



INTERNATIONAL COTTON ADVISORY COMMITTEE

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Aide Memoire

Task Force on Membership

To: Delegates to the Standing Committee, Coordinating Agencies, and Members of the Private Sector Advisory Panel

From: Executive Director

Subject: First Meeting of the Task Force on Membership

Date: December 20, 2005

A Task Force on Membership (TFM) met at the Embassy of Turkey on December 19. Delegates from 13 countries were in attendance: Australia, Belgium, Brazil, Burkina Faso, China (Taiwan), Pakistan, Paraguay, Poland, South Africa, Spain, Syria, Turkey and the USA. The executive director and one member of the Secretariat also attended.

The Standing Committee authorized Creation of the Task Force on Membership at its 480th Meeting in November.

Officers: Mr. Jacob W. Pasgo, Minister Counselor, Embassy of Burkina Faso, was elected Chair, and Mr. Paul Davies, First Secretary (Trade Policy), Embassy of Australia, was elected Vice Chair of the Task Force. The responsibilities of the Chair are to establish draft agendas and conduct meetings of the Task Force, to work with the executive director to determine dates and times of meetings, to determine the consensus decisions of the Task Force and to report to the Standing Committee and possibly the plenary meeting on the work of the Task Force. The Vice Chair will support the Chair at the discretion of the Chair. Consistent with the Rules and Regulations of the ICAC, the positions of Chair and Vice Chair are vested in individuals, not countries.

Terms of Reference: The TFM approved its own Terms of Reference. The TFM will review the membership status regarding each cotton country and will work with the Secretariat to develop a plan of communication with those countries deemed most likely to join. In particular, the TFM will develop a recommendation regarding the membership of China (Mainland) for Standing Committee discussion and approval. The work of the TFM will be guided by the strategies identified in a Strategic Plan for the ICAC, which is scheduled for discussion in the Standing Committee at its next meeting in January 2006.

Membership of China (Mainland): The TFM considered Attachment I to TFM-1, An Update on Efforts to Encourage the Membership of China (Mainland) in the ICAC, which had been prepared by the executive director. It was recognized that the membership of China (Mainland) in the ICAC would be highly desirable. However, there was not agreement that the membership of China (Mainland) in the ICAC would facilitate the process of multilateral trade negotiations in agriculture with respect to cotton issues, as had been suggested in Attachment I. Delegates agreed that the integrity of the ICAC as a scientific and technical body focused on issues of importance to cotton was at stake. It was observed that a decision to expel China (Taiwan) from membership in order to attract the membership of China (Mainland) could set a precedent for other countries to demand the expulsion of members on political grounds. The executive director noted that in his view, the TFM faced three possibilities: 1) maintain the status quo and

retain the membership of China (Taiwan), 2) expel China (Taiwan) in order to attract the membership of China (Mainland), and 3) attempt a compromise solution. The executive director said that in his experience the third option is not likely to be successful, especially if representatives of China (Mainland) feel there is the possibility of forcing the ICAC to expel China (Taiwan).

Delegates agreed that the issues raised in Attachment I required careful consideration and consultation with capitals. Accordingly, it was agreed that further discussion would take place at the next meeting of the TFM.

Other Potential Members: The executive director presented a list of countries that have previously been members of the ICAC but have withdrawn. He indicated that several additional countries could be targeted for membership efforts based on their production, consumption and trade in cotton. The executive director was instructed to prepare a report on the status of efforts at membership development for each country in time for consideration by the next meeting of the TFM. It was agreed that the TFM should target a short list of countries for concentrated bilateral communication according to a strategy to be set. It was agreed that communications with potential members would be coordinated through the Chair of the TFM in consultation with the Standing Committee.

Next Meeting: The TFM agreed to hold its second meeting on Thursday, February 2, 2006 at 2:00 PM. The location is to be confirmed. The primary topic for consideration during the second meeting will be the membership of China (Mainland).