



INTERNATIONAL COTTON ADVISORY COMMITTEE

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Aide Memoire

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

From: Executive Director

Subject: Meeting of a Task Force on BCI Partnership

Date: May 5, 2008

The Task Force on Better Cotton Initiative (BCI) met today in the office of the Embassy of South Africa Annex. Delegates from Argentina, China (Taiwan), Germany, India, South Africa and Switzerland, and the executive director, participated in the meeting. Dr. Sipiwe Mkhize of South Africa serves as Chair of the Task Force.

The BCI is a voluntary private-sector program to mobilize resources to assist in improving cotton production practices. The BCI aims to promote measurable improvements in environmental and social impacts of cotton cultivation worldwide. One of the objectives in the ICAC Strategic Plan is to facilitate the development and encourage the implementation of better management practices that result in more sustainable production of cotton, and the BCI is identified in the Strategic Plan as a potential collaborator.

The Chair and Vice Chair of the BCI participated in the 491st Meeting of the Standing Committee in February 2008. Following those discussions, the executive director and the officers of BCI consulted on a Draft Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) that detailed some specific means by which ICAC and BCI can collaborate so as to work toward common goals. The Task Force considered the draft MoU between the ICAC and the BCI.

There was consensus on the Task Force that there is merit in the work of the BCI and that collaboration with BCI could be beneficial as a means to support better sustainability in cotton production. Some members of the Task Force agreed that the draft MoU was a good model for cooperation between the ICAC and BCI.

There was concern about the precedent of establishing a formal understanding with a non-governmental organization. Members of the Task Force wanted to assure that there is broad understanding that the signing of a MoU would not empower the BCI to speak for the ICAC, that cooperation between the ICAC and the BCI would be limited to a technical level and that, while representatives of the BCI will be invited to participate in many meetings of the ICAC, the BCI will not be entitled to participate in all meetings. Members of the Task Force also wanted to avoid an implication that project proposals submitted by the BCI for funding by the Common Fund for Commodities would receive automatic approval by the ICAC.

The Task Force suggested that, instead of a MoU between the ICAC and the BCI, there should be a MoU between the ICAC Expert Panel on Social, Environmental and Economic Performance of Cotton Production (SEEP) and the BCI. Members of the Task Force offered several specific suggestions for changes in the draft MoU. The executive director agreed to work with the officers of BCI to revise the draft MoU. The Task Force on BCI tentatively agreed to meet on Monday, May 19 at 11:00 AM in the Embassy of South Africa Annex to consider the revised MoU.