

**STATEMENT FROM THE DELEGATION OF TAIWAN**  
**AT THE 78<sup>th</sup> PLENARY MEETING OF THE**  
**INTERNATIONAL COTTON ADVISORY COMMITTEE**

**Overview**

Faced with challenging domestic business conditions and intensified international competition, Taiwan's textile industry has been placing greater emphasis on design and R&D to enhance the added value of products and upgrade product differentiation. In other words, the industry has gradually changed its production focus from price to innovation. As a sector of the textile industry, Taiwan's cotton spinning industry has actively incorporated with other sectors to develop unique, refined and innovative products.

Two recent global consumption trends for fashion and home textiles are functionality and environmental sustainability. There have been no revolutionary breakthroughs in cotton spinning technology in recent years since the sector is technically very mature. The cotton spinning industry has instead placed an emphasis on investment in research and development to improve production processes and elevate facility automation and production efficiency.

Thanks to the fully developed textile value chain in Taiwan, the cotton spinning industry is able to work with the synthetic textile sector to develop high sensitivity, high-performance and high-value products to meet consumers' needs. Meanwhile, to protect the environment and consumers' health, many cotton spinners in Taiwan, including Far Eastern New Century, Formosa Taffeta, Chia Her Industrial, Everest and Tai Yuen, etc. have actively engaged in the production of organic cotton textiles.

It is forecast that textiles using organic cotton and eco-friendly fibers will become important export items for Taiwan in the future. Taiwan's textile industry is also considering ways to develop more eco-friendly functional textiles. This combination of advanced functionality and environmental sustainability is making the industry even more competitive and socially responsible.

**Background on Taiwan's Textile Industry**

**Textile industry: Taiwan's fourth-largest trade surplus industry**

Over the years, Taiwan's textile industry has steadily upgraded its operations from processing imported raw materials and exporting finished goods, to developing synthetic yarn and using imported raw cotton yarn and man-made staple yarn. During this period, Taiwan's textile industry has also become more vertically integrated.

Since the 1950s, Taiwan's textile industry has steadily invested in new machinery and has developed innovative products to meet changing global market demands. These efforts have lead Taiwan as a major supplier of textile products to the world.

In 2018, Taiwan's textile industry comprised 4,317 manufacturers and 132 thousand employees. In 2018, the production reached US\$12.9 billion in value. In the same year, the gross export and import values for Taiwan's textiles & apparel were US\$10.07 billion and US\$3.68 billion respectively, and as a result, Taiwan's textile industry recorded a total trade surplus of US\$6.4 billion, ranking it fourth among all sectors in Taiwan in this regard. Today, Taiwan is one of the world's leading suppliers and innovators of high-quality man-made fabrics. (Please refer to Table 1)

The textile industry of Taiwan is highly export-oriented. Exports have accounted for more than 79% of total textile and apparel production over the past 10 years. Since 2009, Taiwan's textile industry has experienced some expansion in overall production value and number of manufacturers. However, this upward trend was caused to using 2009 as the base year (the aftermath of the financial crisis of 2007-08 resulted in record low figures) and recovery in the global markets in recent years.

**Table 1 -2009~2018 Taiwan's Textiles & Apparel Production Value, Manufacturers and Employees**

Year	2009	2016	2018	2009	2016	2018	2009	2016	2018
	Production Value (NT\$ billion)			Current Manufacturers			Employees		
Textiles	346.1	363.3	371.2	3,209	3,205	3,519	108,395	110,821	100,111
Apparel	26	21.8	18.3	1,104	1,156	1,158	30,139	32,000	32,198
Total	372.1	385.2	389.5	4,313	4,361	4,317	138,534	142,821	132,309

Source: Compiled by Taiwan Textile Federation (TTF) with data from Directorate-General of Budget, Accounting & Statistics, Executive Yuan (DGBAS); Department of Statistics, Ministry of Economic Affairs (MOEA).

## Taiwan Textile Exports

Taiwan textiles & apparel exports amounted to US\$10.07 billion in 2018, increasing 0.01% compared with the previous year. Fabrics exports amounted to US\$6.66 billion in value, down by 2.33% compared with the previous year, and 851,800 tons in volume, down by 4.55%. Yarn exports amounted to US\$1.68 billion in value, up by 9.69%, and 587,200 tons in volume, up 2.18%. Fabrics were the main export item, accounting for 66.1% of total textile exports. Yarn ranked second in this regard, accounting for a share of 16.6%. (Please refer to Table 2)

