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06214



Distr.  
LIMITED

ID/WG.184/10  
8 January 1974

ENGLISH  
ORIGINAL: FRENCH

United Nations Industrial Development Organization

Symposium on the Development of the  
Plastics Industry in Latin America

Buenos Aires, Argentina, 8 - 17 September 1974

TEN YEARS OF CIPA ACTIVITIES <sup>1/</sup>

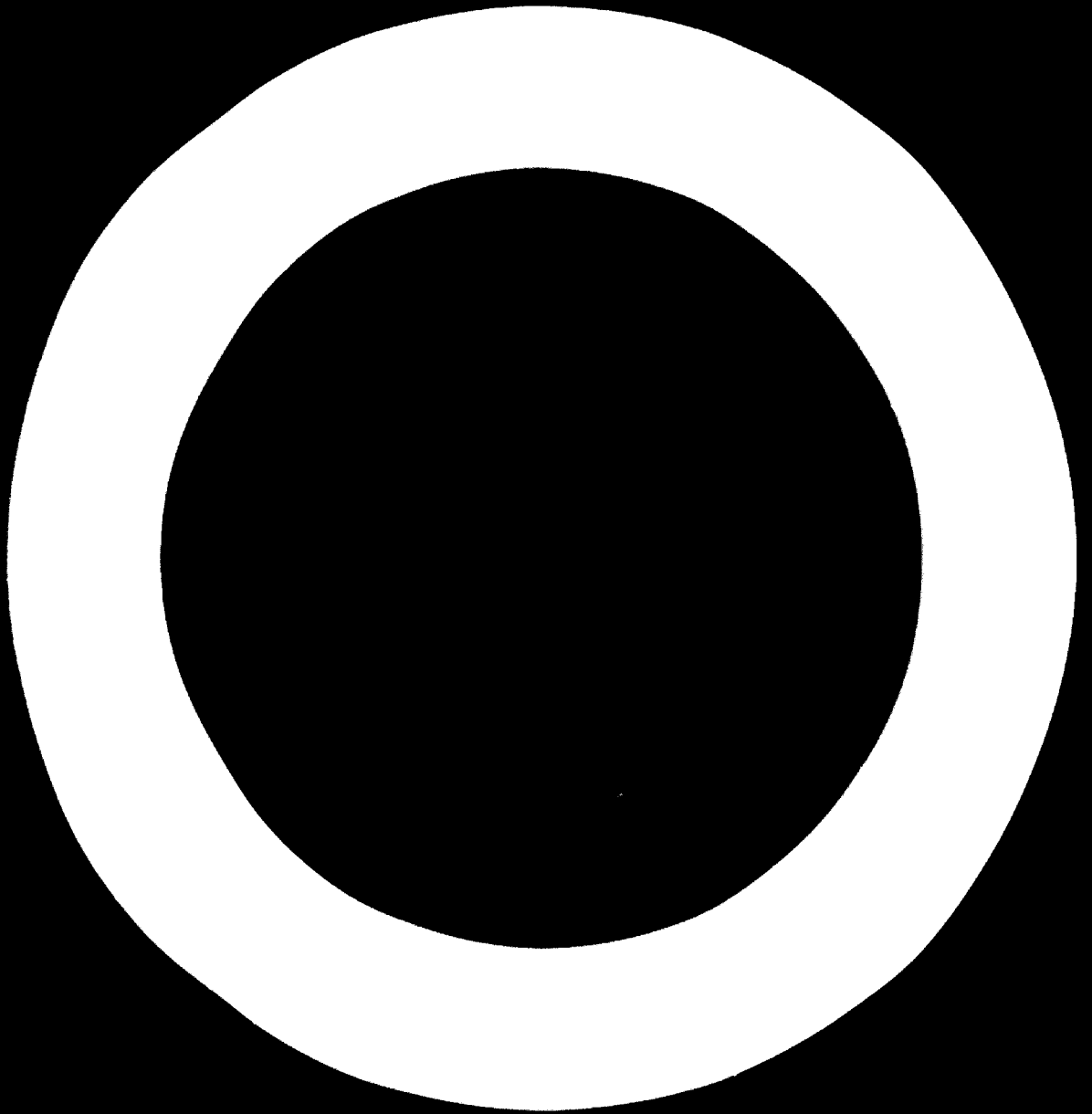
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<sup>1/</sup> The views and opinions expressed in this paper are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the views of the Secretariat of UNIDO.

id.74-8335



It is now a little over 10 years since CIPA (International Committee of Plastics in Agriculture) was set up in Avignon, a city in the South of France which is very proud of its Palais des Papes, its sunshine and its history.

