



# ICA Digest 62

Issue 62

July/August 2008

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## 86th ICA International Co-operative Day—5 July, 2008

### “Confronting Climate Change through Co-op Enterprise”

On the 86th ICA (and the 14th UN) International Day of Co-operatives, the ICA called on co-operators to strengthen efforts aimed at promoting sustainable development, to celebrate actions that are already helping to combat global warming, and to work in partnership to ensure that co-operatives remain at the forefront of activities to tackle climate change.

Sustainable development has always been part of the 'core business' of co-operatives. As democratically controlled businesses with values that include social responsibility and caring for their community, co-ops strive to serve members not solely in economic terms but also in the larger social, cultural and environmental context.

Recognising that climate change is one of the most critical global challenges of our time, the ICA membership, at the General Assembly in 2007, committed to address the causes of climate change and reduce its impact.

Co-ops around the world are rising to the challenge with innovative solutions that demonstrate leadership in many sectors. However, as the challenges expand and the stress on the environment continues to grow, further attention is required by all.



ICA is currently forming a Leadership Council to look at ways to tackle the climate change issue and sustainability from various sectoral, economic, cultural and regional points of view. The members of the council will be announced soon.

In this issue, our interview with The Co-operators Group of Ontario, Canada, looks at how one co-operative enterprise is making sustainability a mainstream business concern, and how the co-operative difference has assisted in the process.

The next *Digest* will include reports on what co-ops around the globe are doing to address climate change.

Download the ICA message now available in more than ten languages:

[www.ica.coop/activities/idc/2008.html](http://www.ica.coop/activities/idc/2008.html)



**“Yes!” -  
historic  
vote for  
change**

At the 2008 ICA Extraordinary General Assembly in Rome, the members voted to accept the recommendations of the ICA Restructuring Report, paving the way for a revitalised ICA with a new subscription and voting system - full report from the Assembly (pages 4-7).

## From the Editor's desk



Maria-Elena Chavez Hertig, Deputy Director-General

This issue of the Digest reports on landmark decisions taken at the ICA Extraordinary General Assembly held in Rome in June. We welcome a newly elected board member and receive updates on co-operative solidarity for co-operative movements that have suffered from recent disasters.

We feature, too, an interview to mark this year's International Day of Cooperatives, "Confronting Climate Change through Co-operative Enterprise". The issue of climate change will continue to be reported on in future issues as members increas-

ingly share their experiences, learn from each other and take leadership roles in their communities. The next Digest will also feature reports on celebrations of International Day of Co-operatives.

A number of articles focus on priority areas of work of the ICA, that of ensuring the visibility of co-operatives, defending the form of enterprise and promoting co-operatives worldwide. Articles on the advocacy work of the ICA at the ILO and European Union are included. The work undertaken of the regions to ensure appropriate co-

operative policies is also highlighted and reports from Africa show the revival of the ICA Africa and its activities.

We are also pleased to welcome two new members of the ICA - Fomento Cooperativo (INFOCOOP) of Costa Rica and Agricultores Federados Argentinos Sociedad Cooperativa Limitada (AFA S.C.L.) of Argentina - and encourage links with these new members.

As the interim editor of the Digest, I welcome all comments and suggestions for future issues at [chavez@ica.coop](mailto:chavez@ica.coop)

## EXPO 2008 ICA EXPO '08 update

### ICA EXPO news

Year 1 - Number 1 - 2008 June - Informative report of the ICA EXPO 2008

#### The Commercial Direction of the fair participates in the ICA events.

During the months of May and June, the commercial direction of IcaExpo has taken part in several events of the cooperative movement aiming at promoting and commercializing spaces at the Expo. They were happy with the positive results and success of the event.

"Our participation in the events in Brussels and Rome, for example, has proven the great interest of the cooperative movement in the Fair," says Ana Branco (sales president of ICA EXPO '08).

So far, the fair counts on the presence of 20 countries, and it is already running out of the main places. The commercial direction predicts that by the beginning of August there won't be spaces left for new exhibitors.

"We will also take part in the events in Blackpool, England and the Assembly for the Americas, in Costa Rica, where we hope to finalize the sales of spaces in the fair," adds Ana Branco.



The great success of ICA EXPO '08 1st edition has also attracted great world buyers and traders who will be present in the fair in October. The organizers expect to bring about billions in business as well as strategic alliances and a marketing development for the cooperatives and entities of this sector.

#### Buyers are attracted by the diversity of cooperative products.



The ICA EXPO '08 already counts on the presence of exhibitors who will bring a variety of products and services.

#### Here are some of them:

Sweet peanut in bars, sweet in straw, banana paste, guava jelly, preserves, jelly, jelly, sweets in bars, cradling, central bars, granola, honey, cashew nut, lined dry tomatoes, lined garlic, pepper, pepper jelly, pepper sauce, seasonings, crystallized sugar, apple vinegar, lined dry tomatoes with mushrooms, chutney, liquors, coffee, nut, honey, cotton, cocoon silk, products made of such material, garment, socks, bags, cases, leas, such as black tea, green tea, wooling tea, handicrafts, agricultural products, such as mushrooms, seaweeds, garlic, fruits, vegetables, organic food additives, chinese calligraphy and paintings, fish, fertilizer and farm chemicals, recyclable material such as waste metal, plastic, cashew nut, dried chilies, ginger, garlic, yam root, cassava flour, beads, textiles & garments, kashin, gems, bark, insurance.

"Our trading will be present at ICA EXPO '08, as we want to see and buy different products. I believe the cooperatives will provide us with what we are looking for."

Marcos Santos,  
International Director of DMCO/USA

The intention of the fair is to multiply the cooperative business around the world.

To know more about the ICA EXPO 2008, click here



The high level of interest in ICA EXPO '08 and the bookings for exhibition space have continued unabated through May and June.

The ICA EXPO team are thrilled by the positive response to the promotion of ICA EXPO '08 at events they have attended in the last months, including the Extraordinary General Assembly in Rome.

