



ICA Digest

Issue 63

Sept/Oct 2008

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The sustainability issue

Co-operatives combat climate change and lead in sustainable business practice

Confronting climate change through co-operative enterprise — The theme of this year's International Day of Co-operatives (IDC) held on 5 July—highlighted the fact that co-operatives are enterprises that make significant contributions to addressing climate change. While some commit to cutting greenhouse gas emissions, others are striving towards carbon neutrality, and all are working towards economic, social and environmental sustainability.

Ban Ki-moon, the UN secretary-general, acknowledged the key role co-operatives play in tackling climate change in his message to co-operators on IDC this year.

“Co-operatives have long fostered inclusive and sustainable approaches to economic and social development at the local level. It is in keeping with this focus that co-operatives are expanding their development efforts creatively, into areas such as environmental sustainability and carbon neutrality, as communities around the world are struggling to adapt to climate change and strengthen their resilience against its impacts.”

Co-operatives are well-placed to be market leaders in activities to tackle climate change, and to initiate carbon reduction and sustainable practices. Not simply a



strategy to maximise market share, co-operatives pursue a sustainable triple bottom line—economic, social and environmental—in accordance with their guiding principles and values.

To be sustainable, co-operatives must be successful enterprises, but it is the principle of ‘profits with purpose’ that sets them apart from their corporate brethren and gives them - when it comes to combating climate change - the competitive edge.

You can read about the innovative and inspiring ways co-operatives are combating climate change and pursuing sustainable business practice in our special report: “Greening Business—Co-operatives and Climate Change” on pages 6-7.

The 86th ICA International Day of Co-operatives called on co-operatives everywhere to strengthen their

efforts aimed at sustainable development and combating global warming, and to work in partnership to continue to tackle climate change.

From political events, lobbying and advocacy, all the way to community get-togethers and sporting events, read how we celebrated around the world on pages 4-5.



ICA EXPO 2008, the first global trade fair to promote co-operative business is only a month away. Our update on pages 8-9 offers a preview of the exciting events and activities planned for this landmark trade event.



Maria-Elena Chavez
Deputy Director-
General

From the Editor's desk

This issue of the Digest focuses on climate change, and how co-operatives are making efforts to reduce emissions and promote sustainability.

The report on International Day of Co-operatives whose theme was climate change, shows that the ICA has the ability to reach out and influence not only the global co-op community, but the general public as well. We present how the Day was celebrated around the world.

We feature a selection of examples of how both producer and consumer co-

operatives tackle climate change—from raising awareness, reducing the co-op carbon footprint to training so that co-ops can participate in carbon markets.

The global co-operative trade fair is also given prominence in this issue. ICA members attest to the importance of the event, while we give readers a quick recap on a number of side events including the launch of this year's Global 300 listing and a seminar on renewable energy.

We report too on key regional events, the Americas

successful regional assembly and upcoming Africa and Asia-Pacific assemblies as well as the Asia-Pacific seminar which reached out to South Pacific movements.

On the international level, the initiative of the United Nations to seek to declare an International Year of Co-operatives is announced and we celebrate ICA member organisations milestone anniversaries. We also keep you updated on changes in leadership and news on co-op people.

Comments are most welcome! chavez@ica.coop

ICA Leadership Council



ICA to create Leadership Council on Climate Change and Sustainability

The ICA is calling on interested co-operative leaders and employees to join a new body, the *ICA Leadership Council of Climate Change and Sustainability*.

The Council will assist ICA in developing follow-up action on the climate change issue. This broad-based *Leadership Council* of a limited

number of persons from different geographic regions and sectors of activity should have a shared commitment to environmentally sustainable actions for co-operative enterprise. They will provide advice and guidance, propose goals and targets as well as concrete actions to be taken by the ICA in all its structures, sectors and

within ICA membership. The Council will also assist in identifying good practice to share with ICA members, as well as potential partnerships to help implement the 2007 General Assembly resolution, "Climate Change: Our Co-operative Commitment" and ICA's Strategy on Climate Change (see www.ica.coop/coop/2008-ICA-Strategy-Climate-Change.pdf).

The Council will initially be convened through teleconferences and email exchanges.

Climate change is a global challenge that ultimately requires a global solution. ICA is committed to be part of the solution and you can have a key role.

Please contact Maria Elena Chavez Hertig at chavez@ica.coop to join.

ICA Central Office (Geneva) has a new telephone number

+41 22 929 88 38 replaces +41 22 929 88 88.

Direct numbers for ICA staff are unchanged as below.

Country code for Switzerland **+41**, city code **22**.

When dialing from inside of Switzerland, please dial 022 before the number.

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A busy year ...

You would be mistaken if you expect the pace of activities at ICA to slow over the summer period, as our director-general, Iain Macdonald, explains.

“The extraordinary General Assembly in Rome in June was a milestone for ICA and most of our work since then has been geared to implementing its proposals. A lot has happened, not least, the planning of the **ICA Expo 08 Trade Fair** in October. This is the first time that the co-operative movement has got together for a global trade event that emphasises our special way of doing business; combining economic and social purposes. Please register!

The **ICA Board** will meet in Lisbon, Portugal before the Fair. As well as ongoing training in accordance with the Board code of governance, it will consider the new four-year strategic plan which we have been preparing for some time. Recommendations and Rules emanating from Rome will have an important impact on the plan. We now have agreement between the centre, the regions and sectoral organisations on the main objectives and key result areas, and each component part of ICA will add its strategic initiatives and activities. With regard to the budget, we should, for the first time, have a fully costed and agreed global strategy for the entire ICA family for consideration and approval by the Board at its meeting in Hanoi (Vietnam) in December. I think that will be a considerable achievement.

The **Global 300** project is about to enter a new phase. With financial support from members in Australia and the USA, we are developing an online database which will

embed the work that our 300 team has painstakingly undertaken over the last two years and establish a professional methodology to develop the project in the years to come. The UK's Co-operative Group is seconding two managers over the next six months to develop, in particular, the CSR side, and they will join the existing team to move the project forward. This is an important part of the project and one that ensures its uniquely co-operative profile.

