



Weekly Digest

Issue 39

11 April 2005

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www.ica.coop

Co-operative success—key theme at forthcoming General Assembly

The 2005 ICA General Assembly promises to be one of the most interesting yet.

This week's digest contains a special four page feature about the General Assembly to be held in Cartagena, Colombia, South America on 18-23 September 2005.

The theme of the General Assembly is *Co-operative Values: A competitive asset*



in a globalised economy .

The GA will showcase co-operatives which have made their co-operative identity a key part of their success in meeting the challenges of a globalising world.

As usual there will be numerous associated events, seminars, workshops etc. We look forward to seeing you in Cartagena.

See pages 8-11 for details.

Youth ask movement to honour pledge

Members of the ICA Youth Network have called on all ICA members to honour the pledge they made at the last ICA General Assembly in Oslo in 2003. The commitment was to increase the representation of youth within the delegations attending the General Assembly.

Jo Bibby-Scullion, ICA Board representative on behalf of the ICA Youth Network said "the international co-operative movement needs to take seriously its responsibility to the next generation of young co-operators. We want to see many more youth delegates actively participating in the global and regional forums of the ICA".

To further encourage

members to help younger people (under 35) attend the GA, the ICA has decided to waive the GA registration fee for youth conference delegates also wanting to attend the GA.

A special youth conference will also be held as part of the next General Assembly.

The ICA Youth Network has become increasingly active over the last year. It now has over 100 members from 20 countries and is growing rapidly. A number of initiatives have commenced and a detailed strategy is being developed. A special planning meeting was recently held in Geneva see page 5. Contact Jo Bibby-Scullion

s0347030@sms.ed.ac.uk



Jo Bibby-Scullion

"...All members attending the next General Assembly should try to include at least one young person in their delegation...."

Jo Bibby-Scullion

From the editor's desk



Welcome to the thirty ninth issue of the Digest.

Regular readers will have noticed that we have taken a break over the Easter period. As a result, the digest is a little longer this week. Next week we return to our regular format and schedule.

In this issue, we include as part of our special features section details on the forthcoming General Assembly in Cartagena, Colombia this September. It is set to be one of the best yet. So, make sure you register soon and book

your accommodation to ensure that you can enjoy this delightful Caribbean location along with the 1500 other delegates expected to attend.

We also report on a series of planning meetings held in both head office and the regions. You will see that we are proceeding in a systematic way to put into place detailed and very public accountability mechanisms. We have also recently completed staff reviews with some resulting restructuring, which we report on.

We are also trying to expand the digest to include specific news on the various ICA sectoral organisations. This will become a regular feature.

Finally, an update is provided on the tsunami reconstruction process.

As usual, we would welcome your comments on the style and content of the digest.

Garry Cronan

cronan@ica.coop

Yearly planning processes underway

“...the objective is co-ordination between the plans developed at regional level and overall global priorities ...”

Each year the ICA undertakes detailed planning in each of its regions and at its global headquarters in Geneva.

The process is designed, in part, to ensure that there is co-ordination between the plans developed at a regional level and overall global priorities of the ICA.

During February and March Jan-Eirik Imbsen, Director of Development and Guy Malacrida, Director of Finance visited three of the ICA's four regional offices to assist in this process.



The key global priorities are ensuring a degree of financial consistency and accountability; review and discussion on development plans and other work programmes and general co-ordination of regional office activities. Contact Jan-Eirik Imbsen imbsen@ica.coop

Above from left, Guy Malacrida, Jan-Eirik Imbsen, Gabriella Sozanski, ICA Director knowledge Management, Manuel Mariño, ICA Regional Director Americas and Carlos Palacino, ICA Vice President Americas. At a recent planning meeting in Colombia.



Vivianne Dubini, ICA Membership Officer

Have you paid your 2005 membership subscription?

Under ICA Rules all membership subscriptions are due by 31 March each year. This is an important year to ensure that your dues are fully paid in order to exercise your rights as a

member. Only organisations that have paid their dues in full are entitled to nominate candidates for ICA board and the Audit and Control Committee and to participate and vote at the forthcoming General Assembly.