"Our participation in Brussels and Rome, for example, demonstrated the great interest the co-operative movement has in the Fair," said Ana Branco, sales president of ICA EXPO '08.

Some twenty countries are represented and many of the premium sites have been booked. The EXPO team predict exhibition space will be fully booked by the beginning of August.

"We will also take part in co-operative events in Blackpool, England and the ICA Americas Regional Assembly in Costa Rica, where we hope to finalise the sale of exhibition space," said Branco.

The first edition of ICA EXPO News has successfully attracted leading global co-operative businesses to the Fair. The organisers expect to bring up to a "billion in business" as well as strategic alliances and marketing developments to the co-operatives sector.

ICA EXPO '08 counts on the presence of exhibitors who will bring a diversity of co-operative products and services from around the globe.

The intention of the Fair is to multiply co-operative business around the world.

To find out more visit

[www.icaexpo.coop/](http://www.icaexpo.coop/)

## Political will prevails

As the sun sets on the most recent General Assembly, ICA Director-General, Iain Macdonald, looks forward to a modernised organisation pursuing the strategic aim of promoting co-operative enterprise around the world.

"I confess to a strong feeling of relief at the conclusion of the Extraordinary General Assembly in Rome. Although the Board had unanimously agreed to the proposals of the Restructuring Working Group at its April meeting in Washington, there was still quite a lot of detail to be resolved. Given that this was the culmination of seven years' work by the Task Force, the Governance Working Group, the Regionalisation Working Group and the Restructuring Working Group, it was important that we got it right. It is one thing to agree to general recommendations, but quite another to propose formal rule changes. As in all co-operative organisations, this is always a carefully scrutinised procedure. Finally, despite a few last-minute amendments, all was agreed, and in good cheer.

I am not sure any of us fully appreciate the significance of what has been achieved. Of course, the proof lies with

the implementation, but the ICA now has a global strategic plan, governance and financial guidelines, a modernised and decentralised structure, an up-to-date Rules and Bye-Laws, and fairer and more transparent subscription criteria. Many would admit that these changes have been required for some time but, only now has political will prevailed.

The danger is always that we spend too much time on such issues to the detriment of campaigning on the promotion of co-operative enterprise. I believe both objectives go together and we are now much better placed to implement our Strategic Plan with a real chance of success. This *Digest* highlights just some of these important activities.

Not least is the celebration of this year's International Co-operative Day (and we are also in discussions with the UN concerning the real possibility of declaring an

International Year of Co-operatives) which has the theme 'Confronting Climate Change Through Co-operative Enterprise'. It would be hard to find a more appropriate subject today.

As previously reported, we are about to launch our Leadership Council on Climate Change. Well-known co-operators from the UK, the USA and Canada have already volunteered their services. We are currently seeking council members with an interest and experience in this area from other parts of the world, to complete the membership of this body and to move forward with a plan of action. If interested, please let us know.

A lot is happening, not least, the ICA Global Trade Fair for Co-operatives which will take place in Lisbon on 23-25 October later this year.

I look forward to seeing you there!"

## DG's Report



Iain Macdonald  
Director-General

"Many would admit that these changes have been required for some time, but only now has political will prevailed"

Read the DG's previous monthly reports:  
[www.ica.coop/directorpage/](http://www.ica.coop/directorpage/)

## US research reveals true value of co-ops

The largest research project in US history on the economic impact of co-operatives in the United States was launched on 26 June, at an online seminar hosted jointly by ICA member, the National Co-operative Business Association (NCBA) and University of Wisconsin Center for Cooperatives (UWCC).

Recognising the need for statistics to make the case for co-operatives to the public, NCBA successfully lobbied the US Congress for funding and the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) awarded a grant to the Wisconsin Center to research the number, size and value of co-operative businesses for the project's first phase.

"We're very pleased and excited to share these results among the greater co-operative community," said Paul Hazen, President and CEO of NCBA. "Our members asked us to tell the co-operative story in a very powerful way. This study enables us to do just that."

More on the research:  
[www.uwcc.wisc.edu/research.html](http://www.uwcc.wisc.edu/research.html)

## ICA GA 2008



A transcript of Ivano Barberini's address to the GA can be downloaded at: [www.ica.coop/calendar/ga2008/](http://www.ica.coop/calendar/ga2008/)

The text of the new ICA Rules and Bye-Laws is available at: [www.ica.coop/calendar/ga2008/](http://www.ica.coop/calendar/ga2008/)

## Unanimous approval for ICA restructuring: Rome GA

Delegates at the ICA Extraordinary General Assembly in Rome (5-6 June 2008) delivered a decisive vote for the 21 recommendations of the Restructuring Report.

Over two days almost 300 delegates packed the meeting hall of the Salone delle Fontane to discuss the restructuring proposals and changes to ICA Rules, Policies, Procedures and Standing Orders.

The members adopted all recommendations and unanimously approved new and amended ICA Rules and Bye-Laws, paving the way for a revitalised ICA with a new subscription and voting system.

In a telegram read to delegates at the opening of the GA, the President of the Italian Republic, Giorgio Napolitano, welcomed co-operators and drew attention to the work of ICA.

"I'll be following your meeting with special interest, as it provides a very important opportunity to reflect on

and compare the present state of co-operation in the world and the adaptation of its organisational models to the new international markets," said President Napolitano.

In his address, ICA President Ivano Barberini said, "The renewal of ICA will improve its functioning at all levels - global, regional and sectoral - through fairly balancing autonomy and integration, and based on shared, solid values and a few, but effective, rules".

He reflected on the "great effort in this direction" in

the last few years and said that there had been a "strong spirit of co-operation" between the global and regional bodies.

"The incorporation of Cooperatives Europe, as the European region of ICA, rendered co-operative action considerably more effective, in the complex reality of the European Union", said Barberini.

He praised the Restructuring Working Group, chaired by Alban D'Amours. "The commitment of its members and Desjardins' staff has been essential for its success."



