



APRIL 2009 n° 5

*Better quality of life
through better packaging
for more people.*



W P O N E W S

President's word

“Better quality of life through better packaging for more people” will continue being our goal!

2008 was an exciting year in the life of the World Packaging Organisation. Africa was the selected continent to host the organisation's 40th anniversary celebrations. Who will ever forget attending the meetings in Ghana, visiting the slave castles and jungle canopy, or participating in the packaging seminar and WorldStar awards evening, with award winners arriving from all over the world to celebrate their success and join in the “crowning” of the packaging royal family? What was of particular interest and pleasing to WPO, International Trade Center, was the growth and maturity of the Ghana Institute of Packaging (GIOP). Both of these organisations together with the Institute of Packaging South Africa had been involved in the “birth” of the GIOP. In October the WPO meetings were held in Cape Town, one of the most beautiful cities in the world.



The new-year has commenced with the world economic crisis consuming all business news and activities and negatively impacting on the lives of millions of people. Companies are reevaluating their business strategies and plans. Cash management has become critical as banks become reluctant to lend money. Like never before businesses are controlling their costs.

Investing in the company's core is more important now than ever before. Having the right people is a critical issue and training the people with real potential is continuing. Research and development is more a priority than ever before.

Innovation continues to be a major priority and it is pleasing to note the WPO WorldStar packaging competition offers both motivation and stimulation for companies and individuals to present their ideas and products and be judged with the best in class. By the same token we have seen the WorldStar Students Competition grow dramatically, it is anticipated that this trend will continue into the future. We wish our Tunisian member every success as they plan and manage the student competition this year.

WPO have produced a number of position papers with the latest document being a joint venture between our communication partner IPPO (International Packaging Press Organization) and WPO on the positive part packaging can

play in alleviating the global food shortage.

Sustainability continues to be a major global initiative and the packaging industry and all the stakeholders are continually working towards achieving success in the social, environmental and commercial areas of the initiative.

The WPO International workshop designed and run by our members in India and the United Kingdom will be a special opportunity for developed and developing country participants to see the “big picture” of packaging as well as identify packaging opportunities for companies or individuals.

Plans are well on the way by our member in Mexico, the Mexican Packaging Association, host for the board meeting and the all important WorldStar Awards Ceremony. The award’s ceremony will be held on the evening of the 13 May. On this occasion the President’s awards will be announced together with the Sustainable Packaging Award.

The WPO vision is “Better quality of life through better packaging for more people”; we see this as a most meaningful objective, particularly in the current global context of recession. Sustainability will continue to be a major global strategy and WPO will support this all consuming imperative for the future.

Kind regards,

Keith Pearson
WPO President

Inside WPO

President at Ukraine show



Invited by the organizers of Pack Fair and WPO member Packers Club of Ukraine, the President of World Packaging Organization, Keith Pearson, visited Kiev from February 24 to 27 and participated in the opening ceremony of the 10th edition of the show that is extremely important for the Eastern Europe region. Pack Fair serves the producers of food and beverage, pharmaceutical and household products in addition to building material, agricultural products and non-food consumer products.

The ceremony was opened by the Deputy Minister of Agriculture. Although the exhibition participants were 30% down compared to the last edition, due to the global recession, the standard of packaging shown was excellent, particularly considering the fact that the Ukraine packaging industry is probably only really started becoming globally competitive around fifteen years ago.

Keith also participated in the award ceremony of the Star Packaging Competition and in a round table discussion group in which he presented WPO activities and some of the issues facing the packaging industry around the world. The waste collection issue was a key topic around the table.

At the same trip, the WPO President visited Ukrplastic, a world class flexible packaging manufacturer. During the visit the President of the company, Oleksander Galkin, explained how the transition from a controlled economy to a market oriented economy took place. It is worth remembering that the company has already been awarded with 13 WorldStar awards.



Another company visited was the machine producer Termo-Pack specialized in filling and labeling equipments. Like most business the sales volumes were down and the company had added a new manufacturing arm to their business; they now produce gym equipment. An interesting thing about the company is that they are constructing a machine that had been designed by students of a national university.

