

PRESS RELEASE

The Leadership of the African Cotton Association (ACA) Pays a Courtesy Visit to WACIP

February 21, 2008

Bamako – Sarah Gavian, WACIP Chief of Party, received this morning a delegation from the African Cotton Association (ACA). The nine-person delegation was led by Mr. Celestine Tiendrébéogo, President of the ACA and Director General of SOFITEX, Burkina Faso's largest cotton company. The ACA Steering Committee Members were in Bamako for the planning sessions of the ACA's 6th Annual Meeting, which will be held in Zambia in March. They took advantage of the occasion to pay a courtesy visit to WACIP and discuss the state of the ginning industry in Africa.

All African cotton companies are currently undergoing a severe crisis due to a widening scissors between rising costs and a stagnant cotton price. Costs have been rising due to higher purchased input costs (because of the appreciation of the Euro and CFA franc against the dollar) and lower yields (because of declining soil fertility, among other causes), while cotton prices have remained low due to such factors as subsidies in developed countries. ACA counts on continued partnership with WACIP to address many of these issues in the coming years.

In support of efforts to emerge from the crisis facing the ginning industry in Africa, the ACA and WACIP agreed to a joint program, including a diagnostic assessment of the constraints on and opportunities for improving ginning efficiency in the C-4 countries, as well as training courses drawing from the US expertise in the ginning and further transformation and marketing of cotton lint.

WACIP's Chief of Party assured the ACA of continuing partnership and agreed to support its efforts to find a sustainable solution to the crisis.

For more information on WACIP's activities in the C-4 countries, visit www.wacip.org