Delegates voting at the Assembly

## Investing in women for co-operative success



Rita Levi-Montalcini & Ivano Barberini

Rita Levi-Montalcini delivered the keynote address, focusing on the enduring strength of the co-operative movement and the need to invest in the education of women to provide them with opportunities for development.

The 99-year-old said co-operatives had played an important role in building peace and security, and in the fight against poverty. She commended the ICA for surviving two World Wars,

and said such an organisation was well equipped to address the difficult issues of today.

Rita Levi-Montalcini was awarded the Nobel Prize for Medicine in 1986 for her work in neurology. Today she is the oldest living Nobel Laureate, and a senator for life in the Italian Senate.

Ivano Barberini thanked the Nobel Laureate and said her presence was a sign of her respect for the social role played by co-operatives.

## ICA unites on restructuring - Alban D'Amours

ICA GA

Members of the ICA Restructuring Working Group (RWG) received high praise for their hard work and commitment from RWG Chair and ICA Board member, Alban D'Amours.

D'Amours presented the final Restructuring Report - the culmination of nearly two years' work - and commended the 21 recommendations to the Assembly.

D'Amours said the resulting unanimous recommendations from the ICA Board arose from a common desire to equip ICA with an organisational structure and a model of financing to allow it to meet members' needs.

"The ICA is at a turning point in terms of putting together its capacity for efficient action ... The land has been cleared, the soil tilled and the seeds sown; so the work on offering added value to members is already under way," he said.

D'Amours spoke about the difficulty of arriving at a more equitable subscription formula - based on a universal basic rate, the number of members in a co-operative,

and a regional weighting system (to take account of socio-economic differences between countries).

"Additionally, we propose to adjust the ICA voting system to bring it in line with the new dues approach, placing emphasis on membership size rather than on the financial contribution of the member as the main basis for determining the number of votes granted."

The changes represented a new chapter in the long and rich history of the Alliance he said. "The vision is ambitious, it calls for leadership and is resolutely turned towards service to members."

Providing added value to members represented a fair return on members' investment, and tangible benefits stemming from affiliation with the ICA.

"The Global 300 initiative is a superb example of the type of concrete support with potential spin-offs that ICA can deliver to all its members. The project increased the world-wide visibility of the co-operative business model, and many of you were



quick to use this powerful tool in your own communities to lobby and promote the performance of this distinctly co-operative model."

D'Amours said that such an affiliation has never been more necessary or promising. "The context of globalisation in which we operate requires greater uniformity in regulations and standards, unprecedented on a world scale, which is why we need to be able to count on a strong ICA and demonstrate our solidarity with the organisation."

The transcript of Alban D'Amours address to the GA can be downloaded at [www.ica.coop/calendar/ga2008/](http://www.ica.coop/calendar/ga2008/)

"We can be very happy that this breath of renewal has come to ICA and that, on the strength of your support, it is not divided but united that ICA will stand and support your efforts to promote our unique business model"

Alban D'Amours

## New ICA Board member

Mr Won-Byung Choi, Chairman of the National Agricultural Co-operative Federation of Korea (NACF) was unanimously elected to the ICA Board at the Rome GA.

Mr Choi said his election would mean NACF could play an even greater role in international co-operative development.

He said that it was a matter of pride that NACF was ranked fourth in the Global 300 list of the world's largest co-operative organisations. He added that in recent years its member farmers had faced difficulties brought about by changes in global and local economics.

Mr Choi said co-operatives needed to seek substantive

business co-operation at the international level to tackle the challenges of globalisation.

The transcript of Mr Choi's address to the GA can be downloaded at [www.ica.coop/calendar/ga2008/](http://www.ica.coop/calendar/ga2008/)

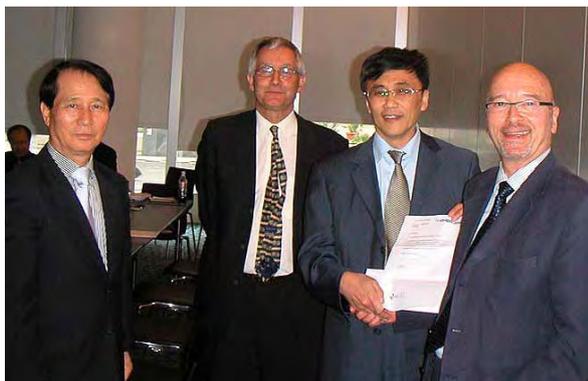


Mr Won-Byung Choi

## ICA GA 2008

### Co-ops fight calamity - Global appeal for disaster victims

ICA Vice-President, Li Chunsheng, gave an update to the General Assembly on the impact to co-operatives following the natural disasters in Myanmar and China.



(L—R) Shil-Kwan Lee, Regional Director ICA Asia-Pacific, Iain Macdonald, ICA D-G, Li Chunsheng, ICA V-P and Len Wardle, Chair, The Co-operative Group UK

In the first week of May, the massive “Nargis” storm and tidal wave hit Myanmar killing more than 77,000 people. 2.15 million were displaced and 400 co-operatives were destroyed.

On 12 May, Sichuan in China experienced an 8.0 magnitude earthquake. More than 69,000 people have been confirmed dead, with over 18,000 missing and more

than 360,000 injured. Li Chunsheng told delegates that the loss to supply and marketing co-operatives amounted to US\$ 440 million. More than 200 co-operators lost their lives.

Members of All China Federation of Supply and Marketing Co-operatives (ACFSMC) have donated more than 100 million Yuan (US\$ 14 million) to affected co-operatives for reconstruction.

Mr. Li added that co-operatives had also showed solidarity and were providing assistance.

At the ICA Asia-Pacific Standing Committee meeting, held in conjunction with the Rome GA, Len Wardle, Chair of The Co-operative Group UK, presented a cheque for UK£ 25,000 to Li Chunsheng of ACFSMC, in response to the ICA global appeal for the China earthquake victims.

