



TOGETHER
for a sustainable future

OCCASION

This publication has been made available to the public on the occasion of the 50th anniversary of the United Nations Industrial Development Organisation.



TOGETHER
for a sustainable future

DISCLAIMER

This document has been produced without formal United Nations editing. The designations employed and the presentation of the material in this document do not imply the expression of any opinion whatsoever on the part of the Secretariat of the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO) concerning the legal status of any country, territory, city or area or of its authorities, or concerning the delimitation of its frontiers or boundaries, or its economic system or degree of development. Designations such as “developed”, “industrialized” and “developing” are intended for statistical convenience and do not necessarily express a judgment about the stage reached by a particular country or area in the development process. Mention of firm names or commercial products does not constitute an endorsement by UNIDO.

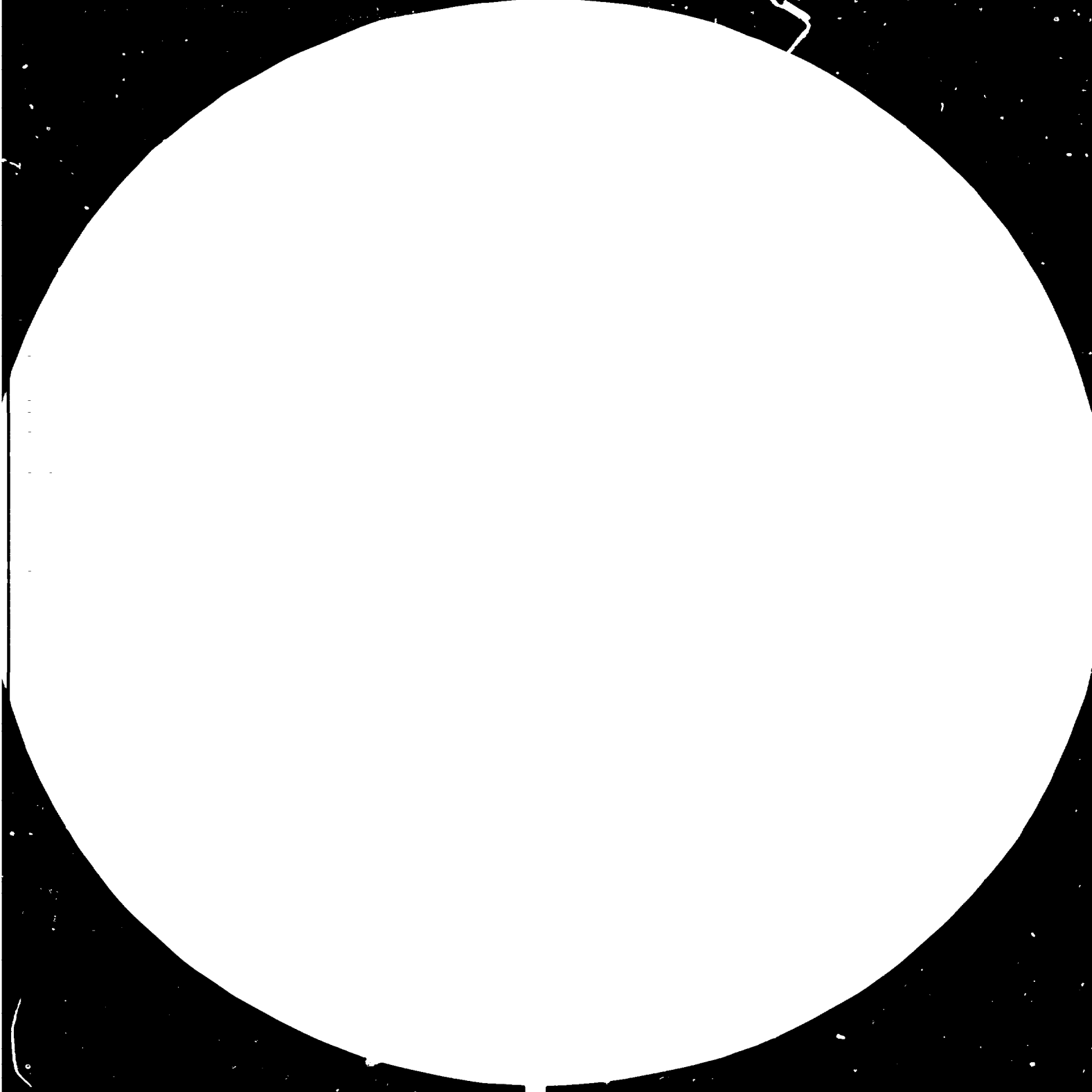
FAIR USE POLICY

Any part of this publication may be quoted and referenced for educational and research purposes without additional permission from UNIDO. However, those who make use of quoting and referencing this publication are requested to follow the Fair Use Policy of giving due credit to UNIDO.

CONTACT

Please contact publications@unido.org for further information concerning UNIDO publications.

For more information about UNIDO, please visit us at www.unido.org





2.8



2.5



Resolution test target 1.0, 1.1, 1.25, 1.4, 1.6, 1.8, 2.0, 2.2, 2.5, 2.8



10343



United Nations Industrial Development Organization

Distr.
LIMITED
ID/WG.323/23
7 January 1981
ENGLISH

Seminar on Furniture and Joinery Industries
Lahti, Finland, 3 - 24 August 1980

THE FURNITURE AND JOINERY INDUSTRY IN THE
SYRIAN ARAB REPUBLIC *

by

Nasouh Malas**

000362

* The views expressed in this paper are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the views of the secretariat of UNIDO. This document has been reproduced without formal editing.

** Director General, General Organization for Engineering Industries

Introduction:

The Syrian Arab Republic is a country with an area of about 1,000 square kilometers of which 185 kilometers along the east coast of the Mediterranean sea. It has the Mediterranean temperate climate, rain and snow are common in most areas of the Syrian Arab Republic during winter, while in summer, the climate is relatively hot and dry, hot winds prevail in most areas. The nights in summer are relatively cool and pleasant. Spring and autumn are mild.

The population of Syria is about 8.5 million and it has a yearly growth of about 3.3 percent.

