



# Weekly Digest

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## Editorial

Welcome to issue sixteen of the Weekly Digest.

This week we report extensively on a series of co-operative meetings which took place in Washington DC (USA) last week. The key message to emerge is that there are many opportunities for furthering the cause of co-operation through much greater co-ordination of our efforts. The sharing of information and experience, plus on the ground collaboration will mean that we increase our effectiveness in serving our members. We are all winners if this occurs. This week we also report on recent ICA activities in Asia. Finally, our lead item announces the theme for this year's International Day of Co-operatives. As usual we would welcome your comments on the newsletter.

## Theme Set for 2004 International Day of Co-operatives

The Committee for the Advancement and Promotion of Co-operatives (COPAC) Board met in Washington last week and agreed on this year's theme for International Day of Co-operatives. It will be celebrated on 3 July 2004. Each year COPAC members, in particular ICA and UN choose a theme which links the co-operative movement's priorities with those of the United Nations agencies. The theme this year will be *Co-operatives for Fair Globalisation: Creating Opportunities for All*.

This year's theme is linked to the work of the *World Commission on the Social Dimension of Globalisation* which recently issued a report on its review of the globalisation process. It noted the critically important role that co-operatives can play in shaping the evolution of globalisation alongside other actors of civil society. Co-operatives can help change the current path of globalisation to one that puts people first; one which respects their rights, cultural identity and autonomy, and the empowerment of the local communities in which they live. Further information and background on the theme can be found at: [www.copacva.org/idc/2004](http://www.copacva.org/idc/2004).

## ICA Establishes Closer Links with US Co-operative Movement

Iain Macdonald, ICA Director-General and Maria Elena Chavez Hertig, Deputy Director-General visited ICA's members National Co-operative Business Association (NCBA), the National Co-operative Bank (NCB) and ACDI/VOCA to discuss how to better link ICA activities to the priority areas of US co-operatives. In addition a number of meetings with potential members representing the farmers, telecommunications and electricity co-operatives were also held. Positive outcomes are expected.

The above photo shows Paul Hazen, NCBA, Iain Macdonald, Maria Elena Chavez Hertig, ICA with Charles Synder, NCB.



## ICA to Link to US Policy and Legislative Initiative

Senior ICA staff attended a special meeting on legislation in Washington organised by its US members and including representatives from the Overseas Council Development Co-operation (OCDC), US Agency for International Development (USAID) and the Co-operative Service of the US Department of Agriculture. The focus of the meeting was a US initiative designed to create a more enabling environment including appropriate co-operative legislation in those countries where US co-operative development agencies are most active.



Discussion took place on the possible participation of the ICA in this project. ICA staff outlined recent ICA legislative initiatives, see [Weekly Digest 7](#) for a full report of these activities. The various international policies and guidelines on co-operatives were also discussed. ICA's Director for Development, Jan-Eirik Imbsen, and Regional Director for East, Central and Southern Africa, Bernard Kadasia, joined the ICA DG and DDG in these discussions. As a result of the meeting the ICA will be facilitating input of materials and contacts for the US project.

## ICA and Freedom from Hunger Agree to Work Together

Senior ICA staff met with Christopher Dunford, President of Freedom from Hunger whilst in Washington. The ICA and Freedom from Hunger (FFH) both share a commitment to global poverty reduction and a desire to reach larger numbers of poor women. The Washington meeting discussed strategic partnership ideas that would strengthen both organisations' goals in a number of ways. This includes exchanging information on the nature of both organisations' development programmes, as well as FFH's experience in working with co-operatives particularly savings and credit co-operatives. Both organisations are working in many of the same countries, so opportunities exist for a common approach. FFH agreed to link their staff with ICA's regional offices with a view to identifying joint activities



and projects. The photo above shows Freedom from Hunger President, Christopher Dunford with the ICA's, Iain Macdonald and Jan-Eirik Imbsen.

## ILO/ICA Meeting of Agencies

The 3<sup>rd</sup> ILO/ICA joint meeting of agencies was held in Washington on 26 May 2004. Over 30 participants from 20 development agencies in Europe and Americas attended. Huseyin Polat (ILO) and Jan-Eirik Imbsen (ICA) jointly facilitated the meeting.



The main objective of these ongoing joint agencies meetings is to share information and experiences among the major national and international agencies involved in co-operative development. The Washington meeting was notable for the active participation of a wide range of US co-operative development organisations. The size and extent of US funded international co-operative development efforts is impressive.

The meeting heard reports from all of the development agencies present. Also, the ICA reported on the Global Co-operative Campaign on Poverty which received general in-principle support. The need for research to inform any co-operative development programmes was noted as was the need to achieve greater co-ordination of development programmes. The next meeting of the joint agencies network will be held in Germany in January 2005. The photo above shows Mr. Mervyn Wilson, Chief Executive, Co-operative College, UK, making a brief concluding speech.

## COPAC Forum Opens the Door for World Bank Collaboration

World Bank representatives committed themselves in helping ICA and the co-operative movement put co-operatives back on the development agenda of the World Bank during the COPAC Forum on *Co-operatives and the Millennium Development Goals* in Washington on 27 May 2004.

In a frank exchange, representatives from 26 co-operative organisations and multilateral agencies learned that a 1993 World Bank study found co-operatives to be inefficient and non-viable enterprises. What is needed today is a strong political lobby by co-operatives on their representatives at the World Bank to recognise the significant contribution of co-operative to national economies both in the developed and developing countries, alongside a strategy of how co-operatives can help the Bank achieve its objectives.

