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ICA's historic General Assembly



The historic election, of Dame Pauline Green of the United Kingdom to the ICA Presidency for a four-year term, is a landmark event for the ICA and marks a turning point in gender relations for the co-operative movement.

Dame Pauline is the first woman to lead the global co-operative organisation since its inception almost 115 years ago. She was unanimously elected to the position by the 2009 ICA General Assembly on 20 November at the Geneva International Conference Centre in Geneva, Switzerland.

Almost 800 delegates from all sectors and regions of the globe participated in the biennial Assembly, with the theme *Global Crisis-Co-operative Opportunity*.

Continuing its history of defining statements committing the co-operative movement to decisive action

on pressing global issues, the Assembly adopted five resolutions concerning the economic crisis, sustainable energy, climate change, peace and nuclear disarmament.

Highlights of the two-day Assembly included a moving homage to the late, former ICA President, Ivano Barberini, and an inspiring keynote address by world renowned economist, Professor Jeremy Rifkin. He called on co-operatives to be the key players in a new distributed, renewable energy market.

Turn to page 4 for a full report from the General Assembly and related meetings and events.

UN proclaims 2012 International Year of Co-operatives

The United Nations 64th General Assembly in its meeting on 18 December 2009 proclaimed 2012 as International Year of Co-operatives.

"The International Year of Co-operatives is a well timed event that represents the depth of understanding of the entire co-operative movement," said Pauline Green, ICA President. It recognises the pivotal role co-operatives play globally in supporting sustainable development.

Iain Macdonald, Director-General of ICA, also indicated that the International Year of Co-operatives will "remind the world that there is more than one way of doing business and that in a global economy we all have to work together. Whether it is in tackling the economic crisis, the threat of climate change, or food security issues, co-operative enterprise offers real hope of solutions to these problems, and I have no doubt that the increased



profile offered by an International Year will achieve great things."

The ICA has already initiated consultations with the United Nations and the International Labour Office (ILO) regarding the planning for the Year. Read the press releases of the ICA, the ILO and the UN at www.ica.coop



Happy New Year!

The ICA would like to wish all our readers a happy festive season and a prosperous New Year. We look forward to bringing you more co-operative news in 2010



Maria-Elena Chavez Hertig, ICA Deputy Director-General

Comments on the Digest welcome at chavez@ica.coop

Latest news

From the Editor's desk

This issue of the Digest ends 2009 with a report on the important ICA General Assembly, the historic election of the first woman president, resolutions on energy sustainability, climate change, co-operative resilience, peace and nuclear disarmament; reporting on the new phase of restructuring—sectoralisation—as well as reports on the many events organised by the ICA sectoral organisations and thematic committees.

We start the year with good news—the proclamation of 2012 as International Year of Co-operatives—and more proof of co-operative resilience.

However, we also start the year with another devastating setback for co-operators in Haiti after the 7.0 magnitude earthquake. ICA has mobilised co-operative solidarity and, once again, co-operatives are contributing to emergency relief and are preparing for the long-term

reconstruction. ICA has made an appeal to members for funds to help in rebuilding the co-operative movement and is already working with its development partners to plan its assistance to the Haitian Co-operative Movement.

2010 will also bring changes to the management of ICA centrally and at the regional level. There will be much to report in the coming months. We look forward to your readership and input.

ICA calls for assistance for co-operatives in Haiti
ICA is calling on members and partners to provide emergency relief and reconstruction assistance to co-operators in Haiti following the devastating earthquake on 12 January 2010. See www.ica.coop/activities/haiti

Co-operatives moving up the 250 Top Retailers List

The Deloitte report, *Global Powers of Retailing 2010: Emerging from the downturn* shows that co-operative retailers have fared better than their rivals moving up the retailers' lists as compared to 2009.

The report notes, "2009 has come to a close and all one can say is good riddance. It was the worst year of economic performance in recent memory and began on the heels of a near breakdown of the financial sector". Yet co-operative retailers reported between 4.2 and 12.1% growth in retail sales.

The 2010 ranking also includes three new entries from the co-operative movement—FDB (Denmark), KF (Sweden) and Coop Norway. They replace the Coop Norden which was listed as 64 in the 2009 report.

2010 Rank	2009 Rank	Name	Country
11	12	Rewe-Zentral	Germany
19	19	Edeka Zentral	Germany
40	58	Migros Genossenschafts Bund	Switzerland
52	69	Coop Switzerland	Switzerland
68	81	S-Group	Finland
76	90	Eroski Group	Spain
83	94	Co-operative Group Ltd	UK
121	-	FDB	Denmark
154	-	KF Group	Sweden
172	-	Coop Norge A/S	Norway

See full report at: www.deloitte.com/assets/Dcom-Global/Local%20Assets/Documents/Consumer%20Business/dtt_globalpowersofretailing2010.pdf.

The report notes retailers in large developed markets will need to offer consumers a favourable value proposition. They will need to be clearly differentiated from competitors and focus on their brand management to convey their value proposition.

This clearly presents opportunities for making consumers more aware of the co-operative difference. It can constitute a serious market advantage.

The Deloitte ranking is based on group revenue and retail sales in 2008.

Director-General's report

As far as I can see, our General Assembly held last November was deemed a success. I have a tendency to judge these things by the number of complaints I receive, and this time there were very few! Indeed I received many positive remarks about the venue and speakers, and this was reflected in our evaluation sheets. All the more pleasing, as originally this GA was meant to be in Glasgow, and we had a difficult task to ensure it took place at all.