If you have any questions on ICA membership issues, please contact Vivianne Dubini dubini@ica.coop or Maria Elena Chávez Hertig chavez@ica.coop at ICA Head Office

ICA regional directors meet at head office

ICA's four regional directors recently met with the Director-General and other senior ICA staff in a special meeting at head office.



ICA's four regional directors, from left Ada Suleymane Kibora (Africa), Manuel Mariño (Americas), Shil Kwan Lee (Asia-Pacific) and Rainer Schlüter (Europe)

The RD's meeting was one of a series of planning meetings held during the week commencing 21 March. The regional directors meet together at least once and generally twice a year. These meetings supplement the yearly planning visits by head office staff to the regions discussed on page 2.

A wide variety of topics were covered including:

an update on the tsunami reconstruction; the ICA/ILO's Global Campaign against Poverty; communications activities; membership and subscription issues.

The regional directors also heard a report from ICA Director of Develop-

ment, Jan-Eirik Imbsen on the work being done to prepare a new ICA development policy. Stirling Smith, Co-operative College (UK) who is assisting the ICA in this process also presented background on the development policy including a series of draft recommendations.

ICA's four regional directors have a total of almost 100 years of co-operative experience between them!

The ICA Director-General and each of the Regional Directors have signed a commitment to abide by the new *Financial Control Handbook* procedures

Financial control and accounting seminars

Effective and consistent financial controls are at the centre of any good corporate governance process.

As we have previously reported the ICA Board has approved the ICA's new internal *Financial Control Handbook*.

A special seminar on the handbook was or-

ganised for all ICA head office staff, regional directors and accountants. This was held at head office on 21 March 2005. The objective was to acquaint staff with the procedures set out in the handbook. Presentations were made by Guy Malacrida, ICA Finance Director and members of the ICA Audit and Con-

trol Committee, including Niklas Widebeck (Sweden) and Phil Holmes, (UK).

A related seminar on the SUN accounting system used by the ICA was organised for ICA head office and regional accountants later in the same week.

Contact: Guy Malacrida
malacrida@ica.coop

Regional directors sign commitment to implement financial handbook

As a public display of commitment to good governance all senior ICA staff including the Director-General and all Regional Directors have signed a commitment to abide by the procedures in the new *Financial Control Handbook*.

The new financial pro-

cedures are now in the process of being implemented.

For more information on the new financial control procedures applying throughout the ICA. Contact: Guy Malacrida
malacrida@ica.coop



Participants just prior to the signing of the commitment

Staffing

New organisational chart

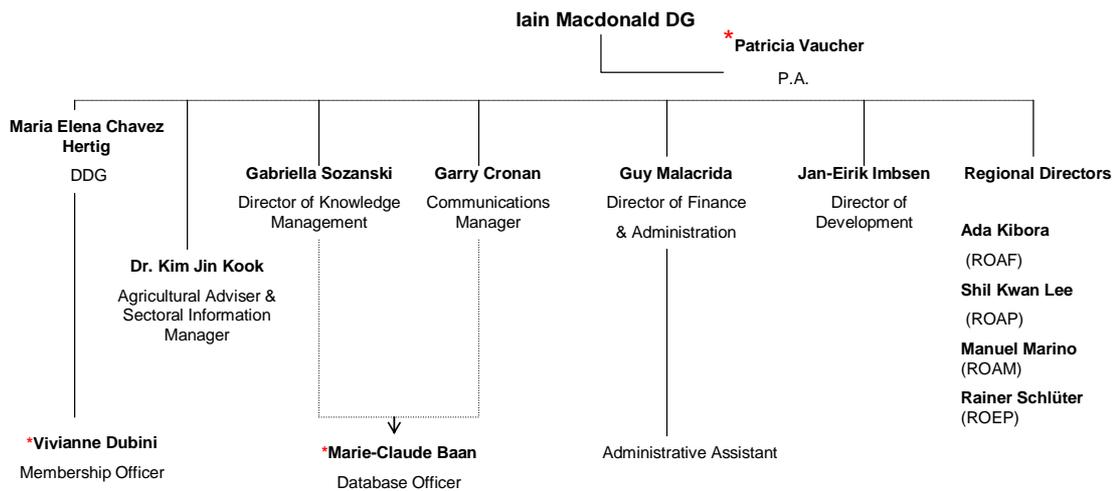
A new organisational chart has been prepared for ICA head office staff.

