

# India and Mali commemorate World Cotton Day at United Nations Headquarters in New York

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The Permanent Missions of India and Mali to the United Nations jointly organized an event on the theme “Cotton for Sustainability: Livelihoods, Value Addition and Partnership” at the United Nations Headquarters in New York on 7 October 2026, commemorating World Cotton Day. The United Nations General Assembly proclaimed 7 October as World Cotton Day through resolution 75/318. The observance draws attention to cotton’s role in economic development, international trade and poverty alleviation, particularly in developing and least developed countries. The event brought together Members of Parliament from India, representatives of Member States and international organizations to discuss cotton’s contribution to livelihoods, value addition and the Sustainable Development Goals.



In his welcome remarks, Ambassador Harish Parvathaneni, Permanent Representative of India to the United Nations, recalled Mahatma Gandhi’s association of cotton and the spinning wheel with self-reliance, dignity and India’s freedom struggle. He highlighted four priorities: supporting producers’ livelihoods; expanding value addition and access to

markets; promoting sustainability; and strengthening technology and partnerships. He emphasized the need for affordable inputs and finance, support for smaller enterprises, and South-South and triangular cooperation to help cotton-producing countries retain more value and advance the SDGs.



Ambassador Issa Konfourou, Permanent Representative of Mali to the United Nations, highlighted cotton's importance to Mali's economy and rural livelihoods. He underscored the challenges posed by limited processing capacity, input costs, market access and trade-distorting support. Outlining Mali's efforts to expand domestic processing and create employment, he welcomed mutually beneficial partnerships, including South-South cooperation, and acknowledged India as a key partner.

Asit Kumar Mal, Member of Parliament, drew on the experience of Kantha embroidery in Bolpur, West Bengal, to highlight how traditional craftsmanship adds value to cotton, supports women's livelihoods and promotes reuse and resource efficiency. He emphasized the importance of fair remuneration, affordable credit, design support and market access for artisans.

L. K. Sudhish, Member of Parliament, highlighted Tamil Nadu's experience in cotton knitwear and garment manufacturing, including the contribution of smaller enterprises, shared infrastructure and skilled workers. He referred to the integrated textile park being developed under the PM MITRA initiative and wastewater recovery and reuse in textile processing.



Ms. Padmini Singla, Joint Secretary, Ministry of Textiles, Government of India, highlighted India's role as a major producer and consumer of cotton and the sector's importance to small and marginal farmers. She outlined the Mission for Cotton Productivity and the Kasturi Cotton Bharat initiative, emphasizing improved productivity, quality and traceability. She also highlighted investments in textile infrastructure, support for artisans and small enterprises, and the importance of open, predictable trade and market access for sustainable cotton value chains.

The Permanent Representatives of Côte d'Ivoire, Uzbekistan, Chad, the Netherlands, Burkina Faso and Egypt, and the Deputy Permanent Representatives of Cameroon and Peru; Ms. Angélica Jácome, Director, Food and Agriculture Organization Liaison Office with the United Nations in New York; and Dr. Keshav R. Kranthi, Chief Scientist, International Cotton Advisory Committee, spoke on the occasion. The discussion focused on opportunities to strengthen cotton value chains, support smallholders and artisans, improve processing capacity and market access, encourage use of technology and advanced science in the sector and deepen international partnerships.

Participants also enjoyed a hands-on experience of Pen Kalamkari on cotton, guided by a master artisan from India, celebrating India's rich craft traditions.

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