I would particularly like to thank our sponsors from the UK, Canada, Italy, India, Japan, Korea, Singapore, Russia, China, Sweden, Finland and, of course, DotCoop, who ensured that the lack of a host organisation did not diminish the end result.

Our Keynote Speaker, Professor Jeremy Rifkin, gave an inspirational address leading us to pass resolutions on energy needs, economic resilience and the threat of climate change, as well as on world peace. Indeed the United Nations Climate Change Conference in Copenhagen meets as I

write, and hopefully they will give serious consideration to the strength of our movement and our views on how to tackle climate change.

We were also very pleased that Juan Somavia, Director-General of the International Labour Organisation (ILO) came to our gala dinner to present the Rochdale Award, posthumously, to Ivano Barberini—accepted on Ivano's behalf by his wife, Nerina, and daughter, Silvia. Of course Ivano was much in people's thoughts during the week, but I think we did him justice, and his book, *How the Bumblebee Flies*, was well received by all.

Ivano would also have been delighted at the election of our first woman President, Dame Pauline Green. This is truly a landmark for ICA and bodes well for our future.

The Board counts four women members which is positive, but is still short of our 33% target. It is however, embellished by a number of new and, generally speaking, younger members. These young, future leaders are seriously

influential in their own organisations, which is essential for the increasing profile of the international co-operative movement. And, our profile should receive a huge boost at the end of this year, with the announcement that 2012 will be the United Nations International Year of Co-operatives. Thank you to all our members who have successfully called on their governments to support this move. We are advised that the UN has rarely seen such a groundswell of support for the declaration of an international year. It is now up to us to exploit this tremendous opportunity that we are being given.

Much of 2010 will be taken up with planning for the International Year, and all involved in the ICA, whether in Geneva, or in our regions and sectors, will have this as their priority.

The next General Assembly in Mexico in 2011 will be a great launching pad for the International Year of Co-operatives. So, 2010 is going to be an important year for us all. My very best wishes to you all. *Iain Macdonald*

DG's Report



Iain Macdonald
ICA Director-General



Iain Macdonald addressing the ICA General Assembly 2009 in Geneva

ICA seeks candidates for Director-General

ICA has officially advertised the post of Director-General following the Board's acceptance of the resignation of current incumbent, Iain Macdonald.

As announced in Digest 66, Mr Macdonald said he would stand down in the course of 2010 after seven, "immensely satisfying and rewarding years" as Director-General of the ICA.

The firm, *Global Recruitment Specialists*, has been appointed to oversee the process.

The preferred start date for the position is May 2010. Applications are being accepted until 8 March 2010 with interviews commencing in April 2010.

Applicants should e-mail a covering letter addressing

how their skills and experience meet the needs of the position and the ICA organisation, together with their CV to Mr Patrick Shields, Search Manager, *Global Recruitment Specialists*, e-mail: shields@globalrecruitment.net

Full position requirements are available from the ICA website: www.ica.coop/ica/vacancies.html

GA 2009

Climate, energy, and co-op resilience focus: Panel sessions



Assembly delegates attend thematic panel sessions at the 2009 ICA General Assembly

Climate, energy and co-operative action were the focus of the ICA General Assembly, starting with the inspiring Keynote presentation from Professor Jeremy Rifkin (see article page 5).

Following Mr Rifkin's address there were three thematic panel sessions addressing Global Crisis – Co-operative Opportunity: a session examining sustainable energy, a session which looked at co-operative resilience in the economic crisis and a third on climate change.

How co-operatives can take charge of energy resources and foster sustainable development was examined in the first panel discussion—'Towards a sustainable energy economy'. Three presenters focused on energy efficiency and conservation, and community-based renewable energy initiatives noting that co-operative values and principles "strongly support the idea of fair, affordable and technically achievable clean energy supply for all". Examples of initiatives already taken by the US electricity co-operatives, Italian consumer co-operative, and Indian agricultural and other co-operatives were highlighted. Educating consumers and members, encouraging them to be active in lobbying

governments, changing consumption patterns and developing new technologies to make renewable energy a larger part of the energy mix were just some of the initiatives highlighted by Martin Lowery of the National Rural Electric Co-operative Association. Touchstone Energy Co-operatives', www.togetherwesave.com and www.ourenergy.coop were among the examples mentioned.

In rural India, the Indian Farmers' Fertiliser Co-operative's Managing Director, U.S. Awasthi, stressed the potential for increased co-operative involvement in solar, biogas, biomass, and wind power development, while Vanni Rinaldi of Legacoop spoke of energy efficiency initiatives and enabling a distributed energy network through co-operatives. All agreed that democratising energy by bringing decisions back to the local level and into the hands of consumers would be effective through the co-operative business model.

A balanced approach to peoples' needs and profit embodied by the co-operative model of enterprise is responsible for co-operative resilience through the financial and larger economic crisis. Lou Hammond Ketilson, co-author of the ILO report on co-operative resilience was joined by Dante Cracogna, Prof. S. Chambo and Alban D'Amours to examine the challenges that lie ahead especially in terms of policy environments, legislation, regulation and accounting standards to provide an update.

Co-operatives that put their values and principles in fared better; co-operatives in countries with adequate legislation and taxation policies also fared better than others. Member-ownership and the co-op capitalisation structure are key elements for stability. However, the panel raised issues for the future—increased regulation, higher capitalisation for financial institutions. They concluded that further work was needed to make policy-makers aware of the co-operative difference and advantage.

The last panel session, Climate Change: The co-operative response, highlighted regional policy and local initiatives.