The First International Colloquium had just been meeting there for a whole week, fortunately with many expeditions into the field and some opportunities for relaxation, when we were able to admire the talents of certain of our colleagues at the Provençal bullfights.

It was on 15 May 1964, at the closing meeting, that Mr. Lornis, President of the French Association of Resin Producers and former Deputy General Manager of the Rhone-Progil Company, got up and proposed to Mr. Dubois, the Chairman, and the other participants that an international association of all countries interested in the use of plastics in agriculture should be set up.

Mr. Bonfiglioli, former Secretary General of the Italian Committee, welcomed this proposal and all the participants agreed. Thirteen countries were then represented.

Two years later, the Second International Colloquium was held at Pisa. Our Italian friends, Mr. Rho, the Chairman, and his assistants, had done things very well: there was a magnificent exhibition of the main achievements of Italian industry and agriculture in addition to the information meetings held in the main hall (Aula Magna) of Pisa University, at which 16 countries were represented.

In 1968, the Third International Colloquium was held in Spain, at Barcelona. Under the guidance of Mr. Infiesta, the Chairman, assisted by Professor Martin Vicente, 17 countries were present this time at the meeting in the assembly room of the Town Hall.

But at that time only 6 countries had properly organized national committees. They are listed below in the order of their establishment:

France  
Italy  
Spain  
Portugal  
United Kingdom  
Hungary.

It was thus difficult to get the association going.

However, by dint of perseverance and a number of meetings, CIPA was officially established with its final statutes at the end of 1968, and the first number of Plasticulture, in English and French, came out at the same time.

Officially recognized by the French Ministry of the Interior on 18 July 1969 (its headquarters being in France), the Committee gradually won the support of other countries, and its membership is today as follows:

Argentina  
France  
Greece  
Hungary  
Italy  
Japan  
Portugal  
Spain  
United Kingdom  
United States of America.

Other countries are expected to join, since Algeria, Belgium, the Federal Republic of Germany and Switzerland are contemplating the establishment of national committees, and I think Mr. Bonfiglioli, who has always encouraged us in the formation of this association and who has now retired to his beautiful city of Bologna, must be pleased to see that CIPA, with its ten member countries, has now reached the minimum level beneath which he thought it could not survive.

It should be said that I have been faced with serious difficulties since I took over as Secretary General of CIPA.

Let us pass over the organization of the Fourth International Colloquium in Paris (29 countries) in 9 months, following the defection of our Hungarian friends.

They redeemed themselves brilliantly in arranging the splendid Fifth Colloquium in Budapest, at which 33 countries were represented.

But it should be said that the quarterly publication of Plasticulture in two languages (English and French) raises technical and financial problems, and it is often the French National Committee that has to make up CIPA's budget. We have now to think in terms of over 40,000 francs a year for translation and printing alone, and Plasticulture only survives because of the advertising, which is mainly French. I should like to take this opportunity to thank the French and foreign industrialists who have shown confidence in this journal, which after all has an average circulation of 1,500 copies and is read in 39 countries.

Today we are here in Buenos Aires, and this time, for the tenth anniversary of CIPA's foundation, the attendance should pass the 50 mark. I should like to thank the three organizations responsible for the success of this Colloquium:

The Argentine Chamber of the Plastic Industry  
The Argentine Committee on Plastics in Agriculture  
UNIDO

without forgetting the representatives of the Government of the Argentine Republic, who have enabled us to meet in this magnificent San Martin Congress Centre.

So much for a brief history of CIPA's ten years of activity. Perhaps it would be a good idea now to see if its activities have been consistent with the aims for which it was established.

Let us recall article 3 of the Statutes:

"The International Committee of Plastics in Agriculture has the following objectives:

"Linking different national committees (CNPA);

"Promoting the formation of new committees;

"Providing information to producers, converters and users in all countries [concerning] studies and research on the use of plastics in agriculture;

"Seeking the solution of scientific and technical problems in the field of plastics in agriculture, in the widest economic sense, and by means of complete international harmony;

"Promoting the international standardization of plastics in agriculture and ... their experimentation. Existing national brands will be considered with a view to recognition by award of a CIPA Brand of Quality."

