practices**

Member governments and institutions share their progress, innovations, and challenges, encouraging peer learning and facilitating the replication of successful models.

- **Strengthening the ICAC's Global Voice**

The visibility and participation of high-level officials and influential organizations enhance the ICAC's position as a global advocate for the cotton sector.

In short, the Plenary Meeting is not just an event. It is a crucial opportunity for collaboration, consensus-building, and taking collective action across the cotton textile value chain. With Tanzania leading the way in 2025, the ICAC looks forward to a transformative conference that will energize the cotton textile community and accelerate the ICAC's impact on the ground, where real people's lives can be improved.