



international co-operative ALLIANCE

Imagine co-operation making a world of difference

This first year in the third millennium is drawing to a close.

We know that there are great challenges facing the world in the years to come. In the

Globalization should work for all

Enhance the co-operative image

There's a new top-level domain

on the Internet



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past years I have repeatedly returned to the subject of globalisation. I have especially pointed at the grave negative effects of globalisation like concentration of wealth into the hands of the few and social exclusion. I believe that more and more people with insight and influence are beginning to understand that the present situation must be addressed.

ICA and its member organisations, representing some 760 million co-operative members - a formidable part of the world population - have not remained and shall not remain, silent on the issue of globalisation. While mitigating the negative effects that it can have, we must make globalisation work for us - particularly using opportunities that the new age of information presents. A great need is to enhance the co-operative image globally, and I am pleased to note a significant tool that is becoming available to us: the new Internet domain name .coop

The selection of .coop alongside .com and .org in Internet addresses serves as a good example of the value of ICA and co-operation. ICA worked with NCBA (USA) and Poptel (UK) to make a strong case for the co-operative movement's own identity on the Internet. As a result, ICA members will soon be able to express their co-operative difference on the Internet and promote co-operative values,

showing how these values can help spread the benefits of globalisation among people in need.

In the Rio Cooperativo 2000 event in December, globalisation is figuring on top of the agenda. In the ICA General Assembly in Seoul in October 2001 the major theme will be: CO-OPERATION AND PEACE in the Era of Globalisation.

This, our concern is derived directly from the ICA values of equality, equity, solidarity and social responsibility and caring for others. Therefore the International Co-operative Alliance will continue to speak up and be an active advocate for a more just, equal and equitable world. That is a central part of ICA's mission.

This issue of the Alliance is the last for the year 2000. It is a four page issue that focuses on a limited number of topics. Our ambition is that the four issues planned for 2001 will be more comprehensive, each issue highlighting a major ICA theme in addition to information and news

from the co-operative sphere.. Our aim is to



Rodrigues

continually improve the quality and relevance of the information contained in our publications.

Finally, I take the opportunity to thank all readers and co-operators for this year and, on behalf of the International Co-operative Alliance, extend Good Wishes to all in the coming year 2001.

Roberto Rodrigues
ICA President

Comings and goings

David Button is the new chairman of Plunkett Foundation, UK; he takes over from Eric Wilson CBE. David has over 25 years of practical experience of working with farmer-controlled businesses (FCBs). He is also currently Chairman of Genesis Business Development Limited, the UK-based consultancy specialising in collaborative rural development both at home and overseas.



Edgar Parnell takes over the vice-chairman's role previously held by David Button. Edgar was chief executive of the Plunkett Foundation from 1985 to 1997; he is a leading international specialist in co-operatives, having worked in well over 30 different countries.

The Plunkett Foundation is an independent charitable trust, providing specialist support to co-operatives and other rural enterprises, including FCBs, in the UK and internationally.

.coop to join .com and .org as top level domain

The international body charged with managing the Internet announced on November 16, its selection of .coop as one of only seven new top-level domains (TLD) that will join .com and .org at the end of Internet addresses. This will give co-operatives instant recognition on the Internet and help consumers find the businesses they trust online.

The Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers (ICANN) -- the entity with jurisdiction over Internet management issues -- approved .coop after the highly competitive application-and-review process found both overwhelming global support for .coop from all sectors of the economy and a clear, unmet need for a unique co-operative identity online. The proposal received more favourable comments on ICANN's public comment forum than any other proposed TLD. The International Co-operative Alliance played a crucial role in mobilizing support from its membership to underline the world appeal and need for the .coop domain name. However, the National Cooperative Business Association (NCBA) took the lead in submitting the application and in making .coop a reality. Not only was it key in mobilising strong support from co-operative organizations in the United States, it also successfully lobbied the ICANN Board together with Poptel. Dot coop is the result of a successful partnership among NCBA, Poptel and ICA.