An interesting visit to Tunis



At the invitation of Packtec, WPO President, Keith Pearson, also traveled to Tunis from December 3 to 5 in order to attend the award ceremony of the World Packaging Organisation's Student competition as well as the Packaging Days 2008 Congress. On this occasion, the Minister of Industry, Energy and SME delivered the opening address; Keith also spoke on behalf of WPO.

Packtec paid for the two students that worked together in the winning project - Salha Donmez and Cem Donmez - to fly to Tunis in order to receive their awards. Second place went to Kuang-Husuan from China and third place was achieved by Susanne Hermann from Germany. The student from China was the only one unable to make the trip. The awards were handed out as part of the opening ceremony of Packaging Days 2008.

Regarding Packtec Conferences, the content and relevance of presentations was excellence. The theme of the conference was "Packaging Innovation & Sustainability" and the speakers, who were mainly from Europe, were experts in their field and provided new insights into the challenges facing innovation and sustainability.

In addition the presentation of case studies provided direction for delegates to be able to implement meaningful change in their organizations. On the final day of the conference delegates were taken on a site tour of Packtek.



It is worth noting that Packtec, under the very capable leadership of Lémia Chekir Thabet, is making a meaning contribution towards offering leadership in respect of packaging matters. Another positive fact is that the association is in the process of mentoring packaging related organizations in the region. There were delegates from Algeria, Lebanon and Jordan what can represent an opportunity for new WPO members from these countries.

Highlights

40th Anniversary of the Argentine Packaging Institute

During 2009 the Argentine Packaging Institute will be celebrating its 40th anniversary fostering the general development of the packaging industry in Argentina. Three major actions will be part of celebrations. The Institute is very active in promoting packaging education through the Packaging Technician Course dictated in Buenos Aires and a Distance Learning Course available for Spanish speakers. Currently many students from Uruguay, Colombia and Peru are learning by this method. More information at administracion@envase.org.



Another item is communication. All the news of the Argentine Packaging Market are published on the IAE Magazine. There is also a local packaging suppliers list that can be found on the "Guía IAE", a useful and updated directory at www.guiaiae.com. And there will be Envase Alimentek 2009, an International Packaging Show that will take place in Buenos Aires, September 22nd to 25th (www.envase.org).

Two shows in Budapest

From September 22 to 25 the Hungexpo Budapest Fair Center will hold the important communicational forum for packaging industry – the 24th International Packaging and Material Handling Trade Exhibition – as well as Printexpo. This year, at the packaging show there will be a new section for suppliers and transporters companies: the Logexpo will gather logistics firms together within the Budatranspack. Another innovation is the Organic Packaging Materials group. At Printexpo the new group is the one concerned about Digital Technology in photo, video and printing techniques.





The majority of the exhibitors taking part in the shows intend to increase their market presence and establish new business contacts (58-61%). Other important aspects are to introduce the company's activity, to increase their image and to present their new products.

About the visitors, an average of 20.9% of them are interested in packaging materials and 17.4% in packaging machines and equipment. Other fields of interest are: packaging systems, waste disposal equipment, material handling, storage, transport, forwarding, logistics, informatics and recycling.

More information about the exhibitions at the Hungarian Association of Packaging and Material Handling webpage www.budatranspack.hu.

Current activities in Poland

Polish Packaging Research and Development Centre (COBRO) is active in implementing international research projects, aiming to introduce progress in the packaging field to the benefit of packaging users and better protection of environment. In recent years they were involved in projects like: packaging as a factor of economic growth of the region and improvement of natural resources protection; advanced quality prediction tool for knowledge-driven packaging design and manufacturing in European SMEs ModelPACK; polylactic acid (PLA) for new bio based packaging.

Two other important projects were the preparation and implementation of the internet support system for packaging selection for fresh fruit and vegetables in the horticultural market and the improvement of communication between participants of national and international distribution chain of Polish packed fresh fruit and vegetables. The system may be applicable all over the world and its main concept and expected results were presented during the WPO Board Meeting in Cape Town in October 2008. Detailed information on the projects is available on COBRO website www.cobro.org.pl.



