

NEWS RELEASE



The Next Steps for Africa: An International Conference on Cotton

Washington DC – 26 October, 2006

The International Food & Agricultural Trade Policy Council (IPC), the IDEAS Centre and the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars have the pleasure of announcing an international conference on cotton, “The Next Steps for Africa,” to be held at the Woodrow Wilson Center on October 26, 2006. The conference will convene trade, development, and agriculture leaders from Africa, the United States, and Europe, as well as high-level representatives from non-governmental organizations, development agencies, and the private sector. These groups will discuss the future of cotton production and trade in Africa. Recognizing that the interests of African cotton farmers are not only affected by trade, this conference will also focus on domestic African competitiveness and development issues.

“With the Doha Round negotiations suspended,” says Charlotte Hebebrand, Chief Executive of IPC, “the sectoral initiative on cotton also hangs in the balance. The purpose of this conference is to call for progress on the trade and development aspects of cotton.”

The conference aims to:

- find ways and means to assure the survival of Africa’s vital cotton sector;
- help identify next steps and long-term strategies for national governments and international actors; and
- define the inter-linkages of the required reforms in trade and agriculture policies, and the support necessary to improve African competitiveness in the global economy.

“Development of the African cotton industry is critical to alleviating poverty and raising living standards in Africa. This conference is extremely timely in bringing together the critical stakeholders in a dialogue to address this issue meaningfully and productively,” says Lee H. Hamilton, President and Director of the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars.

Among the conference speakers are Trade and Agricultural Ministers from Benin, Chad, Mali and Burkina Faso, and Crawford Falconer, the chairperson of the WTO agriculture negotiations.

The African Ministers will hold a press conference at the National Press Club one day before the conference, on October 25, 2005, from 3:30-4:30 p.m., in the Lisagor Room. Burkina Faso President Compaoré will be available for questions via video conferencing during this time.

NEWS RELEASE



For more information, please contact:

Charlotte Hebebrand +1 202 328 5001, hebebrand@agritrade.org

Yvonne Siu +1 202 328 5056, siu@agritrade.org

Kent Hughes +1 202 691 4136, kent.hughes@wilsoncenter.org

William Krist +1 703 989 2626, william.krist@wilsoncenter.org

The International Food & Agricultural Trade Policy Council (IPC) pursues pragmatic trade and development policies in food and agriculture to meet the world's growing needs. IPC accomplishes its mission by convening influential policymakers, agribusiness executives, farm leaders, and academics from developed and developing countries to clarify complex issues, build consensus, advocate policies to decision-makers, and foster broader stakeholder participation in the policy process.

The Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars is the living, national memorial to President Wilson established by Congress in 1968 and headquartered in Washington, D.C. It is a nonpartisan institution, supported by public and private funds, engaged in the study of national and world affairs. The Center establishes and maintains a lively, neutral forum for free and informed dialogue.

The IDEAS Centre is an independent, non-profit organization dedicated to helping low-income countries to integrate into the world trading system and has been active in particular on assisting West African countries to launch the C-4 Initiative.
