



European Union-Africa Partnership on Cotton

Mr. Chairman, Ladies and Gentlemen,

I would like to thank you for giving me the floor to introduce the *European Union-Africa Partnership on Cotton*, on the occasion of this ICAC's 69th Plenary Meeting.

The *EU-Africa Partnership on Cotton* was established to address the concerns of African cotton producers who were strongly affected by the decrease in cotton prices during the 1990's and beyond 2000.

On the occasion of the Forum of Paris, in 2004, the European Union and African countries approved the creation of the partnership and endorsed its action plan, which gave way to an *Action Framework* in February 2010.

The partnership comprises of two aspects: a 'Trade' component which aims at establishing more equitable trade within the Doha Development Round, and a 'Development' component which consists in enhancing the competitiveness and value addition of African cotton by optimizing the impact on producer revenue.

The Action Framework translates the objectives of the Trade and Development components through six strategic focus areas:

1. Improvement of the capacities to develop, monitor, assess and update national and regional cotton strategies
2. Improvement of the institutional environment, internal organization and efficiency of cotton value chains
3. Improvement of the competitiveness of the cotton value chains of Africa
4. Reduction in the vulnerability of cotton value chains
5. Increase in value addition generated by the cotton value chains
6. Strengthening, efficiency and effectiveness of coordination at international, regional and national levels.

The *Comité d'orientation et de suivi du Partenariat UE-Afrique sur le coton (COS-Coton)* has been established as the Partnership Steering committee. It is responsible for the coordination and the implementation of the Action Framework. As such, COS-Coton seeks to manage the needs of the sector's stakeholders, to ensure coherence and ownership of the Action Framework and related programmes.

It is currently composed of 11 members representing 5 categories of players: ACP states, the European Union, African Regional integration organisations, EU-ACP organisations and African regional professional associations including the *Association des Producteurs de*

Coton Africains, the African Cotton Association and the African Cotton & Textiles Industries Federation.

From 2004 up to April 2010, over 140 cotton-related support interventions, still ongoing or completed, have been implemented in Africa by the European Commission, EU Member States and other donors. These support activities represent a total amount of €450 million (or \$ 580 million), two-third of which are committed by the European Commission and EU Member States.

Amongst ongoing programmes, allow me to mention the **“EU-funded All ACP Agricultural Commodities Programme”** which is implemented by five International Organisations. This programme includes a € 15 million (\$19 million) cotton-specific component for the period 2007-2011, which funds activities that are in line with the Partnership Action Framework.

Let me also point out that an identification process is ongoing for a follow-up ACP African cotton-related programme. This will be followed by a formulation phase which is scheduled to take place during the fourth quarter of 2010. This new € 10 million (\$ 13 million) programme should start during the first semester of 2012.

Two final points to conclude: first, COS-Coton has its own website: <http://www.coton-acp.org>, which is regularly updated. Secondly, a CD-ROM is available and has been distributed, which includes main documents relating to the Partnership, namely: the Action Framework, African cotton-specific support interventions since 2004 and a progress report on cotton-related activities of the **“All ACP Agricultural Commodities Programme”**.

I remain at your disposal for further information.

Thank you for attention.