



Weekly Digest

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Contents

- Editorial..... 1
- ICA Director-General Speaks on Co-operatives and Fair Globalisation. 1
- Board Meeting of ICA's Global Health Organisation Held in Canada 2
- Canadian Forum on Role of Health Co-operatives 2
- Australian and Japanese Co-operators visit ICA 3
- ICA Co-op Day Message Now Available in Several Languages..... 3
- Co-operative Communications Network Established in India 3
- ICA ROAP's Record of Training Success 4
- Extraordinary Efforts to Remain a Member 4
- The Tech Co-op, Partners with NCBA to Promote .Coop in Canada..... 4
- New President of Italian Consumer Co-operative Elected..... 4

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Editorial

Welcome to issue eighteen of the Weekly Digest. This week we can announce that the Digest will be also now be available in Spanish. This means that we are offering our weekly news service in three languages, English, Spanish and Portuguese. We are hopeful that other languages will follow. As usual, we would welcome your comments on the newsletter, in whatever language!

ICA Director-General Speaks on Co-operatives and Fair Globalisation

Iain Macdonald, ICA Director-General recently spoke about the theme chosen for this year's International Day of Co-operatives. "The choice of this year's theme, *Co-operatives for Fair Globalisation – Creating Opportunities for All* could not be more relevant."

"For some time I have been concerned by the movement's lack of visibility in what must be the big issue of the 21st century. The co-operative movement is nothing if it is not global. We are by nature inclusive and international. It is galling therefore, to see "globalisation" and "anti-globalisation" so misrepresented. Global trade, especially of a co-operative nature, has to be encouraged. What we are against, of course, is the way in which non co-operative trade, with its emphasis on minimal service and maximum profit, is distorting world trade and causing untold damage and misery – the opposite of our values.

I sympathise with some of the concerns about globalisation, but have become very frustrated at the way the anti-globalisation lobby has allowed itself to be manipulated into appearing to oppose everything and in favour of nothing. There is, therefore, a huge void, which we should be filling; one, which advocates fair and ethical global trade through co-operation.

The everyday activities of co-operatives are helping to build a fairer globalisation. Their fair trade initiatives, community focus and development activities, plus their advocacy and lobbying efforts are all helping. However, there is much more to do, particularly to encourage more co-operative trade among co-operators. The recent Co-operative Trade Fair in Beijing was a start. Another trade fair will take place in Sao Paulo, Brazil in August 2005.

Nevertheless, this is just the beginning. We at ICA see this theme as highlighting what is our main challenge – to put co-operative enterprise at the forefront of the globalisation debate, where we can influence the agenda and ensure our values and principles become the norm."



Board Meeting of ICA's Global Health Organisation Held in Canada



The International Health Co-operative Organisation (IHCO) is one of the ICA's nine global sectoral organisations. The Board of IHCO met in Ottawa on 11 June May. Chair of IHCO Dr José Carlos Guisado, Spain presided at the meeting, see photo below. The IHCO, established in 1996 includes members from Belgium, Brazil, Canada, Japan, Malaysia, Russia, Spain and Sweden.



Items discussed at the Board meeting included a decision to update the last major global survey of health and social care co-operatives. The United Nations in conjunction with the ICA carried out the study known as, *Co-operative Enterprise in the Health and Social Care Sectors* in 1997. Other items included approving Co-operatives UK as a new member of IHCO. The President also announced that Fundación Espriu, Spain would host a seminar on health co-operatives and development in 2005. Dr Guisado indicated that co-operative development agencies would be invited to participate. The objective would be to identify and co-ordinate organisations interested in linking health co-operatives with more general co-operative development efforts. This seminar will be co-ordinated with ICA development. Finally, the IHCO Board requested the ICA to follow-up the application for official status for the World Health Organisation. The latest IHCO News will shortly be available at www.ica.coop/ihco/.

The top photo shows IHCO Board members along with representatives from the host Canadian organisations, CCA, CCC and the Co-operatives Secretariat.

Canadian Forum on Role of Health Co-operatives

A special health forum coinciding with the meeting of the IHCO was held on 10 June in Ottawa, Canada. The forum titled *Health Service Co-operatives: An International Perspective* was organised by the Canadian Co-operative Association (www.coopscanada.coop), the Conseil de la Coopération (www.ccc.coop) and the Canadian Government's Co-operatives Secretariat (www.agr.gc.ca/policy/coop/). It included presentations on the role of health co-operatives in Canada, Japan, Spain and Sweden.



Ms Gabriela Sozánski, photo opposite, the ICA's European Regional Director and Secretary of IHCO made a presentation on *Health Co-operatives: A Worldwide Perspective*. Drawing on the 1997 UN survey, she highlighted that health co-operatives operate in over 50 countries, serving at least 100 million households worldwide! In Brazil one third of all doctors are in health co-ops with over 11 million users. In Colombia, ICA member Saludcoop serves 6 % of the population in 750 cities. In Japan 119 co-ops, have preventive health care operations serving over 2.5 million people. For more information, please contact Gabriela Sozánski, sozanski@ica.coop.

Australian and Japanese Co-operators visit ICA

The latest series of visitors to the Geneva office of the ICA included Mr Uri Windt, Chair of ACCORD, the ICA's only Australian member. The Australian Centre for Co-operative Research and Development ACCORD (www.accord.org.au) is a university-based centre dedicated to researching co-operatives and the broader social economy in Australia and internationally.