ICA regularly receives delegations and visitors at our central office in Geneva - a welcome opportunity to strengthen the global co-operative network, to share information and best practice, and to pursue ICA's strategic objectives of promotion of co-operatives and providing a centre of expertise. One such visit was from Cuba. The group was interested to learn more about product marketing, the management of co-operatives and co-operative federations, and other policy issues. Representatives from the Asociación Cubana de técnicos agrícolas y forestales, the Ministry of Agriculture (MINAG), Ministry of Sugar (MINAZ), and Unidad Básica de Producción Cooperativa, La Miriam, and Swiss Agency for Development and Co-operation participated. They met with Jan-Eirik Imbsen and Han Hoi Choi from ICA, and Hagen Henrÿ, ILO Co-op Unit Chief, who provided insight into various legal issues. We agreed that the Cuban movement should work more closely with our ICA Americas and contact

has already been made.

The ICA President and I also met with Thierry Jeantet, the organiser of the **Mont Blanc Meetings (Recontres de Mont-Blanc)**, which promote the social economy. The Mont Blanc Meetings bring together actors in the social economy as well as researchers, politicians and other stakeholders. Co-operative colleagues, including the ICA President, have been regular attendees at these fora since their inception in 2004. There is a strong link between co-operative enterprise and the social economy, and Jeantet hopes to strengthen those links with a strategic alliance between his own organisation and ICA. The idea will be brought to the Board for discussion. I welcome members' views on this subject. Please e-mail me with your thoughts:

macdonald@ica.coop

A delegation from National Federation of Fisheries Co-operative Associations (ZENGYOREN) of Japan also visited while participating in the WTO negotiations, and held discussions on future implementation of ICA's restructuring.

My last visitor was former ICA President, **Graham Melmoth**. Although retired for some years from his position as chief executive of the Co-operative Group UK, he is still actively involved in a number of government and non-government bodies, and keeps a close eye on co-operative events. He sends his best wishes to the global movement!"

DG's Report



Iain Macdonald
Director-General

“The extraordinary GA in Rome in June was a milestone for ICA and most of our work since then has been geared to implementing its proposals.”

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

IDC 2008



OCEPAR Brazil ran an editorial on Co-op Day

Read and download the ICA message for the 86th International Co-operative Day / 14th UN International Day of Co-operatives

www.ica.coop/activities/idc/2008



Co-op Day 2008 celebration in Mombasa District, Kenya

International Day of Co-operatives 2008: Co-ops focus on Climate Change and sustainability around the globe

On the first Saturday in July, the world celebrates International Day of Co-operatives around the globe. It is an opportunity for co-operatives everywhere to let people learn more about the benefits of co-operatives in their local community, the wider contribution of co-ops nationally and internationally and draw the attention of co-operators on particular issues.

This year, the International Day focussed attention on the contribution of co-ops to the issue of climate change and sustainability.

Events held this year to celebrate the Day were aimed at strengthening efforts for sustainable development and combating global warming. In Brazil, a seminar on Sustainable Development and Co-operatives was an opportunity to show how co-operatives can work in partnership to continue to tackle climate change. At the seminar, the Organisation of Brazilian Co-operatives (OCB)

and Sescoop, the National Service for Co-operative Education, launched a new programme aimed at making co-operatives a sustainable part of the carbon trade

market. The 'Programa Inserção Sustentável das Cooperativas no Mercado de Carbono' aims to reduce emissions from Greenhouse Gases (GHG) and agricultural waste, helping to mitigate the environmental impacts of agriculture and to ensure the sustainability of renewable resources for future generations.

The Day's challenge of sustainable socio-economic development was the message for co-operatives in Morocco and Madagascar. In Agadir, the Office du Développement de la Coopération (ODCo) and the Moroccan Co-operative Movement asked co-operatives to meet sustainability goals particularly in regard to agricultural and food production that respects water and ecosystem balance. The Menabe Region in Madagascar was chosen to host this year's celebration with the theme: "Co-operatives and regional economic development". A dozen co-ops and support agencies showcased co-op products and services in the town of Morondava.

Promoting the co-operative model of enterprise is a key objective of the International Day and co-operative organisations around the world take the opportunity to reach out to their members as well as the general public with messages that highlight the positive impact of co-ops on society, the economy and the environment. This can extend to promotion in the national media, as in Chile, where ICA member, CO-OPEUCH, took a half page ad in the national press to publish a greeting to all co-

ops. In Sudan, the National Co-operative Union published a message on the Day in their national newspaper (below).



Co-operatives also used their own publications and websites to spread the message and issue a rally call to co-operators to fulfil the objectives evoked by the Day's theme. ICA member, Co-operative Association of the Czech Republic called on co-operatives to engage in environmental protection, and publicised the objectives of this year's Day in the Czech Co-operative Movement magazine. The Canadian Co-operative Association disseminated the ICA message in its *News Brief* (Vol. 9 No. 14, 24 July 2008), and Finnish ICA member, SOK Association (SOKL) issued a press release to its members with a link to ICA's message. One of Italy's oldest co-operative organisations, Legacoop, published the ICA message on its website.

Paraná Cooperativo (Issue 42, June 2008), magazine of OCEPAR, Union and Organisation of Co-operatives of the State of Parana of Brazil, included an editorial on International Day and its cover carried the headline: "Co-operation: A question of Principles".

Political advocacy and lobbying are an important part of the aims and objectives of

International Day of Co-operatives 2008—cont'd

IDC. This year, the President of France's Groupment Nationale de la Coopération (GNC), Jean-Claude Detilleux, took the opportunity to send a letter and the ICA message to the President of France and to French ministers responsible for co-operatives and the environment. In Uruguay, the confederation of co-operatives, CUDECOOP, held a week long co-operative expo to celebrate the Day. The event concluded with a day of presentations and a discussion on the 130-year history of co-ops attended by the Minister for Labour, Eduardo Bonomi, politicians and co-operative leaders.

International Day celebrations run the full gamut from small community events to large scale national celebrations. In Argentina, celebrations across the country brought co-operators and local authorities together. The municipality of San Fernando del Valle de Catamarca held events over a week, and in Bariloche, electricity co-op, Cooperativa de Electricidad de Bariloche Ltda, donated books on co-operative values and the principles of conservation of natural resources in Patagonia to local primary schools.