There are four actions co-operatives can take: Measure and reduce CO2 emissions; produce or use renewable energy; inform and motivate members; and lobby and campaign.

Two ICA initiatives, ACT! (Action against Climate Threat of Cooperatives Europe) and the Pacto Verde Cooperativo (Green Co-operative Pact) of ICA Americas were explained. Both initiatives address climate change from a policy perspective with lobbying central to each as well as an important knowledge sharing component. See: www.actonclimate.coop and www.aciamericas.coop.

Nelson Kuria of Co-operative Insurance Company of Kenya provided input on African initiatives. He concluded, saying co-operative need to "lead the change and manage change creatively".

Presentations made at the ICA General Assembly are found:

www.ica.coop/calendar/ga2009/presentations.html

Climate and energy focus—Keynote Address

GA 2009

Distinguished economist, Professor Jeremy Rifkin, President of the Foundation on Economic Trends, and a noted advisor to political and economic leaders in Europe and the United States, gave the keynote address at the ICA General Assembly. He spoke about the role co-operatives can play to address the global economic meltdown, energy security, and climate change.

Co-operatives were the ideal businesses to lead a locally distributed renewable energy network, that could potentially save humanity from the worsening effects of climate change. Prof Rifkin invited co-operatives to play a key role in shaping a new economic order, a 'Third Industrial Revolution', based on mutual economic benefit, environmental concern and a more ethical approach to economic and social development.

The role of past and present energy eras in contributing to the recent economic collapse, means that the age of the 'oil based economy' is coming to an end. Developments in communications technology, however, could facilitate a more co-operatively distributed energy market, and the world could undergo an economic revolution within as short a period as 30 years.

The increasing severity of climate change, evidenced by greater understanding and identification of feedback loops, and the lack of political will to act on even the most conservative estimates, could see the extinction of the human race within a century, said Rifkin. The Copenhagen climate talks illustrated the need for a paradigm shift. Countries argue the geopolitical position as a means to limit their own carbon cuts, when we need to make 'leading on climate



Jeremy Rifkin inspires co-operative leaders at the 2009 ICA GA

and energy innovation' the political aspiration. The climate discussions need to be opened up to representatives of business, social and political society and, in particular, civil society, he concluded.

The co-operative movement will work closely with Rifkin, to ensure that co-operatives are at the forefront of the move to a more sustainable future.

Download the audio file at www.ica.coop/calendar/ga2009

"I said (in 2002) we would see a great renaissance of the Co-operative Movement and it would be the Co-operative Movement that would bring us into the Third Industrial Revolution"

New global Board—ICA governance in brief

The 2009 ICA General Assembly was particularly important for the co-operative movement in terms of global strategies to address the challenges of the financial crisis, climate threat and energy security.

A new global ICA Board was elected, including the election of three ICA Vice-presidents, Stanley Muchiri (Africa), Ramon Imperial (Americas), Li Chungshen (Asia-Pacific) and Dame Pauline Green as the ICA President.

Upon election, Dame Pauline stepped down as the Co-

President of Cooperatives Europe and as ICA's Vice-President for Europe.

The Assembly also adopted amendments to the ICA Rules (now Statutes) and Bye-laws, and approved new rules for ICA Americas.

Gun-Britt Mårtensson, chair of the ICA Board Governance Committee reported on the ongoing work in the implementation of the restructuring of ICA and in particular the work in progress on sectoralisation. The sectoral organisations had now been given the mandate to work out a



Voting at the ICA General Assembly

proposal for their structure, funding, and operations to be considered by the ICA Board in April 2010.

Election results and decisions of the Assembly are found on the ICA website: www.ica.coop/calendar/ga2009.

GA 2009

Crisis and opportunity—ICA's President speaks out



Dame Pauline Green being interviewed by Italian media at the 2009 ICA General Assembly in Geneva

In her inauguration speech to the Assembly on the occasion of her election, Dame Pauline Green remarked on the “great honour” of her appointment. She challenged the ICA to fulfill its huge potential to empower people and communities, particularly in this time of global economic and environmental need.

Dame Pauline paid tribute to her predecessor, Ivano Barberini, for, “the energy and commitment he gave to our movement through his life long work for co-operatives”. She pledged to serve the ICA with the same

energy, vigour and vision.

She also acknowledged the importance of her election for women co-operators around the world, where, despite the movement’s commitment to equality, ‘it is still more noticeable in its omission than in its commission,’ she said.

Dame Pauline said the ICA would need to take new steps to meet new challenges and her focus would be to improve ICA visibility.

“Co-operatives have unprecedented possibilities, and raising our profile is perhaps one of our most important tasks over the coming years”, she said.

The ICA President urged co-operatives to take advantage of the new opportunities presented by the global recession, the UN International Year of Co-operatives (2012) and a restructured ICA to extend the reach and

influence of the co-operative form of enterprise. The knowledge that the top 300 co-operative organisations alone, had a combined GDP equivalent to Spain (the 10th largest economy in the world), that co-operatives employ 20% more people than all the multinational corporations, and that we are owned by nearly a billion people—must be force upon an ‘unsuspecting world’.

“There is no other sector of the economy that compares with those figures”, she said.

Dame Pauline called for the ICA to enhance its role as a valid resource to the world’s co-operatives. “We can exist only if we prove our worth to our members.”

“I am also sure that to do that means that change is a constant for a service based body”, she said.

Read the full inauguration speech on the ICA website: www.ica.coop/presidentpage

ICA calls for sustainability, economic stability and peace

The ICA General Assembly agreed to call for increased efforts to be made by co-operatives, the ICA and other stakeholders to address sustainability, economic stability and growth and peace.

