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INTERNATIONAL UNION FOR THE PROTECTION OF NEW VARIETIES OF PLANTS

GENEVA

DIPLOMATIC CONFERENCE ON THE REVISION OF THE INTERNATIONAL CONVENTION FOR THE PROTECTION OF NEW VARIETIES OF PLANTS

Geneva, October 9 to 23, 1978

STATEMENT

submitted by the Delegation of Mexico

The Annex to this document contains a Statement from the Delegation of Mexico submitted for the information of participants in the Diplomatic Conference.

[Annex follows]

ANNEX

PAPER PRESENTED BY THE MEXICAN DELEGATION TO THE DIPLOMATIC CONFERENCE ON THE REVISION OF THE INTERNATIONAL CONVENTION FOR THE PROTECTION OF NEW VARIETIES OF PLANTS (UPOV) OCTOBER 9 TO 23, 1978

Introduction

Agricultural experimentation started in Mexico at the beginning of the century, although we have a tradition in this field since the 16th century. The work was intensified in the forties, and after that time the main concern was to solve the local food problem and attack that aspect of it which was related to such basic crops as corn, wheat, beans and rice. This work progressed in the fifties and sixties. It was improved by breeding certain oil seeds such as soybeans, sesame, safflower, sunflower, seed cotton and also sorghum as a substitute for corn grain in the field of animal food.

Technical Cooperation

A team of agronomists trained in Mexico collected a large amount of corn and wheat varieties. World interest focussed on this and, when the United Nations became aware of it, it started a program under which people were sent to be trained in Mexico and agronomists from many countries of the world came to our country. We received visitors from several countries, including the United States of America, Germany, Holland, France, Australia, India, Pakistan, Iran, Iraq, Syria, Egypt and Turkey, as well as from Latin America, Russia and Libya.

The results of the research acted as a stimulant on the country and a strong team became highly specialized in wheat and corn. Very abundant wheat and corn collections were created, and a group of persons was appointed to attend to such important aspects as breeding, disease resistance, fertilizers, insect control, irrigation experiments, weed control, grain quality, etc. Actually, short-straw spring Mexican wheats have been used around the world and in many countries they have been multiplied and the final products obtained. Besides this--and for the first and only time--the Nobel Prize for Peace was granted in 1970 to the man who organized the wheat team in Mexico, Dr. Norman Ernest Borlaug.

Our wheat varieties are tested every year in about 80 countries, and the results show that Mexican wheat occupies the first place in a high percentage of the tests as far as yield is concerned. One important factor for the success of its wheat varieties is the fact that they can be adapted to many different conditions of soil and climate (non-sensible varieties), and as a logical consequence they are greatly appreciated.

Certified Seed Production

Since the conditions of climate and soil in Mexico are very variable, it is possible to cultivate small grain cereals as well as corn and sorghum. Under other conditions, we have cotton, soybeans, sesame, sunflower, tomatoes, other vegetable plants and fruit trees.

We now produce annually about 300,000 metric tons of different seeds. Some certified seeds, like those of wheat, cotton and rice, cover 100 percent of the area under commercial cultivation. In some other areas, we have sorghum, oats, soybeans, chickpea, tomatoes, and sunflower. We need to import part of the required seed, and in some cases we frankly need to import seeds from several countries, as in the case of alfalfa seed.

Conclusion

Our agricultural research and experimentation has been rapidly developing over the last 40 years. By now we have an important team of over 600 officials in agricultural research, working on plant breeding and on the practices involved in all aspects of rural technology. They also work on irrigation, soil salinity, fertilizers, weeds, insects, diseases, economy, statistics, variety evaluations, etc.

The results of this research work have been translated into the intensive use of better seeds, and have of course had repercussions on its production. Mexico has

had legislation since 1961 that covers the production, multiplication, certification and trade in seeds.

The actual seed production in Mexico amounts to around 300,000 tons, which is for the benefit not only of our own people, but also for that of several other countries with which we have the opportunity to cooperate on the basis of our experience of exporting large amounts to the rest of the world.

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