



# 62nd Plenary Meeting of the INTERNATIONAL COTTON ADVISORY COMMITTEE

## MINUTES FIRST OPEN SESSION

1:45 PM, Monday September 8, 2003  
Mr. Ryszard Kozlowski in the Chair

The CHAIR opened the session by saying that the future of cotton fiber is in blends and coexistence with man-made fibers. He said that as world population doubles there would be a need for an additional 20 million tons of hydrophilic fiber. He noted that cellulosic fiber produced from natural resources could complement cotton fiber, and new cellulosic fiber could be produced during the next 50 years. He said that cotton fiber is a pioneer of new technologies, but a more objective system to measure fiber properties should be developed with special attention to GE cotton, while a more efficient fiber production technology transfer system should be achieved.

The CHAIR introduced Mr. Carlos Valderrama to present a report from the Secretariat on Textile Fiber Demand and Cotton's market Share. Mr. Valderrama reported that as a result of continued strong demand for cotton manufactures and a sharp recovery of chemical fiber demand, world textile fiber consumption at the end-use level increased by 5% in 2002 and is now estimated at 52 million tons. He indicated that world cotton consumption increased 3% in 2002, marking the fourth year of consecutive expansion. However, world demand for non-cotton fibers resumed expansion and increased by 6% in 2002, and as a result, the market share of cotton, which increased by half of a percentage point to 40.5% in 2001, declined to 39.7% in 2002. Mr. Valderrama noted that cotton demand expanded in all regions over the last four years, with the largest gains registered in developing countries and the USA is the only industrial country where the market share of cotton has improved over the last ten years. He said that In Central and Eastern Europe and the former USSR, faster economic growth since 1998 resulted in increasing rates of textile consumption, and cotton has registered more rapid growth than other fibers, making possible an increase in market share from 23% to 27% in 2002. Mr. Valderrama noted that in contrast, China (Mainland) the world's largest consumer of cotton at the mill level registered declines in final consumption of cotton over the last decade, while other countries in Asia have been able to sustain final consumption of cotton, while increasing mill consumption. He projected that global consumption of cotton might reach 22 million tons in 2005 and 23.6 million tons in 2010, but the market share of cotton could decline further to 38% in 2010.

The CHAIR asked if during the next 10 years end use cotton consumption in the world would rise to the level similar to current level in the USA how much cotton would be needed.

Mr. Valderrama answered that world cotton consumption is 3.4 kilograms per capita, while U.S. per capita consumption is over 16 kilograms and world production would have to increase four fold if world consumption increases to the U.S. level.

The CHAIR introduced Mr. Zywieta of the Central Scientific Research Institute of Light Industry, Russia to present a report on Increasing Competitiveness of Cotton Products by Using Blends with Linen Fiber. Mr. Zywieta said that cotton's market share could be increased using new technologies in blends with other fibers, such as linen, providing improved properties to textile products in terms of modern fashion, comfort, ecology, hygiene, antifungal advancements and human health. He noted that modern consumer demand for textiles with advanced characteristics for specialized uses from household items to casual use could be met by the introduction of new blends of cotton fiber with linen and chemical fibers achieving improved technical characteristics and leading to increased for market share cotton. Mr. Zywieta described health benefits of wearing clothes made of linen fiber, including better human body temperature and moisture management in hot climate conditions and human immune system benefits. He reported that new technologies creating cotton blends with linen and chemical fibers could lead to production of textiles with improved natural properties and technical characteristics sought by consumers, such as light weight, strength, wrinkle resistance, low shrinkage, improved moisture and temperature management and other qualities for specialized uses. He suggested that application of new technologies in cooperation with science and industries serving different fibers, including man-made fibers, could lead to increased use of cotton.

The CHAIR asked if Russian cosmonauts use cotton/linen blends in outer space travel.

Mr. Zyweitin confirmed that both Russian cosmonauts and American astronauts use cotton/linen clothes and other materials on board spaceships because of their comfort, antistatic and other qualities.

The CHAIR introduced Ms. Urania Kechagia of the Cotton & Industrial Plants Institute in Greece to present a report on Appropriate End Use Categories for Cotton Blends. Ms. Kechagia reported that use of man-made fibers first developed in 1931, and they permanently changed the world fiber consumption. Their market share will continue to grow because the man-made fiber industry is constantly producing new high performance fibers and better fabrics for special uses with Industrial and intelligent textiles playing an outstanding role in this development. She noted, that in order to meet the challenge, the cotton industry needs to invest in research and development of new technologies where innovation would be an important competitive factor for cotton yarn and fabric Ms. Kechagia noted that it is possible to tailor synthetic fiber to meet new ideas, concepts, technologies and consumer requirements. However, in many product categories appropriate cotton blends could be used to form the backbone of apparel, household and new textile products. She noted that cotton blended with a range of different fibers, including natural fibers, in various patterns, can be transformed into an endless array of fabrics, from the very simple to the most luxurious ones. Ms. Kechagia described various areas where growing consumer demand could be met by the introduction of cotton-rich fabrics, such as floor coverings, non-wovens for hygiene, medical and other uses, industrial, intelligent and luxurious textiles. She concluded that improved technology and products with cotton-rich blends could answer consumer preferences for fabrics that combine comfort of natural fibers with the performance and easy care of synthetics and could stimulate cotton demand.