ICA members committed and called on the world co-operative movement to play a central role in promoting renewable energy and implementing an energy efficiency vision. They further pledged to take an active role in ensuring that they commit to

fight climate change by lobbying decision-makers nationally and internationally while taking concrete steps with their own enterprises and communities.

Peace and nuclear disarmament also received attention, with members vowing to take all actions to reduce conflict at all levels and eradicate the need for nuclear arms.

Finally, ICA members underlined the value of co-operative enterprises in the

current economic crisis and their contributions to maintaining livelihoods, their need to continuously improve their entrepreneurial skills and practice solidarity to ensure economic stability as a means of promoting peaceful societies.

Underlining all resolutions was the assurance of raising the visibility of co-operatives to improve people’s lives worldwide.

See the GA resolutions at e: www.ica.coop/calendar/ga2009



Rochdale Pioneer Award 2009 - Ivano Barberini, former President ICA, 2001-2009

GA 2009 Awards

The 2009 ICA General Assembly opened with a homage to former President, Ivano Barberini. A moving tribute was given by Guiliano Poletti, President of Legacoop, Italy, who presented the video, *How the Bumble Bee Flies - Co-operation, ethics and development*. Assembly delegates received an English version of the book of the same title written by Ivano Barberini.

At the farewell reception in Geneva on 20 November 2009, long-time friend and colleague, Mr Juan Somavia, Director-General of the International Labour Organisation (ILO), posthumously

awarded the 2009 Rochdale Pioneer Award to Ivano Barberini, for his life-long contribution and legacy to the world co-operative movement. Ivano's wife, Nerina, and daughter Silvia Barberini, attended the ceremony to accept the award on Ivano's behalf.

A limited number of copies of the book (English version), *How the Bumble Bee Flies - Co-operation, ethics and development*, can be obtained by ICA members from the ICA Central Office. Others may contact Stefania Marccone: s.marccone@legacoop.coop for Italian and English versions. It is expected that



a Spanish version will also be available soon.

Ivano's wife, Nerina, and daughter, Silvia Barberini, at the Award ceremony

Proceeds from the sale of the book are being donated to the Rita Levi-Montalcini Foundation for development projects in Africa.

dotCoop Global Awards announced

DotCoop, sponsor of the .coop domain name, announced the winners of the first-ever dotCoop Global Awards for Co-operative Excellence, on 18 November 2009, at the Welcome Reception of the ICA General Assembly in Geneva.

The awards were presented by dotCoop Chairperson, Mr Louie Doering, and winning co-operatives received funds to travel to the Assembly as part of their award.

ICA member, Indian Farmers Fertiliser Co-operative Limited (IFFCO), took top honours in the 'large co-operatives' category (more than USD 50 million in revenue or assets). In the category of medium co-operatives (USD 1 million to 50 million in revenue or assets) was the National Co-

operative Grocers Association (NCGA).

Pachamama Coffee Co-operative, based in the United States and owned by 150,000 coffee farmers worldwide, won in the category of small co-operatives (less than USD 1 million in revenue or assets).

The Awards reward those co-operatives that demonstrate a strong commitment to the co-operative business model in mission and practice.

Honorable mentions were awarded to Cabot Creamery Co-operative (USA) and ICA member, Crédit Coopératif of France, in the large business category. The Phone Co-op (UK) and Wedge Community Co-operative (US) were recognised in the medium-sized business category, and

CAC Santa Maria Magdalena (Peru) and the Federación Nacional de Cooperativas de Servicios Sanitarios, Ltda (FESAN) of Chile, in the small business category.

Co-operative Press Limited, the oldest co-operatively owned newspaper in the world, received special recognition for its overall contribution to the co-operative movement.

Robynn Shrader, Chief Executive Officer of NCGA and first-time attendee of the ICA GA, said receiving the award will help her members market the co-operative advantage.

The next awards will be presented at the ICA General Assembly in Mexico in 2011. More information at: www.globalawards.coop



“These awards can help bring awareness to the distinct differences between our stores and conventional food retailers.”
Robynn Shrader, CEO, NCGA

GA 2009

CICOPA looks to a green future



CICOPA forum at the ICA General Assembly

CICOPA, ICA's sectoral organisation bringing together industrial, service, social and artisans' co-operatives, held its biennial General Assembly followed by a seminar on environment and sustainability in co-

operatives on 18 November 2009. The environment forum was held in collaboration with the regional sectoral organisation, CECOP-CICOPA Europe. Best practice case studies were presented to

demonstrate the potential for worker co-operatives to enact environmental and sustainable development. These included waste management services in a municipality of Buenos Aires; ski equipment recycling in France; and low carbon building in Canada.

The seminar, held just before the United Nations Climate Change Conference in Copenhagen, was considered the critical first step in a longer-term initiative to examine how this co-operative sector can better combine environmental outcomes with its economic and social concerns.

More information on CICOPA: www.cicopa.coop.

Consumer co-ops explore climate of opportunities

Consumer Co-operatives Worldwide (CCW) organised a workshop on economic and climatic crisis on 18 November 2009, prior to the opening of the ICA General Assembly. Representatives attended from 20 countries in Asia, Europe, South and North America.

Case studies documenting the economic crisis in Japan,

the United States and Italy, were presented and ideas were advanced about how consumer co-operatives can overcome current economic difficulties. Co-operative mergers and store restructuring were among the ideas proposed.