A general overview of why co-operative enterprise was able to contribute to the MDGs was presented to the forum by Johnston Birchall, author of the soon to be published ILO-COPAC study, "*Co-operatives and the MDGs*". Bernard Kadasia, ICA ROECSA focused on co-operative participation in the Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP) process and the challenges faced by co-operatives, including the need for capacity-building initiatives. This theme was echoed by D.A. U.G. Dayananda, General Manager, Sri Lanka Co-operative Marketing Federation Ltd. (MARKFED) with regard to farmers' contributions.

Other speakers focused on the specific contributions of co-operatives in such areas as HIV/AIDS and access to credit. The role of the World Council of Credit Unions' international remittance programme was instanced. NCBA noted the role US co-operatives were playing in helping to fight poverty and provide access to credit and services through the US co-operative development programme. The principle of co-operation among co-operatives was also contributing to economic and social development. Links to copies of the presentations made can be found at: [www.copacgva.org/fora/washington2004](http://www.copacgva.org/fora/washington2004). For more information, contact Maria Elena Chavez Hertig, [copac@coop.org](mailto:copac@coop.org). Photo above shows US co-operative leaders with COPAC Coordinator and World Bank representative, Pierre Rondot.



## Strengthened Co-ordination through COPAC

Putting co-operatives on the development agenda, strengthening co-ordination among member activities, especially in co-operative development and continued focus on co-operative policy and legislation are COPAC's main areas of focus. COPAC's membership includes the ICA, International Labour Office (ILO), United Nations (UN), Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations (FAO) and the International Federation of Agricultural Producers (IFAP).



Apart from deciding the theme for the next International Co-operative Day, the Washington COPAC Board meeting agreed to a series of further actions. These included publishing the *ILO-COPAC Guide to Co-operative Legislation* in various languages; beginning preparations for the January 2005 Open Forum which will focus on *Co-operatives and Fair Trade*; supporting follow-up actions with the World Bank by its individual members; strengthening the COPAC website in the areas of policy and legislative links, as well as links to co-operative development projects. It was also agreed that 4<sup>th</sup> Joint Meeting of Agencies in early 2005 would be under the auspices of COPAC which would also assist in the follow-up of the 3<sup>rd</sup> ICA-ILO Joint Meeting of Agencies, elsewhere reported in this issue. Other areas addressed by the Board and of interest to ICA included co-operative statistics, youth and co-operatives, linking to the 2005 International Year of Microcredit and preparations for the 2005 celebrations for International Day of Co-operatives. In order to broaden its activities, the COPAC Board also decided to enlarge its membership to include co-operative development agencies. Contact: [copac@coop.org](mailto:copac@coop.org).



## ICA Involved in Developing Co-operatives in Cambodia

Continuing its focus on co-operative development in the least developed countries of the Asia-Pacific, the ICA Regional Office, New Delhi, has initiated efforts to strengthen agricultural co-operatives in Cambodia. Mr. Shil Kwan Lee, Regional Director and Mr. B.D. Sharma, Senior Consultant recently visited Cambodia. They met with senior officials of the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry to formulate an action plan to *Strengthen the Co-operative Institutional Framework* for the benefit of farmers and the rural community.



Earlier, rural co-operatives were destroyed by a 30-year long civil war. Now the Government has taken a conscious policy decision to promote agricultural co-operatives on a pilot basis. The success of these pilot co-operatives will pave the way for their country-wide replication and also for promotion of co-operatives in non-agricultural sectors. The ICA interventions will add value to the efforts of the Government to promote co-operatives. Areas in which the ICA support has been sought are (a) capacity building; (b) formulation of suitable legal framework for co-operatives; (c) management of business of co-operatives; (d) development of suitable co-operative credit systems; and (e) development of co-operative marketing systems.

Mr Sharma indicated that the process will start with a national workshop for sensitizing leaders of pilot co-operatives and government officials involved in co-operative promotion. Following this, senior policy makers and selected co-operative leaders will be sponsored for study visits of agricultural co-operatives in Thailand and Vietnam thereby exposing them to hands-on co-operative working and practices. A similar effort has also been initiated in Laos PDR, which Mr. Lee and Mr. Sharma visited during April 2004. The top photo shows Shil Kwan Lee and B.D. Sharma visiting new co-operatives in Cambodia.

## NACF re-elects Chung as Chairman

Mr. Dae-Kun Chung was re-elected as Chairman of the [National Agricultural Co-operative Federation](#) (NACF) in Korea on 25 May 2004 with overwhelming support from the presidents of 1332 member co-operatives who cast their votes. Mr Chung begins his second four-year term from 1 July 2004. The NACF is one of the ICA strongest Asian members.



Mr. Chung was first elected in 1999 and oversaw the establishment of the new NACF when the livestock and ginseng co-operatives merged with the former NACF in 2000. He served as the Chairperson of the organising committee for the ICA General Assembly 2001 in Seoul and has been on the ICA Board since 2001. The NACF is a multipurpose agricultural co-operative and bank. It is the largest co-operative in Korea and has over 2 million farmer members. The NACF's financial section includes banking, mutual credit and insurance services. In agriculture the NACF has key operations in marketing, value-added processing, farm supply and retail food stores throughout Korea.

Copies of the Weekly Digest are archived on the ICA's website [www.ica.coop](http://www.ica.coop)