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THE WOOD INDUSTRY IN COLOMBIA IN 1974 1/

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We regret that some of the pages in the microfiche copy of this report may not be up to the proper legibility standards, even though the best possible copy was used for preparing the master fiche.

Conceptual report to complement the statistics which were given to the Seminar in 1973 by the Colombian participants. (Document ID/IG.163/2)

The problem can be divided in five groups, as follows:

1. Raw materials
2. Machinery
3. Design
4. Hardware
5. Marketing

Raw Materials

The Colombian forests are of natural origin and therefore the selection of different species of wood is becoming almost impossible. The wood must be bought in stores where it has been pre-selected which raises its price. Through the "INDERENA" (Institute for the research of preservation of natural resources) the Colombian Government has established norms to force the producers to reforest and to make the forests homogeneous, however, it will take many years to obtain results.

Machinery

Due to high duties established by the Colombian Government to protect the national industries, the import of new machines has become difficult, which on the other hand forces the woodworking industry to maintain its old machinery at very high costs. The producers are allowed to import new machinery only when they export equal quantity in value. This system is called "vallejo". However, it is easy to understand that first you have to produce something in order to be able to import new machinery.

Design

The Colombian design has proved to be quite acceptable, even though there are no schools for design, there are very good schools for architecture and fine arts. These have improved the design so that they have kept their own style, which they transform to conform to the Latin American taste. This is a fact which I personally appreciate very much when we are on the international markets introducing our new wood products and especially our furniture. Today we export furniture to many countries, such as to the United States, Europe, Central America and the Caribbean countries through the "EROEXPO" (a governmental organisation for promoting exports).

One of the most important tasks of the "Design Center" is to investigate our history and materials, a basis for creation of authentic design to maintain the value of exports.

Hardware

In order to work efficiently, the fixtures (especially for furniture) depend on the hardware, which normally is produced in Colombia, and its quality is poor because of the import restrictions in the country. This makes the introduction of new function systems more difficult when competing with those of other markets. But on the other hand, this forces the imagination of designers and obliges them to adopt solutions for some mechanisms.

Marketing

Our wood production (especially the furniture) has been increasing due to quality, price and design, but the shipping and consequently the costs of transportation still require improvements. So far, we design and use hardware and systems which allow us to set the products easily in order to solve the packaging and transportation problems. On comparison our prices with those on the international markets we can say that our prices are half of the international prices.

Approximately 25% of the production of the most important furniture factories go to export. These Colombian factories are:

MODULINEAS (Bogota)

FABREX (Bogota)

IND. BIEMIAN (Bogota)

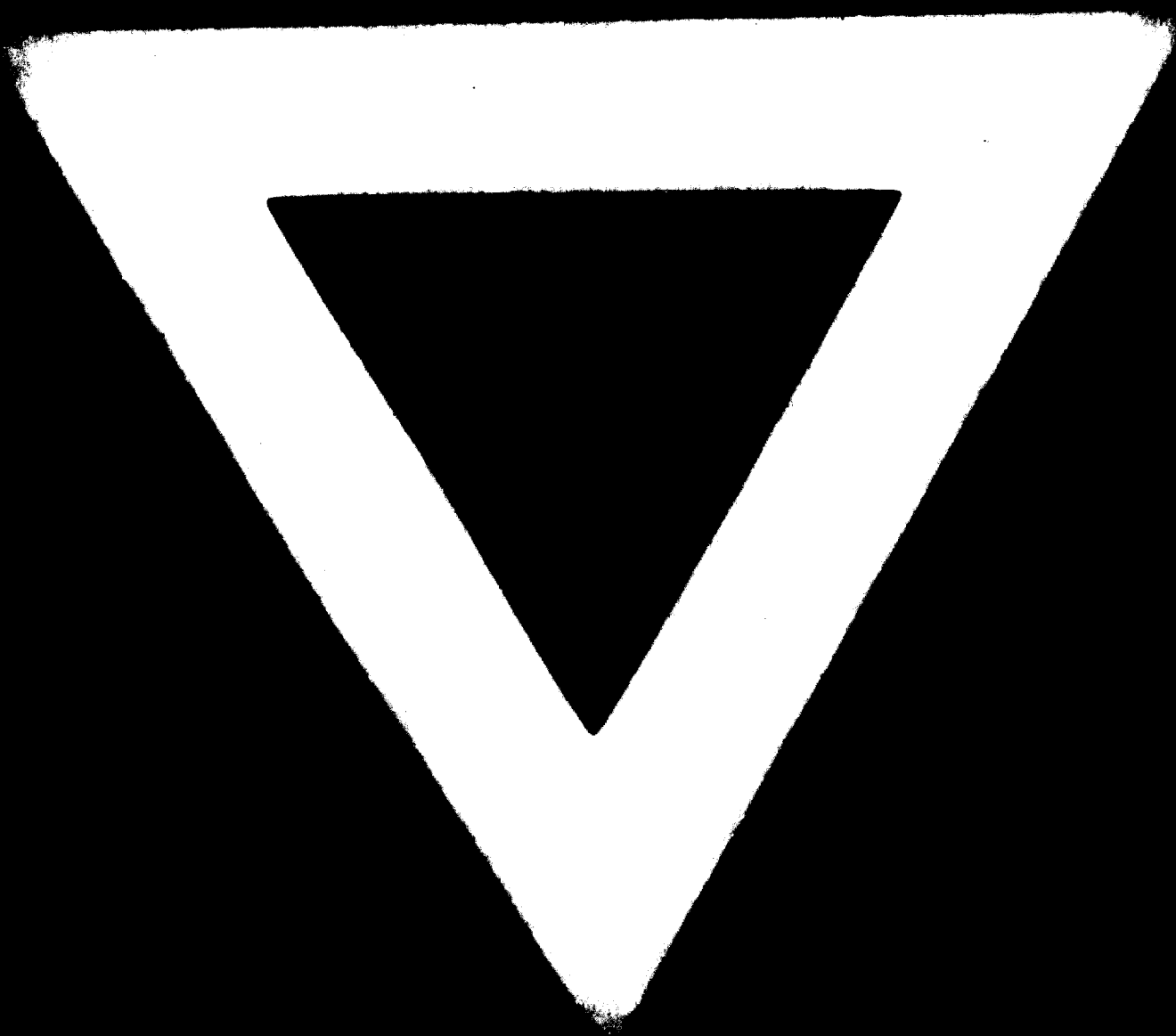
I. M. P. (Palmira)

IMA (Bogota)

HEMIES (Medellin)

and others of less importance.





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