

Alliance of Cotton & Textile Stakeholders on Regenerative Agriculture (ACRE)

NAGPUR DECLARATION

BACKGROUND

A single metric tonne of cotton provides jobs for five people on an average, often in some of the world's most impoverished regions – this adds up to around 100 million families across the globe. (UN 2021)¹

Globally, among the numerous problems cotton farmers face, climate change impact is one of the most critical. It is well established that adaptation measures can help reduce the negative impact of climate change on agriculture and the ecosystem that supports farming, thereby benefitting the farming community, especially the most vulnerable, and all others dependent on it. According to the IPCC (2019), sustainable agriculture practices that focus on reducing crop emissions, effective livestock management and grazing, sequestering carbon in soil and biomass, among others, can contribute towards climate change mitigation by reducing greenhouse gas (GHG)² emissions.

India is one of the largest producers of cotton in the world, accounting for about 22% (5.8 million tonnes) of the world's cotton production. The total area under cotton cultivation is around 13 lakh hectares³. Maharashtra, Gujarat, Telangana, Rajasthan and Karnataka are the leading producers of cotton in India⁴.

Traditionally, the international apparel and textile sector stakeholders have driven various measures over the years to address social sustainability issues, including decent work, welfare and empowerment of women workers, eradication of child and forced labour, etc. More recently, the apparel and textile sector has invested equal attention to environmental and nature-related aspects. Cotton – one of the most commonly used materials in this sector – has been a focus of various such initiatives. Several global apparel and textile sector actors believe that production systems that help prevent and mitigate the negative impacts of cotton growing on nature, the environment and climate are the way forward. Regenerative agriculture practices that help improve soil quality, conserve water, preserve local biodiversity and benefit the farming communities are emerging as a viable win-win option.

There is renewed interest in natural farming in India, especially with the creation of the *National Mission on Natural Farming*⁵ – which aims to mainstream natural farming and thereby regenerate natural systems across landscapes.



¹ <https://news.un.org/en/story/2021/10/1102432>

² https://www.ipcc.ch/site/assets/uploads/sites/4/2022/11/SRCCL_Chapter_5.pdf

³ https://cotcorp.org.in/national_cotton.aspx?AspxAutoDetectCookieSupport=1

⁴ <https://cotcorp.org.in/statistics.aspx>

⁵ http://naturalfarming.dac.gov.in/uploads/Final_Guidelines.pdf

DECLARATION

Promotion of regenerative agriculture is aligned with the national aspiration of exploring agricultural systems, which are sustainable, environment-friendly, non-degrading, non-contaminating, offer better income opportunities to the farmers, along with safe and healthy food to citizens – as embedded in the *National Mission on Natural Farming*. Adoption of regenerative agriculture practices in the cotton sector in India, therefore, require collaboration between all stakeholders, including governments (national and state), buyers, brands, suppliers, financial sector, associations, industry actors, NGOs and international agencies, among others.

At 'Reclaim to Regenerate: Towards Regenerative Cotton Sector in India' on 29 November 2022 in Nagpur, Solidaridad, Centre for Responsible Business (CRB) and regenagri along with all interested actors⁶ in the cotton and textile value chain resolve to:

- Set up India's first Alliance of Cotton & Textile Stakeholders on Regenerative Agriculture (ACRE) platform, which will support scaling up the production of regenerative agriculture in cotton with the vision of making India the world's biggest producer of certified regenerative cotton.
- To encourage more textile and apparel brands to commit to sourcing regenagri-certified cotton in India and transform their supply chain to regenerative by 2030.
- To strengthen the communication on regenerative cotton, in order to increase awareness among national and international consumers and attract their support for regenerative agriculture by explaining the need for and the benefits of certified regenerative cotton.
- Develop partnerships with governments, multilateral and bilateral organisations, buyers, brands, value chain actors, financial sector actors, grower groups and NGOs to promote regenerative agriculture.
- Support cotton farmers with tools and training for carbon verification, and support connectivity to carbon marketplaces/buyers delivering fair value to farmers.

All the signatories who support the **Nagpur Declaration** and recognise the opportunity by strengthening the collaboration are welcome to commit to endorse this Manifesto and work closely with Solidaridad, regenagri, Centre for Responsible Business (CRB) and ACRE Platform.

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⁶ Interested actors are those who formally convey their interest to join this initiative