**Table 2 : 2017~2018 Taiwan Textiles & Apparel Exports**

Items	Export Volume (10,000 Tons)			Export Value (100 million USD)			Share (%)	Unit Price (US\$/Kg)		
	2017	2018	Growth Rate (%)	2017	2018	Growth Rate (%)		2017	2018	Growth Rate (%)
	<b>1.Fiber</b>	54.54	50.27	-7.83	7.75	8.06		4	8	1.42
<b>2.Yarn</b>	57.47	58.72	2.18	15.27	16.75	9.69	16.6	2.66	2.85	7.41
<b>3.Fabric</b>	89.24	85.18	-4.55	68.14	66.55	-2.33	66.1	7.64	7.81	2.32
<b>4.Apparel</b>	2.44	2.65	8.61	5.5	5.10	-7.27	5.1	22.56	19.24	-14.74
<b>5.Miscellaneous</b>	7.90	8.66	9.62	4.07	4.28	5.16	4.2	5.15	4.93	-4.21
<b>Total</b>	211.59	205.48	-2.89	100.73	100.74	0.01	100	4.76	4.9	2.98

Source: Compiled by Taiwan Textile Federation (TTF) with data from Taiwan Customs Statistics.

## Taiwan Textile Imports

Taiwan textiles & apparel imports amounted to US\$3.68 billion in 2018, rose by 9.36% compared with 2017. Apparel imports amounted to US\$1.93 billion, went up by 10.98% and accounting for a share of 52.5% of total textile imports, fiber imports amounted to US\$0.51 billion (increased by 18%, 13.9% of total), fabrics imports amounted to US\$ 0.50 billion (increased by 2.66%, 13.6% of total), yarn US\$0.39 billion (grew by 0.8%, 10.7% of total), and miscellaneous textiles US\$0.34 billion (went up by 9.6%, 9.3% of total) (Please refer to Table 3).

**Table 3 - 2017~2018 Taiwan Textiles and Apparel Imports**

Items	Import Volume (10,000ton)			Import Value (100 million)			Share (%)	Unit Price (US\$/Kg)		
	2017	2018	Growth Rate (%)	2017	2018	Growth Rate (%)		2017	2018	Growth Rate (%)
1.Fiber	22.36	26.35	17.84	4.33	5.11	18.01	13.88	1.94	1.94	0.13
2.Yarn	10.79	10.21	-5.38	3.91	3.94	0.77	10.7	3.62	3.86	6.56
3.Fabric	8.67	8.49	-2.08	4.89	5.02	2.66	13.64	5.64	5.91	4.91
4.Apparel	11.53	12.6	9.28	17.4	19.31	10.98	52.46	15.1	15.33	1.59
5.Miscellaneous	6.9	7.77	12.61	3.13	3.43	9.58	9.32	4.54	4.42	-2.6
Total	60.25	65.42	8.58	33.66	36.81	9.36	100.0	5.58	5.63	0.74

Source: Compiled by Taiwan Textile Federation (TTF) with data from Taiwan Customs Statistics.

## **Background on Taiwan's Cotton Spinning Industry**

### **Raw Cotton Imports**

Taiwan depends on imports for all of its raw cotton needs. Imports of raw cotton in 2017 were 159,600 tons, with a value of US\$260 million. In 2018, cotton imports increased to 198,600 tons, and the value increased to US\$318 million. These figures represented a rise of 24.44% in weight and a rise of 22.31% in value from the previous year. The United States was the largest supplier of raw cotton to Taiwan in 2018, providing 55% of the total imports by value, followed by India (16%) and Brazil (7%).

Taiwan does not produce cotton. However, as with its neighboring countries in Northeast Asia, Taiwan is one of the world's major cotton consumers. Taiwan is willing to offer some views on cotton production. First, the supply of cotton should be stable and abundant, and the cotton trade should remain transparent to ensure the stability of the market price. In addition, in cotton planting, we look forward to more breakthroughs in developing high resistance to pests and diseases, and improvements in breeding, in order to benefit cotton farmers in ICAC cotton producing countries. In addition, Taiwan supports the establishment of a traceability system to ensure that cotton and textile producers abide by environmental and human rights standards.

The reasons for the increase in raw cotton imports by value are as follows:

1. A decline in cotton prices: Cotton prices declined by 1.8% year-on-year to US\$1.60 per ton in 2018, resulting in an increase in cotton imports into Taiwan of 24.5% in value and 22.5% in volume for the year.
2. An increase in consumers' demand: With customers placing increasing importance on "sustainability" and "environmentally friendly," demand for cotton textiles and products are both gradually rising. According to the most recent Global Lifestyle Monitor survey, 84 percent of customers worldwide believe that microfiber pollution is the greatest environmental threat from textiles and apparels; and cotton and other natural fibers are more environmental friendly. Therefore, global demand is steadily growing, and this is reflected in the figures for Taiwan's cotton imports and cotton yarn production.
3. Development of new cotton textiles: The development of advanced, innovative cotton textiles and environmental technologies has attracted global consumers to Taiwan's cotton textiles.

