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BURKINA FASO

Interview of Karim Traore, President of Burkina Faso's National Union of Cotton Producers (UNPCB)

As a GIIIF partner for the development of index insurance in Burkina Faso, **PlaNNet Guarantee** has implemented authorized index insurance solutions to meet the demands of agricultural producers, in particular cotton producers as their crops often encounter yield drops due to poor climatic conditions. PlaNNet Guarantee supports groups of cotton producers, which in turn supports the Burkina Textile Fibers Company (Société Burkinabè des Fibres Textiles, or SOFITEX), in their risk management strategy by offering them an insurance policy, as well as providing technical training for their leaders and raising awareness of index insurance among their members. The partnership with the National Union of Cotton Producers (UNPCB) is a concrete example of PlaNNet Guarantee's activities in Burkina Faso.



Cotton produced by UNPCB members.

Karim Traore has been the president of UNPCB since March 2010. Created on April 15, 1998, UNPCB is the supreme body of the cotton producers' unions (GPC), which were created in 1996 to facilitate the supply of agricultural inputs and equipment, good credit management, and an increase in cotton production, so that Burkina could maintain its leading position in the marketplace.

Mr. Traore's role is to lead UNPCB in its missions, namely: representing and defending the interests of cotton producers; strengthening cohesion between members; improving collaboration with partners; and promoting capacity building among the members of UNPCB.

With close to 80% of its active population employed in the agricultural sector, Burkina Faso's economy is heavily reliant on agricultural production. Cotton is the country's most important cash crop. Against this backdrop, in 2010 index-based insurance solutions were introduced in Burkina Faso to protect smallholder farmers, in particular cotton growers and multicereal famers, against risks associated with climate change. According to Mr. Traore, "We subscribed to

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cotton index insurance about four years ago because we believed that this insurance could improve the lives of cotton farmers, who need protection against the risks related to climate change, which have become all too frequent."

"In the cities of Houndé and Dédougou, which were in pilot regions, several cotton producers have received the benefits of index insurance after droughts that yielded bad production," says Mr. Traore. "As the President of UNPCB, and as a member of a producers' union, I myself recently benefited from this insurance, following floods that occurred in September 2015. My losses were quickly estimated by insurance experts, and I received an agreement for compensation. The compensation payment takes place over time, because all of the production has to be finished for the final calculations to be made. However, the compensation is currently continuing."

IMPACT STATEMENT

"Farmers no longer fear to grow cotton in areas that are at risk, because they know they will be compensated in case of drought or flooding," says Mr. Traore. "It would be difficult for me to provide exact data, however I can tell you that index insurance strongly encourages farmers in their work, and we are finding that cotton production has increased in all of the areas where farmers have subscribed to it."

The compensation of producers who have been affected by climate-related damage or loss are underway, and are gradually progressing. With the first amounts collected, farmers have reinvested in inputs, and have quickly filled the shortfall caused by the drought."

Index insurance has clearly demonstrated its ability to help improve productivity and cotton production in at-risk areas of Burkina Faso. The prospect of scaling-up through the availability of cotton insurance to all UNPCB producers will no doubt confirm this trend.



Cotton producers working on plantations.