Delegates agreed there was a need to take guidance from the co-operative principles, especially the 7th principle of co-operation among co-operatives.

There was broad consensus for a return to basics—to be a true co-operative business—unquestionable product reliability, attention to members' needs and expectations and, importantly, promotion of consumer loyalty to a co-operative store.

Loyalty is a strong driver of successful co-operative business, as is co-operation between sectors and shared experience.

Following presentations on the climate crisis, it was agreed that consumer co-operatives can drive a shift towards more sustainable production, distribution and consumption.

Consumer co-operatives can work with suppliers to promote sustainable consumption by educating consumers and by stocking sustainable products.

Consumer co-operatives can do much at a national level, but co-ordination and synergies on a broader scale are essential.

Consumer co-ops educating consumers on making sustainable choices



ICA GEC yields opportunities for gender agenda

GA 2009

The ICA Gender Equality Committee (GEC) held its *Global crisis: gender opportunity*, seminar held on 17 November, preceding the ICA General Assembly. The seminar examined the global financial crisis and gender relations and opportunities to address inequality in economic and social recovery.

GEC Chairperson, Stefania Marcone, said, "Policymakers must take into account the gender perspective in planning strategies to face the crisis, not only to alleviate the impact of economic recession on women, but also because gender equality should be considered a key strategy for economic recovery".

Eva Majurin, Associate Expert, CoopAfrica Programme, ILO Dar-es-Salaam, said the crisis had impacted on women through increased workloads, reduced access to finance, and declining living standards. Returning to the growth path would not be good enough to restore previous levels of

wellbeing, said Johannes Jutting, Head of the Poverty Reduction and Social Development Unit, OECD Development Centre.

Gender equity is a development priority in many regions. In Brazil, the Ministry of Agriculture invests in gender equality programmes in co-operatives, according to Vera De Oliveira, General Co-ordinator of the Ministry's Co-operatives Programme.

Spanish worker co-operatives are advancing gender equality through initiatives including specific national legislation, according to Paloma Arroyo, Director of COCETA (Spain).

Asian co-operative organisations would provide training courses to empower women and increase their presence in decision-making, said Hajah Armi Haji Zainudin, Vice-President of ANGKASA (Malaysia).

The Canadian co-operative movement, especially the



service sector, had responded to women's emerging needs, said Brigitte Gagné, General Director of Conseil Canadien de la coopération et de la mutualité.

In closing, Dame Pauline Green said she would prioritise increased ICA visibility and its influence in international organisations.

The Gender Equality Committee congratulated Dame Pauline as the first woman to lead the ICA, and also congratulated all women elected to the global ICA Board.

(Left to right) Stefania Marcone, Chair ICA Gender Equality Committee, Vera Lucia de Oliveira Daller, Brazilian Ministry of Agriculture, and Dame Pauline Green, ICA President

ICFO elects new president

Lee Jong Koo, President of the National Federation of Fisheries Co-operatives (NFFC) of the Republic of Korea was elected to the position of President of the International Co-operative Fisheries Organisation (ICFO). Lee Jong Koo is the former Vice-Chair ICFO and succeeds Ikuhiro Hattori of JF Zengyoren of Japan. The election took place at ICFO's Annual General Meeting held on 16 November 2009, prior to the ICA General Assembly.



Lee Jong Koo, ICFO Chair (left), Ikuhiro Hattori, former Chair

Members of ICFO also unanimously adopted a resolution calling for a fair and just outcome in the World

Trade Organisation (WTO) negotiations.

Finally, it was agreed that Mr Park Kwang Bum, Manager of International Co-operation of the Fisheries Economic Institute at NFFC, would replace Masaaki Sato as ICFO Secretary.

The next ICFO members' meetings are scheduled for 2010 in Beijing (China) during the 9th Regional Assembly for Asia-Pacific.

GA 2009

Co-operatives contribute to global health reform



IHCO members at the 2009 IHCO General Assembly in Geneva

The International Health Co-operative Organisation (IHCO) held its General Assembly on 18 November 2009, preceding the ICA General Assembly.

Dr José Carlos Guisado, Vice-President of Fundación Espriu was re-elected IHCO President for a further four-year term. Dr Eudes de Freitas Aquino, President of Unimed do Brasil, was elected Vice-President of the Americas region, and Dr Shuitso Hino, representative of the Health Co-operative Association of Japan (HCA-JCCU) was elected

Vice-President for Asia-Pacific.

Dr Guisado discussed the 2007-2008 health co-operative seminars in Japan, Spain and Canada, and collaboration through the ICA with the International Labour Organisation (ILO) and the World Health Organisation (WHO) including a proposal to work with WHO's health promotion department.

Members also provided updates on their activities. Dr Yasuyuki Takahashi, President of HCA-JCCU,

reported on Age-friendly Primary Health Care Centres, a project to improve the health and standard of living of elderly citizens in Japan. HCA-JCCU will develop certification standards for health care centres.

Dr Agdev Singh Deo, President of the Medical Co-operatives in Malaysia (KDM), outlined a programme for early detection of diabetes, hypertension and obesity. Dr Ricardo López, President of the Federación Argentina de Entidades Solidarias de Salud (FAESS), highlighted the growth of health care co-operatives in Argentina and the development of legislation to support it.

The Assembly adopted a resolution calling on the United Nations and national governments to mount initiatives aimed at eliminating nuclear weapons.