1000 co-operators gathered at Octave Wieve Auditorium, University of Mauritius, for celebrations organised by the Mauritius Co-operative Union Ltd (MCUL), while in Indonesia, 30,000 co-operators convened at the National Stadium in Jakarta to listen to an historic speech by Indonesia's President. A conference on consumer co-operatives, youth co-operatives and a national trade exhibition were also held.

Ensuring that the International Day message is disseminated to all co-operators is an important ingredient in the success of the Day. ICA salutes the efforts of co-operative entities who translate the message for their members no matter where they are based. Bantu, Hungarian, Italian, Catalan, Basque, Vietnamese and Romanian are just some of the translations of the 2008 ICA message.

The word 'celebration' is integral to International Day events and ICA was excited to hear about the creative ways co-op movements choose an event to bring co-operators closer together in community events. In Mombasa District, Kenya, co-operation in team sport was used to create awareness of the Day. The Kenyan International Day of Co-operatives Committee organised the Ushirika Tournament of football and volleyball which started on 10 May and concluded on the Day, 5 July.

In Wisconsin, USA, they held the first annual Madison Co-operative Day Community Picnic and the inaugural Co-operative Croquet Tournament. And, in Portugal, Beja hosted the celebration of the Day in conjunction with a meeting of the Inter-co-

operative Forum attended by ICA members. The event concluded with a music programme open to the public.

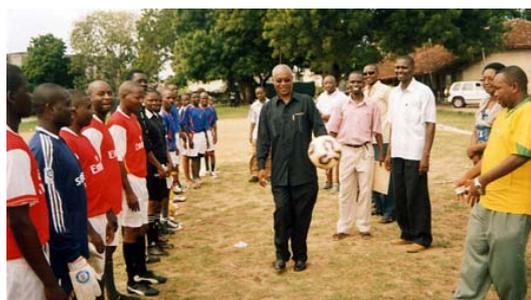
Every year, co-operators produce promotional materials and resources for the Day that strengthen and reinforce the message of co-operative enterprise. The Japanese Joint Committee (JJC), which unites all ICA members in Japan, produces materials that celebrate International Day of Co-operatives each year. The poster (below) was accompanied by a leaflet on the Japanese movement and included the ICA message. The Day also offers opportunities to hold other important events. In Nepal, ICA Board member and IFFCO Chairman, Mr Surindra Kumar Jakhar, inaugurated the 86th International and the 15th National Co-operative Federation Day programme at a ceremony organised by National Co-operative Federation of Nepal in Kathmandu, where Nepalese co-operatives received awards for excellence in co-operative enterprise.

IDC 2008



National celebrations in Nepal for Co-op Day 2008

Poster produced by the Japanese Joint Committee to celebrate Co-op Day 2008

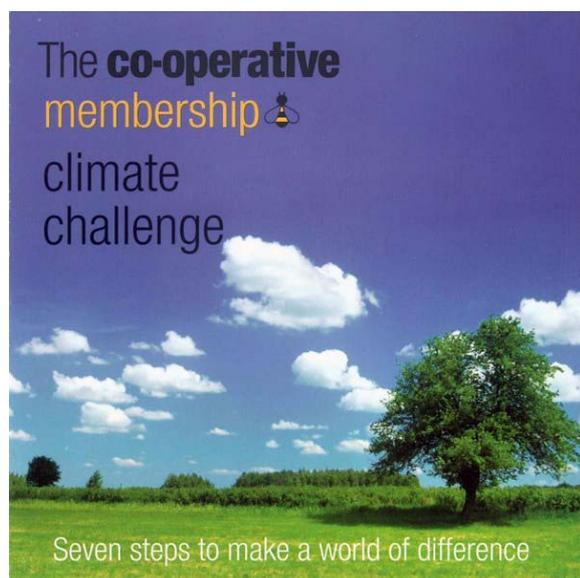


Ushirika Football Tournament helped raise awareness of Co-op Day 2008, Kenya



Sustainability feature

“Greening business”: Tackling climate change through co-operative business



The Co-operative Group (UK) launched a climate campaign aimed at members

“Co-operatives are expanding their development efforts creatively, into areas such as environmental sustainability and carbon neutrality,” *Ban Ki-moon, UN Secretary-General*

Striving for economic gain is not a sufficient condition in itself for economic success. The challenges of operating in a globalised economy, together with the environmental pressures brought on by global warming, are driving enterprises to embrace more sustainable ways of doing business in order to stay competitive. As well, consumers are driving change as they demand more than ‘value for money’; they want to interact with businesses that demonstrate good corporate social responsibility (CSR). Today, displays of CSR are ubiquitous in the world of business—corporate as well as co-operative—but co-ops are the true original practitioners of social responsibility. In fact, co-operatives have a 150-year history of sustainable economic, social and environmental practice which gives them the clear lead in socially responsible business.

Now, in response to the monumental environmental challenge of climate change, co-operatives are again

spearheading a revolution in business which takes account of the triple bottom line—economic, social and environmental.

Co-operatives across all sectors are finding ways to act environmentally and to tackle global warming through co-operative business. Where energy production is the core business of a co-operative, their aim is not just to supply the consumer with energy, but to influence consumer behaviour. This comes down to their core difference of purpose—co-operative organisations base their activities on the values and principles of the co-operative enterprise model: solidarity, social responsibility and democracy. Therefore, co-operatives are rising to the challenge of climate.

The number of producer and consumer co-operatives that are directly involved in energy production, such as electricity co-ops in the **United States** and **Argentina**, wind farms in the **Denmark** and hydroelectric co-operatives in **Italy**, demonstrates the important role these co-ops play in shaping the renewable energy sector. In Denmark, where renewable energies provide over 20% of supply, 23% of wind power is owned by co-operatives; 75% of the district heating networks belong to consumer co-ops; and farmer co-ops own over 20 digester plants, providing a sustainable waste-management solution.

Cooperatives Europe has recently released the preliminary results of the first mapping exercise at European level of co-operatives

working in the energy field. At a time when the energy issue is gaining relevance and European Union policy is promoting renewable energies, the study provides a first overview of the numerous initiatives undertaken by European co-operatives in this sector. (More information: www.coopseurope.coop).

The 6th principle of co-operatives; co-operation among co-operatives, and the 7th; concern for the community, are a boon for environmental initiatives. With sustainable development a core value, the capacity to work together for collective goals has meant that the co-operative movement can implement sector-wide and cross-sectoral practices to tackle climate change.