The meeting discussed ACCORD's current activities and ways in which it could use its research skills to more effectively collaborate with the ICA. ACCORD's current research includes examining membership in a range of co-operative and mutual organisations, analysis of the performance of co-operatives and capital raising options for co-operatives.

The meeting was also an opportunity for Garry Cronan, ICA's Communications Manager to catch up with his former ACCORD colleague. Garry was ACCORD's General Manager prior to joining the ICA in Geneva. The photo opposite shows, Uri Windt, centre, with the ICA's Deputy Director-General Maria Elena Chávez Hertig and Garry Cronan.



A delegation from JA Takikawa Agricultural Co-operative from Hokkaido in Japan also recently visited the



ICA. JA Takikawa is a member of Zen-Noh, one of the ICA's Japanese members. The leader of the delegation, Mr Masamitsu Kudoh explained the reason for the visit. "The recent promotion of trade liberalisation worldwide has meant that Japanese agriculture needs to

modernise, learn to co-operate more, and be as competitive as possible". The delegation received a detailed briefing on the role of the ICA, plus an overview on recent global agricultural trends. The above photo shows the delegation including leader, Masamitsu Kudoh, second from left, front row along with ICA Director-General, Iain Macdonald third from right and ICA Agricultural Advisor, Dr Choi first on the right, front row.

ICA Co-op Day Message Now Available in Several Languages

The ICA's 82nd International Co-operative Day message is now available in a range of languages on our website; see www.ica.coop/ica/ica/coopday. At this stage, the message is in English, French and Spanish all official ICA languages. As well with the help of our members, the message is also available in Catalan, Czech, Portuguese and Romanian.

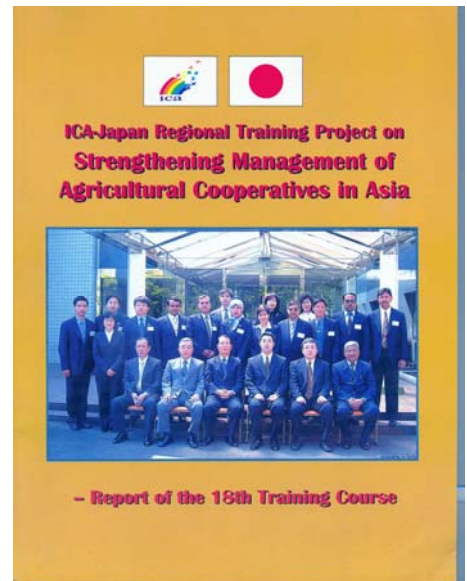
Co-operative Communications Network Established in India

A new network of co-operative communicators has recently been established in India. The *National Committee on Public Relations in the Co-operative Sector* is under the leadership of Mr T. D. Janardhan Rao, erstwhile Chairman, National Co-operative Agricultural Rural Development Banks' Federation. The committee comprises PR professionals and management representatives of the co-operative sector in India. Co-operative organisations represented on the Committee include - IFFCO, NCUI, NCHF, NAFCUB. The objective of the Committee is to review the status of public relations and communications in the co-operative sector and formulate effective strategies accordingly.

ICA ROAP's Record of Training Success

A new report on the recent 18th Training Course for agricultural co-operative managers held in Asia has been released. This series of courses run by the ICA's Regional Office for Asia-Pacific (ICA ROAP) has been running since 1986. It has received long term funding support from the Japanese Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries (MAFF) along with the active collaboration of the Central Union of Agricultural Co-operatives (JA-ZENCHU) in Japan and the Institute for the Development of Agricultural Co-operation in Asia (IDACA) in Tokyo.

Since the programme started in 1986, there have been 18 courses for 267 participants from 14 Asian countries. This represents a long-term investment in the development of the co-operatives and their future leaders. It demonstrates the role the ICA can play in effective co-operative development and institutional building.



Extraordinary Efforts to Remain a Member

The ICA has recently received outstanding membership subscriptions for 3 years from one of its West African members. The Union Régionale des Entreprises Coopératives de la Zone des Savanes de Côte d'Ivoire (URECOS-CI) is based in a northern area of Côte d'Ivoire controlled by rebel forces. The co-operative is a regional federation involved in agriculture, collection, marketing and promotion of cotton. In this region, the government administration and banks have not been able to function normally. However, representatives of the co-operative have recently managed to travel to the ICA office in neighbouring Burkina Faso to personally remit, in cash the outstanding ICA membership -- an act of solidarity to the international co-operative movement and one, which shows how much our members value ICA membership.



The Tech Co-op, Partners with NCBA to Promote .Coop in Canada

Speaking recently at the AGM of the Canadian Co-operative Association, Paul Hazen, President & CEO of the USA's National Co-operative Business Association and CEO of dotCoop announced a partnership with The Tech Co-op. Its purpose is to market .coop Internet domain names in Canada. Jean-Yves Lord, Executive Director of the CCA, promotes .coop to his members. "For co-ops around the world, .coop web and e-mail addresses offer a way to reinforce their difference in the marketplace," said Lord. "Surveys show that consumers trust and prefer to do business with co-ops. A .coop address helps consumers find these trusted businesses online." The ICA is a long time supporter and promoter of dotCoop.

New President of Italian Consumer Co-operatives Elected

The national board of COOP-Consumer in Italy recently unanimously elected Mr Aldo Soldi as its new President. A long time co-operator Mr Soldi has worked in various positions at Coop Toscana Lazio before becoming its President in 1999. He has a university degree in political science. His election represents the beginning of a reorganisation process for the Italian consumer co-operative movement aimed at strengthening its role and leadership.



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