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COORDINATION UNIT ALL ACP AGRICULTURAL COMMODITIES PROGRAMME



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Introductory Remarks for the Final Seminar of the CFC/EU-funded Project on the Commercial Standardisation of Instrument Testing of Cotton

by Pierre BERTHELOT,
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18 January 2012, ARUSHA, United Republic of Tanzania

- **Ambassador Ali Mchumo, Managing Director, Common Fund for Commodities**
- **Dr Terry Townsend, Executive Director of ICAC**
- **Mr Bachir Diop, President of the African Cotton Association**
- **The MD of the Regional Technical Centres of Ségou and Dar es Salam**
- **Representatives of the implementing agencies, FIBRE and CIRAD**
- **Ladies and Gentlemen.**

First of all, allow me to thank the organisers for inviting me to this important final seminar on the standardisation of instrument testing of cotton, which my programme has been privileged to co-fund with CFC over the past four years.

The programme that I am referring to is the '*All ACP Agricultural Commodities Programme*' funded to the tune of 45M euros by the EU. Out of this amount, some 16M has been allocated to the cotton sector, in support of the implementation of the *EU-Africa Partnership on Cotton*.

As we will talk mainly about the RTC project during the rest of these two days, with your permission, I will take this opportunity to outline some of the main results of the cotton component of this All ACP Programme as at end of 2011.

To recall, the Programme seeks to achieve four main results:

- a) First, it aims to train stakeholders of ACP countries/regions so that they are able to develop, adapt and implement sustainable sectoral strategies.
- b) Secondly, the programme assists in the implementation of priority interventions stemming from such strategies. It does so in such a way that access to markets, to production factors and to support services, as well as their use, are improved.
- c) Thirdly, we seek to sensitize ACP stakeholders to the use of market-based risk management tools.



- d) Finally, the experience, complementarities and synergies of the four Programme implementation agencies (namely, CFC, FAO, ITC, WB & UNCTAD) are used efficiently and to the benefit of the stakeholders.

The global objective of the AAACP, in seeking to achieve these 4 results, is to fight against poverty in ACP countries, by:

- First, Improving and stabilising the income of producers and other players in the agricultural commodities sectors of these countries.
- And secondly, by Increasing the countries' and producers' resilience in the face of volatile agricultural commodities prices.

Regarding the first objective – the development of cotton strategies – I am glad to report that the Programme has, with the technical assistance of ITC, covered all the African regions.

Last November in Bamako, we were able to present to donors the Implementation Plans associated with the strategies of UEMOA/WAEMU and ECCAS countries, as well as that of the Eastern and Southern Africa region, spearheaded by COMESA.

These regional cotton strategies were formulated using a “value chain” approach focussing on the market, and a participatory process which involved major private and public stakeholders in the cotton sector at the regional and national levels.

The second objective (supporting programme implementation) covers a wide range of interventions which make up the majority of the 40 projects approved by the Steering Committee of the AAACP in support of cotton. And all these projects are in line with the six areas of focus of the Partnership's Action Framework.

As it happens, we have again been partnering with CFC in implementing some of these major projects, one being the Five million euros project on the prevention of seed cotton contamination, under which 27,000 producers, 140 extension officers, and 240 transporters have been trained as at end of 2011. The WB and ITC are also involved in this major project.



We have also been contributing to improve the production and efficiency of the cotton value chains, with FAO testing and disseminating good agricultural practices (GAP) and integrated production and pest management (IPPM) methods in four West African countries: Benin, Burkina Faso, Senegal and Mali. Over 21 000 farmers and 400 extension officers have benefited from training under this project.

On behalf of the Programme, FAO has also undertaken a review of the seed systems in eastern and southern Africa and has assisted farmers associations in upgrading their business models.

Building capacity of sector organisations is a major concern of the AAACP (Triple ACP). Support has been provided to sector organisations like ACA and APROCA to improve their knowledge of markets, their understanding of buyers' needs, of the cotton trade and marketing practices, notably through **study tours** to importing countries paired with training.

More specifically, the programme has supported ACA through ITC to

- (i) elaborate its 2011-16 strategic plan;
- (ii) establish its marketing commission
- (iii) strengthen its links with members of the English-speaking zone and with ACTIF; and finally,
- (iv) build a new website, which should be accessible by now.

In the area of risk management, which is **the third thrust** of the programme, we have been supporting **three types of activities**:

1. First, risk assessments, to identify, quantify and prioritise major risks faced by the cotton supply chain - for instance for the cotton sector of Mozambique and Burkina Faso;
2. Second, training of stakeholders, the goal being to help participants better understand and quantify price risk and to provide them with the knowledge and tools they need to better manage the effects of price volatility;



3. The third activity involves transfer of capacity to partners in the region who will continue the work now that the programme has come to an end.

To illustrate, training courses on price risk management were held for the Eastern Africa region in Kenya, last July 2011, and in Burkina Faso for Western Africa in August 2011. The courses have been developed in a modular format, and adapted to the needs of the target population - traders, ginner and producers' associations. They have now been migrated onto an on-line learning platform which should increase their potential impact.

Time does not allow me to give a full picture of the support provided to the cotton sector under this chapter. I will therefore limit myself to those few flagship projects and invite you to visit our website (www.acp-cotton.org) to peruse the Synthesis Report presented in Bamako and which documents fully cotton-related projects under the AAACP.

Turning now to the subject that has brought all of us here today, I am eagerly looking forward to the various presentations and discussions.

I do expect that these will allow me, once back in Brussels, to reassure the EU and the ACP Secretariat that we have been betting on the right horse.

As you know, the EU as co-funding agency, and the ACP as beneficiary, have both been sharing the same major concerns.

These relate to three aspects:

- First, the financial viability of the project
- Second, its institutional sustainability
- and finally, the ownership of the project by those whom it is expected to serve.



We know that this ownership is a major determinant of the success of the project.

I do hope that we will also have the opportunity look into those three aspects that I have just mentioned during this final seminar.

To conclude, let me thank all those who have been devoting their energies to ensure that this project is indeed a success.

I would like to thank

- ICAC and CFC for the guidance provided,
- FIBRE and CIRAD for their professional implementation of a complex project,
- and of course, the managing directors and staff of the two regional centres who face the daily challenge of making them work and enlisting client support.

And thank you too for your kind attention.