European Packaging Directory 2009

On March 24th, the EPIC - European Packaging Directory 2009 was officially introduced at Ipack-Ima packaging exhibition in Milan, Italy. The publication, billed as a common source of European information for the industry and retailers with an interest in packaged products, provides a reference tool for the European packaging industry, the activities of EPIC members and the resources supplied in each country. The printed version is supported on-line by www.epic-packaging.org.



Packaging activities moves Greece in 2008...

A lot of activities took place in Greece in 2008 as reported below.

The 1st National Conference on Food and Beverage Packaging was organized by the Association of the Greek Manufacturers of Packaging and Materials (AGMPM) and took place in the grounds of the 11th Biennial Packaging Exhibition (SYSKEYASIA). The 300 participants from industry and academy had the opportunity to attend the two plenary sessions and any of the four focused parallel sessions: the role of packaging in the developing and production of the final product; packaging designing and the retail-chains requirements; novel packaging technologies and packaging materials and packaging operations.



The speakers in the plenary sessions were from the leading retail chains, food industry, ECR and heads of food processing research groups. There were also two invited speakers from WPO members: Lemia Thabet (Tunisia) and Dogan Erberk (Turkey).

The following round table discussions created interesting and warm debates:

- Conception and designing of a product: (a) what is coming first? The aesthetic or the functional designing? And (b) the environmental parameter starts from the product designing and not from its waste management stage.
- Developments in the retail packaging: (a) Packaging and demographic trends. And (b) Packaging, the retail store, and the consumer.

Another important activity in Greece last year was the support to students doing research on food packaging.

AGMPM has set up prizes to be given each year to the graduate students who have presented the best research papers in scientific conferences. In 2008 were given three €1000 prizes to the following Ph.D. students:

- Th. Tsironi, National Technical University of Athens (NTUA) , "Development of mathematical models for selecting the optimum modified atmosphere for packaging of fish filets"
- A. Karagiannaki, Athens University of Economics and Business, "RFID on various steps of packaging. Effects and interactions"
- E. Chouliara, University of Ioannina, Combined effect of irradiation and modified atmospheres for the extension of shelf life of fresh poultry"

And also AGMPM organized a discussion on waste management in May 2008 entitled "Biodegradable and Oxi-biodegradable plastics. Their effects in municipal waste management". Major issue was the adoption by major retail chains of Oxi-biodegradable shopping bags.

Another similar discussion happened last December about "Municipal solid waste management and packaging waste. Exploring more effective and more efficient ways".

... and the agenda for 2009

The major 2009 packaging events in Greece are the two Exhibitions: Expo Pack 2009 and Graphica Expo 2009 which will take place from May 29 to June 01 in the new Athens Metropolitan Expo Centre. More information info@graphicaexpo.gr and www.graphicaexpo.gr.

ABRE produces important documents in 2009



In the end of March, ABRE (Brazilian Packaging Association) launched the new version of ABRE Packaging Guide with updated information on the market as well as information about its members and respective areas. Another important document to be launched this year will be produced by ABRE's Environment and Sustainability Committee and will provide information about this subject to orient companies.

The Strategic Issues Committee from ABRE will also publish a new document that will join the results of a various number of research projects done since its creation in 2002. The idea is to offer strategic information to the packaging industry in order to show clearly the value of packaging in the creation and production chains. The document will bring topics like: function and role of packaging; the ideal packaging and the future one; packaging and environment; main attributes per category; packaging value and strategic goals to the packaging industry.

Information on all these material can be offered in the webpage www.abre.org.br or by e-mail isa@abre.org.br.

The success of Indiapack 2008



Indiapack 2008, the International packaging exhibition held from September 18-21 in Mumbai, was a four day international B2B exhibition on packaging and allied industry. It was inaugurated by Keith Pearson, President of WPO and Dharmatilake Ratnayake, Immediate Past President-Asian Packaging Federation (APF). There were also present B.S. Kampani, Chairman of IIP; Sanjay Bhatia, Vice Chairman IIP and Rajiv Dhar, Director of IIP.

