



12 June 2022

(22-4571)

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**Ministerial Conference
Twelfth Session
Geneva, 12-15 June 2022**

Original: French

MINISTERIAL DECLARATION ON COTTON

Communication from the co-sponsors of the Sectoral Initiative in
Favour of Cotton¹ plus Côte d'Ivoire

The following communication, dated 11 June 2022, is circulated at the request of the delegation of Burkina Faso on behalf of the co-sponsors of the Sectoral Initiative in Favour of Cotton plus Côte d'Ivoire.

We, the Trade Ministers of the four co-sponsors of the Sectoral Initiative in Favour of Cotton (C-4) plus Côte d'Ivoire, at the World Trade Organization (WTO) in Geneva,

- **Stressing:**
 - that the issue of cotton is of vital importance for the economies and populations of cotton-producing and exporting African countries and, in particular, least developed countries (LDCs);
 - that this support and these subsidies continue to seriously disrupt world cotton prices and that one of the main consequences of this disruption is the significant loss of income suffered by millions of people in cotton-producing and exporting African countries and LDCs;
 - the crucial role of the cotton sector in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), notably as regards the fight against poverty and the contribution to food security in cotton producing and exporting African countries and LDCs;
- **Taking into account** the need to empower women and young people in rural areas;
- **Recognizing** the vital needs of African cotton-producing countries in general and of the C-4 in particular, and the structural constraints exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic on the cotton sector;
- **Reaffirming** our deep concern at the lack of substantial, concrete and measurable outcomes in the multilateral trade negotiations on domestic support for cotton, despite the mandate issued in December 2005 in Hong Kong;
- **Having assessed** all the outcomes of the Eleventh WTO Ministerial Conference held in Buenos Aires (Argentina) from **10 to 13 December 2017**;
- **Having also assessed** the negative impact, on the economies and social conditions of the cotton-producing populations in African countries, in LDCs and, in particular, in the C-4 countries, of domestic support that creates distortion, of export subsidies, and of any other form of cotton subsidy with equivalent effects granted by certain WTO Members;

¹ Benin, Burkina Faso, Chad and Mali.

o **Recalling:**

- the Ministerial Decisions on Cotton adopted on 1 August 2004 in Geneva and on 22 December 2005 in Hong Kong, issuing a specific mandate to address cotton "**ambitiously, expeditiously and specifically**";
 - Decision WT/MIN(15)/46 - WT/L/981 dated 19 December 2015, of the Tenth WTO Ministerial Conference held in Nairobi (Kenya) from 15 to 19 December 2015, and the need to achieve substantive, concrete and measurable outcomes for cotton;
 - the conclusions and observations formulated at the close of the various sessions of the WTO Director-General's Consultative Framework Mechanism on Cotton, held in Geneva, and following the post-Buenos Aires multilateral trade negotiations on cotton;
 - UN General Assembly Resolution A/RES/75/318 of 30 August 2021 underscoring the historical importance of cotton as a global commodity and the vital role that cotton plays in several Member States by providing livelihoods and as a subsistence crop for millions of people, and its broader economic and social impacts around the world;
1. **Reiterate** the pressing demand of several countries that produce and export cotton and cotton-related products to reach a concrete and fair Agreement and to bring about agricultural policy reforms, with a view to eliminating the distorting effects of all forms of support for the cotton sector;
 2. **Urgently call upon** all WTO Members granting domestic support that distorts the international cotton market to strive for further progress in the work on cotton and to notify, on a regular basis and to ensure transparency, up-to-date information on the domestic support granted to their cotton producers, in order to effectively meet the objectives set for this vital issue;
 3. **Emphasize** the need to explore all possible solutions that would adequately respond to and take into consideration the vital and trade-related concerns of several million producers regarding domestic support for cotton;
 4. **Once again express** our confidence in our negotiators in Geneva and, at the same time, give them a fresh mandate to pursue the negotiations on cotton;
 5. **Remain committed** to concluding the Doha Round of negotiations, taking account of the legitimate concerns of developing countries and, more particularly, those of LDCs, which include several African countries, notably the C-4 countries;
 6. **Express** our readiness to continue the reforms under way in the cotton sector in our countries;
 7. **Reaffirm** our support for the preservation of a multilateral trading system based on WTO rules;
 8. **Express** our gratitude to the South-South, North-South, bilateral, regional and multilateral development partners for their support for capacity-building activities with respect to the production, processing and exportation of cotton and cotton by-products in African countries, in LDCs and, in particular, in the C-4 countries;
 9. **Re-extend** the invitation to all the development partners (bilateral, regional and multilateral) to contribute to the implementation of the integrative and regional programme, most notably the "**Cotton Roadmap Programme**", so as to ensure the development of value chains in the cotton sector in the beneficiary countries, with a view to truly making this sector an instrument for creating jobs, combating poverty and illegal migration, improving food security, and sustainable and inclusive economic and social development;

10. **Once again express** our appreciation to all the partners that have contributed to the successful implementation of the "Project on technology transfer for cotton by-products in eight (8) pilot African LDCs";
11. **Urge** our technical and financial partners to contribute to the implementation of integrative programmes and projects that could promote the production, processing and marketing of cotton and its by-products in accordance with the development component of the MC10 Ministerial Decision on Cotton;
12. **Welcome** the active involvement of our partners to ensure the successful celebration of the first, second and third editions of World Cotton Day, held at WTO Headquarters in Geneva, in the capitals of the C-4 countries and in other cotton-producing countries respectively on 7 October 2019, 2020 and 2021, and invite them to continue to support the effective implementation of, and harmonious follow-up to, the recommendations arising from this important event;
13. **Welcome** the commitment of the World Trade Organization (WTO), the International Trade Centre (ITC) and the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) to maintaining their support for the implementation of projects and programmes in the cotton/textile, and their by-products, sector in the C-4 countries;
14. **Welcome** the commitment and support of Member States for the adoption, by the UN General Assembly, of Resolution A/RES/75/318 of 30 August 2021, proclaiming 7 October World Cotton Day (WCD);
15. **Invite** Member States to celebrate this Day, in an appropriate manner, in accordance with national priorities, in order to raise awareness of the importance of cotton production, processing and trade, as well as the specific challenges and emerging opportunities for developing countries in general and for LDCs in particular.

Done at Geneva on 11 June 2022