At the global level, ICA’s climate change resolution, passed at last year’s General Assembly, the *ICA Climate Change Strategy* and initiatives like the *ICA Leadership Council of Climate Change and Sustainability* (see full report page 2) have cemented an international commitment to climate change benchmarks.

An increasing number of co-operatives are looking for ways to reduce their impact on the global environment. Climate Change has become the focus of many of these concerns and businesses are implementing strategies to dramatically reduce their greenhouse gas emissions.

The United Nations Environment Programme’s **Climate Neutral Network (CN Net)** is a spur to enterprises to go further by pledging to be “climate neutral” by a specified date.

“Greening business”- cont’d

In March 2007, UK’s **Co-operative Financial Services** (CFS), a founder member of CN Net, went ‘beyond carbon neutral’. CFS seeks to be among the world’s leading businesses when assessed on its response to global climate change, an integral part of its approach to sustainability. An illustration of the commitment in practice, CFS member, **The Co-operative Insurance** (formerly CIS) saves 78 tons of CO₂ per year at its landmark building and is the UK’s largest solar project. **The Co-operative Bank**, another CFS member, has over 4000 branches powered by renewable energy and its offsetting portfolio has invested in biogas digesters in India, household energy efficiency benefiting 17,000 families in Pakistan, and rainforest reforestation, employing 400 in Uganda.

Consumer awareness initiatives are used increasingly by co-ops to encourage members and clients to curb consumption and act ethically.

In Switzerland, ICA member, **Migros**, is helping consumers choose climate friendly products as they shop. Migros has instituted a new labelling system that takes the guesswork out of which products are best for the environment. The first products using the labels are detergents. The retail giant has also joined the **WWF Climate Group**, an association of businesses undertaking to reduce CO₂ emissions by 16% by 2010.

Climate change featured high at the UK Co-op Congress last May, where The Co-operative Group of the UK invited two million members to sign up to the **Climate Challenge**, a climate pledge

to make seven small steps towards combating climate change.

In addition to awareness raising campaigns aimed at the public and their members, co-operatives are undertaking to clean up their own operations. For example, in 2007 the **Associazione Nazionale Cooperative di Consumatori (ANCC)** of Italy held a year-long campaign, “Coop4Kyoto” which focused not only on members but also on suppliers and all facets of operations. Today, it continues to implement a plan to reduce emissions.

The Japanese Consumer Co-operative Union (JCCU) has a long history of commitment to sustainability. It promotes member activities to reduce CO₂ including home energy saving, tree planting, reducing the use of plastic bags, and recycling. JCCU member co-ops also report their ‘CO₂ reduction per sale of 100 million Japanese Yen’ to measure operational achievements in-store and in their delivery business.

The impact of climate change on global food producers has reinforced the pledge of agriculture co-operatives to integrate environmental initiatives into farm practices. Co-ops are supporting Good Agricultural Practices (GAP), sustainable community forestry management, responsible fisheries, Integrated Pest Management (IPM) and sustainable soil and water management.

ICA member, the **Organisation of Brazilian Co-operatives (OCB)** is helping agricultural co-ops to be part of the carbon market, a financial mechanism for off-

setting emissions. In **India**, farmers also are lowering greenhouse emissions through an initiative of the **Indian Farmers Fertiliser Co-operative (IFFCO)**. A switchover from naphtha to natural gas in the production of feed, will reduce the amount of CO₂ generated and released into the atmosphere. And, in Korea, the **National Agricultural Co-operative Federation (NACF)** has programmes to reduce methane from livestock farms as well as green financial products for member farmers.

Investment in environmentally sustainable projects is one way banks, credit unions

and co-op insurers are tackling climate change through co-operative business. The Italian Federation of Co-operative Banks (**FEDERCASSE**) finances, at competitive rates, renewable energy projects, and **Credit Coopératif** of France supports its customers’ environmental efforts through targeted financial products and loans for environmental projects, where they can demonstrate a sustainable economic model, such as installation of renewable energy. **The Co-operators**, the Canadian co-operative insurer profiled in the last *Digest* (*Digest* 62 pp. 12-13), invests in sustainable energy operations to demonstrate its commitment to the fight against climate change.

These few examples show the huge potential in the environmental field for the co-operative enterprise model, which joins the efficiency of the ‘for profit’ enterprise to the defense of the collective interest, championed by the co-operative form.

Sustainability feature



Co-ops demonstrate solidarity on climate change by joining initiatives such as UNEP’s carbon neutral network.
www.climateutral.unep.org



The 10th National Co-op Congress of Colombia will focus on Climate Change on 25-26 September.

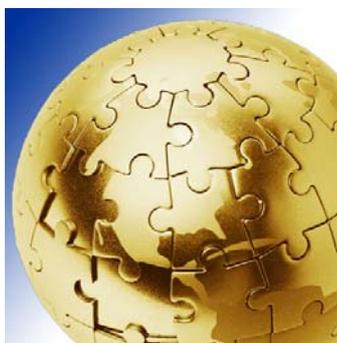


Swiss retail giant, Migros, uses labelling to help the customer choose environmentally sustainable products and reports CO₂ reductions by product line.



ICA EXPO 2008

ICA EXPO 2008—23-25 October, Lisbon (Portugal) “Increase your competitive edge”



The 2008 global co-operative Trade Fair, **ICA Expo**, is just around the corner: “This is a huge opportunity for co-operatives to showcase services and products to the world—but it is also a chance to demonstrate co-operative solidarity and to promote co-op to co-op trade,” said Iain Macdonald, ICA director-general, in his



Link to Iain Macdonald's Expo message on YouTube from the EXPO webpage: www.icaexpo.coop/

“This is a huge opportunity for co-operatives to showcase services and products to the world ...” Iain Macdonald, ICA-DG

video message uploaded to the ICA website as well as to YouTube.

Several thousand commercial visitors are expected to attend. International media will cover the event and co-operatives from Angola, Brazil, Bulgaria, China, Georgia, India, Iran, Italy, Malaysia, Nigeria, Palestine, Poland, Portugal, Spain, and Russia, will participate as exhibitors and buyers—with many more still finalising their involvement at Expo.

