



Weekly Digest

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Editorial

Welcome to issue seven of the ICA's new weekly publication. This issue highlights the important role the ICA plays in developing supportive and enabling legislation for co-operative development around the world. We report on progress made since the signing of the Memorandum of Understanding with the ILO and provide some background on ILO Recommendation 193. Reports from two of our sectoral organisations, banking and tourism are also included.

As always we would welcome comments on the style and content of the newsletter.

Legislation: A Priority for the ICA

Legislation has always been a major focus of the ICA. A key concern is ensuring such legislation is supportive of co-operative principles.



At the global level the ICA established a Legislative Committee of the Board in 2000 comprised of the President, Vice Presidents and four members of the Board. Complementing this is an advisory legislative group which reports to the Board Committee. Active since early 2001, it consists of co-operative legal experts from all regions. The Legislative Advisory Group is chaired by Dr Hagen Henry, who is the author of numerous publications including the Guidelines on Co-operative Legislation which were submitted to the ICA General Assembly 2001 for comment, see www.ica.coop/ica/review/issue2b-%202001.pdf. He also participated in the ICA delegation to the ILO Conference as the ICA legal consultant where ILO Recommendation 193 was adopted.

To help further raise the profile of legislation within the ICA Dr Henry has agreed to be a regular contributor to ICA publications with periodic reviews on legislative trends.

The above photo is from the Legislative Forum held at the ICA General Assembly in Oslo last year. Pictured from left to right are Ole Gjems-Onstad, (Norway), Emanuel Kamdem (Cameroon), Hagen Henry (Germany), and Dante Cracogna, (Argentina).

COPAC: A Vehicle for Legislative Change

Outside of the formal ICA structure, the Committee for the Promotion and Advancement of Co-operatives, (COPAC) has played a key role in promoting enabling and supportive co-operative legislation. Established in 1971 as an inter-agency committee, COPAC's membership includes the ICA, Food and Agriculture Organization of



the United Nations (FAO), International Federation of Agricultural Producers (IFAP), International Labour Office (ILO) and the United Nations (UN). Its aim is to promote and coordinate co-operative development initiatives through policy coordination, information exchange and advocacy. The ICA's Deputy Director General Maria Elena Chávez Hertig also holds the position of COPAC Coordinator and is responsible for managing COPAC activities. Future editions of the Weekly Digest will carry regular reports on its activities. COPAC's website is www.copacgva.org.

Regional Legislative Groups and Initiatives

A number of legislative initiatives have been occurring within the ICA regions. The Co-operative Ministers' Conferences in Africa and the Asia/Pacific region are important forums for the development and dissemination of good legislative practice. ICA Europe has for a number of years had a Legislative Expert Group. Interesting work has also been done in the ICA Americas region. Within the MERCOSUR countries, a Specialised Meeting on Co-operatives or Reunión Especializada de Cooperativas (RECM) developed. Within RECM, a Legal Commission was created which recently examined tax and other issues relevant to co-operatives. The coordinator of the Legislative Commission is Professor Dante Cracogna from the University of Buenos Aires and President of Intercoop Editora Cooperativa of Argentina. Prof Cracogna was also the coordinator of the group of co-operative experts which drafted the Framework Law for Co-operatives in Latin America and is a member of the ICA Legislative Advisory Group.

Papers from Co-operative Ministers Conference Available Online

As previously reported, a very successful Co-operative Ministers Conference was held in New Delhi (India) in early February. The aim of the Ministerial Conference series is to create enabling legislation and policies in the countries of the Asia-Pacific region. It provides an opportunity for co-operative leaders to talk directly to Co-operative Ministers and officials from many countries in the region.

The papers and presentations from this, the 7th Asia-Pacific Co-operative Ministers Conference are now available on the ICA's ROAP website www.icaroop.coop/PubList.asp. Also, available is the Declaration agreed to by all the participants, including government Ministers and officials.



Among a range of interesting presentations is one by Tan Kin Lian from NTUC Income (Singapore) on the subject of *Surviving in a Globalised World: Co-operative Experience*. This presentation explains the strategy behind NTUC success. Another interesting presentation was made by Jürgen Schwettmann, Chief of the ILO's Co-operative Branch (see separate item below). The photo above shows ICA Board member Rahaiah Binti Baهران (Malaysia) addressing the conference.

ILO Recommendation 193 Explained

Regular readers of the Weekly Digest will be familiar with close working relationship which exists between the ILO Co-operative Branch and the ICA. Both are headquartered in Geneva within sight of each other. Both have long historic links. The first Director-General of the ILO in 1919 was Albert Thomas, a strong supporter of co-operatives and the ICA. This background is contained in a presentation made by the Head of the ILO Co-operative Branch, Jürgen Schwettmann (*photo opposite*) to the recent Co-operative Minister's Conference. Mr Schwettmann's presentation goes on to spell out in simple terms the development of the current ILO Recommendation, its key components, including the ICA principles and how it can be used within individual countries. See: www.icaroop.coop/pubDetails.asp?id=178.



Works Starts on ICA-ILO “Common Agenda”

The ILO and ICA signed a Memorandum of Understanding on 10 February in Geneva. Under the terms of the MoU resources are being committed for a number of joint projects under the banner, *ICA-ILO Common Agenda*. Concrete results have already started to flow.