The revised structure is the result of a detailed review undertaken by the Director-General. New job descriptions and reporting arrangements are also in

the process of being implemented, see *item below*.

The Director-General, Iain Macdonald believes the new structure will “lead to an increase in efficiency and clarity in our dealing with members and other organisations”.

I hope the revised structure makes clear which staff members are responsible for what activities in head office. Both the Director-General and the Deputy Director-General share a general oversight role for a range of activities, listed below.



Maria Elena Chavez Hertig

- International Standing
- COPAC
- IT
- Membership
- Legal Issues
- Thematic Committees



* Part time (60%)

Iain Macdonald

- Board
- Finance & Administration
- Personnel
- Development
- Regions
- Knowledge Management
- Communications

Job descriptions and office policies completed

Detailed job descriptions have been completed for all head office staff. The new job descriptions have been agreed between the Director-General and the relevant staff. Another key and

complimentary administrative task also recently completed was the production of an updated office policy manual. The new manual sets out the responsibilities and entitlements of ICA staff. All

head office staff have been fully involved in this process and have signed the agreed job descriptions and office policy. The process is currently being extended to regional office staff.

New ICA HO staff email addresses

ICA head office staff email addresses have recently been standardised. As a result several changes have been made to addresses. New email addresses are listed below

Iain Macdonald
Jan-Eirik Imbsen
Patricia Vaucher

macdonald@ica.coop
imbsen@ica.coop
vaucher@ica.coop

Vivianne Dubini
Marie-Claude Baan
Jin Kook Kim

dubini@ica.coop
baan@ica.coop
kim@ica.coop

Recent staff changes



Jin Kook Kim recently joined the ICA Head Office in Geneva. He is replacing Dr Choi as the National Agricultural Co-operative Federation's (Korea) seconded officer to the ICA.

Dr Kim was born and educated in South Korea. He joined NACF in 1986 and worked in several departments, research, international co-operation, training institute & planning. He has also worked as a representative of NACF in its EU office in Brussels, Bel-

gium from 1996 to 2001. Before joining ICA he was Deputy Director General of marketing & supplying planning department of NACF. He has a Ph.D. in Public Administration. He is the author of *Challenges and Changes of European Agriculture in the 21st century* (Korean).



Dr. Choi Chan Ho was seconded from the National Agricultural Co-operative Federation as ICA's Agricultural Advisor from March 2002 to March 2005. We would like to thank Dr Choi for his important contribution to the work of the

ICA during his time with us. Dr Choi is returning to NACF where he will take a professor's position in the Agricultural Co-operative College of NACF while directing a project to establish an e-learning centre.

Dr Choi's new email is: chanho@nonghyup.com



Barbara Coghlan who was with ICA Europe for 2 years has left the ICA. We would like to thank Barbara for all her efforts for ICA Europe and wish her the best in her future endeavours.

Staffing

The ICA would like to formally thank NACF for their continuing support for this and other seconded positions with the ICA. It is greatly appreciated

ICA visits Egypt

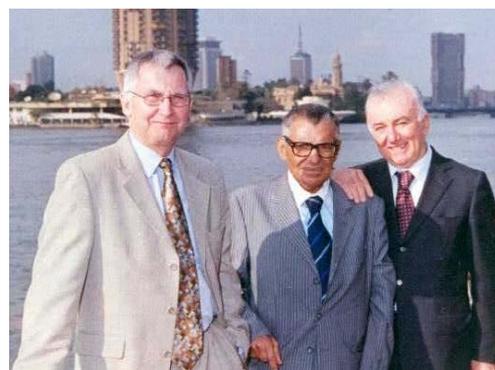
Ivano Barberini, ICA President and Iain Macdonald, Director-General visited Egypt recently at the invitation of the Central Agricultural Co-operative Union (CACU).