The Co-operative Group UK has made a further donation of UK£ 25,000 to the Chinese Red Cross. The Israeli

Co-operative Movement, the Japanese Consumers Co-operative Union (JCCU) of Japan, and National Agricultural Co-operative Federation (NACF) of Korea, have also contributed to the disaster relief and reconstruction effort.

ICA calls on co-operators around the world to demonstrate their solidarity with the earthquake victims. To make a donation see [www.ica.coop/publications/pressreleases/2008-china-earthquake.pdf](http://www.ica.coop/publications/pressreleases/2008-china-earthquake.pdf)

ICA Asia-Pacific has also issued an urgent call to co-operators to come to the aid of victims of the Myanmar disaster. Please send donations to:

Global Appeal for Victims of Cyclone Nargis  
(Beneficiary: ICA Regional Office for Asia & the Pacific)  
Standard Chartered Bank  
10 Sansad Marg,  
New Delhi-110001, India  
A/c no: 525-0501177-4.  
Swift Code: SCBLINBBXXX

Contact: [info@icaroop.coop](mailto:info@icaroop.coop)

### Italian hosts thanked

The commitment of Italian host organisations—AGCI, CONFCOOPERATIVE and Legacoop—has contributed to the outstanding success of the General Assembly in Rome, said ICA President, Ivano Barberini.

Barberini drew attention to a long-standing relationship between the Italian co-operative movement and the ICA. He noted that the In-

ternational Co-op Day was first proposed by the Italian Co-operative League in 1894 (it was adopted by the ICA in 1923), and since WWII, the social role of co-operation has been recognised in the Italian Constitution: “This acknowledgement represents one of the best examples in the world of an institutional commitment to co-operative development,” said Barberini.



## Global award for co-operative excellence

ICA GA  
2008

A new award scheme to recognise excellence in co-operative business was announced at the conclusion of the Rome GA. The dotCoop Global Award for Co-operative Excellence will be presented for the first time in October 2009 at the ICA GA in Glasgow, Scotland.

Paul Hazen, President of dotCooperation LLC, encouraged co-operatives from all sectors to examine their processes in order to compete for the award.

Current global awards focus on individuals who have positively impacted the co-operative community. This Award will recognise the co-operatives themselves and will provide others with the opportunity to understand how they can use their differences to positively

impact their business and communities.

The dotCoop Awards will identify excellence at all levels of enterprise. Planned Categories are: Less than US\$ 1million in revenue or assets; US\$ 1 to 50 million in revenue or assets; and greater than US\$ 50 million in revenue or assets. Awards will be presented in each category both globally and at the continental level.

A .coop domain name with supporting services will be provided by dotCoop. The domain name can be used by the selected co-operative, or donated to a co-op of their choice to help expand awareness of co-operatives on the Internet.

A judging panel of international representatives will be

nominated by sectoral and national organisations that are members of the ICA.



Paul Hazen, President of dotCooperation

Submissions will be accepted from 1 January 2009 and all submissions will be made through the award website.

For more information visit [www.coop](http://www.coop).



## GA Picture gallery



Salone delle Fontane



Delegates during the Assembly



Luigi Marino, President Confcooperative



New Board member Won-Byung Choi



Palazzo Taverna, venue for the Gala GA dinner

## Feature interview

### Mainstreaming sustainability is a co-operative business

In 2007, The Co-operators Group Limited, the leading Canadian-owned multi-product insurance provider in Canada, formally initiated a bold plan to fully integrate sustainability into all aspects of its business practice. The Co-operators is a member of ICMIF, the ICA sectoral organisation serving co-operatives and mutual insurers, and a member of the Canadian Co-operative Association (CCA) - an ICA member organisation. Barbara Turley-McIntyre, Director of Sustainability at The Co-operators, spoke to the *Digest* about the organisation's landmark sustainability programme.



“Sustainability isn't a destination. It is something we'll be journeying all our lives,”

Turley-McIntyre

“The process was sparked when our President and CEO, Kathy Bardswick, and Senior Vice-President, Dennis Deters, heard Dr. Karl-Henrik Robèrt, founder of The Natural Step, speak at the ICMIF [International Co-operative and Mutual Insurance Federation] AGM in Singapore in 2005,” explained Turley-McIntyre.

Shortly after, The Co-operators began to investigate what it would take to move their organisation towards sustainability.

“What they heard from Dr Robèrt was transformational. Kathy came back and said “we have found the way, these principles really align with how we want to proceed”, said Turley-McIntyre.

“Dr Robèrt was invited to speak at our AGM in 2006 and he addressed our delegates, directors and senior management. We've con-

“I believe co-ops can be the catalyst for ‘the sustainable society’ because it aligns with who they are. We need to seize the moment and take what has always been ours. It goes back to the roots of co-operatives and the triple bottom line”.

*Barbara Turley-McIntyre*

tinued to work with The Natural Step Canada on our sustainability implementation strategy.

“Having the framework of The Natural Step [TNS] principles and the planning process gave it the rigor we needed to come out with a policy and vision. Engaging sustainability consultant, Coro Strandberg, from Strandberg Consulting, who works very closely with the co-ops and credit union movement in Canada, very much continued the momentum.”

“Coro conducted a ‘thought leaders’ study with ten international insurance directors and asked what they were most concerned about in the industry, and climate change came out on top. She also undertook benchmarking analysis as we did this work. It's very helpful to compare yourself against other organisations. You don't need to reinvent the wheel if the solutions are already out there”.

In early 2007, a new sustainability policy for the organisation emerged together with updated statements of the company's vision and values to reflect its commitment to sustainability. The Board approved the new policy in June 2007.

In the last half of 2007, Turley-McIntyre was named the Director of Sustainability

and a team was created to guide progress toward sustainability within the organisation. The Board also created a sustainability sub-committee to ensure that sustainable principles are given prominence in the governance of the organisation.

“We've got support at all levels and the engagement of our 4500 staff across Canada has been overwhelming. The whole organisation is reading from the same page saying “let's start rowing” and we're all going in the same direction”.

