

World Cotton Day, 7 October 2019

Partners' Conference on support for cotton and cotton by-products

India's statement

Chair,
Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

The people of Africa and India have known each other and traded across the Indian Ocean for many centuries. Our shared common experience of a colonial past and the solidarity of our resistance to it, have cemented our common yearning for a more just and equitable international political and economic order.

2. The development partnership between India and Africa is a sterling example of South-South cooperation. It is India's endeavour to base our partnership on the principles of equality, solidarity and mutual respect, in order to assist Africa in the pursuit of an "Africa-owned" and "Africa-led" paradigm of development. Our model of cooperation with Africa is demand-driven, consultative, participative, involves local resources, emphasizes capacity-building and is based on Africa's own prioritisation of its needs.

Cotton TAP-1

3. In this spirit of South-South cooperation, India implemented a US\$ 2.85 million Cotton Technical Assistance Programme in 6 African countries, namely - Benin, Burkina Faso, Chad, Malawi, Nigeria and Uganda over a period of 7 years from 2012-2018. This programme was announced at the second India-Africa Forum Summit in 2011. It aimed at strengthening both the agriculture and textile part of the cotton value chain in Africa through a series of interventions which were grouped into two components.

4. The first component was training and capacity-building exercises on various aspects related to cotton production, post-harvest and value-addition. Almost 2,000 African farmers, scientists, government officials and industry representatives received training on how to enhance cotton production through the use of better agronomic practices.

5. The second component was the creation of infrastructure related to the cotton value chain. This included the setting up of a model ginning unit in Benin, skill centres for apparel manufacturing in Nigeria and Malawi and a bio-pesticide lab in Uganda.

Cotton Tap-2

6. It gives me great pleasure to announce, on the occasion of the World Cotton Day, that India has decided to launch a second Phase of the Cotton Technical Assistance Programme based on the success of Cotton TAP-1.

7. In its second phase, the programme will be scaled up in size and coverage and will be introduced in five additional countries, namely Mali, Ghana, Togo, Zambia and Tanzania. The Cotton TAP programme will thus cover a total of 11 African countries including the C4. This programme will be implemented over a period of five years. The programme will focus on increasing cotton production and improving the post-harvest and plant residue-based industry in the participating countries, as well as building the capacity of the cotton-based textile sector in these countries.

8. As with phase 1 of the Cotton TAP programme, we will engage the most competent and credible technical institutions of the Government of India to implement phase 2 of the programme.

9. Having spoken about India's development assistance for cotton, I wish to also share that India provides duty free access to all cotton imports from LDCs. Cotton imports from LDCs made up nearly one quarter of India's total cotton imports in 2017. This is significantly higher than the world average for cotton imports from LDCs. We call upon other WTO Members to also provide duty-free, quota-free market access to all cotton imports from LDCs.

10. I thank you once again for giving me the opportunity to share my thoughts and I wish the World Cotton Day every success!