#### **Analysis of Cotton Yarn Production, Sales and Inventory**

Cotton yarn production (excluding CVC yarn) was 716,791 bales in 2018, for a increase of 7.9% from 2017. Domestic sales totaled 296,733 bales (a share of 41%), down by 2.9% from 2017, while the export volume amounted to 423,029 bales, up by 13.2% from 2017. Ending inventories amounted to 42,388 bales, a decrease of 6% over 2017 (Please refer to Table 4).

**Table 4 : 2010~2018 Production, Sales and Inventory of Cotton Yarn** (Unit: Bales)

Year	Production	Domestic Sales	Export Volume	Ending Inventory
2010	882,361	465,785	431,872	45,874
2011	658,001	352,265	297,957	55,605
2012	955,044	518,713	435,740	56,336
2013	965,507	532,673	424,696	71,980
2014	902,732	501,491	402,532	78,567
2015	660,604	285,446	377,567	77,747
2016	805,158	429,115	392,712	60,776
2017	664,340	305,602	373,637	45,071
2018	716,791	296,733	423,029	42,388

Note: 1 bale=400 pounds=181kg.

Source: Taiwan Spinners Association.

Taiwan's total production of spun yarn was 1,266,829 bales in 2018, a decrease of 2.9% from 2017. Domestic sales (including for self-use) of spun yarn totaled 705,666 bales (a share of 55.7%), for an decrease of 12.6% from the previous year, and the export volume amounted to 577,929 bales, up by 8.9%. Ending inventory for 2018 stood at 187,660 bales, a decrease of 5.2% over 2017. (Please refer to Table 5).

**Table 5 : 2014~2018 Production, Sales and Inventory of Spun Yarn** (Unit: Bales)

Products	Year	Production	Domestic Sales	Export Volume	Ending Inventory
Cotton (including CVC yarn)	2014	1,302,653	736,387	569,838	106,723
	2015	901,995	418,907	475,860	122,691
	2016	1,073,272	587,155	498,251	115,419
	2017	838,722	416,822	447,968	81,372
	2018	859,785	383,429	485,708	76,356
Man-made fiber yarn	2014	681,882	523,427	137,298	135,405
	2015	525,865	411,594	95,417	144,252
	2016	430,684	374,892	60,927	115,599
	2017	466,355	390,821	82,893	116,663
	2018	407,044	322,236	92,221	111,304
Total	2014	1,984,535	1,259,814	707,136	242,128
	2015	1,427,860	830,501	571,277	266,943
	2016	1,503,956	962,048	559,178	231,018
	2017	1,305,077	807,643	530,861	198,035
	2018	1,266,829	705,666	577,929	187,660

Note: 1 bale=400 pounds=181kg.

Source: Taiwan Spinners Association.

### **Analysis of Cotton Yarn Trade**

The export volume of cotton yarn was 131,000 tons in 2018, up 10.18% over the previous year, while the export value was US\$299.1 million, up 14.91% year on year. The import volume was 25,400 tons, up 1.6%, and the import value was US\$77 million, up 7.39%. (Please refer to Table 6).

**Table 6 : 2017~2018 Exports & Imports of Cotton Yarn**

	Volume (1,000 tons)			Value (million US\$)			Unit price (US\$/Kg)		
	2017	2018	Growth Rate (%)	2017	2018	Growth Rate (%)	2017	2018	Growth Rate (%)
Exports	118.9	131	10.18	260.3	299.1	14.91	2.2	2.3	4.5
Imports	25.0	25.4	1.6	71.7	77	7.39	2.9	3	3.4

Source: Compiled by Taiwan Textile Federation (TTF) with data from Taiwan Customs Statistics.

### **Shaping Sustainability in the Cotton Value Chain**

#### **The Situation of "Sustainability" in Taiwan in Recent Years**

As global environmental conditions continue to experience more volatility, consumers worldwide are becoming more and more eco-savvy. Accordingly, governments in a number of countries have begun to stipulate more rigorous environmental regulations and standards. When environmental regulations and market demand coincide, brands and retailers adopt a positive response to “green sourcing” policies and are willing to set mandatory guidelines for their suppliers. Such a shift in trade symbolizes the advent of the “eco-economy”.