The emphasis on staff engagement is reinforced with education: “Together with TNS we developed a one hour e-learning course that teaches employees about the fundamentals of sustainability. A quarter of our staff has taken the course. By the end of 2009, all staff will have had the opportunity to do it. It puts us all - staff, directors and member-owners - on the same page when we're talking about the topic of sustainability”.

“When we talk about sustainability, it's the triple bottom line we mean - economic, social and environmental. A co-operative insurer has to be financial because we have to be there in hard times. But we're also there for other reasons, which means we can take positive action sooner rather than later”.

## Feature interview

In *The Future of Sustainable Insurance: thought leaders survey study (2007)*, Coro Strandberg writes, “Extreme weather events linked to climate change are already on the balance sheet; the cumulative impact to the insurance and reinsurance industry of storms, hurricanes, flooding, fires, and drought will be dramatic”.

“Climate change threatens industry sustainability together with environmental sustainability. In my opinion the way forward in relation to climate change has to be two things; adaptation and mitigation and I don’t think the two things are mutually exclusive. Whether you’re a co-operative/mutual insurer or a shareholder insurer we’re facing those same risks. We need to work together and I believe co-ops and mutuals are very well poised to be leaders in this area,” said Turley-McIntyre.

“When I think of co-operatives and mutuals, and in particular the seven co-operative principles, there seems to be an easy alignment between those core values and sustainability. To me it’s a natural fit. Given the way co-operatives manage their business I would say they naturally have an advantage in relation to sustainability. In particular, they are very close to their members.”

Turley-McIntyre said that there are a number of ways to influence the wider community and to engage stakeholders: “Through our member-owners, through advocacy with government - but I truly believe we’re doing it in a way that proves ‘we’re doing it with you’. We don’t have all the answers but we are learning as we go.”

“In our first year we are measuring our own carbon footprint. We don’t want to be suggesting to our clients that they should be modifying their behaviour until we’ve cleaned up our own house. As an insurance company our footprint might be less than an extraction company or a manufacturing company, but we still do have a footprint. We’ve engaged an engineering company to measure our heating and cooling, paper use, air travel, electricity and our company fleet and, based on the audit, we’ll be setting benchmarks for the future. We want to be able to influence our clients, our suppliers, the Canadian Community to follow suit – but we’re doing it first ourselves.”

The Co-operators commended the initiative of the ICA to invite The Natural Step to the General Assembly in Singapore in 2007.

The discussions there led to a

resolution on climate change and most recently, a strategy. The Co-operators looks forward to working with ICA to help define concrete activities and to ensure that the contribution the co-operative movement makes to climate change is not only visible, but provides leadership to enterprises not yet seriously engaged in the issue.

The Co-operators Group Limited: [www.cooperators.ca/](http://www.cooperators.ca/)

The Natural Step Canada: [www.naturalstep.ca/](http://www.naturalstep.ca/)



### Fact file

Founded in 1945 as a co-operative, The Co-operators is committed to organising and operating its enterprises in accordance with co-operative principles. The Co-operators Group Limited insures more than 845,000 homes, 1.1 million vehicles and 600,000 lives, 132,000 businesses and 44,000 farms. It covers 300,000 employees through group benefit plans and more than one million Canadians through travel insurance products. The Co-operators has assets totalling over Canadian \$ 7 billion.



“Our commitment to sustainability started when the organisation was born, with the formation of a co-operative that provided financial security for Saskatchewan farmers. The journey will continue as long as the organisation exists. We must continue to grow profitably so that we can fully embed sustainability into our business practices and meet the changing needs of our communities”.

*President and CEO, Kathy Bardswick*

## Regional News “Hands off our coops” petition registers global concern

“It is another example of our competitors attempting to reduce consumers’ choice, to steal our market share and to end our ethical challenge”

*Cooperatives  
Europe*



More than 70,000 co-operators from across Europe and around the world have signed a petition urging the President of the European Commission, José Manuel Barroso, and the Competition Commissioner, Neelie Kroes, to consider the ‘co-operative difference’ in deciding current legal cases against co-operatives that are before the European Commission.

Cooperatives Europe has launched the petition to de-

fend the co-operative enterprise model; a model that relies on the principles of democratic control, self-responsibility, equity and solidarity. The legal cases are an attempt by private companies to challenge national co-operative laws and tax regimes.

The decision of the Commission presents potential risk to the entire co-operative system in all economic sectors across the EU. The co-operative systems in

many EU states could be subject to legal challenges.

In Europe, 263,000 co-operative enterprises serve 160 million members (one in every three EU citizens) and actively contribute to the economic and social objectives of the Union.

Co-operatives are enshrined in treaties and recognised in the statutes of the European Co-operative Society. They have the support of the European Parliament, the Committee of the Regions and the European Economic and Social Committee.

A total of 25 of the 27 European member states have specific legislation for co-operatives.

Cooperatives Europe urges those interested in the social and human dimension of economic activity, to sign the petition online at: [www.coopseurope.coop/spip.php?article585](http://www.coopseurope.coop/spip.php?article585) The petition will remain open till at least 30 September 2008.

### What the Co-op members say ...

“The co-operative structure is the way forward for all businesses in a world of finite resources. The EU should be supporting and promoting the co-operative model in all member countries, and should not yield to pressure from large self-interested conventional companies whose practices already threaten our financial and environment stability.” (Scotland)

“Please pay attention to ethics in any regulation!” (Belgium)

“Today’s co-ops are the life blood of our times and the future. They are providing exceptional services to the people of Europe, which Public companies are not. They are open and transparent and we need more of this type of business.” (UK)

“Co-operatives are essential in a democratic country where people are equal in rights. In this country there must be independent co-operatives in all fields of activity.” (France)

Read more comments:

<http://handsoffour-coops.tumblr.com/>

## 16th ICA Americas regional conference

## Regional News

The 16th Regional Conference of ICA Americas will be held in San José, Costa Rica from 22–25 July. More than 700 delegates will discuss the conference theme, “Co-operative Social Responsibility and Democratic Life”.

