



# Weekly Digest

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## Editorial

Welcome to the twenty eighth issue of the Weekly Digest. Each week I receive a steady stream of co-operative newsletters and journals across my desk. Many are outstanding publications reporting on sectors of co-operative activity in various countries and languages. The audience for these publications is largely from within the co-operative movement. We tend as a movement to spend a lot of our limited communication resources talking to the converted. This is as it should be, our principles require us to educate ourselves about co-operation, but we need to make a greater effort to educate the world. We have to stop being one of the world's best kept secrets! This week we report on some activities designed to help do that. As usual we would welcome your comments. Remember, it's your ICA so let's hear from you!

## ICA Considering Co-operative Certification Process

The ICA at its last Board meeting in Warsaw on 19-20 September 2004 considered a Canadian proposal for a global process on certification of compliance with co-operative practices.

Glen Tully, ICA board member and former chair of the Canadian Co-operative Association (CCA) raised the possibility of the ICA becoming involved in the application of the new co-operative compliance tool at the international level. The board asked the Director-General Iain Macdonald, *photo opposite*, to examine this option.

The Coopérative de développement régional Québec-Appalaches (CDRQA) is leading the development of the certification process. The CDRQA has received the support of the Conseil de la coopération du Québec (CCQ), with whom it is working in close collaboration. The compliance tool is based on: the research of Professor Daniel Côté, of the Centre de gestion des coopératives, HEC, (Desjardins centre for studies in the management of financial services co-operatives); certification models developed by ISO; various co-operative and social audit models developed around the world; and CDRQA's 20 years of experience in co-operative development. Gérard Perron, executive director of CDRQA, is coordinating the development of the certification tool.

Iain Macdonald is hopeful such a model may have wider application globally. "I have asked the newly formed ICA Governance Group to consider this as part of their work programme," he said. "Having access to such a tool which can validate and demonstrate the distinctiveness of co-operatives in a consistent and measurable way throughout the world is something that the ICA believes may be of real value to our members" he concluded. For more information contact Iain Macdonald [Iain.Macdonald@ica.coop](mailto:Iain.Macdonald@ica.coop)



## Planning Underway for 2005 International Co-operatives Day

Co-operatives worldwide have been celebrating International Co-operatives Day (IDC) since 1923, when the day was initiated to strengthen the unity of the ICA and as a means of publicising the co-operative movement worldwide. In 1992, the United Nations General Assembly proclaimed the first Saturday of July 1995 to be United Nations International Day of Co-operatives, marking the centenary of the establishment of the International Co-operative Alliance. In 1994, it invited the international community to observe this Day annually, starting from 1995. In this way the United Nations intended its own celebrations to support and extend those of the international co-operative movement.

The theme for each year's co-operative day is decided by the Committee for the Promotion and Advancement of Co-operatives ([COPAC](#)). COPAC's membership includes ICA, ILO and the United Nations, amongst others. Work has commenced on identifying an appropriate theme for 2005. It is intended that the theme be decided early to enable the ICA and its members to have sufficient time to use the day to promote co-operatives more widely. Themes from earlier years have included:

- 2004: Co-operatives for Fair Globalization: Creating Opportunities for All
- 2003: Co-operatives Make Development Happen! Their contribution to the UN's MDGs
- 2002: Society and Co-operatives: Concern for Community
- 2001: The Co-operative Advantage in the Third Millennium
- 2000: Co-operatives and Employment Promotion
- 1999: Public Policy and Co-operative Legislation
- 1998: Co-operatives and the Globalisation of the Economy
- 1997: The Co-operative Contribution to World Food Security
- 1996: Co-operative Enterprise: Empowerment for People-Centred Sustainable Development
- 1995: The ICA Centennial and the Next 100 Years of International Co-operation

## ICMIF Seeking New CEO

Hans Dahlberg, *photo opposite*, the long standing CEO of the International Co-operative and Mutual Insurance Federation (ICMIF) has announced his intention to retire in July 2005.

ICMIF is one of the oldest and most successful of ICA's global sectoral organisations. It has 140 members representing insurance co-operatives and mutuals in 67 countries. Together, they represent approximately 7% of the gross collected premiums in the international insurance market. 32% of members are based in Europe, 28% in Asia, 39% in the America and 1% in Africa.



A selection committee has been formed to choose the new CEO. ICMIF has written to its members seeking applications from suitably qualified applicants. Applications need to be submitted by 5 December 2004. For further details please contact the Chairman of ICMIF Jean-Louis Bancel [jeanlouis.bancel@mutualite.fr](mailto:jeanlouis.bancel@mutualite.fr)

## WOCCU CEO Announces Resignation



World Council of Credit Unions (WOCCU) recently announced the resignation of President/CEO Arthur Arnold, *photo opposite*, effective 1 January 2005. WOCCU is one of the ICA's four international members.

After five years at the helm of the international credit union organisation Arthur Arnold decided not to extend his employment contract with WOCCU. He will become the new CEO of FMO (Finance for Development) at the International Development Bank of the Netherlands. He said "we have come a long way with WOCCU during these last five years. Today it is a very different WOCCU from five years ago: stronger from all points of view and well respected in the world for creating value for its member organizations, their credit unions and their members," The WOCCU board is forming a search committee to replace Arnold.