In 1978, on the average there were six persons per family and G.N.P/ per capita was approximately US\$ 400,-. Damascus is the capital and it is considered to be the oldest inhabited city in the world.

Raw material situation:

In general, we can say that the Syrian Arab Republic has practically no suitable raw materials for the furniture and joinery industry. The major available species of wood growing locally are pine, (Aleppo pine), poplar and walnut.

Pine is not suitable for use as sawn timber and for industrial use, except for particle board, where it is actually being used. Poplar is not available in large quantities and it is being used mostly for the manufacture of matches, and to a lesser extent as a building material in some farm houses. This latter use is increasing. Actually poplar is not even available in sufficient quantities for the production of matches and certain volumes of poplar are imported from Turkey for this specific purpose.

Walnut trees are available in Syria and are bearing fruits. But occasionally, these trees are felled for one reason or another and the walnut logs are used as a raw material by the furniture and joinery industry, or used for the production of veneer for local use or for export. Products using walnut lumber are rather expensive.

Other species of wood raw materials are imported, mainly from Rumania, the Soviet Union, Yugoslavia and Austria, as sawn timber. African logs (mahogany, samba, tiama, condrotti and guaria) are imported for the local production of plywood, blockboard and veneer. These logs come mainly from Liberia and Ghana.

The local production of wood based panels (plywood, blockboard and particle board) is insufficient to meet the local demand and about 50,000 cubic meters of wood based panels are imported yearly.

Upholstery materials are produced in good qualities and sufficient quantities, even with certain export possibilities, but some special upholstery material is being imported at relatively high prices.

There are also certain small plants for the manufacture of adhesives based mainly on imported raw materials. The industry depends mainly on imports of hardware, fittings, and surface finishes.

In general, there are no problems regarding the availability or supply of raw materials.

Structure of the industry:

Practically all the furniture and joinery industry in Syria is in the private industrial sector with these three exceptions:

1. certain plants attached with the General Public Contracting Organization with GPCO that produce doors, windows, furniture, etc. for their own building contracts.
2. A plant for the manufacture of school desks which started production only two years ago. It is attached to the General Organization for Engineering Industries (GOEI), and produces about 20,000 desks for two students each, annually.