Co-operators gain from lifelong learning



Global HRD Forum at ICA General Assembly

Human Resource Development (HRD) specialists met in Geneva during the ICA Global HRD Forum to expand the co-operative HRD network. IRENE.T—the Social Enterprise European Network for Training

which aims to support exchanges between European Third Sector organisations on training and best practice was launched by Chris Cooper formerly of The Co-operative College (UK) at the Forum held on 17 November 2009, prior to the ICA General Assembly. (see IRENE.T website at: www.irenet.eu)

Iain Macdonald, ICA Director-General, said the inclusion of the IRENE.T project, “is a very welcome initiative and one that can only bring benefits to co-operatives and social enterprises”. Adding his support, Dr Yehuda Paz, Chair

of the ICA Global HRD Committee said, “We welcome this pan-European project, which co-operatives, as a leading form of social enterprise, should be fully committed to. Bringing together of social enterprises and providers of relevant education and training will be a significant move forward for the co-operative movement”.

Work will continue on building the IRENE.T Network and a European Internet platform.

The next IRENE.T event is scheduled for Manchester (UK) in 2010 and will be hosted by The Co-operative College (UK).

Sustainability initiatives—Swedes co-operate on food labels

Business groups, farming co-operatives and the Government of Sweden have developed a co-ordinated way to identify the carbon emissions associated with the production of foods from whole wheat pasta to fast food burgers.

Lantmannen, Sweden's largest co-operative farming group, has begun labelling foods including chicken, oat-meal, barley and pasta. Scientists at Lantmannen analysed life cycles of 20 products. These take into account emissions generated

by fertiliser fuel for harvesting machinery, packaging and transport. An estimated 25% of the emissions produced in industrialised nations can be traced to food.

The Swedish initiative will be promoted to other EU nations.

Sustainability

'Every climate declaration is hugely time-intensive,'
Claes Johansson,
Lantmannen's
Director of
Sustainability.

Consumer co-ops spearhead sustainability

Euro Coop, the European community of consumer co-operatives, has joined the European Retailers' Environmental Programme (REAP)—a project to spearhead sustainable consumption in Europe's commerce sector.

"We believe that the experiences and values of

consumer co-operatives can contribute by adding a different dimension to the work private retailers have so far accomplished", said Euro Coop Secretary General, Rodrigo Gouveia.

Consumer co-operatives are committed to supplying a range of quality products and services that respond to far-

reaching sustainability criteria and environmental, economic and social standards. Because of their policy on consumer education, consumer co-operatives are in a privileged position to help their consumer-members make more sustainable buying choices.

More: www.eurocoop.coop



Dairy co-ops tackle climate change

The dairy sector is co-operating globally to reduce carbon emissions and ICA dairy co-operative members who are members of the International Federation of Agricultural Producers (IFAP), have joined the world-wide initiative.

IFAP has joined the Dairy Sustainability Initiative — www.dairysustainabilityinitiative.org — to share best

practice, promote environmental initiatives and aims to improve the overall performance of the dairy sector.

IFAP also signed the *Global Dairy Agenda for Action*—a declaration to reduce carbon emissions as part of its contribution to helping to address global warming.

"In signing this declaration, milk producers recognise the

climate challenges faced the world over and confirm our commitment to being part of the solution over time", said Wes Judd, Chair of the IFAP Dairy Products Group.

ICA and IFAP collaborate closely on a wide area of issues and are both members of the Committee for the Promotion and Advancement of Cooperatives. More information: www.ifap.org

NRECA to lead on Smart Grid project

ICA member, the National Rural Electric Co-operative Association (NRECA) has announced a USD 68 million project to demonstrate Smart Grid technology. NRECA, together with financial commitments from 17 NRECA members, has matched the US Department of Energy

stimulus grant of USD 34 million, awarded to the co-operative to develop Smart Grid technology.

Martin Lowery, Executive Vice-President, NRECA, and Chair, NCBA, said that the project was "transformational for the co-operative and very much

related to the ICA energy efficiency resolution".

Contact: martin.lowery@nreca.coop



Building Knowledge



ICA consulted as centre of co-operative knowledge

As part of the restructuring agenda, ICA has sought to widen its remit and promote its role as a centre of knowledge on co-operatives. Recently, ICA provided co-operative data including data from the ICA Global 300 Project and other information to supplement a new report published by ICA member, Co-operative Development Scotland (CDS).

The report entitled, *A comparative analysis of co-operative sectors in Scotland, Finland, Sweden and Switzerland*, was commissioned with the aim of enhancing the understanding of the opportunities and challenges for developing co-operatives in Scotland.

CDS strongly adheres to the belief that co-operatives,

with their proven success across the world, offer a better way of doing business.

The author of the report, Johnston Birchall, is Professor of Social Policy, University of Stirling (UK).

The report is available in full and summary. See: www.cdscotland.co.uk/cds-research

ICA Americas recognised for innovative CSR tools

ICA Americas was nominated for the 2009 Award for Innovation (Galardón Innovación) by the Chamber of Commerce of Costa Rica for their "Balance Social Cooperativo (BSCoop)", a tool to evaluate co-operative social responsibility.

BSCoop enables co-operatives to evaluate their level of social responsibility and develop effective social responsibility reporting. The reports are then submitted to ICA Americas with a view to obtaining co-operative social responsibility certification.

