



# **International Cotton Advisory Committee**

**Provisional Minutes**

**83rd ICAC Plenary Meeting**

**March 23-24, 2026  
Bremen Parliament Building  
Bremen, Germany**





## 83<sup>rd</sup> ICAC Plenary Meeting

### MINUTES

#### 4<sup>th</sup> Open Session: Crafting a National Textiles Policy that Encourages Innovation and Enhances Global Competitiveness

11:00 am to 12:30 pm, Tuesday, March 24, 2026

### Opening of the Session

The Chair, Dr. Khalid Mahmood, welcomed participants and outlined the objective of the session:

- To examine how national textile policies can drive innovation
- To assess how policy frameworks can strengthen global competitiveness
- To encourage interactive discussion among panelists and participants

### Panel Composition

The Chair introduced the panelists:

- Ramakrishnan Janarthanan, LXMI Global Advisory
- Ms. Mary Concilia Anchang, African Chamber of Trade and Commerce
- Ms. Alison Ward (CottonConnect)
- Dr. Siddhartha Rajagopal (Texprocil)
- Mr Besim Özek, BOSSA
- Dr Mansurbek Mo'minov, Uzbekistan's Scientific Research Institute of Fiber Crops

# Presentation: Global Textile Policy and Industry Evolution

## Speaker: Mr. Ramakrishnan Janarthanan

Mr. Ramakrishnan Janarthanan provided a comprehensive overview of the global textile industry, noting:

- The sector is valued at approximately \$2 trillion, employing over 430 million people
- Around 110 billion garments are produced annually
- Approximately 100 million households depend on cotton farming

He highlighted the historical role of textiles in industrialization across major economies, including:

- United Kingdom and United States (industrial foundations)
- Europe (machinery and innovation leadership)
- Japan (technology and industrial expansion)

He further analyzed the development of modern textile leaders, including China, India, Bangladesh, and Vietnam, emphasizing:

- Strong government support
- Integrated value chains
- Export-oriented strategies

Key challenges identified:

- Supply chain disruptions
- Rising production costs
- Competition from synthetic fibers
- Sustainability pressures
- Digital transformation gaps

### Policy recommendations included:

- Full value chain integration (farm to garment)
- Investment in sustainability and circular economy models
- Trade facilitation measures
- Workforce development and skills training
- Incentives for innovation and modernization

# Presentation: Sustainability, Traceability, and Market Shifts

## **Speaker: Ms. Alison Ward**

Ms. Ward highlighted major shifts in the global textile sector, including:

- Increasing regulatory pressure (e.g., EU digital product passports, green claims directives)
- Rising importance of certification, traceability, and verified data
- Growing role of technology, including:
  - Farm-level data collection
  - geotagging
  - DNA tracing

She emphasized:

- The transition toward regenerative agriculture
- The importance of multi-crop farming systems
- The need to improve farmer incomes alongside sustainability

Key findings:

- Measurable improvements in yield, profitability, and reduced chemical use
- Potential 35% reduction in CO<sub>2</sub> emissions through improved practices

She concluded by stressing:

- The need for collaboration across the value chain
- The importance of continuous improvement rather than incremental compliance

## **Presentation: African Textile Sector and Policy Gaps**

### **Speaker: Ms. Mary Concilia Anchang**

Ms. Anchang focused on Africa's textile sector, with emphasis on Cameroon.

Key points included:

- Africa possesses strong raw material potential but lacks processing capacity
- Significant decline in textile industries since the 1990s due to weak policies and restructuring

Challenges identified:

- Limited mechanization

- Infrastructure and logistics gaps
- Lack of access to finance
- Heavy reliance on raw material exports
- Competition from second-hand imports

She presented the case of Cameroon's textile sector, noting:

- Collapse of domestic industry due to outdated technology and policy gaps
- Continued dependence on imports

Policy recommendations:

- Strengthened regulatory frameworks
- Investment in infrastructure and industrial capacity
- Development of SMEs and financing mechanisms
- Promotion of value-added production

She also highlighted the role of FICOTA in:

- Supporting value chain development
- Promoting public-private partnerships
- Strengthening African textile ecosystems

## **Presentation: India's Kasturi Cotton Initiative**

### **Speaker: Dr. Siddhartha Rajagopal**

Dr. Rajagopal presented India's Kasturi Cotton Bharat Initiative, aimed at:

- Transitioning from volume-based to value-driven exports
- Enhancing quality, traceability, and sustainability

Key elements:

- End-to-end traceability using blockchain and QR codes
- Standardized fiber quality parameters
- Integration across the value chain

The initiative promotes:

- Branding of Indian cotton as a premium product
- Sustainability frameworks adapted to local farming conditions
- Farmer-centric improvements

He emphasized that:

- Branding and traceability are essential for global competitiveness
- Public-private partnerships are critical to success

## **Presentation: Industry Perspective and Brand-Led Transformation**

**Speaker: Mr. Besim Özek**

Mr. Özek highlighted the increasing influence of brands in shaping textile policies.

Key observations:

- Major global brands are phasing out conventional cotton
- Growing demand for:
  - Organic cotton
  - Regenerative cotton
  - Certified materials

He emphasized:

- Rapid emergence of new regulatory frameworks (e.g., Digital Product Passports)
- Increasing requirements for:
  - traceability
  - environmental compliance
  - social audits

He noted that:

- Brands are often ahead of regulation in setting requirements
- Companies must adapt quickly or risk losing market access

He also highlighted:

- Growth in recycled materials and second-hand markets
- Challenges posed by ultra-fast fashion models

# Presentation: Uzbekistan's Textile Transformation

**Speaker: Dr. Mansurbek Mo'minov**

Dr Mo'minov outlined Uzbekistan's transformation from a raw cotton exporter to a fully integrated textile producer.

Key achievements:

- Processing of 100% of domestically produced cotton
- Establishment of over 140 integrated clusters
- Growth in textile production and exports

Sector contributions:

- Approximately 7.9% of GDP
- Employment for over 600,000 people

Policy drivers included:

- Cluster-based production systems
- Investment incentives and special economic zones
- Strong compliance with international labor standards

Future goals:

- Increase textile exports to \$6 billion
- Expand production and investment
- Strengthen sustainability and certification systems

## Discussion and Q&A

**Key Themes Raised:**

### 9.1 Textile Waste and Overproduction

- Concerns raised regarding EU regulations prohibiting destruction of unsold textiles
- Discussion highlighted need for:
  - better production planning
  - increased recycling
  - growth of second-hand markets

### 9.2 Traceability Challenges

- Questions raised on feasibility of full supply chain traceability, particularly for SMEs
- Panelists noted:
  - technological solutions exist
  - capacity-building and training are critical

### **9.3 Second-hand Markets**

- Increasing global demand for second-hand clothing
- Growing role in employment and circular economy, particularly in Africa

### **9.4 Sustainability and Recycling**

- Recognition that recycling technologies are evolving but not yet fully scalable
- Importance of improving fiber quality in recycled materials

## **10. Closing Remarks**

The Chair thanked all panelists and participants, noting:

- The importance of linking cotton production with downstream market demand
- The growing role of policy, innovation, and collaboration in shaping the future of textiles

With no more business, the session adjourned at 12:34 pm.