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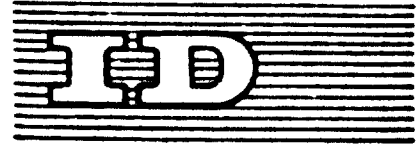
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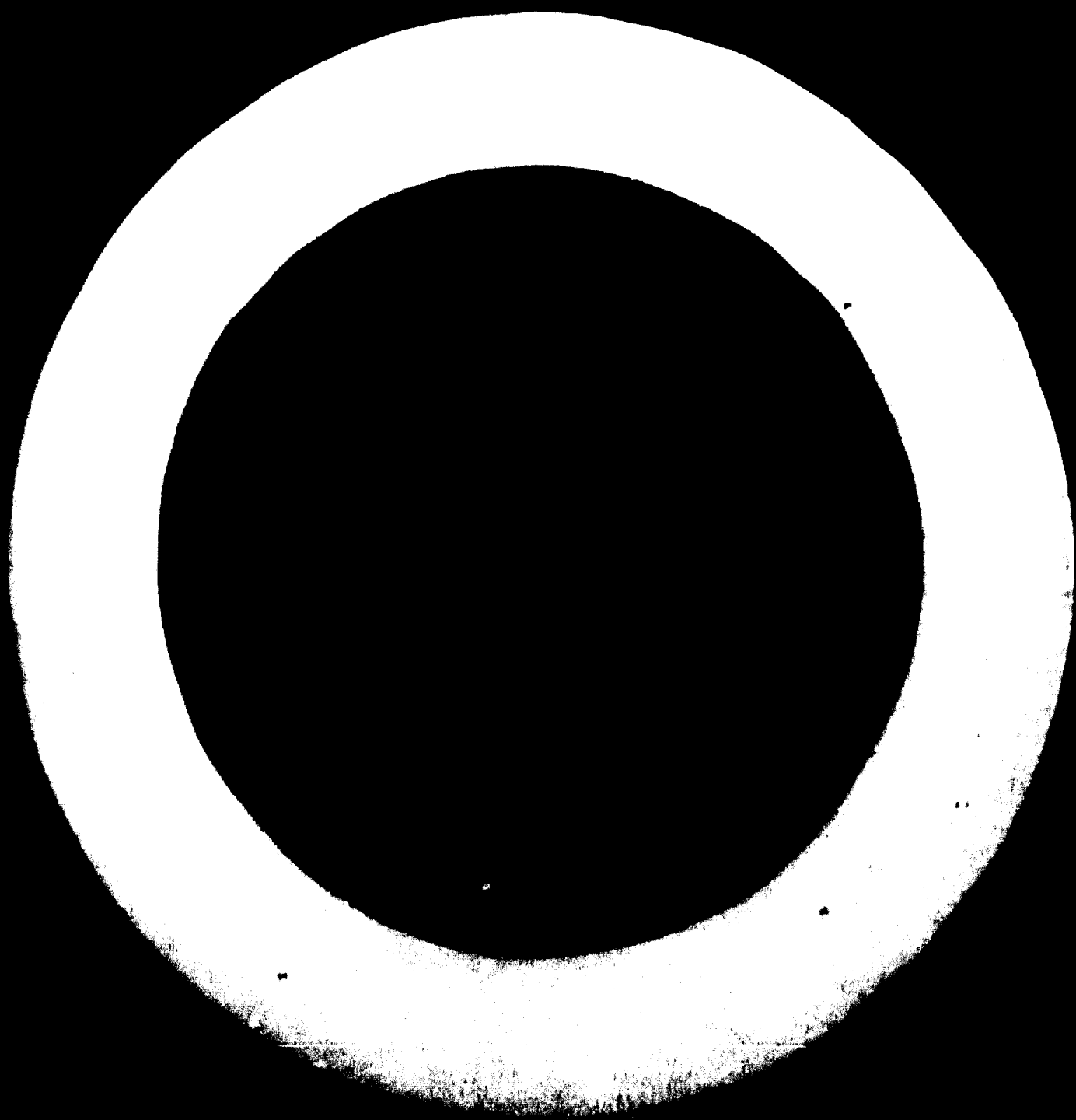