## Workshop on “Strengthening Agricultural Co-operatives in Cambodia”



Cambodia is one of the least developed countries of the Asia-Pacific region. Our Regional Office for Asia Pacific (ICA ROAP) has been assisting with co-operative development efforts in that country.

ICA ROAP recently sponsored a national 2 day workshop in Cambodia on the topic of strengthening agricultural co-operatives. Nearly 60 participants attended, including chairpersons of pilot co-operatives, senior government officials, representatives of Rural Development Bank, community based organisations and international NGOs. Representatives of FAO and JICA also participated. The workshop was opened by the Thai Minister of Agriculture. Presentations were made by agricultural experts from Thailand, the Republic of Korea, and the Cambodian Ministry of Agriculture of Cambodia. ICA ROAP Regional Director, Shil Kwan Lee, and ICA ROAP senior consultant, B.D.Sharma also made presentations.

After two days of intensive discussions the workshop prepared a plan specifying action points regarding agricultural co-operatives. Participants have formulated practical recommendations on these components that will form the basis of strategy for the development of agricultural co-operatives in Cambodia. Both the government and farmers organisations are very supportive of co-operatives. Contact P Nair [nair@icaroap.coop](mailto:nair@icaroap.coop) for more information. *(The above photo shows workshop participants with Shil Kwan Lee and B.D. Sharma.)*

## Asian Co-operative Women Call for Greater Representation

A meeting of co-operative women leaders in Asia has called for at least 30 % representation for women on the boards of all ICA members in the Asia-Pacific region.

The call was made at a recent 3 day seminar and networking programme for co-operators responsible for the advancement of women in co-operatives in the Asian region held in Bangalore, India. The programme is supported by ICA-Asia & Pacific and the National Co-operative Union of India. Its objective is to provide a common meeting ground and support for Asian co-operative women leaders. The programme also seeks to share success stories and best practices among women leaders and build support networks across the region. The 3 day workshop was attended by 30 co-operators from India, Malaysia, Iran, Singapore, Sri Lanka and Nepal. The recommendations of the workshop including that on gender representation will be presented to the forthcoming ICA Regional Women Forum to be held in Chiang Mai on 30 November 2004. Contact Mrs.Savitri Singh, [savitrisingh@icaroap.coop](mailto:savitrisingh@icaroap.coop) secretary of the ICA Regional Women’s Committee and the co-ordinator of the programme for more information. *The above photo shows Ms. Kanti Singh, Minister in the Indian Government with ICA ROAP officials.*



## “Co-op News” from UWCC

The University of Wisconsin Centre for Co-operatives (UWCC) in the USA runs a co-operative news aggregation service. The “*Co-op News from UWCC*” was started in early 2001. The service is designed to link subscribers to the most up to date news stories about co-operatives from around to the world. It is also provides an insight into how different media throughout the world report on co-operative activity – both good and bad. UWCC online activities were partially an outgrowth of an early Internet-technology joint project with ICA (the Co-op “gopher” site).

*Co-op News from UWCC* averages 250 stories per month, and archives the items for 6 months. At any one time there are usually about 1500 links to news stories on the UWCC site see <http://www.wisc.edu/uwcc/> UWCC have also recently begun linking to French, Spanish and Italian language stories. For more information please contact UWCC Acting Director, Anne Reynolds *photo above* [reynolds@aae.wisc.edu](mailto:reynolds@aae.wisc.edu) Anne Reynolds is also a member of the recently formed ICA Governance Working Group which will be closely examining corporate governance within the ICA.



## New Media Co-op Formed



**mediacoop**

Legacoop have recently established a new sectoral association for co-operatives in the media sector. The new association called Mediacoop was formally established in Rome, at a Congress on 7-8 October

2004. Over 370 organisations of different cultural and political orientation (co-operatives, non profit societies, associations) have joined the new association. These enterprises are active throughout Italy in the book trade (sale and production), graphic design activities, typographic and advertising, radio and television as well as video and movie production.

"In an environment characterized by a worrisome and increasing deficit of pluralism in the national media and communications generally," - said the President of Legacoop, Giuliano Poletti, at the opening session of the Congress - "the Association has the goal to develop this sector, stimulating and protecting the peculiarity of the co-operative and non-profit communication activity as an entrepreneurial form. It will also be able to protect the autonomy of the press and to guarantee the independence of the information." Legacoop is one of the ICA's most active members. Contact [s.marcone@legacoop.coop](mailto:s.marcone@legacoop.coop)

## French Co-operation – The Stories of Men and Women



A new book *Co-operators, Two Centuries of Co-operative Practice* is due to be published in April 2005. The book is a contribution to the history of co-operation in France, including its international dimension.

Co-operation will be presented through biographies of the women and men who have played a key role in its founding and development. Over 200 co-operators are portrayed, offering an inside and practical view of how co-operation developed in France. French co-operatives today employ over 700,000 people in 21,000 enterprises. The book, in French is written by historian Patricia Toucas and will be available from Groupement National de la Cooperation (GNC) [gnc@enterprises.coop](mailto:gnc@enterprises.coop)

## Classic Co-op Text Republished

The University of Wisconsin Co-operative Extension Publications has revised the reference book *Co-operatives: Principles and Practices in the Twenty-First Century*. It can be downloaded at

<http://www.wisc.edu/uwcc/info/pubs/schaars.htm>

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