The Fair will introduce co-operative products by country and region plus product specific displays. Smaller producer co-ops have been sponsored by co-operative development agencies so that they can learn more about co-operative trade.

The majority of stands (more

than 80%) will feature agricultural products. There will also be displays of co-op produced handicrafts and information about financial services provided by co-ops in the banking and credit sector.

The Expo organisers call on all co-operatives interested in showcasing their products and services at the world's largest co-operative trade event to book a stand as soon as possible as time is running out. Exhibitors are guaranteed a minimum of five meetings with international buyers, hosted by the Fair. Exhibitors also receive a manual covering all aspects of co-operative trade.

Information on registering for the Fair and reserving exhibition space is available on the ICA Expo website:

www.icaexpo.coop/

What the exhibitors say: “Why is the Trade Fair important for your co-operative business?”

Iran Central Chamber of Co-operatives (ICC)

“A trade fair is the best event to bring together producers, suppliers and consumers. It is very effective for domestic and international trade relations. ICC welcomes the opportunity to participate in international co-operative exhibitions like Expo 08.”

Indian Farmers Fertiliser Co-operative Ltd (IFFCO)

“IFFCO and other co-operative organisations that adhere to the co-operative philosophy, can take advantage of the opportunities provided by a ‘readymade’ network for product distribution and establishing business partnerships. It will also pro-

vide a platform for organisations to meet and explore aspects of ongoing business with an eye to investment in other profitable ventures. IFFCO will showcase a spectrum of its product strength in the Indian market, its business intelligence and its achievements in India and globally.”

National Auditing Union of Worker's Co-operatives, Poland

“We are participating at the Lisbon Expo because this is the most important event for co-operative trade, and we want to ensure Poland is represented. We expect to gain commercial experience and

make new business contacts. It is an excellent initiative this year for promoting co-operative trade.”

Central Co-operative Union (CCU), Bulgaria

“Our motto is ‘All together we can do more’. The ICA Expo will be a landmark in our efforts to promote co-operative business as well as create greater visibility for the Bulgarian co-operative movement. This Expo will bring together the world's co-operatives to encourage trade by capturing a highly qualified public, interested in co-op products and services. We welcome this great idea of the ICA.”

ICA Expo: An opportunity to share, learn, and partner

Trade is not the only activity at ICA Expo. The Fair will provide participants with many opportunities to share, learn and partner, as ICA and other organisations provide visitors with information at their stands and convene side events.

In the business forum to be held on 23, 24 and 25 October, a number of events will join ICA's own seminar on renewable energy and the launch of the 2008 Global

300 List (see more below).

Euresa will showcase micro-credit activities in an information session on the 23 October. Eurocoop will convene consumer co-operatives on the 24th, and Emicard of Russia, will feature financial services on the 25th. Other information and discussion sessions are being finalised.

A number of other meetings will also be held in conjunc-

tion with ICA Expo, including a legislative forum and the 8th Co-operative Meeting of Portuguese Speaking Countries.

Technical visits to a distribution centre and wine co-ops are also available for Expo participants.

Register to participate as an exhibitor, visitor, hosted buyer, and attend the business forum and gala dinner! www.icaexpo.coop

ICA EXPO 2008



Renewable energy: A growth sector for co-ops?

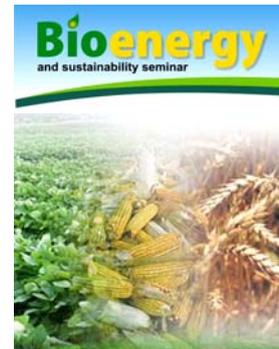
Bio-mass, wind and solar energy are growth areas for co-operative enterprise. Although experts agree that meeting today's level of demand with renewable energy sources is currently not possible, the future looks positive. Co-operatives, committed to environmental sustainability, are changing their energy consumption patterns in all their operations to reduce demand, while others invest to ensure that 'renewables' become an option for tomorrow's energy needs.

ICA will focus on how co-operatives are addressing the need for energy for sustainable development while tackling the issue of climate change at a seminar on 24-25 October during ICA Expo. It will showcase co-operatives involved in producing and distributing energy and the opportunities and challenges for the co-operative model in providing energy. Specific emphasis will be put on reconciling bio-energy production and the food crisis, as well as innovative approaches to

both renewable and traditional fossil fuels to continue to serve energy needs for sustainable development.

Prof. Ignacy Sachs, French/Brazilian economist will join David King of the International Federation of Agricultural Producers (IFAP) Roberto Rodrigues, former Minister of Agriculture of Brazil and President of ICA, and co-operators involved in the provision of energy.

Join us in Lisbon!



2008 Listing of Global 300 to launch in Lisbon

The latest ICA list of the largest 300 co-operatives and mutuals in the world will be announced at a **Global 300** seminar and launch event on 24 October 2008 during ICA Expo.

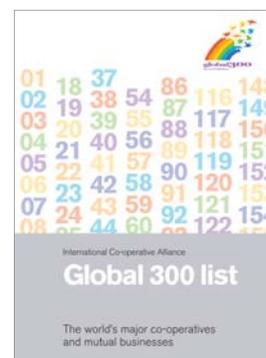
The event, open to all interested participants, will showcase the economic and social contribution of the 300 co-operatives with the highest turnover, with specific emphasis on how they put

their values and principles into practice through Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR). The list not only includes a general ranking, but also analysis by sector, country and a report on the contribution of co-operatives to their national economies in terms of their input to Gross Domestic Product (GDP).

At the launch, a list of the top 300 co-operatives in

developing economies – the **Developing 300 List** – will be released, positioning co-ops in terms of their relative importance in national economies. Three specific country profiles—Kenya, Malaysia and Colombia—will feature.

The **Global 300 List**, **Developing 300** and **CSR Case Studies** will be available on www.global300.coop shortly after the event in Lisbon.



ICA Americas Report from 16th ICA Americas Regional Conference



Delegates at the opening of ICA Americas regional conference in Costa Rica

The next ICA Americas Regional Conference will be held in Guadalajara, Mexico, in September 2009.

The 16th ICA Americas Regional Conference concluded on a high note on 25 July in San José, Costa Rica. 600 co-operators from across the Americas, came together with international guests from Italy, Spain, Sweden and Switzerland for the four-day event.