All major players in the packaging and allied industry have participated in this successful event. Companies from over 20 countries worldwide, including China, Germany, India, Japan, Malaysia, Singapore, South Korea, Taiwan, UAE, UK and USA, participated at the event with a wide range of innovative products, technologies and services on display. Ministry of Commerce & Industry, Ministry of Food Processing Industries, Ministry of Textiles, Govt. of India and many National & International Trade Associations actively supported the show.

According to Rajiv Dhar, Director of IIP "the success of Indiapack is a reflection of a positive growth of the Indian packaging industry which is set to continue in future". At the same time it took place the International Summit for the Packaging Industry 2008 (ISPI), the Award Distribution Function for Indiarstar & Pacmachine and the National Awards for Excellence in Packaging, all organized by IIP.

Ease packaging in Denmark

Next April 30th, important international experts will join at the "Ease of Opening" Conference organized by the Danish Technological Institute, member of WPO. The conference will present a range of different views and methods based on an anthropological, design, marketing and engineering perspectives in order to provide better packaging for everyone. More information by e-mail helle.antvorskov@teknologisk.dk.



To the point

Bolivia's new image through packaging

A new Bolivian brand scheme is emerging to help create a positive image in the country's exports, supported by the Bolivian Packaging Organisation (OBE) that was formally chartered in June 2007 as a direct result of Project BOL/61/80, executed by the International Trade Centre UNCTAD/WTO (ITC) and financed by The State Secretary for Economic Affairs of the Government of Switzerland (SECO).



The project's early research identified the lack of properly designed packaging as one of the main impediments to Bolivian exports. During the first phase of the program, the project consultants worked with companies in sundry sectors – from bean processors to winemakers - to improve their packaging to make it more attractive to consumers and reduce loss during shipping.



At the same time, the ITC Project began working with manufacturers, users, export chambers, business associations, the Bolivian Institute of Foreign Trade (IBCE), the Bolivian Institute of Standards and Quality (IBNORCA) and the national government, to create OBE. The entity has since become affiliated with the Latin American Packaging Union and the World Packaging Organisation.



Because Bolivia is a landlocked country and has problems with its roads, OBE is extremely important to its competitiveness with respect to packaging. And since February 2008 it has had its own offices, supplying technical assistance and information regarding packaging and specialized information of the international business chain.

Fulfilling its mission, in 2008 OBE organized the "1st International Fair of Packaging in Bolivia". This was the first time there was a specialized pavilion showing the packing and packaging technology of Bolivia and other countries. It was carried out from 19 to 28 September, within the framework of the International fair EXPOCRUZ 2008, and had the support of the Latin American Union of Packaging (ULADE), the Argentinean Institute of Packaging (IAE), and the Competitiveness Management Section of the ITC. Seventeen national and international exhibitors participated.



In November 2008, there were two important events in Cochabamba. Within the framework of the 1st Food Technology Fair, the OBE organized the Pavilion of Packaging and Packed Foods, where nine exhibitors of institutions related to packaging, materials suppliers and technology participated. Simultaneously the "2nd International Symposium of Export Packaging" was held, and for this, OBE had the support of USAID and the auspice of 3M, AG Logistics of Bolivia and Tetra Pak of Peru. The fair stands competition was won by "La Papelera", which is a packaging manufacturing company and an OBE member.

In 2009, one of the OBE's proposals included an ambitious work plan for the 1st National Contest of Packaging Design: "Priza OBE Star". The objective of this contest is to boost creativity and technological innovation of packaging in Bolivia, concerning users and manufacturers of packaging materials, graphic industry and related activities, through design. To heighten the competition, the OBE obtained WPO approval for the contest to be part of the WorldStar 2009 event.



