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**Committee on Agriculture
Special Session
Sub-Committee on Cotton**

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WTO NEGOTIATIONS ON AGRICULTURE

Communication from the Co-Sponsors of the Sectoral Initiative in Favour of Cotton¹

The following communication, dated 12 February 2020, is being circulated at the request of the delegation of Burkina Faso on behalf of the co-sponsors of the Sectoral Initiative in Favour of Cotton.

KOUDOUGOU MINISTERIAL DECLARATION ON COTTON

We, the Trade Ministers of the four co-sponsors of the Sectoral Initiative in Favour of Cotton (C4) at the World Trade Organization (WTO) in Geneva, on the occasion of the 7th Regular C4 Coordination Meeting in Koudougou (Burkina Faso) from **27 to 29 January 2020**:

- **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 support and 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;
- **Reaffirming our deep** concern at the lack of substantial outcomes in the multilateral trade negotiations on domestic support for cotton, despite the mandate issued in December 2005 in Hong Kong;
- **Having reviewed** all the outcomes of the 11th 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 C4 countries, of domestic support that creates distortion, of export subsidies, and of any other form of subsidy with equivalent effects granted to cotton by certain WTO Members;

¹ Benin, Burkina Faso, Mali and Chad.

○ **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***";
 - our N'Djamena appeal of 16 November 2005, the subsequent Ouagadougou Declarations of 20 June 2006 and 6 September 2007, the Bamako Declaration of 27 October 2016, the Cotonou Declaration of 21 April 2017, and the N'Djamena Declaration of 16 November 2018;
 - Decision WT/MIN(15)/46 – WT/L/981, dated 19 December 2015, of the 10th 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;
1. **Reiterate** the pressing demand of several countries that produce and export cotton and cotton-related products to reach a concrete and fair Agreement at the 12th WTO Ministerial Conference (MC12) to be held in Nur Sultan from 8 to 11 June 2020, 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. Also urgently **call upon** all WTO Members granting domestic support with trade-distorting effects on 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. **Consider**, therefore, that the 12th WTO Ministerial Conference should be the final deadline for effectively carrying out the mandate on cotton given by the Trade Ministers 17 years ago, a mandate which has yet to be addressed in any adequate and meaningful way, particularly in relation to domestic support;
 5. **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;
 6. **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 C4 countries;
 7. **Express** our readiness to continue the reforms under way in the cotton sector in our countries;
 8. **Reaffirm** our support for the preservation of a multilateral trading system based on WTO rules;
 9. **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 C4 countries;
 10. **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;

11. **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 pilot African LDCs";
12. **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;
13. **Welcome** the active involvement of our partners to ensure the successful celebration of the first-ever World Cotton Day, held at WTO headquarters in Geneva on 7 October 2019, and invite them to continue to support the effective implementation of, and harmonious follow-up to, the recommendations arising from this important event;
14. **Welcome** the commitment of the International Trade Centre (ITC) to maintaining its support for the implementation of projects and programmes in the cotton/textile, and their by-products, sector in the C4 countries;
15. **Invite** Member States to support the draft Resolution on proclaiming 7 October to be World Cotton Day, with a view to its adoption at the next session of the United Nations General Assembly, and 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 Koudougou on 29 January 2020

For the Republic of Benin



Mr Eloi LAOUROU
*Ambassador, Permanent Representative of
Benin to Geneva*

For Burkina Faso



Mr Harouna KABORE
Minister of Trade, Industry and Crafts

For the Republic of Mali



Mr Mohamed AG ERLAF
Minister of Industry and Trade

For the Republic of Chad



Ms Achta DJIBRINE SY
*Minister of Commerce, Industry and Private
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