I believe I have dealt with the first three points in the historical review I gave above.

As regards the fourth, I will say that excellent progress is being made with international harmonization, and this Colloquium is a splendid example of it. Are we not meeting in Latin America in order to promote the use of plastics, and hence both agriculture and industry, not only in this part of the world, but also in all other continents, and in particular to consider how these materials can effectively be used to help solve the terrible problems created by the drought in the Sudano-Sahelian zone?

Is this co-operation between UNIDO and CIPA going to lead to some constructive action on this problem, which is an official item on the United Nations agenda? The future, will tell us, of course, but I for my part am and remain confident.

There remains the fifth point in the Statutes, "Standardization of plastics in agriculture".

France has had a quality seal for agricultural polyethylene films since 1964 and one for piping in PVC, high and low-density polyethylene, for still longer. CEMP (Plastics Study Centre, 21 rue Pinel, Paris 13) is the body which has been officially entrusted by AFNOR (French Standardization Association) with the task of establishing quality standards and exercising quality control over materials. For example, seven companies producing agricultural polyethylene films have so far been awarded one and two star labels, the latter representing a minimum life of two years in the climate of Marseilles.

In 1972, after the meeting of the CIPA Board in Budapest, we sent, at the request of Mr. Somos, the Chairman, a copy of the specifications for the French quality seal to all countries belonging to CIPA, and also to the following: the USSR, Bulgaria, Yugoslavia, Czechoslovakia and the Federal Republic of Germany.

I must say that apart from the United Kingdom, with which we have exchanged a great deal of information, we have had no news from any other countries. No doubt we shall be able to take advantage of the next meeting, which is to be held this same week, to raise this matter again.

I think, although there is nothing explicit on the subject in the Statutes, that we should now set up working commissions for each major field of application, for example, in the countries belonging to CIPA and others.

I for my part would envisage, for example, the following commissions to start with:

- Greenhouses and large sheltering devices;
- Ground coverings (small sheltering devices and mulching);
- Protection against weather (wind screens, anti-hail nets, shade nets, etc.);
- Ensilage;
- Container crops;
- Collection, distribution and storage of water and means of economizing on its use.

I should say that the first five of these commissions already exist in France, meeting once or twice a year.

That, then, is a brief review of ten years of CIPA activities.

I must now of course give you a brief account of developments in the use of plastics and some figures.

If we stick just to cultivation techniques, i.e. excluding packaging for transport, handling or sales purposes, agricultural machinery and buildings, we can arrive at the following figures:

	<u>1963</u>	<u>1973</u>	<u>Coefficient</u>
Japan	35/40,000 T.	197,000 T.	5.3
United States	20/22,000 T.	95,000 T.	4.5
Italy	3,500	71,000	20
Federal Republic of Germany	7,000	70,000 (?)	10
France	3,500	57,000	16
Australia	2,900	32,400	16
United Kingdom	2,000	32,000	16
Spain	1,000	25,000	25
Hungary	?	12,600	
Greece	0	11,500	
Bulgaria	?	8/13,000	
Israel	1,000	8,000	8
Argentina	?	6,000	
Algeria	0	3,000	
Yugoslavia	?	1,500/2,000	
Portugal	0	600/2,000	
	<u>75/82,000</u>	<u>630,600/637,500</u>	8

Over a period of 10 years, consumption in 16 countries increased by a factor of about 8, which means an average annual increase of a little over 23 per cent for cultivation uses alone.

We have no figures for such major countries as China and the Soviet Union. There are also many other countries where plastics have been in use for many years, such as Belgium, Tunisia, Turkey and Romania.

If we make a rough estimate for the rest of the world as a whole of the order of 150,000 to 170,000 tonnes, we may conclude that in 1973 some 800,000 tonnes must have been used in crop growing, of which films would account for about three-quarters, or 600,000 tonnes.



