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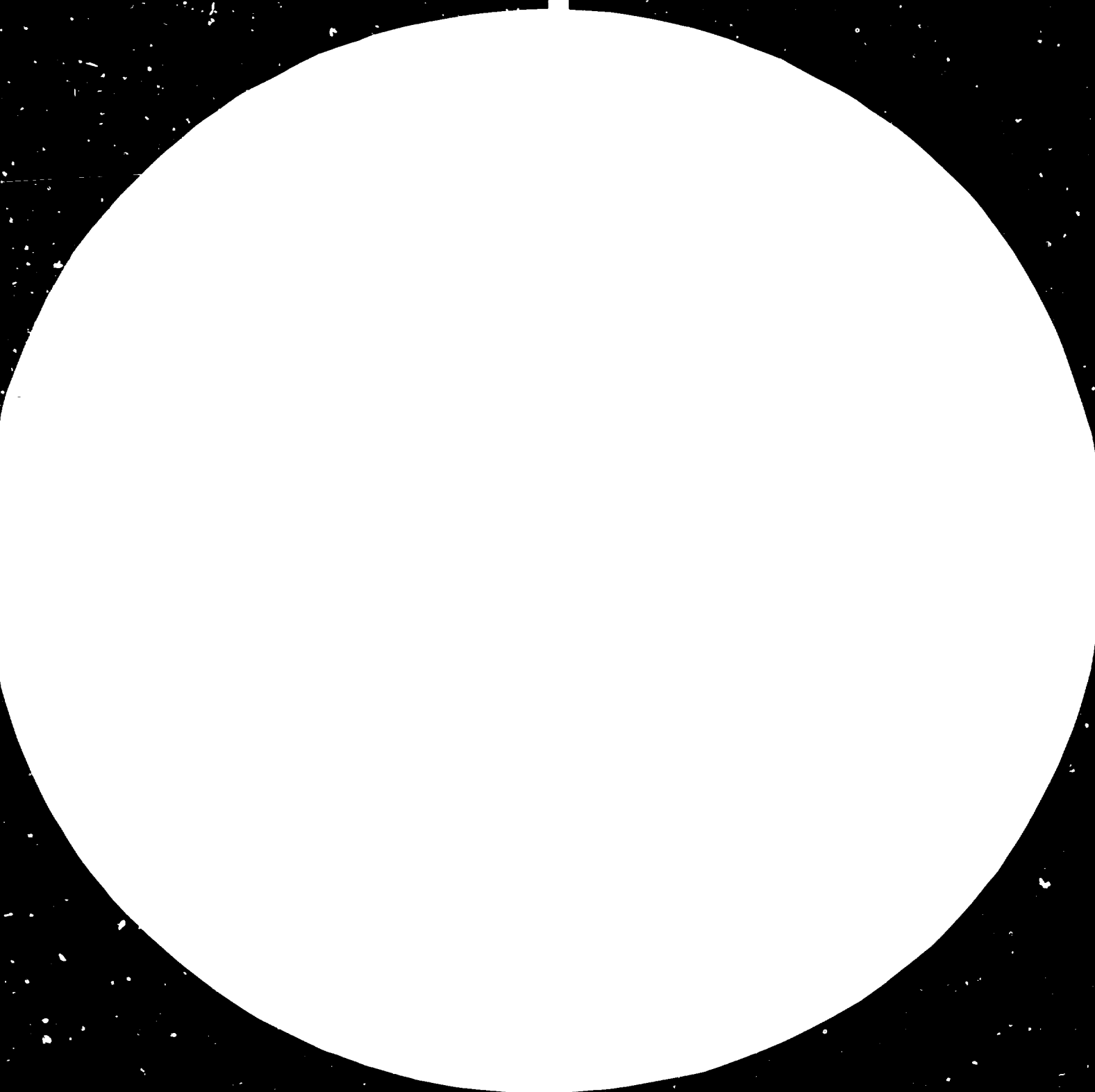
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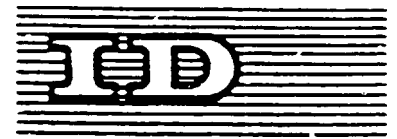
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Distr.
LIMITED
ID/WG. 348/2
7 September 1981
ENGLISH

United Nations Industrial Development Organization

Seminar on the Furniture and Joinery Industries,
Lahti, Finland, 2 to 23 August 1981

THE CURRENT STATUS OF THE FURNITURE INDUSTRY IN CYPRUS *

by

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Introduction

Cyprus is the largest island in the Mediterranean with an area of 3,572 square miles, or 9,851 square kilometres. It has a maximum length of 160 miles from east to west and a maximum width of 60 miles from north to south.