The conference will compare the social responsibility of private versus co-operative businesses. To what extent

can co-operative organisations fulfil their social responsibility from the perspective of co-op members and, on the other hand, to what extent does Co-operation contribute to social benefit in the context of globalisation (especially with regard to sustainable development and democracy)?

ICA President Ivano Barberini and Director-



General Iain Macdonald will participate in the regional meeting.

Conference website: [www.aciamericas.coop/CR2008/](http://www.aciamericas.coop/CR2008/)

## Co-operative dialogue in Abu Dhabi



Al Suwaidi, Under Secretary, Ministry of Social Affairs Government of UAE

The United Arab Emirates, the UAE Ministry of Social Affairs and ICA Asia-Pacific, held a joint Consultative Dialogue in Abu

Dhabi (UAE) between the governments and the co-op movements in the Asia-Pacific region, from 1-3 June 2008.

The meeting to finalise the adoption of the Recommendations of the 8th Ministers' Conference on Co-operative Legislation and Policy (held in Kuala Lumpur, March 2007) allowed heads of government and co-op leaders to consider and respond to the recommendations, and to develop strategies to incorporate in governmental development plans



(L-R) Shil-Kwan Lee, Director ICA Asia-Pacific, Ivano Barberini, ICA President and Mariam Al Roumi, Honourable Minister of Social Affairs, Government of UAE

## ICA Africa launches research study

The 8th African Ministerial Co-operative Conference (Lesotho, 2005) identified three critical areas for reshaping co-operative development in Africa: relationship building between government and the co-operative movement; research and development; and information and communications technology.

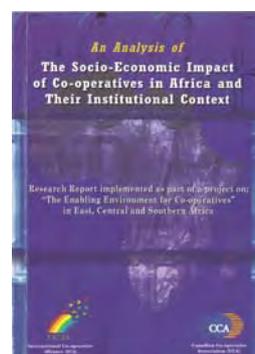
One of the research engagements is a study launched by ICA Africa in connection with the ICA Africa Members' Forum, entitled ‘An Analysis of the Socio-Economic

Impact of Co-operatives in Africa and their Institutional Impact’. It highlights the contribution of co-ops to social and economic development in Africa, and identifies the issues that need to be addressed for the African co-op movement to reposition itself, to develop systems that are sustainable, and to operate as member owned and controlled democratic institutions.

Research was conducted in six countries: Botswana, Ethiopia, Kenya, Malawi, Swaziland and Tanzania.

The study was part of the ICA Africa project ‘The Enabling Environment for Co-ops in East, Central and Southern Africa’, aimed at creating an enabling policy environment where co-ops play a greater role in economic development and poverty reduction.

The research was funded by long standing partner and ICA member, Canadian Co-operative Association (CCA). The research team leader was Professor Suleman Chambo, Principal of Moshi University College of Co-ops & Business Studies.



Contact:  
Jan-Eirik Imbsen:  
[imbsen@ica.coop](mailto:imbsen@ica.coop)

## Regional News **Renewal and revitalisation for ICA in Africa**



ICA AFRICA MEMBERS FORUM WORKSHOP AT CO-OPERATIVE COLLEGE, SEMINAR CENTRE NAIROBI KENYA ON 5-7 MAY 2008.

Africa's co-operative movement has a critical role to play in improving the lives of its members and providing an appropriate framework to facilitate pan-African exchange and development.

The final report of the ICA Commission for Africa called for a member driven process that reconfirms ICA as the representative organisation for co-operatives in Africa.

The ICA Africa Members' Forum, held recently in Nairobi, Kenya, was a milestone in the restructuring of ICA Africa, and the revitalization

of the regional movement. A key element of the Forum was a renewal strategy for both the ICA and the co-operative movement.

Held at the impressive Co-operative College on the outskirts of Nairobi, the Forum was hosted by the Kenyan co-operative movement led by ICA Vice President for Africa, Stanley Muchiri.

The College Director and last year's Rochdale Pioneers Award winner, Esther Gicheru, was an active participant.

The Hon. Joseph Nyagah, Kenya's Minister for Co-operative Development and Marketing, opened the meeting chaired by Professor Chambo, Principal of the Moshi University College of Co-operative and Business Studies.

A resolution reaffirming the members' commitment to support ICA Africa was one outcome of the meeting. A plan of action and consultation was also proposed as the basis of a new four year strategy that will be submitted to the Regional Assembly for adoption.

At the Nairobi meeting, the regional Executive Committee decided that the theme of the Regional Assembly for Africa, which will be held in November in Abuja, Nigeria as, 'Revitalizing Member Commitment and Involvement for Improved Sustainability of African Co-operatives'.

For more information, please contact: Jan-Eirik Imbsen, Interim Regional Director for Africa: [imbsen@ica.coop](mailto:imbsen@ica.coop)

## ILO News

### Co-operative law in the spotlight

The ILO Summer Academy on Sustainable Enterprise Development is an opportunity to study different topics under the guidance of leading ILO enterprise development specialists, independent experts and academics. The course entitled 'Co-operative Policy and Legislation' runs from 15—26 September 2008.

According to the ILO's Recommendation 193 on the Promotion of Co-operatives (2002), co-operative policy and law must ensure that co-operatives are treated on an equal footing with other types of enterprises in a way that allows them to remain competitive whilst maintaining their distinctive features.



For more information email [enterprise.academy@itcilo.org](mailto:enterprise.academy@itcilo.org)

Summer Academy website: [www.itcilo.org/enterpriseacademy](http://www.itcilo.org/enterpriseacademy)

## Co-ops support job creation in rural areas

ICA made two important statements to the recent ILO Conference in Geneva, on the role of co-operatives in job creation and promoting fair globalisation.

Addressing the conference on 11 June, ICA Director-General, Iain Macdonald, underlined the role of co-operatives in promoting employment and reducing poverty in rural areas - a focus of this year's ILO Conference.

On 12 June, he reminded delegates of the contribution that co-ops make to closing the employment gap around the world.