The theme, 'Co-operative Social Responsibility and Democracy' provided fertile ground for debate about the future of co-operatives in the Americas. Among topics discussed was a forum on democratic participation of women and investment in education in co-operatives, implementation of social responsibility in co-operatives, the effect of trade liberalisation on co-operative financial success and investment, and the opportunities and challenges flowing from legal constraints in the social and environmental areas. The impact of health co-operatives in the community was also examined.

At the opening, Dr Oscar

Arias Sánchez, President of the Republic of Costa Rica, urged co-operatives worldwide towards solidarity: "After all, the co-operative is socially responsible par excellence. But, it is also clear that the co-operative [movement] can do even more to deepen its social vocation ... We must also [show] solidarity [with] our communities, with children, the elderly, single mothers and people with disabilities," he said.

Speaking on 'Corporate Social Responsibility and the ILO' on 24 July, José Manuel Salazar-Xirinachs, Executive Director of the Employment Sector, International Labour Organisation (ILO) said co-operatives faced a critical challenge as corporate business increasingly seeks to be 'good' corporate citizens and thus adopts strategies that replicate the core activities of co-operatives.

"The fact remains that there is little understanding of the significant contribution to CSR and sustainability that

co-operatives make on a day-to-day basis in economic and development circles," said Salazar.

Read the full speeches and other papers from the 16th Regional Conference: www.aciamericas.coop/CR2008/conclusiones/

A football match, dedicated to ICA President, Ivano Barberini, who attended the Conference, was a lively addition to the opening events.



"San José Declaration"

The 5th meeting of parliamentarians - including legislators from Bolivia, Uruguay, Brazil, Mexico, Costa Rica, Paraguay, Peru, Dominican Republic and Costa Rica - and the ICA Americas Consultative Council, was held on 22 July to consider the final draft of a legal framework for co-operatives in Latin America. The meeting concluded with a signing of the "Declaration of San José", on 23 July.

This Declaration recognises the efforts of the ICA, through its regional office for the Americas, to develop a legal regulatory framework for co-operatives in Latin America ("Ley marco"). It also commits the signatories to encourage and facilitate the uptake of that regulatory framework and to establish a Special Commission to act as a permanent bridge between co-operatives and government. See www.aciamericas.coop/IMG/pdf_vdeclaracionparla.pdf

Excellence in CSR recognised

ICA Americas

ICA Americas presented the first Quality Certificates in Co-operative Social Balance, a tool to measure Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR), on the final day of the Regional Conference, to representatives from Argentinean co-operatives, **Cooperativa de Electricidad y Servicios Anexos Limitada de Zárate**

(**CEZ**) and **Cooperativa Agropecuaria "UNIÓN" de Justiniano Posse Limitada**.

ICA Americas will continue to offer co-operatives who align to the model on CSR developed by ICA America, with the opportunity to have access to this certification in CSR and, specifically, in

social balance as a tool. Activities are planned in Paraguay, Argentina and Venezuela, and possibly Ecuador and other countries of the region.

For information on how to obtain certification, contact:

aciproductos@aciamericas.coop

New members welcomed by the Americas region

New ICA members from the Americas were welcomed into the ICA at the opening ceremony of the Regional Conference. **Instituto Panameño Autónomo Cooperativo (INFOCOOP)** (pictured) and **Centro de Estudios y Capacitación Cooperativa (CENECOOP)**, both of Costa Rica, and **Agricultores Federados Argentinos (AFA)**, received their certificates of membership as well as other membership documents.



ICA Asia-Pacific prepares Hanoi Assembly

ICA Asia Pacific

ICA Asia-Pacific is preparing for the 8th Regional Assembly themed: "Increasing the advantages of co-operatives in a competitive environment", to be held in Hanoi, Vietnam. The Assembly and related events will be held from 1-6 December 2008. The event is hosted by the Vietnam Co-operative Alliance (VCA).



The provisional agenda of meetings for the week includes meetings of the regional committees—agriculture, banking, consumer, HRD, fishery, re-

search university/campus co-operatives, women and youth. A number of thematic seminars, study visits and conferences will also be held including a youth semi-

nar, women's conference, and the 5th Asia-Pacific Research Conference.

ICA Asia-Pacific is also hold the 5th Co-operative Forum on 4 December focusing on the co-operative advantage.

The Assembly itself will be held on 5 December.

The ICA Board will also meet on 2-3 December.

More information on the Assembly and related events from ICA Asia-Pacific: contact: sethu@icaroap.coop.

ICA Asia Pacific

ICA A-P—The Fiji Seminar

A conference aimed at developing co-operatives in the South Pacific was held from 7-9 July by ICA Asia-Pacific (ICA A-P), together with Government of Fiji, Fiji Co-operative Union and Integrated Human Resource Development Programme



Delegates enjoyed a study visit to the Fiji Teachers' Union Thrift and Credit Co-operative Society, MTW Contractors' Co-operative Society and Lovia Co-operative Society Ltd.

(IHRDP) of ILO in Fiji.

The Fijian government and co-operative movement was represented by Tom Rickett, Fiji Minister for Information, Trade, Tourism and Communication, who opened the conference; Sevanaia Bilivalu, Acting Registrar of Co-operatives who explained the legislative and policy environment for Fiji's co-ops; and Are Wakowako, discussing the potential of co-operatives in a globalised economy.

Regional perspectives were provided by speakers from Japan, Korea, India and New Zealand. ICA Regional Director, Shil Kwan Lee, gave a region-wide overview of

co-operative development. Other topics discussed included the importance of global HRD networking (Dr Bhagwati Prasad, Chief Executive of National Co-operative Union of India and Chair of the ICA Global Committee on HRD), The competitiveness of co-ops in a market economy (Ramsey Margolis, Chief Executive of New Zealand Co-operatives Association), gender (Savitri Singh, Gender Programme Advisor, ICA A-P) and university co-ops (P. Nair of ICA A-P). The delegates were invited to debate the role of governments in co-operative development and the role of co-operatives in the national economy.

Hands on training



Several courses organised by ICA A-P in recent months have given participants practical and theoretical skills in co-operative management.

The **seminar/workshop on university co-operatives** (7-

8 July) in Purwokerto, Central Java, discussed strategies for developing university co-ops in Indonesia and internationally. Delegates heard success stories from Japan and discussed the problems encountered developing university co-ops in Indonesia. The seminar concluded on the need to build co-operation among co-ops in strengthening this sector.

