



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

## MINUTES FIRST OPEN SESSION

### Towards a More Sustainable Agriculture: Learning from Other Commodities

11:00 hr. Monday, December 7, 2015

Dr. C. D. Mayee, Indian Society for Cotton Improvement in the Chair

Presentations:

- “Sustainability Challenges for the Cocoa Sector” Lars Brogaard (Danish Standards Foundation) and Jack Steijn (European Standards Committee on Sustainable and Traceable Cocoa)
- “Sustainability: Global Best Practices that Apply to Cotton” Daniele Giovannucci (Committee on Sustainability Assessment)
- “Developing a Sustainable Coffee Economy” Dr. Denis Seudieu (International Coffee Organization)
- Report of the Expert Panel on the Social, Environmental and Economic Performance of Cotton, Chair of the SEEP, Allan Williams

The CHAIR opened the session by stating that this was a unique session where cotton is trying to learn from other commodities.

He introduced both speakers of a shared presentation on “Sustainable challenges for the cocoa sector”. The first part presented by Mr. Jack Steijn described the need ISO standards for sustainable production of cocoa and the process for their development. He stated that the critical issues in cocoa production are to avoid child labor, arrest decreasing production and tackle climate consequences that could have a huge impact on cocoa production in the world. It is important to understand what is sustainable cocoa, make sure that sustainable production becomes mainstream, ensure profitability for producers and establish a transparent system to designate production as sustainable. Mr. Steijn assured that on-going initiatives, such as Fairtrade, will be admissible under ISO standards. He said that the criteria for sustainability have to be based on impact and not on use of inputs. Mr. Lars Brogaard of the Danish Standards Foundation focused his part of the presentation on the development of ISO standards. The ISO makes sure that the development of standards includes consensus among stakeholders, consensus among expert groups and a complete coherence between countries and liaison organizations. Giving an example of a liaison organization, he stated that International Cocoa Organization would be involved if a standard is being developed on cocoa. He described that the current stage of cocoa standards. The entire process takes about 2 to 4 years arrive at a publicly usable standard. After the process description Mr. Steijn again took over again and said that cocoa production and consumption sectors are equally involved in their inputs for developing any guidelines, which have to be sustainability management, performance-based, traceable and ultimately reach the certification scheme. He optimistically stated that there is already a demand for sustainably produced cocoa as some consumers have plans to demand for sustainably produced cocoa.

Mr. Daniele Giovannucci of the Committee on Sustainability Assessment (COSA) made a presentation on

“Sustainability: Global best practices that apply to cotton”. He described COSA is a global consortium of partners dedicated to accelerating agricultural sustainability through robust monitoring and evaluation. He said that common frame and benchmark in sustainability issues have to be such that farming communities could pursue the dual objective of viable production and good livelihood. He hoped that in about ten years sustainability would be well defined and understood. Mr. Giovannucci said that the five lessons learnt are that: standards matter; compliance checks are outdated; local requirements are critical; multidimensional views offer better understanding; and institutions like cooperatives and association are extremely important. He cited an example of how irrelevant questions can lead to misleading conclusions. The solution lies in vetted indicators and metrics, performance monitoring, impact assessment, reach out to producer organizations and make sure that policy and strategy are properly integrated.

Dr. Denis Seudieu of the International Coffee Organization explained the coffee production scenario and stated that coffee is produced in almost all non-arid countries in the tropics. With minimal exceptions, coffee is produced in developing countries, including a significant number of least developed countries. Africa has about 12 million small producers, accounting for more than half of coffee growers. Dr. Seudieu defined sustainable development as a system of production and trade that is more equitable in terms of social, economic and environment targets. Some of the challenges (social, economic and environmental) of a sustainable coffee sector include: improved income for coffee farmers, transparency in marketing, diversified income generating activities, gender equality in farming, better farm working conditions, effective farmer organizations, adoption of good agricultural practices, non-harmful soil fertility management, integrated pest control, saving water use and waste management. Dr. Seudieu said that climate impact on coffee could be huge, affecting crop physiology and thus impacting yields all over the world. It is also feared that the impact on flowering and fruit filling stages coupled with outbreak of coffee pests and diseases could be very harmful. A majority of the coffee-producing countries are among the most vulnerable to the effects of climate change and smallholder farmers, who are already vulnerable, will become even more at risk. Dr. Seudieu discussed a number of initiatives that the International Coffee Organization has undertaken to face the above-mentioned challenges. The International Coffee Organization is promoting coffee development projects that encourage sustainable development and poverty reduction in producing countries through projects, which have as their principal beneficiaries the coffee-producing countries of Africa, Asia & Oceania and Latin America. The Organization has established a Consultative Forum on Coffee Sector Finance with a particular emphasis on the needs of small- and medium-scale producers and local communities in coffee producing areas. However, Dr. Seudieu in his conclusions observed that the variation of weather patterns due to climate change would exacerbate chronic environmental threats that could derail progress toward sustainable development.

Mr. Allan Williams, Chairman of the Expert Panel on Social, Environmental and Economic Performance of Cotton (SEEP) in his report presented an update on pilot testing of guidance framework and the importance of metrics to the textile supply chain. Pilot testing of the 68 sustainability indicators of the SEEP is being undertaken in Australia, Latin America, West and Central Africa, USA and Zambia. He provided brief details on each of these

testing conditions and observed that based on the current experience a number of lessons have been learnt. The framework proved to be a very useful resource for all activities. The framework provided a focal point for discussions on sustainability in cotton production. The testing experience encouragingly showed that data on many of the indicators is already being collected. The testing also indicated that there might be a need to develop indicators that are more specific to rain-fed production conditions. Mr. Williams also observed that because of many reasons the economic indicators are sensitive to measure. He stated that SEEP plans to publish a summary of results once the pilot testing studies are completed in the countries under study at this time. He elaborately explained that how the textile supply chain could benefit from the metrics. Mr. Williams recognized the support from the GIZ, Germany, and acknowledged the immensely valuable contributions made by Dr. Michel Fok of CIRAD to the work of the SEEP.

The Delegate of INDIA commented that the positive attitude and use of appropriate technology always lead to positive results. He was impressed by the inter-commodity approach to learning from each other. The CHAIR thanked the delegate and concluded the meeting at 1:10 p.m. with his concerns about global warming and its negative impacts on production across commodities.