They participated in the annual general meeting of CACU in Cairo which was attended by more than 500 delegates from agricultural enterprises all over Egypt.

In discussions with General Secretary, Moham-

med Idris it was agreed to work together in promoting the co-operative moment in the North African and Arab speaking countries in association with the new all Africa ICA regional office in Nairobi.

It was also agreed to look at the feasibility of a joint ICA/ International Federation of Agricultural Producers (IFAP) project on human resource development using videoconference techniques. It was agreed that this proposal would be considered by the



ICA Global Human Resource Development Committee.

macdonald@ica.coop

Iain Macdonald, and Ivano Barberini with Mohamed Idris (CACU) in Cairo

Youth network meets in Geneva

Representatives from the ICA's Youth Network met in Geneva

on 1 April 2005 to discuss ways of further developing the network.

Next week's digest will carry a full report.

Tsunami Update

Initial tsunami assessment completed

Within the framework of ICA's post-Tsunami reconstruction programme two as-



Shil Kwan Lee, Iain Macdonald, Robby Tulus and Gabriella Sozanski at the recent briefing in Geneva.

essment reports have been prepared and distributed so far. The reports present the current situations in Indonesia and Sri Lanka estimating the needs of co-operatives for re-launching their activities.

Robby Tulus in his report on Aceh, Indonesia suggests 8 areas of activities to develop. ICA is seeking funds from development agencies to finance these

co-operative reconstruction projects.

The first fact-finding missions made it clear that assistance is not only needed for revitalising co-operatives which suffered substantial damage but also to set up co-ops in sectors where they did not exist. It is a recognition of the co-operative model as a vehicle for quick recovery from disasters with the full involvement of people affected.

In addition to the two assessments, the ICA Regional Office for Asia and Pacific drafted two project proposals which will also be circulated to agencies and member organisations who might want to support these initiatives.

These proposals aim at developing co-operatives in India and Sri Lanka with a strong gender focus.

ICA continues to play its role as a coordinator of information in order to ensure an equitable distribution of funds collected by the co-operative movement. The ICA President and Director General will shortly travel to Sri Lanka and Indonesia, visiting regions hit by the catastrophe: They will also meet senior government officials to facilitate co-operatives working in a supportive environment and being in the mainstream of reconstruction. Contact Gabriella Sozanski sozanski@ica.coop

Desjardins focused on Sri Lanka



Desjardins assisted in the training of local survey team members

Individual co-operative organisations from throughout the world continue to work directly with affected co-operative communities. The following report from the Desjardins Group in Canada is typical.

“Desjardins was one of the first to provide direct financial assistance, only a few days after the South-east Asia tsunami disaster, the Desjardins Group announced that it would draw on CAN \$1 million from its surplus to set up an assistance fund for reconstruction in the affected area. Management of the fund was given to Développement international Desjardins (DID) which has been providing

support to the SANASA network of cooperatives in Sri Lanka since then.

Support for SANASA could last two or three years and will focus on restarting operations for the co-operatives affected by the disaster. A wide-ranging effort is already underway to reconstitute data destroyed in the disaster. Some 65 individuals have been recruited and trained for this task. The financial data recovered will be used to draw up a summary of the situation and will be useful for all organisations wishing to provide support for SANASA and its members.

DID has already contacted

the Government of Quebec and the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) in order to add their support to that provided by Desjardins members in their gesture of solidarity with cooperatives in Sri Lanka. In addition, in order to ensure maximum coherence of its support with action undertaken by other co-operative organisations around the world, DID will rely on the coordination of information provided by the ICA for all co-operative efforts.”

Contact: France Michaud
communications@did.qc.ca

The digest will, over coming weeks, carry regular reports from members on their tsunami reconstruction efforts.

Health Sector News

IHCO in discussions with ICA on draft agreement

Representatives from the International Health Co-operative Organisation (IHCO) recently met with ICA head office staff in Geneva. IHCO is one of ICA's nine global sectoral organisations.

The reason for the visit was to discuss the signing of a agreement between IHCO and the ICA. Under the agree-

ment the ICA will provide a range of support services to IHCO in the areas of communications, financial management representation, coordination and membership. For its part, IHCO will pay for these services and provide administrative support.