ICA commended the work of the ILO in assisting

constituencies to implement ILO Recommendation 193 on the Promotion of Co-operatives. It is hoped that the ILO will strengthen its activity aimed at ensuring that a policy environment exists that enables co-operatives to grow and prosper alongside other forms of enterprise.

Macdonald said ICA is committed to working with the ILO to improve the potential of co-operatives to advance the development goals of people and achieve a fair globalisation.

Download a transcript of the speeches at [www.ica.coop/activities/un/index.html](http://www.ica.coop/activities/un/index.html)



D-G Iain Macdonald delivering ICA's statement to the ILO Conference at UN head-quarters in Geneva

## CoopAfrica Partnership Programme

Swaziland was the venue of the meeting of the COOP-Africa Steering Committee on 26 June in which the ICA participates.

COOPAfrica, funded by the UK Department for International Development (DfID), is a partnership programme implemented by the International Labour Organisation (ILO) aiming at supporting the development and promotion of co-operatives in Africa. The programme acts as a co-ordination mechanism that brings together co-operative centres of competence in Africa and makes their expertise available to co-operative movements and organisations that need them. It has a three-year time frame and has been operational since the beginning of 2008 after its official launch in October 2007 last year.

The ICA is one of the partners which also include the Committee for the Promotion and Advancement of Cooperatives (COPAC), the UK Co-operative College, the International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC), and the African Union.

The Steering Committee is the highest decision-making body of COOPAfrica and aims to strengthen the participation of the programme's partners and co-operative stakeholders in the planning, monitoring and evaluation of COOPAfrica.

The meeting in Swaziland was to review initial activities and to discuss the workplan. Of particular importance was progress on the launch of the three financial facilities called Challenge Funds for "services", "innovative co-operative ventures" and



"training". These funds are accessible through a bidding process, and the applications must clearly demonstrate a link to the achievement of COOPAfrica objectives and contribute to the fight against poverty. Specific selection criteria have been set up to ensure gender equality and women's empowerment.

COOPAfrica which makes a significant contribution to the Co-operating Out Of Poverty campaign, invites collaboration and partnership with other agencies involved in co-operative development.

## Sectoral News

"The right selection and variety of topics discussed gave me a fresh, new perspective on mutuals and co-operatives ..."  
(past participant)

## Latest ICMIF management course

The next ICMIF management course is being held 21—27 September 2008 in Nantwich, UK.

The course takes participants on a journey from the principles of mutuality and co-operation and how they impact on the way we are governed, through the skills

required by senior executives to manage competitive and operational challenges, and the strategic issues that are at the top of the agenda for CEOs.

Read more about the course content and why previous participants recommend it so highly at

[www.icmif.org/services/training/managementcourse.asp](http://www.icmif.org/services/training/managementcourse.asp)

The deadline for registration is 18 July 2008. Queries should be directed to Faye Lageu: [faye@icmif.org](mailto:faye@icmif.org)

## Member News

### ICA welcome two new members



**INFOCOOP  
COSTA RICA**

*Juntos podemos*



*75 años*

ICA welcomes two new members.

The Instituto Nacional de Fomento Cooperativo (INFOCOOP) of Costa Rica officially became a member of ICA on 14 May 2008. INFOCOOP promotes finance and supports co-operatives at all levels by providing an enabling environment for co-operative development. It provides technical assistance, credit facilities, supervision and auditing services and collects national co-operative statistics. [www.infocoop.go.cr](http://www.infocoop.go.cr)

Agricultores Federados Argentinos Sociedad Cooperativa Limitada (AFA S.C.L.) of Argentina joined ICA on 4 June 2008. AFA markets and exports agricultural and livestock produce. It purchases consumer goods and agricultural inputs for members and employees, and establishes industrial plants for agricultural production. AFA purchases and rents agricultural land for research and other activities, provides cash and in-kind advances to members guaranteed by production, and facilitates access to credit. [www.afascl.com](http://www.afascl.com)

### ICA member updates

The new ICA Membership statistics are 218 member organisations from 87 countries made up of 209 members and 9 associate members.

The new President of **All China Federation of Supply and Marketing Cooperatives (ACFSMC)** is Mr Li Chengyu. He was previously the Governor of Henan Province in central China and has extensive experience in co-operative governance and agricultural economy. He is recognised for his contribution to rural development and agriculture. Like his predecessor, Li Chengyu highly values international co-operation and co-operative collaboration. [www.acfsmc.cn/](http://www.acfsmc.cn/)

There is a new President at Instituto de Desarrollo y Crédito Cooperativo (**IDECOOP**) of the Dominican Republic. Mr Pedro Corporán has replaced Mr José Feliz Medina.

The new name for the German Consumer Federation **Konsumverband eG** is **Zentralkonsum eG**. The name is intended to emphasise the positive results of the economic activities of the co-operative. [www.zentralkonsum.de/](http://www.zentralkonsum.de/)

The new Chairperson of the **National Confederation of Co-operatives (NATCCO)**, which was formed by credit union pioneers in the Philippines, is Engr. Jose R. Ping-ay. [www.natcco.coop/](http://www.natcco.coop/)

The new president of Spain's **Confederació de Cooperatives de Catalunya** is Mrs Pepa Muñoz Quintana, replacing Mr Xavier Tubert. [www.cooperativescatalunya.coop/](http://www.cooperativescatalunya.coop/)

## Lou Hammond Ketilson

The Chair of the ICA Research Committee, Lou Hammond Ketilson, has been awarded the prestigious 2008 Canadian Association for Studies in Co-operation CASC/ASÉC Merit Award.

Ketilson is Director of the Centre for the Study of Co-operatives at the University of Saskatchewan and Associate Professor, Department of Management and Marketing, Centre for the Study of Co-operatives (Saskatchewan).

Her research interests include; management in co-operatives and other democ-

atic organisations, community development, women in co-operatives, Aboriginal co-operative development, and diversity on co-op boards and governance bodies.

The award was presented by CASC, a voluntary, non-profit organisation of researchers and practitioners who work in the co-op sector.