Participants from Brunei, Cambodia, Laos, Malaysia, Philippines, Vietnam, Indonesia and Thailand gained hands on experience in farm marketing and rural development at the first **Capacity Building for Marketing—2008**

training course (23 July-17 August). The project, funded by the Japanese Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries (MAFF), is designed to give participants the skills to help organise the marketing activities of primary co-operatives in their own regions.

"The 8th Management of Consumer Co-operatives in Asia-Pacific" workshop (12-14 August) was hosted by Singapore National Co-operative Federation (SNCF) and supported by NTUC FairPrice. It focussed on the importance of customer service and HRD to increase competitiveness.

Co-operative reconstruction after disasters

The Japan Joint Committee of Co-operatives (JJC), which comprises 12 Japanese ICA members, expressed solidarity with victims of the 12 May China earthquake and the cyclone

that hit Myanmar in May 2008. JJC has donated a million yen to each disaster. In a letter to Chinese and Myanmar co-operative movements, JJC said, "We hope that our donation will be used effec-

tively for relief and reconstruction for the victims and co-operatives damaged by the earthquake and the cyclone". JJC also requested an update on how the donation was used.

ICA Africa confirmed as key intermediary

A research project aimed at enabling the policy environment for co-operatives in Africa has confirmed ICA Africa's key role in government relations, advocacy work, and member service. As reported in *Digest 62* (pg. 11) *The Enabling Policy Environment Project*, jointly funded by CIDA and the Canadian Co-operative Association (CCA), has shown significant accomplishments in the area of policy and legislative reform and

enabled research culminating in the publication of *The Socio-Economic Impact of Co-operatives in Africa and Their Institutional Context*. The EEP greatly enhanced awareness of the ICA among policymakers and politicians and with leaders of key sector organisations. It helped to reinforce the value of an ICA Africa acting as an agency for progressive reform for the sector, while demonstrating to members what can be

achieved with resources. As a key sponsor for the project, CCA has reinforced its own reputation as an experienced partner for co-operative development in the region.

A second stage of the project, building on the commitment of members in Africa towards a new role for ICA Africa, focussing on government relations, advocacy and member service, is currently under negotiation.

ICA Africa



ICA Africa launches new website—www.icaafrica.coop

ICA Africa is delighted to announce the relaunch of its website—www.icaafrica.coop.

This is an important milestone in the restructuring of ICA Africa and will give it more visibility by providing information on regional activities as well as news feeds to track media coverage of the African co-operative movement.



Africa Regional Assembly

ICA Africa's 8th Regional Assembly will take place in Abuja, Nigeria on 10-14 November 2008.

The theme is: "Revitalising member commitment and



involvement for improved sustainability of African co-operatives".

See www.icaafrica.coop for the invitation and visitor information.

'Hands off' protest growing

Since last reported in the *Digest*, the online petition launched by Cooperatives Europe, "Hands off our co-ops", has grown in strength and profile, drawing much-needed attention to the potential plight of co-operative enterprise in Europe.



The co-operative systems in many European Union (EU) states could be subject to legal challenges asserting co-ops are unfairly advantaged, if the EU rules against them.

Cooperatives Europe launched the petition to defend the co-operative enterprise model.

Coops Europe

UN news

International Year to focus on co-operatives

The idea of an **International Year of Co-operatives (IYC)** has long been discussed. An exciting development is the decision of the United Nations to examine the feasibility of establishing an IYC. ICA director-general, Iain Macdonald, says this offers an unprecedented opportunity to showcase and profile the global movement. ICA has been working with the UN Secretariat as to the role that the ICA can play in helping to ensure that the

UN moves forward with preparations.

"If we want to maximise the obvious advantages offered, we will need to harness our potential from every part of the co-operative world. We cannot continue to complain about lack of publicity and understanding if we do not take advantage of such opportunities," said Macdonald.

Co-operators will receive a questionnaire from the UN

soon about this initiative. Iain Macdonald asks members to please respond positively. Findings from this survey will be included in the UN Secretary-General's report on co-operatives, during the 64th session of the General Assembly, at the end of 2009. If accepted, the year could be proclaimed in 2010 and officially celebrated in 2012.

Contact Maria Elena Chavez Hertig at chavez@ica.coop for more information.



Co-operatives have added their voice to growing protests over stalled WTO free trade negotiations. On 22 July in Geneva, Switzerland, where the World Trade Organisation (WTO) ministerial meeting was held before its collapse, ICA member agricultural co-operatives and 18 farmers' groups from Africa, Asia, America and Europe, attended a press conference and signed the

Farmer co-ops voice concern on WTO

"World Farmers' Group Joint Declaration".

The declaration sought assurance that the trade talks not be allowed to destroy sustainable development in agriculture nor put farmers around the world at further risk. The agricultural leaders also urged WTO ministers not to sell wider food concerns in return for trade—emphasising that food, vital for human life, should not be treated like other commodities or be the subject of speculation.

Farmers claim the current food crisis is not attributable to lack of trade, but rather to lack of production. From 2000-2006, world trade in agricultural products grew twice as fast as world agricultural production. They

believe that further trade liberalisation will benefit large scale corporate farming and multinational traders, at the expense of small scale, vulnerable producers.

After the press conference, 15 representatives visited the WTO secretariat and delivered the farmers' consensus opinion to Pascal Lamy, director-general of WTO. They insisted that negotiations should be balanced for developing and developed countries alike, and said that if this was not the case, then no agreement was better than a bad agreement.

Read the full declaration: www.copa-cogeca.eu/img/user/File/declaration_WTO/DECLARA-TION_WTO_e.pdf

ICA members who have joined the UN Global Compact include:

1. Unimed do Brasil, Confederação Nacional das Cooperativas Médicas, Brazil
2. Confederacion de Cooperativas de Colombia CONFECOOP, Colombia
3. FDB, Denmark
4. Indian Farmers Fertiliser Co-operative (IFFCO), India
5. Krishak Bharati Co-operative Ltd. (KRIBHCO), India
6. Singapore National Co-operative Federation (SNCF), Singapore
7. Kooperativa Forbundet (KF), Sweden
8. Fédération des coopératives Migros, Switzerland
9. ACDI-VOCA, United States

Co-ops are good corporate citizens

Co-operatives are good corporate citizens. Over 50 co-ops, and nine that are direct members of ICA, have joined the United Nations Global Compact, a framework for businesses that are committed to aligning their operations and strategies with ten

universally accepted principles in the areas of human rights, labour, environment and anti-corruption. A number of members of the Compact are represented within ICA's membership and are on the Global 300 list. See: www.unglobalcompact.org

Milestones...