Following the approach of the symposiums already carried out, the 3rd International Symposium of Export Packaging is scheduled for 14 to 15 August 2009 in the "El Conquistador" Conventions Centre of Los Tajibos Hotel in Santa Cruz de la Sierra. International and national experts will lecture on packaging and its trends. Additionally, the 2nd International Trade Show of Packing and Packaging of Bolivia will be carried out in Santa Cruz International Fair from 18 to 28 September, in a pavilion exclusive for national and international packaging organizations.



The OBE's mission is to improve competitiveness of the country's exportable offer and economy. It will encourage development of national capability in packaging, through research, training for professionals and non-professionals and institutional body building, to favour the transformation of the Bolivian productive sector, and increase added value of export goods. See www.envase.org.bo the official packaging site of Bolivia, launched by the OBE on July 07, 2008. A. A. Joshi is Head of T&E and M. C. Dordi is Head of C&P of the Indian Institute of Packaging.

Position Paper

Packaging is the answer to World hunger

Packaging can make a large difference to combat world hunger, and this is something WPO and IPPO (International Packaging Press Organisation) together want to emphasize in a first joint position paper signed by IPPO President Bo Wallteg and WPO General Secretary Carl Olsmats. The paper is available at <http://www.worldpackaging.org/paper-published/paperpublished.asp>.

This initiative has had quite a long preparation time, as it is important to get things right with these matters, and let members in IPPO and WPO have a say before publication. The target is to be published both in packaging trade press, packaging websites and regular daily press. We have learned that it is very difficult to get a message across through the daily press, where focus now have shifted from food and raw material scarcity a year ago to social and economical aspects on the current financial crisis today. Nevertheless have we received good media coverage and some examples of published articles are found in <http://www.worldpackaging.org/media-presence/media-presence.asp>.

Many IPPO members have helped to spread the joint view of WPO/IPPO through publication in own trade journals. Some IPPO members have also translated the article into local language and sent the articles to the daily press.

Another initiative in the same direction is the International Conference - More Technology, Safety & Quality, Less Hunger - from post harvesting to consumer, in Milan, in connection to Ipack-Ima 2009, <http://www.formazione.ilsole24ore.com/st/ipack-ima/eng/agenda.htm>. It was organised by the Ipack-Ima exhibition in collaboration with Il Sole 24ORE. A great networking event with opportunities to establish new contacts in this field. Many prominent speakers were also present to share their views on the theme. Representatives from e.g UNIDO, WTC, FAO were present in Milan, March 25th together with an interested audience. WPO was represented by several members and General Secretary Carl Olsmats.

WPO can make a difference to combat World Hunger!!

The position paper* content is as follow:

“Ever since World War II, global food production has increased faster than population growth, and food prices have remained relatively stable. Now, however, we are seeing a reversal of that trend – and we face a world food shortage. Populations are starving and food prices have risen dramatically. As a result, in many cases there is food but no money, or too much food in some places and too little food in other places.

The current food shortages have emerged quickly and with little warning. As always, several reasons are cited. The rising middle class in Asia and in other emerging markets with bigger purchasing power is one such reason, while another argument is the attractiveness and usage of food raw materials for other purposes such as cattle feed, fuels and materials. Some even say that the production of bio-plastics (plastics made from renewable raw materials) is prejudicial to food production. Crop failures, climate change, protective tariffs, and poor logistics are other factors that are said to affect global food supplies. Traditionally, such problems have been addressed by increasing land availability for agricultural use (through de-forestation), as well as plant breeding, artificial fertilization, spraying, irrigation, etc, to increase yield per hectare. Genetically modified plants are also used, but the issue is controversial and many consumers are skeptical.

Now we face new and bigger challenges that will also require new solutions. Consumers want their food to be as natural as possible, minimizing use of genetically modified plants, pesticides in production and limiting use of sugar and salt as a traditional means of preservation. Further de-forestation to create new farmland, could negatively affect the environment and the climate.

In order to cope with food shortages, a sharp increase in food availability is required by 2020 but such an increase need not mean a real increase in production. Large quantities of food are now wasted because of poor logistics, storage and packaging processes, as well as the lack of cold chain facilities. In some developing countries, it's estimated that as much as 50% of all food production is lost because of the scarcity of processing and packaging technology, while in industrialized countries, food is carelessly handled and between 25 and 50% is discarded because it has passed the 'best-before' date. Moreover, up to 10% of all fruit and vegetables shipped in the EU, worth some 10 billion euros, are destroyed. Enormous resources go into producing and transporting these goods which are lost partly because lack of adequate packaging.

