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Meeting of Experts/Decision Makers for
Promotion and Development of Machine
Tool Industries in Developing Countries
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COUNTRY STUDY REPORT ON
MACHINE TOOLS IN SRI LANKA^{1/}

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BACKGROUND TO INDUSTRY

Machine Tools have been in use in Sri Lanka since the beginning of this century, catering mainly to the needs of railways and other public utilities, and to the needs of a partially mechanised agricultural sector.

In 1956, Government policy laid strong emphasis on industrial development thus heightening the level of industrial activity particularly in the metal working industry. Sri Lanka now produces rolled steel, cold drawn wire and wire products, iron & steel castings, machinery for processing of rice, sugar, tea, rubber and coconut products, power looms, hardware and agricultural implements, water pumps, domestic and household consumer goods such as aluminium cooking utensils, kerosene cookers, sewing machines, electrical goods such as refrigerators, table and ceiling fans, smoothy irons, radios etc. There is also infant machine tool industry. However, manufacturing technology, precision, quality control and factory organisation still lag behind modern industrial standards.

DEMAND

The Ceylon Steel Corporation was established by the Government of Sri Lanka for developing the iron and steel industry. The Corporation being one of the largest industrial enterprises in the country has taken positive steps to lay the base for indigenous manufacture of machine tools. The Corporation is not the sole importer of machine tools to Sri Lanka. Surveys conducted by the Corporation indicate that there are in Sri Lanka over 5000 metal cutting machine tools. Much of this equipment is obsolete and requires repair and rebuilding. In addition they are not fully and properly utilised.

There is thus a keen demand for machine tools both for replacing obsolete machines and for raising productivity. So far machine tools imported have been only general purpose machines and there are only a very small number of automatic machines. These and other special purpose machine tools will continue to be imported. Industrialists are keen to replace equipment but due to a very tight foreign exchange situation in the country imports are restricted.

MANUFACTURE

The plan for local manufacture of machine tools has to take into account the availability of machine tools for producing precision and interchangeable components, foreign exchange available for investment on new machine tools, the level of technology in the country and the engineering skills available. It is recognised that these resources are still in short supply. Accordingly the manufacturing programme envisages the production of the following only in the initial stages.

1. Pedestal grinder with 2 wheels 250 mm diameter.
2. Bench drilling machine - capacity 13 mm.
3. Pillar drilling machine - capacity 20 mm.
4. Power hacksaw - capacity 200 mm.
5. Arbor Press 3/4 Ton.
6. Centre Lathe swing 400 mm, centre distance 1000 mm.
7. Machine Tool accessories.

Manufacture of pedestal grinders has already commenced. These grinders are being produced by tool room methods which are usually employed for building prototypes. The use of jigs and fixtures for building machines in batches is being introduced.

In order to develop the specialised skills required for manufacture of machine tools, rebuilding and re-conditioning of machine tools is also being undertaken.

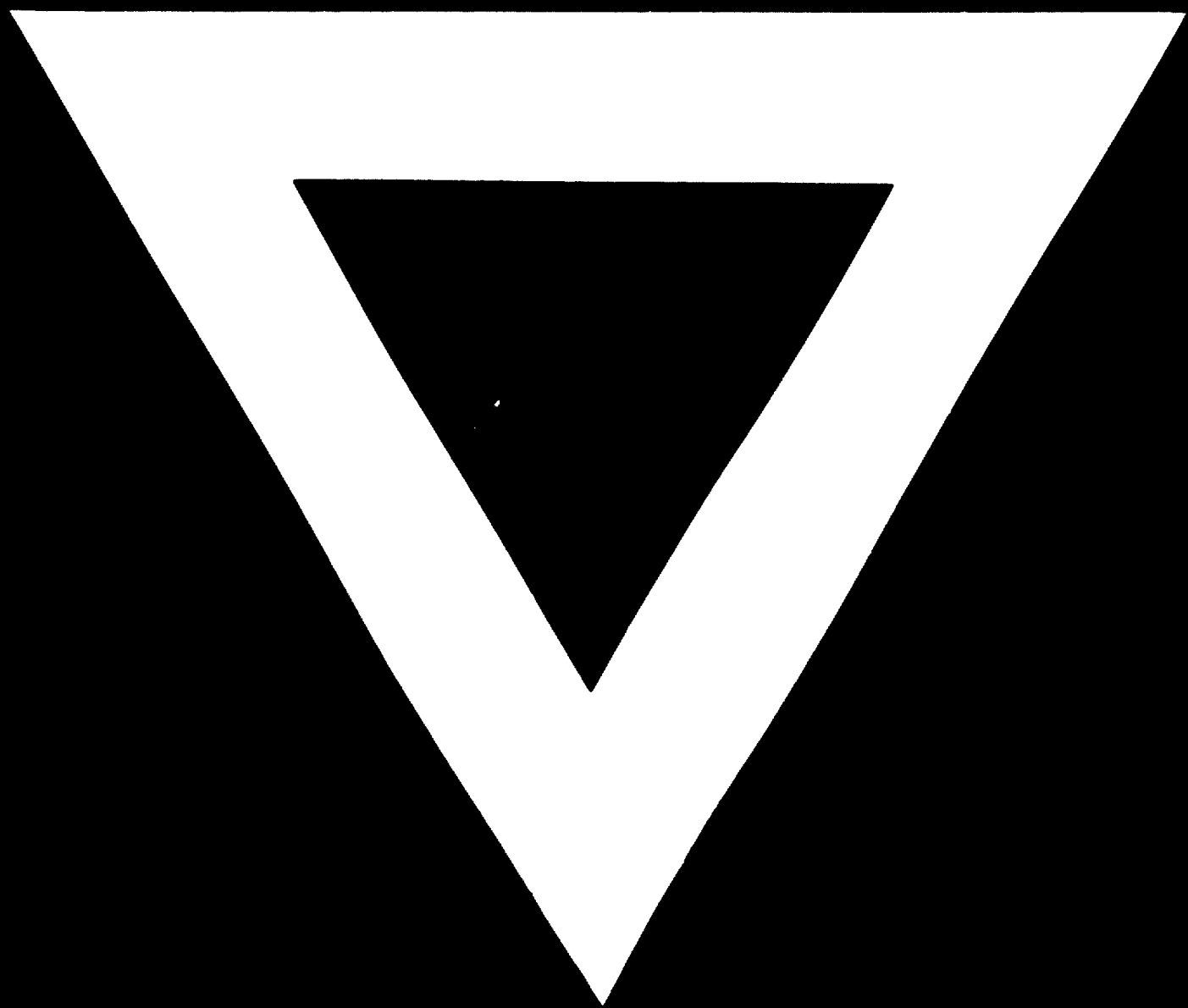
ASSISTANCE

In the present state of the industry much assistance will be needed from outside sources. UNIDO has already helped by sending out to Sri Lanka Mr. Fedor Rajic UNIDO Expert in 1971 and Dr. Alfred O. Schmidt UNIDO Expert on Machine Tools in 1974.

UNIDO assistance is now requested for the following :

1. Training of Engineers in design of machine tools, jigs and fixtures.
2. Training of Engineers and Technicians in manufacture of machine tools, their re-building and maintenance.
3. Collaboration agreements for manufacture of machine tools listed above.





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