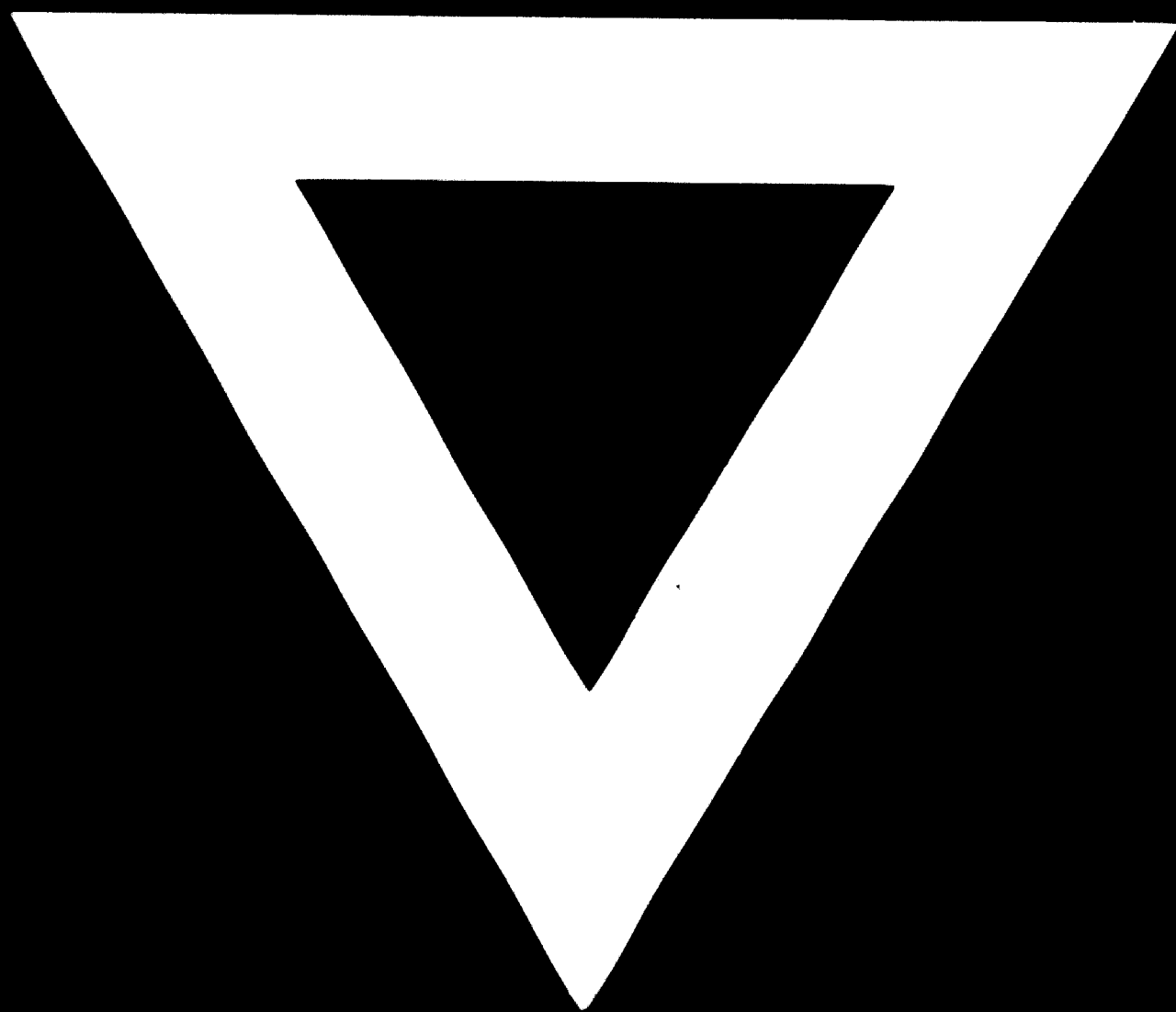
What is the outlook for the next ten years? It is very difficult to put forward a figure. I think, nevertheless, that an average annual increase of 12 to 13 per cent is not unrealistic, which would mean a volume of 2.6 million tonnes by 1983 or 1984.

I shall bring this brief review and forecast to a close at this point. Other speakers will give you particulars of the development of the situation in each country, and in any case, Plasticulture will give details of progress between 1971 and 1973 when I have collected all the figures. I should like already to thank the correspondents who have sent me their figures and to ask all those who have not yet done so to let me have them as soon as possible.

Thus agricultural plastics and CIPA, at the end of its first years of existence, both seem to me to be in good health.

This new agricultural science enables men not just to feed themselves better, but also to know each other better. There could be no better proof of this than the solid ties of friendship that it has created among all those concerned with the subject.





**75.08.11**