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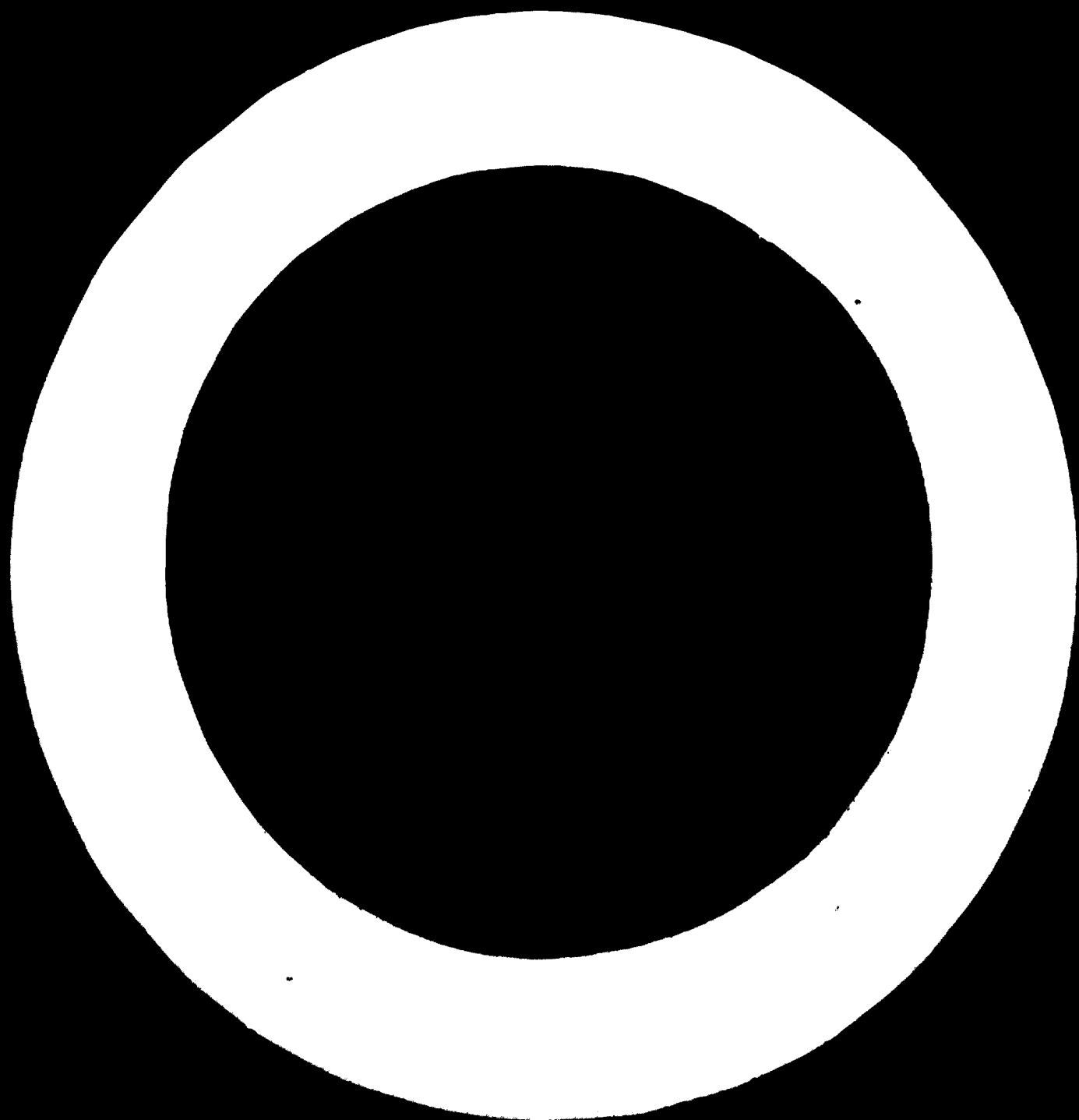
Seminar on the Development of the
Leather and Leather Products Industries
in Developing Countries
Regional Project for Africa