This is one area where the global packaging industry can make a positive contribution to sustainability and fighting world hunger. The general public and politicians often see packaging as an environmental threat rather than a tool for sustainability. For instance, the usage of a few grams of plastic for packaging is often considered much worse than a kilogram of destroyed tomatoes, although the latter, taking into account all processes in production and logistics, in most cases affects the environment much more than packaging material.

Although there are continuous calls for the use of less packaging, the solution to these problems is perhaps to use more. That means larger numbers of packaging for more uses, but of course combined with a continued packaging weight reduction through better technology and process development for each individual package.

Ensuring that food produced in developing countries is effectively packaged would result in much larger quantities of food reaching the people. By adding adequate packaging, logistics and storage, yet more food could be delivered to those who most need it.

A high proportion of all drinks consumed in the world are unpacked. By packaging larger quantities of drinks, especially in developing countries, vital nutrients could reach more people, and diseases could be reduced through improved hygiene and food safety.

The global packaging industry has provided solutions for many of these problems.

As in any other industry, there are failures, but overall the packaging industry has worked successfully to optimise packaging solutions over past decades. In the current tough economic climate, with enormous pressure on margins, packaging buyers won't pay one cent extra for something that isn't required to protect and promote their products. While packaging cannot alone fully correct today's food shortages, it is an essential part of a long-term incremental process that will have to employ a blend of technologies and processes. It's true to say that the global packaging industry can contribute greatly to increased prosperity and sustainability in the world by ensuring that larger amounts of food reaches more consumers, preserved in a way that results in better quality and smaller losses."

** This document was produced under the partnership between IPPO (International Packaging Press Organization www.ippopress.com), through its President, Bo Wallteg, and WPO (World Packaging Organization www.worldpackaging.org) through its General Secretary, Carl Olsmats. IPPO is a friendly association with members all around the world; they are independent, professional journalists, writing for packaging magazines and newsletters.*

Country Report

An overview of the Greek packaging market

In the last five years the Greek packaging industry had an average growth of 4%, much above the European Union average. Food and beverage are the major customer sectors covering more than 55% of packaging consumption. The expected growth figure for 2009 is between 1% and 1.5%.

But the Greek packaging manufacturers are being affected by competition from (often subsidised) packaging producers in low-cost manufacturing locations, as well as the growing trend of multinational consumer goods producers to import goods from central manufacturing facilities outside of the country.

In addition, multinational producers are also said to be exerting significant downward pressure on packaging prices. The trend towards e-auctions has been noted in the country, with packaging companies forced to participate if they wish to remain on lists approved suppliers.

On the other hand, Greek packaging materials are exported to the Balkan countries, the Middle East and North Africa. Moreover, several Greek companies have established manufacturing facilities in the Balkans which is a fast expanding market area.

The Greek packaging industry has also realized that innovation and good manufacturing practices are strong weapons to overcome the competition from the low cost labour manufacturing countries. For that purpose, the Association of the



Greek Manufacturers of Packaging and Materials (AGMPM) is strongly promoting activities related to innovation.

Packaging consumption per material	2008 in € million	Annual growth 2004- 2008 %
Paper & board	302	3.5
Rigid plastics	248	6.5
Flexible plastics	386	5.7
Metal	398	3.1
Glass	64	0.5
Wood	44	2.5
Total	1,442	4.1

Packaging consumption by end sector	2008 in € million	Annual growth 2004- 2008 %
Food	540	4.7
Beverages	288	4.0
Healthcare	52	3.1
Other consumer	252	5.8
Industrial	220	2.3
Total	1,442	4.2

For more information about the Greek market contact Mr. Alexis Stassinopoulos from the Association of Greek Manufacturers of Packaging Materials (AGMPM) by e-mail info@pac.gr.