The nomination of ICA Americas highlights the important work being undertaken by the ICA to enable its members to not only be competitive in the marketplace, but to do so in respect of the Co-operative Values and Principles. Contact: aciproductos@aciamericas.coop

Business seminar offers inspiration to Asia-Pacific co-ops

Eighteen co-operative leaders from India, Indonesia, Malaysia, Myanmar, Philippines, Singapore, Sri Lanka and Vietnam, participated in the first ever two-day business seminar, hosted by Singapore National Co-operative Federation (SNCF) on 23-24 October 2009 in Singapore. SNCF Chief Executive, Dolly Goh, discussed

the co-operative movement in Singapore and delegates were inspired to hear how competitive co-operative businesses can fast-track careers, even in the current global economic crisis. They looked at ways to foster camaraderie, and generate and share profits between the co-operatives in the Asia-Pacific region.

An option for future development was standardisation of education and training programmes conducted at co-operative education and training institutions, and establishing a certification business, with ICA Asia-Pacific promoted as first choice provider.

More: www.icaoap.coop

Managers of consumer co-ops train in Japan

The *Training programmes for Managers of Consumer Co-operatives*, courses introduced by the ICA Asia-Pacific in 2001, have been well attended. This year, ten trainees from five Asian countries—India, the Philippines, Singapore, Vietnam and Korea—participated in

one of three training programmes held in Miyagi, Tokyo and Kobe, Japan.

Co-operative managers from India and the Philippines learned about the history and values of the Miyagi Co-operative. Those attending the Tokyo course gained

insight into the day to day operations of Co-op Tokyo.

All training had a strong, practical focus on the skills required for successful consumer co-operative management demonstrating ICA's commitment to capacity-building.

ICA welcomes new ICA Asia-Pacific Regional Director

Dr Chan-Ho Choi assumed his position as Regional Director for ICA Asia-Pacific on 1 January 2010. Dr Choi was formerly General Manager of the International Co-operation Office of the National Agricultural Co-operative Federation (NACF) of Korea, Secretary-general of the ICAO, ICA's agricultural co-operative organisation, and Secretary General of the Korean Co-operative Council. He comes to the ICA with more

than 30 years co-operative experience and strong academic background in agriculture. Dr Choi also spent three years at the ICA Central Office on secondment from NACF. He is therefore well acquainted with ICA.

In his message to members of the region he noted, "I am a strong believer of the ICA network being an integral part of the solutions to many problems of co-operatives emanating from the apathy of market

determinants and policy engineers." He informed members of his plan to continue the co-operative building strategy initiated by his predecessor, Shil Kwan Lee, who had served as Regional Director since 2002.

Dr Choi also pledged to serve the cause and interests of ICA members in an absolute manner together with the committed team of ICA Asia-Pacific.

ICA People



Chan-Ho Choi

Shil Kwan Lee retires

After eight years of service to the ICA, Shil Kwan Lee retired as ICA's Regional Director for Asia-Pacific on 31 December 2009.

The ICA wishes to thank Shil Kwan Lee for his excellent work. He has made serious contributions to improving ICA member services in the Asia-Pacific region through

a wide range of capacity-building activities, but also with significant work in improving the policy environment for co-operatives in the region.



Shil Kwan Lee

Cooperatives Europe seeks new director

Cooperatives Europe is seeking a new Director following the announcement by Rainer Schlüter of his intention to stand down after five years as Director of Cooperatives Europe and Regional Director of ICA's European region.

The Board of Cooperatives Europe recognises the contribution Rainer has made to the founding and development of Cooperatives Europe and to the wider co-operative and social movement.

It is expected that the appointment of the new Director will be made in time for the Cooperatives Europe General Assembly in April 2010.

More: www.coopseurope.coop



Rainer Schlüter

Former ICA Director, André Saenger, dies at 90

André Saenger, ICA Director from 1981 to 1983, died on 11 November 2009.

Mr Saenger will be best remembered for spearheading the relocation of the ICA secretariat from London to Geneva. He also played an important role in restoring the financial status of the ICA at that time.

Mr Saenger was born into a family of co-operators. His

father was the general manager of a Swiss co-operative society, as was André himself, shortly after the 1939-45 War, in Crans Montana. Later he went to work at Coop Switzerland, the second largest retail chain after Migros.

Mr Saenger's long career in international affairs began as a civil servant working, in particular, with a number of United Nations agencies. He worked for the International

Labour Office (ILO) in Iran and Tunisia and represented the UN in Tunisia, Egypt, Morocco, Benin, Zaire and Geneva.

Upon retiring he became the ICA's representative to the UN in Geneva, thus returning to his co-operative roots.

The ICA wishes to express its deepest condolences to the Saenger family.



André Saenger in 2007 while visiting the ICA Central Office in Geneva

Member News



Mr Robertas Miliuskas,
Chairperson of the Board,
Litcoopunion, Lithuania

Member updates

Belcoopsoyuz of the Republic of Belarus has elected a new Chair. Mr Sjarhei Sidzko was elected Chairperson of the Board on 10 December 2009 taking up the post from recently retired Vladimir Kuleshov.

The **Indonesian Co-operative Council (DEKOPIN)** elected a new President on 19 December 2009. Mr H.A.M. Nurdin

Halid will serve as President until 2014.

The General Secretary of the **Kibbutz Movement of Israel** is Mr Zeev Shor replacing Gavri Bargil, who finished his term.

The **Lithuanian Union of Consumer Co-operative Societies** elected Mr Robertas Miliuskas as chairperson of the board on

17 November 2009 replacing Mr. Jonas Nekrošius.

The **National Union of Handicraft and Production Co-operatives of Romania - UCECOM** has a new address: 73 Unirii Blvd., Block G3, section 3, P + mezzanine, sector 3, 030831 Bucharest, Romania. Phone: +40 031 030 1400, E-mail and website remain unchanged.