The draft agreement expected to be signed shortly is hoped to be a model for other ICA sectoral organisations.



José Carols Guisado, left President of IHCO, Gabriella Sozanski and Estanislau Simón Flores, Director of Espriu Foundation, Spain discussing the detail of the agreement.

IHCO reacts to Swedish Government exclusion of health co-ops

IHCO President, José Carlos Guisado has written to the Swedish Health Minister objecting to proposals which will effectively exclude co-operatives from running publicly financed hospitals.

Dr Guisado's letter lends support to Par-Olof Jönsson, President of Swedish Medicoop in his efforts to reverse this decision.

"This is an example of a government not appreciating the role of co-operatives in the deliv-

ery of services like health care." Further details on this action are contained in the latest edition of IHCO's twice yearly newsletter. The new edition also features articles on the co-operatively run Barcelona Hospital and on co-operative welfare in Saskatoon, Canada.

The Barcelona Hospital belongs to the Co-operative Society of Health Welfare Facilities (SCIAS). SCIAS was created in 1974 and in 2003 had a turnover of almost 50 million euros.

The Barcelona Hospital figures are also very impressive. Almost 800 co-operators work in the centre which in 2003 took care of 75,000 patients.

The article on the Community Health Service Saskatoon (CHSA) is also very interesting. They take a much more holistic approach to the delivery of health care, focusing on housing, poverty, unemployment and nutrition issues amongst others.

Copies of the IHCO newsletter will be shortly available on the ICA's website.



Dr Guisado supporting Swedish co-operative colleagues

International Seminar on Healthcare and Co-ops

The [Espriu Foundation](#) one of ICA's Spanish members, is running a 2-day international healthcare and co-operatives seminar in Barcelona, Spain on 20-21 April. Speakers from a range of countries as well as from the central Spanish Government will be participating.

The programme includes, presentations on *Participation and collaboration of private bodies in the National Health-Care System; Health Care Systems from Throughout the World and Health Care Systems in Europe and Spain.*

An interesting range of speakers will discuss the

situation applying in their own countries. Countries featured include: Sweden, Japan, Argentina, Canada, Brazil, Russia, Malaysia, the UK and the host country, Spain.

Contact Estanislau Simón Flores direction@fundacionespriu.coop



"Valores cooperativos, una ventaja competitiva en una economía globalizada"



"..We look forward to seeing you in Cartagena."

Ivano Barberini
ICA President

".. Leading global speakers, and practically focused workshops are features of this year's GA.."



Dr Birchall exploring the connection between co-op principles and success in a globalising economy

Invitation to 2005 ICA General Assembly

The ICA Director-General, has recently written to all ICA members inviting them to the next General Assembly, (GA).

The local Colombian hosts for this year's GA are Confederación de Cooperativas de Colombia, (Confecoop) and Saludcoop - see separate item page 10.

We expect up to 1500

delegates to attend this year's event. This will make it one of the largest ever, as well as being the first ICA GA or Congress to be held in South America.

GAs offer participants an unrivaled opportunity to meet, network and share experiences with fellow co-operators from around the world.

Participants will also be able to attend a wide range of related events, special workshops, tours as well as outstanding social events.

This year's GA also has important statutory business to conduct, including the election of the President and full Board and the Audit and Control Committee. A very full programme of activities.

Co-operative values - a competitive asset in a globalised economy

As we noted on our front page, the theme this year is the competitive advantage of co-operative values in a globalised economy.

In both the plenary and concurrent sessions, we will be looking at co-operative success. We hear too little about this!

Our objective is to dem-

onstrate how our principles give us a unique platform with which to compete and serve our members in an increasingly global economy.

We will also be examining how to operationalise our principles. We will learn how co-operatives not only address the more obvious disadvantages of globalisation, but

also importantly embed a set of values, which enable them to succeed, whether at a local or global level.

Participants will be challenged to gain a deeper insight into how successful co-operatives are doing this. The transfer of such knowledge is one of the main benefits of attendance at global events such as the General Assembly.

Co-operative Identity Statement - 10 years of success!