Vienna, Austria, 22 February - 5 March 1971

STATEMENT
ON THE SITUATION OF THE HIDES AND SKINS,
LEATHER AND LEATHER PRODUCTS INDUSTRIES IN
S O M A L I A ^{1/}
presented by
A.M. NURADDIN

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Background

The Somali economy depends mainly on agriculture, livestock and animal by-products. In the past, exports of bananas accounted for over 50 per cent of the foreign currency brought into the country, closely followed by the export of livestock and livestock products such as meat, bones, hides and skins. Since the last few years, however, there is a changing trend. Exports of livestock and animal products are increasing and at present it is our number one foreign currency earner.

Somalia exports two million heads of live animals per year, mainly sheep and goats, but also cattle and camels. These are exported on the hoof to various countries in the Middle East. Through this we lose not only the skins but also intestines, blood and bones. The Government is continuously attempting to export carcass meat but this will take some time to achieve.

There is no official census through which the livestock population has been determined but the latest estimations indicate:

Cattle	2,500,000
Camels	2,500,000
Sheep/goats	16,000,000.

The value of the total exports of hides and skins are increasing as the following figures show:

Total exports of hides and skins:

1967	So. Shs.	8,903,990
1968	"	11,742,380
1969	"	17,079,870.

While Somalia produces hides for export there is at the same time import of shoes:

1967	footwear imports	Shs.	4,800,000
1968	"	"	5,845,000
1969	"	"	5,100,000.

Hides, Skins and Leather Development Scheme

The Somali Government realized the potentialities of the hides and skins trade and has embarked on a programme to develop the local shoe and leather industry.

With the assistance of FAO, a hides, skins and leather development centre was established in Mogadiscio. The United Nations Special Fund started in September 1967 for a five year period ending 1972. In addition to the project manager there is a leather technologist/chemist, a leather utilization expert, a hides and skins improvement officer and a marketing officer soon joining the centre. The centre serves as a catalyzer for the whole industry and has four main objectives or sections:

1. Hides and Skins Improvement

This section has high priority because of the fact that improved quality of hides and skins fetches a higher price, whatever the prices are in the international markets. Secondly, it is essentially the raw material that determines the quality of the leather produced from it and therefore the less the defects, particularly those man-made, the higher the return for all concerned whether producer or manufacturer. In the past all our exports of skins were marketed through Aden, which was a free port and a large trade centre. This system has been reversed by direct exports from Somalia to earn foreign currency.

Drying sheds are being constructed in the main producing areas in the north of the country. Instead of the traditional cased sun-dried skins, the drying sheds produce suspension shade dried skins.

The sheds are constructed next to the slaughterhouses so that together with drying improvement, the flaying can be improved. A thinking for the future is also that these drying sheds can easily be converted into a pickling plant.

2. Tanning

Somalia has two mechanized commercial tanneries run privately and rural tanners in Brava and Mogadiscio. It is felt that there is scope for additional factories. The centre provides technical assistance and training facilities at the mechanized and rural level. After training they go back to their tannery and as an extension service technicians of the centre visit the tanners for follow-up.

The centre also checks price of leather by making exact calculations of leather produced in the centre. This is to avoid private enterprise to sell at extravagant prices necessitated by the shortage in manufactured leather. The centre also produces leather to substitute imported crust leather to save hard currency. This production helps trainees to be qualified with heavy emphasis on production so that when absorbed by tanneries or when going back to their own factories they will produce economically and be highly conscious about costs.

It is Government policy to export processed skins rather than the raw material. For this purpose a pickling and tanning plant is under construction in Burno. It is hoped that this plant will be operational soon.

The plant will process skins for hides and skins exporters in addition to its own productions and it is the intention to gradually increase exports in the form of pickled and semi-tanned conditions. It is believed that this trend is duplicated all over the continent where governments are actively reorganizing their economy to create more employment and improve the life of their inhabitants.

During this year a plant exclusively for pickled and blue chromed hides is to be set up adjacent to a meat factory in Kismayo Port in the southern tip of the country.

3. Leather Utilization

This section has the same functions for leather utilization as the tanning section for the leather industry. New products are being developed; different kinds of handbags, shoes, sandals and leather articles. All these new ideas are experimental, developed and produced in the centre and then handed over to private enterprise for production.

It has happened already that by this exportable products were developed. Because of the small production of each individual, lack of capital and insufficient knowledge of export markets, the goods were sold locally. The centre then assisted by buying the products after checking the quality. When collected a sufficient quantity, the centre exported for the producers, so assisting in marketing and at the same time controlling the quality.

The centre has also been requested to produce for the army and police forces. By doing this the local shoemakers are further trained and while training they produce. There are two mechanized factories producing among themselves 100,000 pairs of shoes.

