

PAN-AFRICAN COTTON ROAD MAP

COMING TOGETHER TO STRENGTHEN THE AFRICAN COTTON SECTOR

GLOBAL CONTEXT

Cotton production and processing is a fundamental source of income and employment in 28 African countries. Although the continent is a small player in terms of world production, raw cotton is among the top exports of many African countries. The sector provides income for food security, education, health, housing and transportation. The crop is therefore critical in the fight against rural poverty.

The introduction and adoption of new technologies and expansion of the area under cotton have resulted in significant production gains in the world. And yet, cotton production in Africa peaked in 2004/05 (at around 2 million tons) and then declined by almost 50 per cent over the next five years. The African cotton sector faces major challenges pertaining to productivity, competitiveness and sustainability. Addressing those challenges means improving value addition (and quality) and closing the gap in productivity between Africa and other world producers. This requires improved farm-level productivity and ginning efficiency, supporting capacities and institutions through the capacity-building of stakeholders and strengthening of governance structures.

The Pan-African Cotton Road Map was initiated by UNCTAD, the Common Fund for Commodities, the Secretariat of the African, Caribbean and Pacific States and the *Comité d'orientation et de suivi-coton* of the European Union-Africa Partnership on Cotton. The Road Map is intended as a practical tool to revive the African cotton sector. The Road Map includes a thorough analysis of the challenges facing the African cotton sector and lays out a continental strategy along three thematic areas: raising productivity; improving marketing and trade; and increasing value addition. It also aims at strengthening coordination mechanisms and coherence across all policies and actions at the national and regional levels, in particular between regional strategies on clothing produced from cotton textile.

HOW CAN THE ROAD MAP HELP AFRICAN COTTON-PRODUCING COUNTRIES?

The Road Map is the culmination of an extensive multi-stakeholder consultation process – involving African Governments of cotton-producing countries, cotton sector stakeholders and regional and international partners – with the ultimate goal of supporting African countries in taking advantage of the opportunities offered by producing cotton for trade. The Road Map outlines a path towards the integration of ongoing processes in the sector, describing specific short-, medium- and long-term actions and objectives for the continent's various cotton sector stakeholders, as well as a timeline for implementing those actions. UNCTAD offers advisory services and intends to conduct capacity-building workshops to facilitate the implementation of the Road Map.

PROGRAMME FACTS AND FIGURES

Programme scope:
African cotton-producing countries

Programme start date: 2008

Number of potential
beneficiary countries: 28

Programme website:
unctad.org/AfricanCotton

RESULTS AND IMPACT AT A GLANCE

- The Road Map has become a valuable resource in the design of concrete initiatives:
 - Zambia has been using the Road Map for its cotton development strategy.
 - The Economic Community of Central African States has also reported using the tool in the establishment of cotton funds at the national level.
- The *Comité d'orientation et de suivi-coton* is considering funding the implementation of part of the Pan-African Cotton Road Map through the next cycle of the European Union Development Fund.



DONORS/ FUNDING SOURCE

Current: n/a

Past: European Union,
Common Fund for
Commodities, Centre for the
Development of
Enterprise