

## Regional Strategy Meeting: Africa

### October 12, 2017 in Washington D.C.

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The [Organic Cotton Round Table](#) (OCRT) is an annual multi-stakeholder event, held as part of Textile Exchange (TE)'s Textile Sustainability Conference. It brings together the organic cotton community to act collectively and to incubate new ideas. For the first time this year, we are focusing on five specific regions and we would like to invite you to join our Africa session.

Since its inception five years ago, the OCRT has focused on addressing key challenges in the stability and sustainable growth of the organic cotton sector at a global level through its three Task Forces: Business Models, Seed and Soils, and Consumer Engagement. Under these Task Forces, the OCRT has already identified a number of initiatives and has either catalyzed, or been an incubator for, their development. Such initiatives include the [Organic Cotton Accelerator](#), the [Chetna Coalition](#), [aboutorganiccotton.org](#) (a microsite dedicated to organic cotton), and an inventory of non-GMO seed availability.

In 2016, to meet demand for organic cotton strategies specific to Turkey and the surrounding regions, Textile Exchange hosted a workshop in Izmir, Turkey, which was the precursor to what has since formed into the [Regional-OCRT](#). Its official inauguration was held in Izmir, Turkey, on April 28, 2017. In the same year, an Africa Sourcing Hubs working group was formed, with the aim of supporting and facilitating the sourcing of organic cotton from Africa.

With the growing need to tailor strategy and build resources and networks of supporters at the regional level, the 2017 OCRT in Washington D.C. will continue with its customized regional strategies. In the afternoon of the OCRT, participants will divide into breakouts that cover the key organic cotton producing regions, including a meeting specifically for Africa. We would like to invite you to attend.

### OCRT Regional Strategy Meeting - Africa

The Regional Strategy Meeting for Africa builds on the efforts of the Africa Sourcing Working Group born out of the OCRT meeting in Hamburg last year. During the meeting, we will explore strategic opportunities for the two "cluster" regions (West Africa and East/Southern Africa), while understanding that each country on the African continent will have its own unique characteristics. Cross-cutting themes for the meeting include:

- **A spotlight on seed and agro-ecology:** Practically all farming in Africa is rain-fed (and rainy seasons are increasingly unreliable) plus fear of food insecurity is a serious issue for many. How can good quality seed and regenerative agriculture deliver on yields and farmer profitability? We'll explore stories of success and what is needed to replicate and scale such cases.
- **A closer look at West Africa:** The Catholic Relief Services (CRS) is an active partner in Burkina Faso. The CRS has developed a Theory Of Change model that aligns well with the objectives of Textile Exchange's Africa Sourcing Working Group. The CRS will present an overview of their work, particularly in relation to livelihoods and agriculture.
- **The role of trade:** Fair and rewarding trade (value sharing) is critical for the sustainable growth of Africa's agricultural sector. Organic agriculture is a vehicle for improving livelihoods in Africa but small-scale landowners are vulnerable to the market. To this point, the double certification of Organic and Fairtrade is a strategy, particularly in the West. But are farmers reaping the benefits - and, if not, what needs to happen to ensure farmers prosper?
- **A joined-up preferred cotton strategy:** Volumes of organic, Fairtrade, and organic-Fairtrade (OFT) cotton are small, and growth has been sketchy. The most successful of these are where partnerships are in place. Collaboration across different cotton sustainability programs, including CmiA, cotton companies, the supply chain, and development partners would help harmonize efforts on the ground, offer wider options and opportunities for farmers, and potentially improve market efficiencies and logistics.
- **A trading platform for Africa:** As primarily an agriculture-based economy, trade commitments and farmer-centric business models are extremely important for the continent, not to mention the millions of farming families. There is no doubt that the manufacturing sector is set to grow (and has enormous potential to transform the sector through domestic value-addition) and this too must be taken into account in policy discussions and long-term strategy.

## Objectives for Washington

- Share stories of what's working well and what's not for brands, manufacturers, and farmers.
- Learn about possible sourcing "hubs" and "cluster" models that can accelerate the region's organic, Fairtrade and sustainable cotton industry.
- Explore country-specific scenarios for an uptake and growth plan for the Region.
- Collect ideas (including aims and deliverables) for a pre-competitive action plan.
- Shape the way forward for 2018.

## Invitation to Attend

Is this region part of your organic or preferred cotton supply network? Be part of a strategy building exercise, explore the potential for sector growth, improving livelihoods, and aligning pre-competitive objectives for sourcing from Africa.

### **WE HAVE LIMITED SPACE - BOOK NOW TO ENGAGE IN NEW BUSINESS MODELS AND IN ADDRESSING OPPORTUNITIES FOR COLLABORATION!**

To book your place, please contact [OCRT@TextileExchange.org](mailto:OCRT@TextileExchange.org)

## Preliminary Agenda

Timing	Activity
2:00-2:15 p.m.	Welcome and introduction – Prama Bhardwaj, Mantis World
2:15-2:45 p.m.	Updates and insights from Prama Bhardwaj, (chair) Africa Sourcing Working Group, Silvère Tovignan, Textile Exchange plus partners and friends. Topics will cover: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Unlocking demand through brand and value chain participation (including a mapping exercise)</li><li>• Farm developments, best practices, and activities in seed, soil and agro-ecology</li><li>• Enabling value-addition (inc. policy and trade barriers between countries on the continent)</li><li>• Value sharing, transparency and connecting farmers to the market (sourcing/trade platform)</li></ul> Confirmed thoughtstarters include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Catholic Relief Services</li><li>• Roland Stelzer – Elmertex</li><li>• Tobias Meier, Ecos</li><li>• Subindu Garkhel, Fairtrade International</li><li>• Heinrich Schultz, OrganiMark</li><li>• Jane Dever, AgriLife, Texas</li><li>• Keith Tyrell, PAN UK</li><li>• Alexandra Perschau, Cotton made in Africa</li></ul>
2:45-3:45 p.m.	A world café to build a shared understanding of what's needed to grow the organic and sustainable cotton sector in Africa. Table discussions will be facilitated by the thoughtstarter and ideas harvested for feedback after the OCRT. Each table will be asked to compose a summary "tweet" (of no more than 140 characters) and feed this back to the wider group.
3:45-4:00 p.m.	Summarize action points and wrap up: The summary and action points will then be reported back to the plenary session for all OCRT participants to hear.



Textile Exchange is a global non-profit that works closely with our members to drive industry transformation in preferred fibers, integrity and standards and responsible supply networks. We identify and share best practices regarding farming, materials, processing, traceability and product end-of-life in order to reduce the textile industry's impact on the world's water, soil and air, and the human population. <http://textileexchange.org>