It was at the 1995 ICA Centenary General Assembly in Manchester, UK that the new co-operative identity statement incorporating a definition and the revised co-operative principles was adopted.

The principles have more than symbolic importance. They represent one of the lasting achievements of the ICA. They are a widely accepted and recognised standard throughout the world. Not only as a set of guiding principles within the movement, but they are also

referenced and supported by increasing numbers of governments and international institutions. They help us defend and promote co-operatives anywhere in the world.

They are also a recipe for commercial success. The distilled wisdom the principles represent have been tested by countless co-operators in many varied settings over the last century. When we believe in them, we can succeed. Mainstream businesses mimicking key aspects of our principles is ample demonstra-

tion of their continuing relevance in a globalising world.

This year's GA will be focused on demonstrating how particular co-operatives have succeeded both commercially and socially by following the new principles. How they have put them at the centre of their business models.

A special background paper on the principles 10 years on, is being prepared by well known co-operative academic Johnston Birchall. This paper will be distributed to delegates prior to the GA.

Historic occasions

Co-operative history is made at ICA General Assemblies.

GAs and their predecessor, the ICA Congresses have been held regularly since the ICA's formation in 1895.

In 1992, at the ICA Congress in Tokyo it was decided under the newly adopted structure to replace the former three to four year Congress and yearly Central Committee meetings with bi-annual General Assemblies. These new arrangements were part of the series of major structural changes, including regionalisation adopted at the Tokyo Congress. Regional Assemblies were also introduced to alternate with the GA's.

In 1995, a combined Cen-

tenary Congress and General Assembly was held. The 1995 GA like its immediate predecessor also made history. It approved the new ICA identity statement. Since then GA's have been held every two years.

Under the current ICA rules the General Assembly is the ICA's supreme policy making body. It is where members exercise their democratic control over the international movement. It is one of the longest standing international democratic, people based institutions in the world.

A full list of Congresses and GA's include:

- 1895 London, UK
- 1896 Paris, France
- 1897 Delft, Netherlands
- 1900 Paris, France

- 1902 Manchester, UK
- 1904 Budapest, Hungary
- 1907 Cremona, Italy
- 1910 Hamburg, Germany
- 1913 Glasgow, Scotland
- 1921 Basel, Switzerland
- 1927 Stockholm, Sweden
- 1930 Vienna, Austria
- 1934 London, UK
- 1937 Paris, France
- 1946 Zurich, Switzerland
- 1948 Prague, Czech Rep
- 1951 Copenhagen, Denmark
- 1954 Paris, France
- 1957 Stockholm, Sweden
- 1960 Lausanne, Switzerland
- 1963 Bournemouth, UK
- 1966 Vienna, Austria
- 1969 Hamburg
- 1972 Warsaw, Poland
- 1976 Paris
- 1980 Moscow, Russia
- 1984 Hamburg
- 1988 Stockholm
- 1992 Tokyo, Japan

-
- 1995 Manchester
 - 1997 Geneva
 - 1999 Quebec, Canada
 - 2001 Seoul, Korea
 - 2003 Oslo, Norway
 - 2005 Cartagena, Colombia



The 2005 General Assembly will make history - it will be the first one in South America in the ICA's 110 year history

Nominations for Rochdale Pioneers Award

Nominations have been called for the Rochdale Pioneers Award.

The award recognises a person or under special circumstances a co-operative organisation which has contributed to innovative and financially sustainable co-operative

activities and have significantly benefited their membership. Nominations with CV and supporting documentation should be sent to the ICA DG by 15 June 2005. The ICA Elections Committee will consider and award the prize at the ICA General

Assembly in September.



The Rochdale Pioneers

Previous Rochdale award winners



Dr Venghese Kurien, above, chairperson, Na-

Since its introduction in 2000 there have been three winners of the Rochdale Award. tional Co-operative Dairy Federation of India, was the first Rochdale Pioneers prize winner. The award was presented at the General Assembly in Seoul in 2001. The architect of *Operation Flood* – the world's largest dairy development – Dr Kurien led a "white revolu-

tion" benefiting 10 million farmer households in 80,000 villages.