The organic textile market has gradually taken shape in Taiwan after years of promotion. Organic cotton production in Taiwan has a long history. Several companies have had their organic cotton products certified, such as Far Eastern New Century, Formosa Taffeta, Chia Her Industrial, Everest and Tai Yuen. Organic certification bodies, such as the Institute for Marketecology (IMO) and the Control Union, have grown more prominent.

The worldwide “green wave” has directly and indirectly created greater demand for eco-friendly products, generating thriving research and development in “green” textiles around the world. As a result, “eco-textiles” are emerging and becoming more main stream. Given greater consumer interest in climate change and global environmental conditions, it can be expected that concerns about ecology will surpass purely economic factors for both industry and consumers. As a result, eco-friendly and green products will prove to be good for business. Introducing eco-friendly practices into the production of goods should create jobs and generate new business opportunities.

In fact, eco textiles and related services are now a popular focus at international textile exhibitions. The Taipei Innovative Textile Application Show, organized by the Taiwan Textile Federation, has devoted special sections to displaying eco textiles and

the relevant certification services (including their identification marks) to facilitate buyers' sourcing choices. The Taiwan Textile Federation (TTF) also publishes a “Taiwan eco-textiles selection” and promotes the products through its website, exhibitions, and other channels.

Digital printing and paper transfer printing can work directly on fabrics, reducing energy consumption and enabling the skipping of the wastewater treatment process. Companies in Taiwan specializing in such applications are thus considered eco-friendly. Advances in the related technology have greatly enhanced dyeing efficiency and printing speed.

### **The Role of the Government of Taiwan in Facilitating "Sustainability" of the Sector**

Taiwan has implemented the VPC (Voluntary Product Certification) for organic textiles. In recent years, the importance of sustainability in economic and development work has been widely recognized internationally. Introducing innovations in the manufacturing process to meet ecology demands as well as environmental protection goals are prevailing trends in both the textile and apparel industries. Consumer groups have requested that the Taiwan government establish an organic certification mechanism as a way to manage production of organic textile products. The range of materials included in the certification system covers organic cotton, organic wool, organic hemp, organic silk and organic leather. The products cover the yarn, fabrics, clothing and household textiles categories. The validation process includes product testing and factory inspection, and is divided into four grades:

- (A) The first level: the product contains more than 95% organic material or organic transition material.
- (B) The second level: the product contains more than 70% organic material or organic transition material.
- (C) The third level: the product contains more than 55% organic material or organic transition material.
- (D) The fourth level: the product contains more than 5% organic material or organic transition material.

### **ICAC International Seminar, Taipei**

ICAC International Seminar 2019, Taipei was held on May 15, 2019, bringing together representatives from five continents and 14 countries including the U.S., EU, Ivory Coast, India and Australia. Themed “Sustainability: New Future for the Cotton



and Textile Industry,” the seminar explored the role and influence of Taiwan’s textile sector on the global supply chain, and the importance of technical innovation to achieving sustainable development.

In addition to the representative of the U.S. presenting developments in cotton traceability in recent years, representatives from Taiwan, Australia, Egypt and India also shared insights on sustainable cotton and recycled cotton. All the representatives agreed on the importance of policy, source design, and technology research and development on the sustainability of the cotton and textile industry. Also, an in-depth dialogue meeting was held between ICAC representatives and Taiwanese companies to discuss methods to promote the sustainability of cotton products and ways to coordinate existing individual efforts in this regard to create synergies and generate commercial opportunities.

### **Conclusion**

Taiwan’s textile industry is utilizing novel technology to produce high value-added and best quality products. In doing so, we raise the high-quality image of Taiwan’s textile products and broaden Taiwan’s competitive edge in the industry and in the Asia-Pacific region.

Taiwan’s textile industry is developing many high value-added materials as a means of creating product differentiation. Facing the twin effects of over-supply and higher energy prices, the industry acts prudently by concentrating its innovative efforts on developing functional applications, including promoting the use of eco-fibers, as well as developing attractive, high-quality products.

Over the years, the government has significantly assisted the textile industry to realize the vision set for the sector: namely to become a global R&D and production base for functional and technical textiles and a fashion design center in the Asia-Pacific region. Another objective is to shift from made-in-Taiwan (MIT) to designed-in-Taiwan (DIT) and branded-in-Taiwan (BIT).

The Ministry of Economic Affairs and the ICAC have jointly organized seven seminars in Taipei since 2005. The eighth seminar is planned to be held in 2021.

As an active member of the ICAC, Taiwan enjoys the many opportunities provided to share its development experiences with the other members. Taiwan looks forward to continuing to work with members of the ICAC in pursuing the objectives and goals established by the organization.