



Weekly Digest

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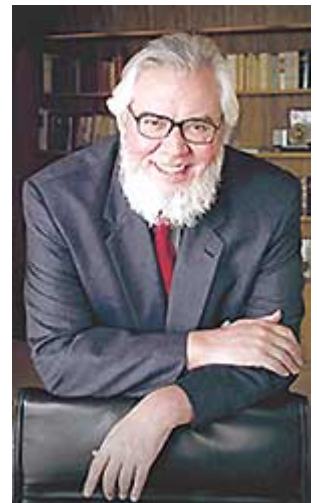
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Editorial

Welcome to issue nineteen of the Weekly Digest. This week we lead with the ILO's International Co-operative Day message. This is the first time the message has been personally delivered by the ILO Director-General – an acknowledgement of both his personal commitment and the importance of the recently signed MOU between the ILO and the ICA. We also highlight the centenary anniversary of the Indian co-operative movement - one of the ICA's oldest members, plus a range of other ICA activities and news. As usual, we would welcome your comments on the newsletter.

ILO Issues Statement for International Co-op Day

The Director-General of the International Labour Organisation, Juan Somavia, see photo opposite, has issued the following statement,



“The ILO is honoured to join the international co-operative movement in celebrating the 82nd ICA International Co-operative Day, and the 10th UN International Day of Co-operatives. I commend your initiative in devoting this day to the leading challenge of our time - building a fair globalisation that creates opportunities for all. The co-operative movement has an important role to play in achieving this objective.

Two years ago, the ILO established the World Commission on the Social Dimension of Globalisation. We brought together 26 prominent people who reflected all sides of the debate. From divergent voices, a converging view emerged: globalisation can and must change. Their Report, entitled *A Fair Globalisation: Creating Opportunities for All*, acknowledges globalisation's potential for good – promoting open societies, open economies, more opportunities and a freer exchange of goods, knowledge and ideas. But it also points to the deep-seated and persistent imbalances in the current workings of the global economy.



One of the Report's key messages is that globalisation begins at home - successful globalisation – a people centred globalisation - demands successful localization based on sound national and local policies. The Report also calls for fair rules in the global economy and for better global governance to create the space for effective national action.

Co-operatives can be highly instrumental in enabling and empowering women and men to seize the opportunities created by globalisation and in providing a buffer against its downside. Deeply rooted in local communities, they are also part of a global movement representing 800 million households worldwide. As business organisations, they contribute to economic development.

.....continued on page 2

ILO Co-op Day Message continued.....

“Co-operatives open up market opportunities for the smallest producer. They harness local comparative advantages and draw on local strengths. Guided by human and social values, they draw on collective strength to promote the well-being of members, their families and their communities.

Co-operative organisations give members voice in national, regional and global debates. They are important advocates for a globalisation, which recognises and respects the rights, aspirations, needs and identity of people. They can also take concrete action to realize this goal. And there is much scope for partnerships within and beyond the co-operative movement guided by principles of fairness and solidarity. The ILO's Recommendation No. 193 on the Promotion of Co-operatives and the *Memorandum of Understanding*, which we signed earlier this year with the ICA, provide a firm foundation for our own partnership and engagement with the global co-operative movement. We look forward to working together to promote decent lives and livelihoods for women and men, to break into the cycle of poverty and to make steady progress towards a fair and inclusive globalisation.” See www.copacgva.org/idc/ilo-idc2004

ICA Accounting Group Gets Down to Business

The 2003 ICA General Assembly in Oslo resolved to create a special working group to develop a financial procedures manual. It was to be based on best practice and designed for use by all ICA staff, both globally and in the regions. The objective is to have financial processes that are more consistent throughout the ICA thus ensuring better reporting and accountability. Finance Director, Guy Malacrida, see photo opposite, chairs the working group, which reports to the ICA's Audit and Control Committee. It includes Niklas Widebeck, HSB Sweden, Phil Holmes, Co-operatives UK, and Edmondo Belbello, Coopfond, Italy. The working group held their first meeting in Geneva on 27 May 2004. As a first step in developing the manual, the group has decided to compile a detailed list of current procedures applying throughout the ICA. A questionnaire is being sent to all ICA Regional Offices to help gather this information. The group's next meeting is 15 September 2004. Contact malacrida@ica.coop



More on Fair Globalisation and the Role of Co-operatives



Robby Tulus see photo opposite, former ICA Regional Director for Asia-Pacific and one of the organisers of the recent successful Beijing International Co-operative Trade Fair believes that co-operative to co-operative (C2C) trade has an important contribution to make in helping to realise a fairer globalisation.

He said “The spirit of the Beijing Co-op Trade Fair, and also the forthcoming Brazil Co-op Trade Fair will, if we can sustain the growing joint global purchasing efforts between co-ops, help address the unfair realities of global trade outlined at the recent UNCTAD XI conference in Sao Paulo on June 18”. Mr Tulus goes on to quote from [The Spirit of Sao Paulo](#) declaration issued at the conclusion of the UNCTAD XI meeting:

"While globalisation has posed important challenges and opened up new opportunities for many countries, its consequences have been highly unequal between countries and within countries.....Most developing countries, however, especially African countries and the (other) Least Developed Countries, have remained on the margins of the globalisation process. They still face major challenges for realisation of their economic potential and the incorporation of large masses of unemployed into the productive sectors."