At the Oslo General Assembly in 2003 the award was shared between Francisco Luis Jimenez Arcila from Colombia and Lloyd Wilkinson from the UK.

"We need to honour outstanding co-operators"



Colombian co-operators welcome international co-operators

The Colombian co-operative movement is preparing to welcome up to 1500 co-operative delegates and observers to the 2005 ICA General Assembly in Cartagena.

Carlos Palacino, President of Confecoop, CEO and President of Saludcoop and ICA Vice President, Americas is in charge of the preparations. He and

his local team headed by Fabian Muñoz are working with Gabriella Sozanski, the ICA Global GA co-ordinator.

Mr. Palacino is confident that delegates will have a great time in Cartagena and will gain greatly from the outstanding speakers and activities at the General Assembly. "It is a great honour to host such

an event" he said.

"I am sure our focus on co-operative success will appeal to international as well as Latin American delegates. We are doing everything to ensure your stay in Cartagena will be safe and enjoyable", he said.

Contact : palacino@saludcoop.coop



Carlos Palacino is leading a special Colombian General Assembly Organising Group - he is determined to make it an outstanding success!

Co-ops are responsible for 10% of Colombia's GDP

Your Colombian hosts and local movement

The co-operative movement started in Colombia in 1930, when with the encouragement from some sectors of the Catholic Church and the trade unions, the first co-operative organisations were formed.

Today there are around 5,000 co-operative organisations in Colombia. They play an important role in activities such as savings and loans, agro-industrial production, health and insurance, amongst many other activities.

Co-operatives generate 57,000 direct jobs and

produce US\$4,900 million annually which is a very impressive 10% of Colombia's GDP.

CONFECOOP, the Colombian Federation of Co-operatives is the country's national apex co-operative organisation. Its basic task is to unify actions in the defence and representation of the movement. Confecoop is composed of 16 regional associations and 8 economic organisations. It is engaged in permanent dialogue with the Government, Congress, industry associations and social organisations, seeking to



position the co-operative sector by including it on the agenda of Government and society alike.

Saludcoop is a co-op success story. Started in 1995 it is now the number one private health provider in the country and the second largest private employer. In 2001 over 2 million people used its services. This means 6% of the Colombian population have access to a health service through SaludCoop EPS.

Wide range of sectoral, thematic and special meetings

Apart from the GA itself there will be up to 25 other seminars, special workshops, meetings etc held in the days leading to the Assembly.

The following sectoral organisations will have meetings and/or conferences: CICOPA; ICA Housing; IHCO; ICFO; CCI; ICAO and ICBA. Within the GA itself

there will also be special sectoral workshops and streams.

The ICA Gender Equality and HRD Committees will be meeting. As already mentioned a special youth conference is being organised. The ICA Board, its Audit and Control Committee, the Governance Working Group, Presidents Committee and Development Committee

are also all meeting. Special seminars on micro-finance; the Co-operative Learning Centre; the Global Co-operative CEO's project; Co-operative Integration and the Supply Chain and Multi-national co-operatives are being organised.

More details on all these events and others will be regularly included in the digest as they become available.



Gabriella Sozanski, at work coordinating all ICA General Assembly activities

A beautiful and historic Caribbean city



Cartagena is famous for its medieval and colonial buildings.

Cartagena has much to offer the visitor.

Delegates and their partners will have the opportunity of exploring one of the most beautiful and historic South American cities.

The walled old town of this fortified Spanish colonial port is a UNESCO World Heritage Site. It's packed with churches, monasteries, plazas, palaces and grand mansions with overhanging balconies and shady patios.

Cartagena is nearly surrounded by the Caribbean Sea. Small, coral stone protected beaches can be

found only a few metres outside of the walled city. The larger beach extends around the peninsula of Bocagrande and Laguito, the other popular tourist area of Cartagena.

Our local Colombian hosts have included tour information in the package of material available on either the ICA main website of the special General Assembly website, see www.ica.coop/ica/ica/icaevents/ga2005/tours.pdf

Also, for more tourist and general information on Cartagena see www.cartagenainfo.net/



If you like beaches or water sports, then you will enjoy Cartagena!