The CHAIR introduced Mr. Mark Messura, Vice President of Cotton Incorporated, USA to present a report on The Importance of Fiber Content Labels. Mr. Messura reported that Cotton Incorporated conducted research in support of the International Forum for Cotton Promotion (IFCP). IFCP members at the meeting in Cairo last year identified the need for basic information about fiber content labeling requirements in different countries. He noted that without fiber content labeling in clothing, it is nearly impossible for consumers to identify or search for cotton clothing, and consumers must identify cotton products easily if we are to be successful in building consumer demand for cotton through promotional activities. Mr. Messura said that because synthetic fibers such as Sensura or Supplex have been able to improve their softness, consumers who shop with their hands, touching the fabric but not reading the fiber content labels, are often fooled into thinking that they are buying cotton products. He indicated that more than half of consumers in the U.S. market check fiber content labels before buying clothing, and older consumers are more likely to check labels. Mr. Messura reported that from an initial sample of 166 countries, Cotton Incorporated was able to collect detailed information on 73 countries and was not able to find information for the other 76 countries. He indicated that it was verified that 59 of 166 countries have fiber content labeling laws, while 49 countries require fiber content labeling in apparel, 47 countries require fiber content labeling in home textiles. Mr. Messura concluded that in most of the large consumer markets, fiber content laws do exist, and the existence of these laws provides the necessary prerequisite step for allowing consumers to identify cotton products and for development of consumer promotion programs. He noted that the ability to build and secure a future for cotton relies on influencing the decisions made by consumers in stores and markets across the globe, and the ability to choose cotton over other fibers begins with the simple act of identifying cotton in products by reading fiber content labels.

The SECRETARY GENERAL asked if Cotton Incorporated is research included information on enforcement of fiber labeling laws.

Mr. Messura answered that the study conducted for the IFCP did not cover the issue of enforcement. However, countries could address the issue of enforcement as a second step after the introduction of labeling laws.

Mr. Silberman of the IFCP asked how can delegates and observers co-work to change labeling laws in their own countries.

Mr. Messura answered that there is no single solution for all countries, but he hopes that delegates will think on how best to stimulate labeling laws in their countries, and the information presented today will help them.

The delegate of India commented that it is possible to develop labeling requirements. However, the difficulty for India arises from the fact that there are more than 18 languages in that country.

The delegate of Turkey asked about the experiences in the U.S. with the assurance that the real fiber content is in compliance with the label information.

Mr. Messura answered that labels are accurate in the USA because there are organizations and consumers that are

checking the labels and if the labels are not accurate companies pay penalties. He noted that in some cases producers advertise fibers with hang tags using different names for fibers, such as microfiber, and if consumers do not check labels they could be unaware that microfiber is in fact polyester.

The delegate of TOGO asked if the study identified labeling laws with requirements to distinguish GE cotton content.

Mr. Messura answered that the study did not address this issue.

The delegate of South Africa asked Mr. Valderrama to clarify if reference to percentage market share of the textile fiber market is made for the same group of products universally.

Mr. Valderrama answered that the universes of textiles include natural fibers such as cotton and wool, as well as chemical fibers polyester and cellulose. He noted that some analysts include silk, flax and olefin, but these fiber' share is small.

The delegate of Germany noted that the EU has labeling requirements and an enforcement in member states with the intention to provide consumer protection and information, but not promotion. He noted that his country is neutral to cotton promotion and he considers it dangerous to use labeling as a cotton promotion instrument. He said that there could be a problem with possible requirements for additional information additional such as origins, traceability of products, and GE cotton content.

The delegate of Australia asked Mr. Messura if consumers are more likely to check labels for fiber content as they age.

Mr. Messura answered that in fact consumers are more likely to check labels for fiber content as they age because of acquired life experiences.

The delegate of Poland commented the in Poland labeling is associated with safety of the consumer and is not a subject of promotion. He noted that the subject needs additional discussions. However, there should be caution not to impose too many requirements on labeling, such as GE cotton content. He said that the new law in Poland eliminated a very complicated set of requirements, which existed under the old law.

The delegate of China (Taiwan) suggested that the ICAC and the IFCP provide incentives to countries to introduce fiber content labels and to standardize the labels.

The delegate of Egypt noted that there is a direct correlation between per capita income and cotton consumption as well as between education and cotton consumption.

The CHAIR noted that despite all the efforts of man-made fibers to emulate natural fibers the later will always stay in demand and fiber blends and new technologies would provide opportunities to increase market share of natural fibers. E demonstrated products made of new blends of fibers as an example of innovative technologies.

The CHAIR adjourned the meeting at 3:30 pm