A jointly funded ICA-ILO part time position has been created with the brief to assist in the preparation of a detailed framework for the ICA’s global campaign on poverty. Mr Guy Tchami, who has worked with the ILO Coop Branch for the past year, will be working directly with both ICA and ILO staff. The above photo shows Jan-Eirik Imbsen, ICA Director of Development, Dr Choi Chan Ho, ICA’s Agricultural Advisor based in Geneva and Guy Tchami meeting at ICA’s Geneva office to discuss the poverty campaign.



ICA Participation in Fair Trade Seminar



Euro Coop, the Network of European World Shops (NEWS), and European Fair Trade Association (EFTA) are organising a benchmarking conference on the topic *Fair Trade – A Contribution to Sustainable Development*, on 23 March at the European Parliament in Brussels. www.eurocoop.org/home/en/default.asp

Fair trade is now seen by many as a practical tool to assist in addressing the global issues of poverty reduction and sustainable development. The ICA has underlined the great potential of this innovative practice to contribute to the achievement of the UN’s Millennium Development Goals.

Dr Choi Chan Ho agriadvisor@ica.coop will be attending on behalf of the ICA.

Social Tourism and Co-operatives

The International Association of Tourism Co-operatives (TICA) is an international network of tourism co-operatives or companies owned by co-operatives. It is also one of the ICA’s nine sectoral organisations. TICA’s major aim is to promote the development of co-operative tourism locally, regionally, nationally, and globally. To achieve this goal, TICA actively collaborates with international organisations whose objectives are to defend and inform the traveller, in particular with the Bureau of Social Tourism (BITS), www.bits-int.org which is based in Brussels. TICA members benefit from partnership agreements with BITS, having access to information and participation in meetings. The Chairperson of TICA is Maurizio Davolio (Legacoop) who is also a member of the BITS Board.



The ICA President, Mr. Ivano Barberini will be a guest speaker at the next BITS Congress, to be held in Blankenberge, Belgium, 28-30 April 2004. Mr Davolio notes that “Mr Barberini’s participation at the forthcoming BITS Congress will contribute to the consolidation of the relationship between TICA and BITS as well as between the co-operative movement and non-profit associations in the field of tourism”. Mr Davolio can be contacted at mdavolio@tin.it. The photo above shows Maurizio Davolio, right along with ICA Board member, Jean-Claude Dettilleux and Caroline Naett, Secretary-General of the Groupement National des Coopératives (France) at the recent meeting of ICA Sectoral Organisations held in Geneva.

News from International Co-operative Banking Association (ICBA)

The International Co-operative Banking Association (ICBA) is one of the ICA's longest standing sectoral organisations. Its members are co-operative banks from more than 55 countries throughout the world. The current President is Eugeniusz Laszkiewicz from the National Association of Co-operative Banks in Poland, (*see photo opposite*).



ICBA recently circulated their first Information Bulletin for 2004. It includes member reports from Fédération de caisses Desjardins du Quebec (Canada), Crédit Mutuel (France), Crédit Coopératif Group (France) and Cooperativa Nacional de Ahorro y Crédito (Uruguay). The Bulletin also includes a lengthy report on the proposed new accounting standard IAS 32 which the ICBA feels will particularly affect co-operative banks. (Future issues of the Weekly Digest will report more fully on this issue.) The ICBA reports that it will also hold a seminar in conjunction with the ICA Regional Assembly for Europe in September 2004 in Warsaw (Poland). For more details about ICBA, please contact Mr Laszkiewicz biurowaw@kzbs.pol.pl

Putting Diversity on the Co-operative Agenda



ICA Deputy General, Maria Elena Chávez Hertig was invited to lead a workshop on gender equality from the international perspective at the first UK's Co-operative Group Diversity Conference in Manchester (UK). Ms Chávez Hertig's who is also Secretary of the ICA's Gender Equality Committee presented the ICA gender strategy and ICA's experience in promoting gender equality. She concluded by noting studies that show the business case for diversity. . Economically successful co-operatives need to embrace diversity and equality. The conference addressed

diversity from a variety of perspectives including gender, ethnicity, race, disabilities, sexual orientation and age.

ICA Youth Seminar in Malaysia

An ICA Regional Co-operative Youth Seminar 2004 will be held in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, 5-7 September 2004 in collaboration with the ICA Consumer Sub-Committee on University/College Co-operatives for Asia and the Pacific. It will be hosted by National Co-operative Organisation of Malaysia (ANGKASA). The main theme of the seminar is "Co-op Youth Participation in the Changing Environment". The participants will be youth leaders from all kinds of co-operative sectors or national youth coordinators of respective countries. Contact: Ms. Sharine Khoo sharine@angkasa.coop

Solidarity with Spanish Co-operators

The ICA Director-General, Iain Macdonald has written to ICA members in Spain. In the letter Mr Macdonald expresses his condolences on behalf of the international co-operative movement after the recent bombings in Spain. The text of the letter is reproduced below.

Dear Colleagues,

On behalf of ICA, may I express our sincere condolences to the people of Madrid and Spain, and to all those affected by last week's dreadful events. It is difficult to articulate the horror of such actions or to understand their purpose, but hopefully peace and justice will eventually prevail. I know all members of the global co-operative movement will be thinking of you at this difficult time. With heartfelt wishes,

Reminder: ICA Subscription Payments Due

Please note that ICA membership subscriptions are due by 31 March 2004. Please contact ICA (admin@ica.coop) if you have questions.

Copies of the Weekly Digest are archived on the ICA's website www.ica.coop.