Around the world

One of the main objectives of WPO is to supply its members and the packaging community with useful information. Below we selected some issues that have been discussed by the packaging industry around the world.

About the world economy:

- how significant will the global economic slowdown be on the declining volumes, capacity utilization and pricing
- managing volume vs price
- over capacity (mill shuts, plant closures)
- restructuring cost base as volumes/demand declines (manufacturing facilities, personnel, product lines)

- financial liquidity
- the availability of finance for new projects – if available, what will the cost of capital be?
- short term liquidity availability to manage working capital
- credit worthiness of suppliers and customers
- the number of liquidations has increased significantly impacting both finances and supply
- what is the supply/financial risk at both suppliers and customers
- the importance of cash generation to survive - how can we generate more cash as an industry

About commodity prices:

- managing pricing with huge commodity price fluctuations;
- commodity cycles have been shorter and more extreme;
- margin retention as demand declines across low margin customers.

About increasing environmental pressure:

- process emissions into the atmosphere (volatiles);
- migration of chemicals from inks/varnishes through the board in food packaging;
- carbon foot printing in the packaging industry;
- recyclability/biodegradability/reusability of substrates.

About mergers and acquisitions:

- opportunities of acquisitions, disposals and mergers have increased as companies are in distress and need to survival.

About how promoting the value of packaging in the current environment:

- the value of packaging: cost versus value and benefits.

Source of information: WPO

Challenges on packaging supply and demand in Africa



ITC - International Trade Center current export packaging activities are focused on the packaging supply chains in the sub Saharan Africa, as well as on capacity building programmes addressing exporting small and medium scale enterprises and trade support institutions. The objective of these programmes is to improve the export competitiveness of the region by scaling up the capacity and capabilities of both the private and institutional packaging sector to serve the needs of the exporting industries.

Between 2006 and 2008, ITC conducted in-depth audits of the packaging supply chain in Cote d'Ivoire, Ghana, Kenya, Madagascar, Mali, Mozambique, Nigeria, Senegal and Tanzania, with the financial support of the Netherland Centre for the Promotion of Imports from Developing Countries (CBI).

Three seminars, to present the studies results, have already been held in Ghana, Kenya and Nigeria in 2008 and will be followed by others in Madagascar and Tanzania



in 2009. The seminars received a strong official support and satisfied the expectations of participants in all countries, who stressed the critical need of more events of this type and of packaging training programs.

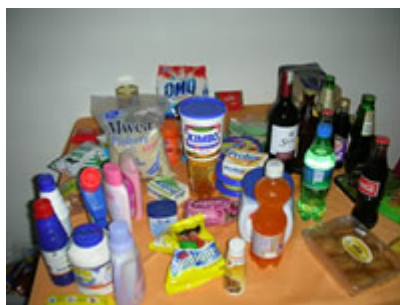
The main objectives of the seminars where:

- To disseminate the information on the current situation of the packaging sector in the national, regional and international contexts, and consider its main strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats;
- To upgrade the knowledge and understanding of participants on export packaging issues and requirements;
- To reinforce the dialogue between the public and private business sector on packaging issues;
- To discuss, recommend and prioritize the technical assistance needs for the packaging sector, i.e. projects, packaging initiatives and potential developments at national and regional levels, with particular focus on SMEs exporters of agro food and horticultural products



The recommendations for follow up projects and activities made during the seminars were analyzed with the counterpart organizing institutions and high level Government representatives, with a view to draw up draft action plans for the development of the packaging sector and identify possible intervention areas for ITC. To date the counterpart organizers in Ghana, Kenya and Nigeria have already endorsed and further elaborated the draft action plans and are expected to inform ITC on the progress of their implementation.

Copies of the country studies and a synthesis report "Packaging supply and demand in selected countries: situation, trends, perspectives and recommendations" will be available shortly on the ITC's packaging website: www.intracen.org/ep. Other packaging material is available for downloading. For more information on ITC's activities in the field of Export Packaging please contact Elisabeth Piskolti-Caldwell at piskoltie@intracen.org.



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