Co-operative sustainability is not only a matter of their environmental record or financial success. Sustainability is also about longevity. Many co-ops have served members' economic and social needs over many years. ICA congratulates these ICA members who, in 2008, celebrate a significant anniversary year.

100 years (1908-2008)

Confédération Nationale de la Mutualité, de la Coopération et du Crédit Agricoles (CNMCCA), France

Suomen Osuuskauppojen Keskusliitto (SOKL), Finland

50 years (1958-2008)

Instituto Movilizador de Fondos Cooperativos, Cooperativa Ltda. (IMFC), Argentina

La Segunda Cooperativa Limitada Seguros Generales, Argentina

Confédération Nationale du Crédit Mutuel, France

National Agricultural Co-operative Marketing Federation of India (NAFED); India

Cooperativa de Ahorro y Crédito La Rehabilitadora Ltda. N° 24 (COOPAC LA REHABILITADORA), Peru

40 years (1968-2008)

National Federation of Agricultural Co-operators and Producers (MOSZ), Hungary

Groupement National de la Coopération (GNC), France

25 years

Centro de Estudios y Capacitación Cooperativa R.L. (CENECOOP), Costa Rica

Member News

New members

Fiji Co-operative Union Ltd (FCUL) became ICA's 221st member on 11 August 2008. FCUL is a federation representing the interests of its members. It collects and disseminates statistics, funds training, promotes the co-operative model, audits member co-operatives and spon-

sors co-operative development. FCUL has 236 member societies, representing 8,260 individuals.

Centro de Estudios y Capacitación Cooperativa R.L. (CENECOOP) of Costa Rica joined ICA on 10 July 2008 as an associate member.

It is an educational institute that develops programmes for members, co-operative leaders and employees at a national and international level. The organisation has 18 member societies and 15 employees: www.cenecoop.com/

The new ICA membership statistics are 221 member organisations (211 Members and 10 Associate Members) from 88 countries.

ICA people

Monique Leroux was elected on 29 March 2008 as President of the Desjardins Group of Canada succeeding **Alban D'Amours**. Mr. D'Amours will continue to serve on the ICA Board until the 2009 General Assembly where full Board elections will take place. He also serves on the Board of the "Chagnon Foundation", the largest philanthropic organisation in Canada, and on the board of two Québec-based bio-technology businesses. The new ICA contact at FDB Denmark is **Thomas Bagge**

Olesen, Managing Director.

Mamoru Moteki was elected the new president of JA-Zenchu at the General Meeting on 8 August 2008. He succeeds Isami Miyata. Mr. Miyata will continue to serve on the Board of ICA.

Stanley Muchiri was re-elected unopposed on 22 August 2008 as director and chairperson of the Co-operative Bank of Kenya Ltd.

Sarah Deas has been appointed as chief executive of Co-operative Development

Scotland (CDS). She replaces Ian Hughes.

Francia Bowery, ICA Americas consultant working with gender issues will join the Federación Nacional de Cooperativas Agropecuarias de Autogestión (FECOOPA R.L.) on 30 September. ICA wishes her well in her new position.

Japan Workers Co-operative Union has a new English version website. See eng-lish.roukyou.gr.jp/



*Mamoru Moteki,
President JA-Zenchu*

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More events:
[Calendar of ICA events
& related co-operative
activity:](#)

Copies of the ICA
Digest are archived
on the ICA's web-
site www.ica.coop

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

- 1-2 Oct 2008 CECOP Conference, "Worker ownership: the synthesis between entrepreneurial development and social inclusion", Brussels, Belgium. For more information, contact cecop@cecop.coop.
- 13-17 Oct 2008 The Co-operative College: Conference for young co-operators (18-30 years), Manchester, UK. For information and to register interest, contact euroycc@co-op.ac.uk.
- 16-18 Oct 2008 ICA Research Conference, "*The Role of Co-operatives in Sustaining Development and Fostering Social Responsibility*", Riva del Garda, Trento, Italy
Programme: www.ica.coop/icaccr/2008-ica-research-conf-trento-prog.pdf
More information: www.issan.info/ica-index.shtml
- 20-22 Oct 2008 ICA Board Training & Meeting, Lisbon, Portugal. Contact: inwood@ica.coop
- 23-25 Oct 2008 ICA EXPO 2008, Lisbon, Portugal. More information, Contact luiz-branco@icaexpo.coop, website www.icaexpo.coop/
- 23-24 Oct 2008 ICA Expo 2008 Renewal Energy & Sustainability Seminar, Lisbon, Portugal
- 24 Oct 2008 ICA Global 300—Launch event of 2008 List. Contact global300@ica.coop
- 5-7 Nov 2008 Microinsurance Conference 2008, Cartagena, Colombia
www.microinsuranceconference2008.org
- 10-14 Nov 2008 ICA Africa 8th Regional Assembly, "*Revitalising member commitment and involvement for improved sustainability of African co-operatives*", Abuja, Nigeria
www.icaafrica.coop
- 21 - 22 Nov 2008 European Conference on Social Economy, "*Building Europe with Social Economy players*", Strasbourg, France. Website eco-soc2008.eu/
- 1-6 Dec 2008 8th ICA Asia & Pacific Regional Assembly and special committee meetings, "*Increasing the advantages of co-operatives in competitive environment*", Hanoi, Vietnam, Host: Vietnam Co-operative Alliance
- 2-3 Dec 2008 ICA Board Meeting, Hanoi, Vietnam. Contact inwood@ica.coop
- 2009**
- Sept 2009 ICA Americas Regional Conference, Guadalajara, Mexico
www.aciamericas.coop
- 27 Sept-2 Oct 2009 ICA General Assembly 2009, SECC, Glasgow, Scotland, UK
www.ica.coop/calendar/ga2009/ga2009-invite.pdf