



# 74<sup>th</sup> Plenary Meeting of the INTERNATIONAL COTTON ADVISORY COMMITTEE

## MINUTES

### THIRD BREAKOUT SESSION

#### Preserving the Heritage of Cotton

8:30 hr. Wednesday, December 9, 2015

Chair: Mr. Nayan Mirani, Vice-President, Cotton Association of India

#### Speakers:

Dr. Amareswar Galla, International Institute of the Inclusive Museum, India, "Curating Cotton in Museums."

Dr. Mohammed Negm, Cotton Research Institute, Egypt and Mr. Khaled Schuman, Cotton Egypt Association, Egypt, "Preserving the Heritage of Egyptian Cotton by DNA-based Technology."

Mr. Jean-Marc Derossis, President, International Cotton Association, "175 Years of Knowledge and History Serving the Cotton Industry."

#### Heritage Comes from Human Experiences

Cotton has been produced for thousands of years, and the modern commercial cotton industry based on trade primarily in saw-ginned upland cotton is approximately 200 years old. India, Egypt and the International Cotton Association have traditions that span much of this heritage, and efforts to preserve their heritage can be instructive for segments and regions of the entire world cotton industry.

Dr. Galla recently visited the headquarters of the Cotton Association of India in the Cotton Exchange building at Marwari Bazar in Mumbai. The Cotton Exchange building offers exciting opportunities for communication of "The Journey of Cotton." However, the building is an animator, it is not the message, and it will be a challenge to capture the many voices of the heritage of cotton. As one walks the corridors of the Cotton Exchange, the voices of traders and the calls of graders, the bedlam of active trading and the cries of orders being booked, the conversations of friends and the disagreements over quality can be heard in the hallways and side rooms containing the history of the historic building. The dynamic of the cotton industry, and the endogenous sights and sounds that have influenced the development of the world economy, can be captured in the course of preserving the Heritage of Cotton.

Cotton's heritage includes practices, expressions, knowledge and skills, as well as objects and spaces associated with the industry. Domains of the heritage range across stories, practices and knowledge. Key concepts include intergenerational transmission, community perception, and the dynamic heritage of the industry. Museum collections include both moveable and immovable objects, documents, artifacts, memorabilia, equipment from eras past and current, and in particular oral traditions illuminating the people and practices that animate the heritage of cotton. The challenge for the cotton industry is to "get beyond" the Cotton Exchange building to communicate the living history of the industry, and to link cotton's heritage internationally with cotton collections in Liverpool, Bremen, the United States and elsewhere.

Dr. Negm reported on efforts to preserve the brand of Egyptian Cotton by preventing counterfeiting. He noted that it is difficult to find DNA in strands of fibers from woven and finished fabric, but tests can nevertheless be performed to determine whether cotton in textile products is from *barbadense* or *hirsutum* genotypes. He emphasized that Egypt is not seeking to differentiate between types of *barbadense* cottons, such as Egyptian or Pima varieties, but Egypt is trying to prevent invalid content claims by unscrupulous manufacturers and retailers using upland cotton, or even polyester, in blends labeled as Egyptian cotton.

Mr. Schulman reported on the work of the Cotton Egypt Association to protect the Egyptian cotton logo by ensuring that only licensed users were displaying the logo on products of 100% Egyptian cotton. The Egypt Cotton Association is contacting retailers and brands and monitoring claims of Egyptian cotton content.

Mr. Derossis briefly summarized the 175-year history of the International Cotton Association (ICA). The ICA began as the Liverpool Broker's Association in 1841, was renamed the Liverpool Cotton Association in the 1870s, and then became the International Cotton Association in 2004. Despite the transformation of the association as trading conditions affecting firms in the UK changed, the pillars of the ICA are eternal. The ICA is first and foremost an arbitral body, and the by-laws and rules of the ICA, with the provision for "invoicing back," form the foundation of the organization.

The members and board of the ICA are highly diversified today, and include representatives from all major cotton trading regions. The ICA has had several presidents resident outside the traditional location of Liverpool, and several recent presidents have been representative of industry segments other than the merchant sector. The ICA conducts an annual two-week training program known as "Complete Cotton," a training program that helps to continue the traditions of knowledge, cultural norms, trade practices, and the core value of "Contract Sanctity" that have benefited all cotton sectors since 1841.