He concludes, “fair globalisation is what co-operatives can contribute - avoiding the obstacles sometimes created by discriminatory government policies, allowing north-south as well as south-south C2C trade.” Robby Tulus can be contacted on rtulus@magma.ca

Japanese Co-operatives Set Vision for Future

The Japanese Consumer Co-operative Union (JCCU) held their 54th General Assembly in Tokyo on June 17 and 18, 2004. Over 880 delegates from co-operatives throughout Japan were in attendance. The JCCU is a long time member and supporter of the ICA. The conference received a message from the ICA President, Ivano Barberini.



Mr. Ogura Shugo, JCCU President, see photo opposite, made the opening address. Mr Shugo in speaking about the challenges facing the Japanese consumer movement noted, “we must stand up to these challenges with the ideal of *creating a more human lifestyle and sustainable society through the concerted efforts of individual citizens* which is written in the JCCU’s Ideals and Vision for the 21st Century.”



Delegates attending the Congress spoke out on the issues of world peace, campaign for food safety, protection of consumer rights, welfare activities as well as the business issues such as structural reform of business, compliance, business collaboration among co-op societies and mutual insurance during the two days of breakout sessions and the plenary session. The discussions focused mainly on the JCCU's 9th National Midterm Plan for 2004-2006.

UNDP Looking at Co-operatives to Help Reach MDGs

Mr Mark Malloch-Brown, Administrator of the United Nations Development Programme recently briefed NGO representatives, including the ICA in Geneva on plans for achieving the Millennium Development Goals. Ultimately, progress will only be made if action is taken at the country level, he said. UNDP will not be leading the process nor financing it, but rather is providing intellectual input through the Millennium Project (www.unmillenniumproject.org).



Maria Elena Chavez Hertig, Deputy Director-General, asked if UNDP had given consideration to the co-operative model of enterprise noting that case studies were soon to be published on how co-operatives were indeed making contributions to many of the MDGs. He said, “for the provision of services, co-operatives are exactly the type of model which UNDP is looking at to reach the MDGs”. This was a component of the public-private partnership initiatives that UNDP was seeking to promote.

Mr. Malloch-Brown also noted that 2005 will be a “make or break” year for the MDGs if the world is going to be reach the goals by 2015. A solid decade of investment in development will be needed, he said. 2005 will also mark the five-year review by government heads of states and will agree on a growth plan. He noted that NGOs had a critical role in bringing the message of the MDGs to the people and he and the UNDP were confident that the MDG could be achieved by 2015.

New President of Canadian Co-operative Movement

The Canadian Co-operative Association has a new president. It is Dave Sitaram from Credit Union Central of Ontario. He was elected at the CCA’s Annual General Meeting, June 19 in Gatineau, QC. Mr Sitaram has a long record of involvement in the Canadian Credit Union movement.

Mr. Sitaram replaces Glen Tully, who stepped down from the Board after serving two three-year terms, including three years as President.



Indian Co-operative Movement Celebrates Centenary

This year, in March 2004, the Indian Co-operative Movement has completed a century of its services to the nation. Starting with a limited spectrum of rural credit dispensation in 1904, the co-operative sector of India has expanded tremendously and emerged as a significant component of national economy. With a wide network of more than half a million co-operatives and membership of 230 million spreading from



village to tertiary levels, the co-operative movement has acquired commanding heights in the spheres of agriculture, handlooms and handicrafts, finance and banking, distribution of consumer goods, etc.

Besides economic development, other significant contribution of the co-operative movement in India has been the creation of good public leadership. A sizeable number of members of the Indian Parliament and Provincial Assemblies have been associated with the co-operative movement.

To commemorate the achievement of co-operatives, the National Co-operative Union of

India has constituted a high level committee for the Centennial Celebrations from village to national levels. All the sectoral federations at secondary, provincial and national level have been impressed upon to undertake centennial celebrations in a befitting manner.

Apart from organising seminars, conferences, discussions, debates, etc., important publications will also be brought out. These include “Success Stories of Co-operative Movement during 100 Years”; “A Directory of Research on Co-operation”; and “A Directory of First Co-operative in all the States”. The celebrations will culminate into a National Co-operative Congress to be held in December, 2004.

As a part of the centenary celebrations, the National Federations of State Co-operative Banks of India, one of the members of the ICA in India, convened a national conference of co-operative banks to reflect on the achievements of rural co-operative credit system during the last 100 years and to formulate strategies to strengthen rural credit system in the context of the changing environment. The top photo shows a scene from these celebrations. ICA Board member Dr Sisodia is pictured on right of photo.

“The Indian Co-operative Movement has been part of the ICA family since 1900 and will continue to be very active ICA members”

B.D. Sharma, ICA ROAP Consultant and former Director

Canadians Suggest New ICA Co-operative Principle?

In addition to electing a new president, the recent CCA Annual Conference unanimously agreed that when amendments to the International Co-operative Principles are next considered, the CCA would advocate adding a principle for the fair treatment of co-operative employees. The Co-operative Housing Federation of Canada put the resolution for the new principle. Their proposed new principle is: *Co-operatives treat their employees fairly and value their contribution to the co-operative movement.*

Latest ICA Review Now Available

The latest edition of the ICA Review, Volume 97 No 1/2004 has just been published. The issue includes nine papers from a number of recent co-operative research conferences. Copies of the Review are currently being sent to members and subscribers. A pdf version will be shortly available on our website. A Spanish language version will also be available shortly. Photo is of Akira Kurimoto, Chair of ICA’s Global Research Committee and one of the edition’s editors.

