



association cotonnière africaine
african cotton association

SECOND EDITION OF THE AFRICAN COTTON QUALITY WORKSHOP

The A.C.A. consolidates the Quality of African Cotton

The African Cotton Association (A.C.A) staged the second edition of the African Cotton « Quality workshop » from 14 to 16 January, 2010, at the “Palais des Congrès” in Cotonou. The key topic of the gathering was: « *Together, let's free the African Cotton from contamination* ».

The event pulled together about 100 participants from Africa, Europe and Asia. It is worthwhile pointing out the impressive turnout of the Asian customers, namely from Thailand, China, Bangladesh and Vietnam. Besides, several delegates came from France, Switzerland and Turkey. International marketers were also in attendance.

The second edition of the « African Cotton Quality workshop, following the first that took place in November, 2006 in Cotonou, made it possible to review the progress so far made on the implementation of the resolutions adopted during the first edition, while offering to the African cotton companies and cotton farmers a better opportunity to «listen to their customers ».

On 14 January, 2010, the opening ceremony was presided over by His Excellency, **Dr. Issifou KOGUI N'DOURO**, Minister of State in charge of National Defense, representing the Head of State, His Excellency, **Dr. Thomas Boni YAYI**, the host of the event. The Minister of State was accompanied by **Dr. Christine OUINSAVI**, Minister of Commerce. In his opening address, after welcoming the delegates to the event, he declared: « *I am delighted to observe that, through the holding of this second edition, the A.C.A. is giving us an additional proof that it is effectively playing its role of harnessing and harmonizing our countries' research and development efforts, with the aim of attaining a sustainable, productive, competitive and environment-conscious cotton farming* ».

Before the opening address of the Minister of State, **Mr. Mathieu ADJOVI**, President of the AIC and Representative of Benin within the A.C.A's Management Committee, welcomed all the delegates to the second edition by declaring: « *On behalf of all the actors of the Benin cotton segment, I thank the leaders of the African Cotton Association for kindly choosing Cotonou to host this important gathering designed to share ideas and thoughts on the quality of the African cotton, a key asset for positioning our cotton products on the world market* ».

The A.C.A. President, **Mr. Ahmed Bachir DIOP**, expressed his heartfelt gratitude to the Government and People of Benin for their « core African » hospitality. He then went on to describe the situation of the African cotton by highlighting its determining place in the continent's economy. He emphatically underlined the difficulties it is confronted with nowadays. He gave assurance that the A.C.A. will spare no effort in order to eradicate contaminants and enhance the quality of our cotton. While concluding, he prayed His Excellency, the Minister of State, **KOGUI N'DOURO**, to act as the spokesperson of the actors of the African cotton segment **before** President YAYI BONI, so that he may lend his support towards the adoption of a Marshall Plan to save the African cotton.

After the official opening ceremony, several papers were delivered. The first concerned the general situation of the African cotton quality, delivered by **Mr. DIABY Seydina Oumar**, Head of the Filing Department of CMDT (Mali), on behalf of his colleagues, Members of the

A.C.A. Quality and Metrology Commission. Then, a representative per A.C.A. Member Country presented an actual situation report of the cotton quality in his country.

Mr. **Gerald Estur**, freelance consultant, followed with his own paper aiming at enlightening participants on the requirements of the cotton market, with regard to quality. This paper was the first in a series of others presented by consumers of the African cotton who came from Asia (China, Thailand and Bangladesh) and Turkey, following the keynote address by **Mr. Matthias KNAPPE, of the ITC/CCI**, which informed participants on the efforts being made by his Centre to assist in making the African cotton competitive.

The group works that followed these various papers and presentations made it possible to highlight the various cotton production chains deserving closer attention in the fight against contamination. They also led to the adoption of a draft list of actions to be implemented towards promoting the African cotton to the same footing as that of other world acclaimed cotton, through the elimination of contamination by foreign bodies, between now and 2015.

The closing ceremony, presided over by Her Excellency, **Dr. Christine OUINSAVI**, Minister of Commerce, was graced by two addresses. The A.C.A. President, **Mr. Ahmed Bachir DIOP**, after renewing his gratitude to the Benin authorities for their support in organising the said event, paid a deservedly glowing homage to the A.C.A. members of Benin for fully taking part in the related organisation. He then solemnly undertook, on behalf of the A.C.A. members, to ensure the implementation of the resolutions adopted during this second edition of the African Cotton Quality workshop.

Mrs. **Christine OUINSAVI**, Minister of Commerce, upon request by the A.C.A. President, performed the official installation of the Quality and Metrology Commission. In her closing address, she stated that the Government of Benin will spare no effort in providing support to the actors of the cotton segment in order to facilitate the implementation of recommendations stemming from the proceedings. She further affirmed the Benin Government's commitment and said: « *The Government of Benin undertakes to liaise with its counterparts in order to ensure effective cooperation between our countries concerning the cotton segment, in a way as to promote exchanges at all levels and attain better results* ».

To close the event, a gala dinner was offered to the participants, animated by a cultural show which enabled them to appreciate some beautiful facets of the Benin culture. Some participants, mainly Asian customers, travelled up to the Northern part of Benin to see for themselves the amount of efforts being made to meet their quality requirements.