3. A new project for the production of furniture is being established by the Syrian-Saudi Arabian company. This project is under implementation and should start production in 18 months' time. It will be one of the largest and most modern furniture factories in the area and will produce living rooms, bedrooms and dining rooms.

The private industrial sector is very active in the furniture and joinery industries. Those industries comprise mainly small size establishments. The following table gives an idea of the existing plants or licenced ones in the furniture and joinery industries in certain provinces of Syria, as of July 1980:

Provinces	Number of establishments		Number of licences granted	
	Furniture	Joinery	Furniture	Joinery
Damascus	375	235	495	312
Tartous	64	8	133	14
Total for all Syria ^{1/} 1,000		500	1,000	600

1/ Personal estimation of the author based on his experience.

It should be explained however that a good percentage of the licenced projects are not implemented as the beneficiaries finally invest in other types of industry or trade.

Design and marketing:

The overwhelming product development is based on individual requirements particularly generated from the buyer in accordance with his own requirements and home or office needs. In general we can say that large serial production is as yet non-existent, and many of the manufacturers are working on an order basis. This order either comes from the buyer himself or retailers who order certain furnitures for their show rooms.

Recently, we have noted that many retailers have appeared who order different furniture from who do woodwork and these retailers transfer the woodwork to other shops for upholstery, painting or varnishing, so that the furniture is not completely manufactured by the same shops. It might be useful to mention that these are getting specialized due to the requirements of traders or retailers.

Industrial infrastructure:

Professional associations:

The owners of furniture and joinery industries are organized under the association of handicraft workers. This association assists them in promoting the furniture and joinery industries and especially the procurement of raw materials at favourable conditions, represents them at local and international fairs, and in general looks after the interests of the manufacturers of wooden furniture and joinery through government administration.

Training:

Training of workers in the furniture and joinery industries is attained through the following way:

1. Many students obtain the high school industrial certificate specializing in wood industries. This is part of formal education.
2. The directorate of training (DT) attached to the ministry of Industry has a regular course in carpentry specially organized for workers in the wood industries.
3. On the job training through certain experts who visit the country to put into operation new machinery and equipment as well as true training which those workers obtained abroad.

Existing institutions which could provide assistance to the furniture and joinery industries:

These are:

- Directorate of private industrial sector in the Ministry of industry.
- Directorate of Training in the Ministry of Industry.
- Directorate of Technical Education in the Ministry of Education.
- Centre for Industrial Testing and Development and the National Body for specifications and measurements, attached to the Ministry of Industry.
- Centre for Management and Productivity Development attached to the Ministry of Industry.
- General Union of Handicraft workers.
- Chamber of Industry.

Measures to be taken to assure the development of the furniture and joinery industries:

In the long run, measures should be taken for planting trees and increasing the forests in the country. Whole species able to be grown on a commercial basis (such as poplar, pine, , walnut etc.) should be planted so that the local industry should depend more on local source of logs and sawn wood rather than imported material which is getting more expensive and harder to obtain as the time goes.

National specifications of materials and products should be established.

New factories should be established both in the private and public sectors that are large sized to use mass production methods and modern technology. Co-operation or joint ventures with companies of the developed world which are well advanced in furniture and joinery production is highly recommended.

Expansion of the local production of wood based panels (plywood, blockboard, particle board, and hardboard) is necessary to assure the supply of local demand at stable prices.

Kiln drying of sawn wood is not practiced as air drying is generally used at random, without specific drying requirements. Kiln drying or at least technological drying of sawn wood should be introduced. The establishment of solar drying kilns should be investigated and encouraged.

Special attention should be given by the furniture and joinery manufacturers to finishing processes, as finished products are generally of inferior quality to that obtained by modern technology or know-how.

Experts from industrial countries, either recruited directly or through international organizations, advanced in furniture and joinery industries, should visit Syrian manufacturers to upgrade their technology and specifications. On the other hand, more workers and managers in this industry should be given the opportunity to train in factories in developed countries to get acquainted and trained on modern technologies and methods of production related to this industry.