4. Marketing

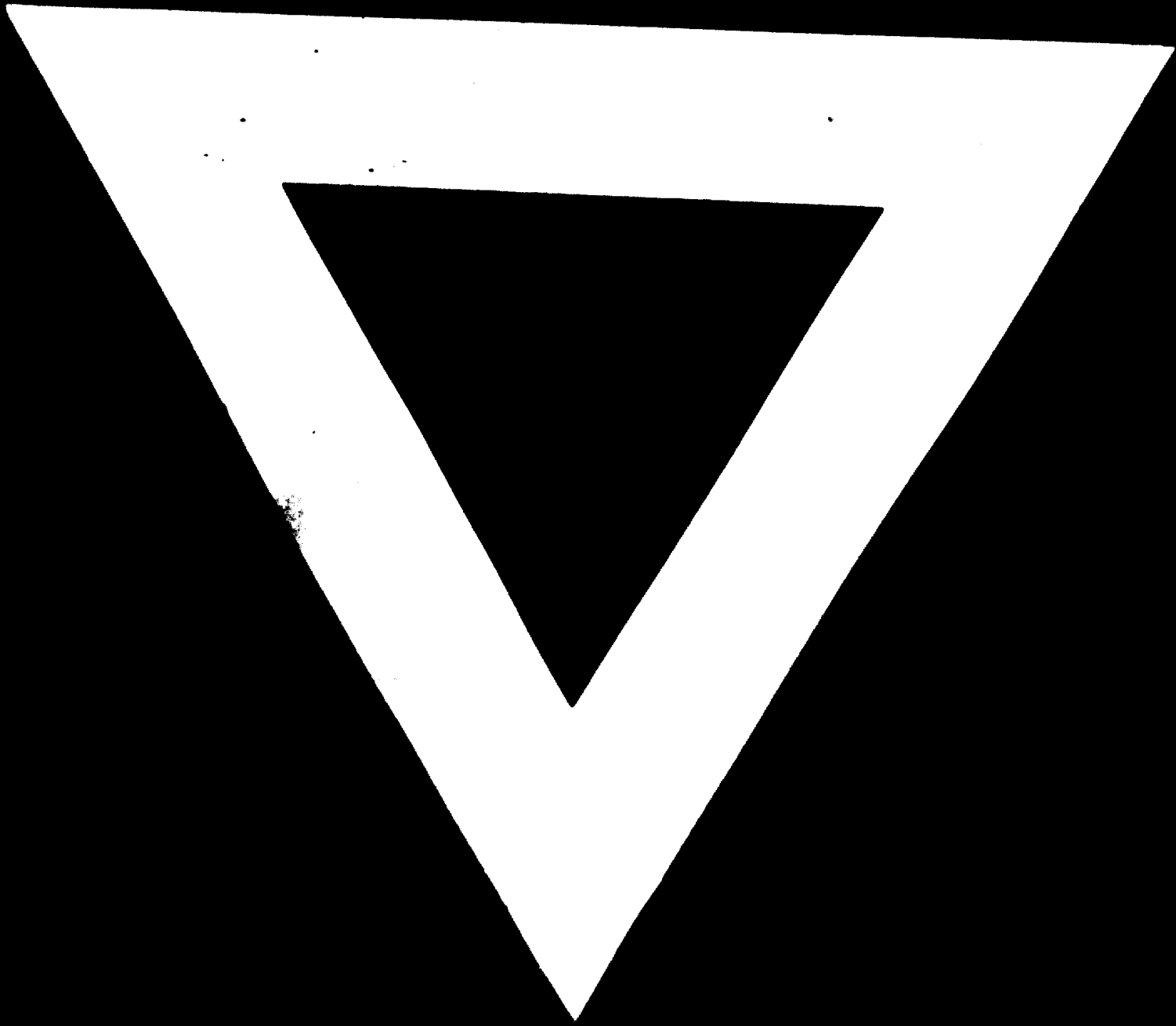
Marketing, including at present raw hides and skins, is considered the backbone of the project. What is the use of processing and improving the quality if the final product cannot be sold at an economical profit. The whole project is geared to this aim and all experiments and developments are considered in an ultimate economical result.

Conclusion

It has already become clear that the hides, skins and leather development centre has worked as catalyzer for the industry. On the Government side, the centre prepares reports, advises on legislation and prepares feasibility studies and co-ordinates Government policies with private enterprise and vice versa. On the industrial side, the centre provides training, know-how, develops new products, assists in marketing, works on hides and skins improvement and produces leather and leather articles to curtail the imports for national consumption.

Important is also the co-ordination of developments as the centre has created a keen interest from private enterprise. A new tannery was already recommended, an additional tannery is being discussed, a private shoe factory is being established with the financial backing of the National Development Bank of Somalia. These factories are to meet mainly local requirements.





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