A secure and comfortable venue for the General Assembly delegates

The venue for the General Assembly is the [Hilton Cartagena](#). This is a five star hotel located 15-20 minutes from the airport and 10 minutes by taxi from the historic centre of the city.

The Hilton Cartagena is the venue for many large scale international confer-

ences similar to the General Assembly. As a result it has developed a special series of procedures to ensure the security and comfort of its guests.

220 rooms have been pre-booked at a special rate for participants. You need to register

early to ensure one of these rooms.

Several other four and five star hotels are listed in the information pack sent to members or available on our website. Please book early.



Where can you find more information about the General Assembly?

All ICA members will have recently received a first mailing of information on the General Assembly.

The mailing included an invitation letter; a provisional programme of activities; registration forms; election material and visa and accommodation details among other particulars. You can find all of this information on the

ICA's main website www.ica.coop

A second mailing will be sent to members in July. It will include a special edition of the ICA Review with Dr Birchall's background paper, a final detailed agenda and other information and background papers. The list of candidates for the ICA Board and Audit and Control Committee will also

be included, as will the ICA's latest Annual Report.

A special General Assembly website has been set up by the local host organisations. It is in Spanish and English www.icacartagena.coop.



The old city, Cartagena

INTERNATIONAL
CO-OPERATIVE
ALLIANCE

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

Calendar of ICA Events and Activities

- 20-21 April** International Seminar on Health, organised by International Health Co-operative Organisation, (IHCO) Barcelona, Spain. Contact: Estanislau Simon direccion@fundacionespun.coop
- 22 April** IHCO Board meeting, Barcelona, Spain. Contact: Estanislau Simon direccion@fundacionespun.coop
- 21-29 April** Visit by ICA President and Director-General to Indonesia and Sri Lanka to visit tsunami reconstruction efforts. Contact: macdonald@ica.coop
- 17 May** ICA Housing Executive Meeting, London, UK. Contact Mike Doyle, mdoyle@chfhq.org
- 18-19 May** ICA Board meeting New Lanark, Scotland. Contact: macdonald@ica.coop
- 19 May** ICA Asia Pacific Standing Committee, New Lanark, Scotland. Contact: Shil Kwan Lee, icaroap@vsnl.com
- 19 May** ICA Communications Committee meeting, Glasgow, Scotland. Contact: Garry Cronan, cronan@ica.coop
- 20 May** ICA Governance Group meeting, Glasgow, Scotland. Contact: Garry Cronan, cronan@ica.coop
- 20 May** ICA's new International Accounting Standards (IAS) Group's first meeting, Glasgow, Scotland. Contact: Iain Macdonald, macdonald@ica.coop
- 22 May** CCI Executive Committee meeting, Glasgow, Scotland. Contact: Giuseppe Fabretti, giuseppe.fabretti@ancc.coop.it
- 28 June** *Co-operatives in Europe* Convention in Brussels. Contact: Rainer Schlüter, rsc@cecop.coop
- 2 July** 2005 International Day of Co-operatives. Contact: Maria Elena Chávez Hertig chavez@ica.coop see www.copacgva.coop
- 24-27 July** WOCCU, 2005 World Credit Union Conference, Rome, Italy. See www.woccu.org/
- 11-12 August** ICA Global Research Conference, Cork, Ireland Contact: Olive McCarthy, o.mccarthy@ucc.ie see www.ucc.ie/acad/foodecon/CCS/ICA/index.htm
- 8-9 Sept** ICA African Ministerial Conference, Lesotho. Contact: A.S. Kibora, Regional Director, ICA Africa, skibora@icaroecsa.coop
- 18-21 Sept** ICA board, sectoral, thematic, youth and other pre-General Assembly meetings. Cartagena, Colombia See page 10 for details
- 22-23 Sept** ICA General Assembly, plus related sectoral and thematic committee meetings. Cartagena, Colombia. Contact: Gabriella Sozanski, sozanski@ica.coop see www.ica.coop or www.icacartagena.coop
- 15-18 Nov** ICMIF Conference, Singapore. See www.icmif.org/