Ketilson is the first woman to receive the award. For a biography of Ketilson visit: [www.usaskstudies.coop/staff/Lou/index.php](http://www.usaskstudies.coop/staff/Lou/index.php)



Lou Hammond Ketilson  
(Photo courtesy of Robin Puga, BCICS)

## Co-op people

## Garry Cronan

Garry Cronan left the ICA on 30 April 2008. The ICA thanks him for his work and wishes him all the best in his future endeavours.

In the interim period of finding a replacement, the contact for issues regarding **Global 300** is Hassan Kashef, Global 300 Project Officer: [global300@ica.coop](mailto:global300@ica.coop)

For issues relating to communications contact Maria-Elena Chavez Hertig, Deputy Director-General: [chavez@ica.coop](mailto:chavez@ica.coop)

## Condolences

It is with sincere sadness that we advise ICA members of the death on 26 March 2008 of Mr Jakub Janiak, former President of the National Auditing Union of Workers' Co-operatives (NAUWC) of Poland.

In 1991 Mr Janiak was elected President of NAUWC, and served as Deputy President from 1995. He was a member of the Board of Directors of CECOP. In 2001 he was elected by the ICA General Assembly as a member of

the Audit and Control Committee. A well-known expert in co-operative audit, Mr Janiak was connected with the audit and control of co-operatives and the State for most of his professional life.

He will be greatly missed.

## Learning opportunities for young co-operators

A conference for young co-operators from across Europe will be held in Manchester, UK, from Monday, 13 October to Friday, 17 October 2008. It is aimed at young people (18-30 years) who are already involved in co-operation or who want to learn more. The conference is hosted by The Co-operative College.

Email [euoycc@co-op.ac.uk](mailto:euoycc@co-op.ac.uk) for information and a booking form. The College website is [www.co-op.ac.uk](http://www.co-op.ac.uk).

### School of Young Creators of Co-operatives

Are you aged 18-35 years? Are you interested in forming a co-operative? The

School of Young Creators of Co-operatives 2008 (ÉJCC) is a unique opportunity to discover the skills to create and manage a co-op.

ÉJCC is held from 4—17 August 2008 at the University of Sherbrooke (Quebec).

For more information visit [www.ejcc.coop](http://www.ejcc.coop)



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[www.ica.coop](http://www.ica.coop)

**More events:**  
Calendar of ICA events  
& related co-operative  
activity:  
[www.ica.coop/calendar/](http://www.ica.coop/calendar/)

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

## 2008-2009 Calendar of ICA events and related co-operative activities

13-16 July 2008	2008 WOCCU: World Credit Union Conference, Hong Kong <a href="http://www.woccu.org/events/wcuc">www.woccu.org/events/wcuc</a>
21 July 2008	ICA Americas Board meeting, San José, Costa Rica <a href="mailto:member@aciamericas.coop">member@aciamericas.coop</a>
22-25 July 2008	16th ICA Americas Regional Conference, San José, Costa Rica <a href="http://www.aciamericas.coop/CR2008/">www.aciamericas.coop/CR2008/</a>
4-17 Aug 2008	School of Young Creators of Co-operatives, University of Sherbrooke, Sherbrooke, Quebec, Canada <a href="http://www.ejcc.coop">www.ejcc.coop</a>
2-5 Sept 2008	Inaugural Social Enterprise World Forum: <i>Working together for a sustainable future</i> , Edinburgh, Scotland <a href="http://www.ceis.org.uk/events/sewf">www.ceis.org.uk/events/sewf</a>
15 - 26 Sept 2008	ILO Summer Academy on Sustainable Enterprise Development, <i>Cooperative Policy and Legislation</i> , Turin, Italy <a href="http://www.itcilo.org/enterpriseacademy">www.itcilo.org/enterpriseacademy</a>
21-27 Sept 2008	ICMIF Management Course, Nantwich, UK. Booking deadline 18 July 2008 <a href="http://www.icmif.org/services/training/managementcourse.asp">www.icmif.org/services/training/managementcourse.asp</a>
22-24 Sept 2008	CIRIEC Social Economy Conference, <i>Innovation &amp; management: Responses of public, social &amp; cooperative economy enterprises to major challenges</i> , Seville, Spain <a href="http://www.congresociriec.es/">www.congresociriec.es/</a>
13-17 Oct 2008	The Co-operative College: Conference for young co-operators (18-30 years), Manchester, UK. For information and to register interest email: <a href="mailto:euroycc@co-op.ac.uk">euroycc@co-op.ac.uk</a>
16-18 Oct 2008	ICA Research Conference, <i>The Role of Co-operatives in Sustaining Development and Fostering Social Responsibility</i> Riva del Garda, Trento, Italy <a href="http://www.ica.coop/icaccr/2008icaresearchconference.pdf">www.ica.coop/icaccr/2008icaresearchconference.pdf</a>
22-23 Oct 2008	ICA Board meeting, Lisbon, Portugal: <a href="mailto:ica@ica.coop">ica@ica.coop</a>
23-25 Oct 2008	ICA EXPO 2008, Lisbon, Portugal: <a href="mailto:luzbranco@icaexpo.coop">luzbranco@icaexpo.coop</a> <a href="http://www.icaexpo.coop/">www.icaexpo.coop/</a>
10-14 Nov 2008	ICA Africa Regional Assembly, Abuja, Nigeria: <a href="mailto:lmbsen@ica.coop">lmbsen@ica.coop</a>
2-3 Dec 2008	ICA Board meeting, Hanoi, Vietnam: <a href="mailto:ica@ica.coop">ica@ica.coop</a>
4-6 Dec 2008	ICA Asia-Pacific Regional Assembly and related meetings, Hanoi, Vietnam: <a href="mailto:info@icaroop.coop">info@icaroop.coop</a>
27 Sept-2 Oct 2009	ICA General Assembly, Glasgow, Scotland: <a href="mailto:ica@ica.coop">ica@ica.coop</a>