It is situated at the north-eastern end of the east Mediterranean basin at a distance of 240 miles north of Egypt, 64 miles west of Syria and 44 miles south of Turkey.

Cyprus has a population of approximately 640,000. According to the last official census, 77 per cent of the total population were Greek Cypriots, 18.3 per cent were Turkish Cypriots and 4.7 per cent were other minorities (i.e. Maronites, Armenians and Latins).

Geographically, Cyprus, although a small island, combines a striking variety of landscapes and features. Its coastline is indented and rocky with long sandy beaches in numerous coves. The north coast, covered with olive and carob trees is backed by a steep narrow belt of limestone (Pendaaaktylos Range) rising to more than 3,000 feet. In the south-west the extensive mountain massif of trees (pine, dwarf oak, cypress and cedar) culminates into the peak of Mount Olympus which rises 6,406 feet above sea level. Between these ranges lies the rather broad, fertile plain in Messaoria to the east and the still more fertile Morphou to the west.

The total area of the arable land is about 46 per cent of the island and the total forest land is 18 per cent. Cyprus has a Mediterranean type of climate with dry and hot summers and rather rainy, unstable and mild winters, separated by short autumn and spring seasons of rapid changes in October and April/May.

Economic activity in Cyprus continued its upward trend during the last few years, although the rate of growth of domestic output was lower than that of the previous years. It is estimated that the gross domestic product increased in real terms by 6.7 per cent compared with a gain of 17.0 per cent recorded for previous years.

The marked deceleration in production growth was primarily due to capacity constraints which characterized activities in all major sectors of the economy. Virtually all productive resources were fully utilized, but the major limiting factor for growth was the shortage of skilled labour experienced mainly in the construction and manufacturing industries.

The only supplier of raw materials for furniture and joinery production is the Cyprus Forest Industries which supplies the local industry with the following:

1. Sawn timber (Pine Wood)
2. Kiln seasoned timber
3. Particle board
4. Veneered particle board

This firm is also planning to establish a plant for plastic coated particle board. Other types of timber such as oak, mahogany, meranti, redwood and all other raw materials such as fittings, finishes, adhesives, upholstery materials, etc. are imported.

The present number of registered industrial units manufacturing furniture in the island is about 523. The skilled labour force is currently 2,000. The remainder of the labour being unskilled, with no formal training in furniture production other than what they acquired in furniture factories as process workers.

The value of gross production in 1974 was C£ 0.6 million and in 1978 it was C£ 7.9 million. In 1979 it was C£ 7.5 million. Exports in 1974 were C£ 29,000 and imports for the same period totalled some C£ 700,000 whilst exports in 1977 were C£ 448,454 and import C£ 516,784. Exports have risen appreciably each subsequent year but official statistics appear to provide figures that are lower than they actually are. The large plants are located in industrial estates in the main towns such as Nicosia, Larnaca and Limassol. Famagusta is presently under Turkish occupation.

The availability of the labour force is a problem mainly due to transport and scarcity of skilled labour. Other smaller factories

are spread all over the island. The main problem that affects the growth of the furniture industry in Cyprus is its rationalization.

In Cyprus, the design of the furniture as such does not exist as all the furniture manufacturers copy their designs from imported furniture (mainly from that made in Italy). Marketing is left to individuals by participating in foreign trade fairs or by exhibiting their products in local showrooms or by advertising on the television.

Industrial Infrastructure

The Cyprus Employers Federation is the only professional association in Cyprus.

Training schemes in Cyprus are organized by the Cyprus Productivity Centre and the Ministry of Labour.

No standards are available in Cyprus.

Measures which could be taken by the management of the plants, the Manufacturers' Associations, Government and International Organizations to assure the development of Cypriot industry by transferring the knowledge of the developed countries to the developing countries through providing technical assistance, experts or just literature would all be very much welcomed.