Welcoming new members to the ICA family

ICA welcomes the newest members and associate members.

Banco Credicoop Cooperativo Limitado (BCCL) of Argentina, provides financial services to its members with the aim of promoting economic, social and cultural development. BCCL encourages the provision of co-operative credit for housing and consumer goods, as well as works that promote economic and social progress. In 2009, BCCL had more than 722,000 members. More: www.bancocredicoop.coop

Central Nacional das Cooperativas Odontológicas (Uniodonto do Brasil) represents 125 co-operatives and nine federations involving more than 22,000 dental surgeons and two million customers. Uniodonto publishes standardised guidelines, and ensures compliance with the co-operative principles. More information: www.uniodonto.com.br

Central de Cooperativas e Empreendimentos Solidários do Brasil (UNISOL Brasil)

promotes the development of economic solidarity and initiatives that generate employment and income for people in situations of exclusion. Currently, UNISOL Brasil represents 463 co-operatives in 22 states of Brazil. More information: www.unisolbrasil.org.br

All China Federation of Handicraft Industry Co-operatives (ACFHIC) of China is an apex organisation representing 51 urban and rural unions of industrial, artisan and service producer co-operatives. ACFHIC represented 1,100 member societies with about 800,000 individual members in 2007.



General Co-operative Union of Egypt (GCU) is the apex organisation for the co-operative movement in Egypt. GCU represents the 5 co-operative federations of Egypt which have about 11 million individual members.

COOP de France is the political voice of agricultural co-operatives in France. Coop de France represented



about 400,000 farmers in 2007 through 3,200 member societies. There are about 12,500 co-operatives utilising the co-operative's farm equipment. Agricultural co-operatives employ around 150,000 people in France. More information: www.coopdefrance.coop



Confédération Générale des SCOP (CGSCOP) of France, co-ordinates the network of Scop (société coopérative de production) or employee owned co-operatives enterprises and represents Scops at the national level. CGSCOP represents 2,000 co-operative enterprises. In 2008, the SCOP movement had a turnover of 3.7 billion euros. More information: www.scop.coop



Welcoming new members to the ICA family (cont'd)



Kenya Union of Savings and Credit Co-operatives Ltd (KUSCCO) is the national association for SACCOs (Savings and Credit Co-operatives) in Kenya. KUSCCO helps develop SACCOs and strengthens the co-operative principles within their membership. KUSCCO represented nearly three million individuals through their 2,000 SACCO members in 2007. More information: info@kuscco.com

Korean Association of Social Economy Enterprises (KASEE) of South Korea is an Associate Member. It represents workers' co-operatives, social enterprises and other worker-owned enterprises in South Korea. It fights

poverty through job creation for disadvantaged people and co-operative values.



Cooperativa de Servicios Múltiples del Centro Ltda. (CENTROCOOP) of Peru is a multipurpose co-operative encouraging savings and promoting socio-economic development. In 2006, the organisation had 4,089 individual members. CENTROCOOP has received a number of awards for excellence including the Gold Trophy Award FIJET – America for “Excellence in Financial and Services Quality 2008” presented by the International Superior Council of the Press. More: www.centrocoop.org



Kooperativ Utveckling Sverige (Coompanion) of Sweden, represents 25 regional and county co-

operative development centres. The centres promote new co-operative enterprise, engage in advocacy and provide technical assistance. More: www.coompanion.se



Women in Informal Employment Globalising Organisation (WIEGO) of the United Kingdom, is a network for global action, research and policy, comprising membership-based organisations of informal workers including co-operatives, unions and associations. WIEGO helps to build and strengthen informal worker organisations. It provides policy advice on the informal economy and promotes good practice. In 2007, WIEGO had 120 members in 30 countries. More: www.wiego.org

The current ICA membership statistics are:

240 Member Organisations

211 members and 29 associate members from 89 countries.

ICA Directory

The ICA Member Directory was issued in December 2009 and sent electronically to all ICA member organisations.

The Directory, published on quarterly basis, lists the names of member organisations, their mailing

addresses, telephone, fax, and e-mail contacts, website addresses as well as the names and titles of contact persons.

Additional copies are available in print and electronic formats for ICA member organisations only

by contacting Ms Gretchen Warner, Membership and Development Manager, at the ICA Central Office in Geneva by e-mail at warner@ica.coop.

Amendments and corrections can also be sent to Ms Warner.

Member News



INTERNATIONAL
CO-OPERATIVE
ALLIANCE

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www.ica.coop

More events:

[Calendar of ICA events
& related co-operative
activities](#)

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

2010 Calendar of ICA events and related co-operative activities

2010

- 2-3 February ICA Board Meeting, Manchester (UK)
- 15-19 February Co-operative Policy and Legislation Course, International Labour Office Training Centre, Turin (Italy). Applications and Information: r.fioravanti@itcilo.org
- 19 April Cooperatives Europe Regional Assembly and European Convention, Moscow (Russia) www.coopseurope.coop
- 22-23 April ICA Board Meeting, Moscow (Russia)
- 2-4 September ICA European Research Conference, "Co-operatives' contribution to a plural economy", Lyon (France)
- October ICA Asia-Pacific Regional Assembly, Beijing (China)
- 8-10 December ICA Expo 2010, Bangalore (India) www.icaexpo.coop
- 8-10 December ICA Board Meeting, Bangalore (India)

2011

ICA General Assembly, Mexico

2012

United Nations International Year of Co-operatives



Questions about .coop? Visit www.coop or e-mail Dotcoop at support@nic.coop."