The new TLD will be restricted for use by only bona fide co-operative businesses, which number more than 750,000 globally with 760 million members. Because co-operative businesses like credit unions and food co-ops are owned and

operated by the people who use them, polling data show consumers trust them more than conventionally organised businesses. In implementing .coop it is expected that preference will be given to telecommunications co-operatives.

NCBA submitted the .coop proposal together with Poptel, a worker-owned telecommunications co-operative in the UK that will provide technical registry services, as well as the ICA. The group sought a designated Internet suffix for co-operatives because co-ops fit neatly into neither .com nor .org the only suffixes currently available to them. Dot coop was in competition with more than 180 possible TLDs proposed by 44 applicants including such technology giants as Nokia, Novell and IBM. ICANN selected only seven new names, including .coop. Joining .coop as new TLDs are .aero, .biz, .info, .museum, .name, and .pro.

Registration for the .coop domain would not be available to co-operatives until mid-2001 because NCBA must still negotiate contract agreements with ICANN and Poptel, and the new TLDs are subject to approval by the United States Department of Commerce. ICA will be a partner to NCBA and Poptel in determining the governing policies regulating .coop.

NCBA is a national cross-sector membership association representing co-operatives over 100 million Americans and 48,000 businesses ranging in size from small buying clubs to businesses included on Fortune's 500. Poptel is the UK's leading cooperative Internet Service and Solutions Provider, majority owned by its employees.

For more information and updates about .coop see www.coop.org, www.poptel.net or www.ncba.org

At the helm of communications at a turning point in media

Mary Treacy, who has left the ICA after more than 17 years -- the last 12 as Director of Communications -- was responsible for the ICA's communications strategy during an exciting period of technological advance. That she seized the opportunities made possible by the digital revolution, embracing change while maintaining a balance between new technologies and the more traditional media, is a tribute to her deep understanding of the needs of a global organisation as complex as the ICA.

From the introduction of desktop publishing in the mid-1980s -- something she quickly recognised as a means of enhancing productivity while saving precious financial resources -- to the boundless opportunities afforded by the digital age, Mary has always been receptive to new ideas and has enjoyed being out there among the pioneers at the new frontiers. And she has accepted the countless difficulties thrown up along the way as the inevitable side-effects of working across multiple boundaries and bandwidths. As she wrote in a recent Review of International Co-operation (Vol192/No.2/1999): New technology is only a tool. Co-operation still remains the necessary ingredient for success.



Among her lasting achievements, spearheading the use of the Internet for the ICA will always remain supreme. She recognised its potential, for trade and learning as well as straightforward communication, way before most people (inside as well as outside North America) had even heard of it; she set herself almost impossibly tight deadlines to achieve a lively, interactive, and regularly updated presence for the ICA on the worldwide web; she went on to explore the opportunities for bulletin boards and Internet trade portals; and by her actions she persuaded many local and regional movements to take their first tentative steps along the information superhighway.

In spite of her sharp grasp of the new technology, though, Mary maintained the ICA's long tradition of respect for the printed word and for the literature of Co-operation. As well as editing the ICA's regular flow of newsletters and publications, generally produced on tight schedules and with slender resources (for many years a full-time staff of just two, including herself), she was responsible for bringing into print a number of important books.

Throughout her time at the ICA, Mary served as Secretary to the Communications Committee, a

'Walking the talk' - the way forward



Karl-Johan
Fogelström

During the two and a half months I have served as director-general the most immediate and important task for me has been to form an idea, a notion about what this organisation should do. I have made an attempt in this direction and presented the result to the ICA Board for its consideration and approval. The active approval of the Board is fundamental because in my view the ICA Secretariat should do what the ICA Board wants it to do - in a proactive, not reactive, way.

My perception is that an organisation, to be successful, should be led by a set of guiding principles consisting of defined values, a vision and a mission statement. Everything that is done, decided upon, etc, in the organisation should be checked off with the organisation's guiding principles. One should in principle, and hopefully also in practice, refrain from doing things that do not harmonise with the (approved and shared) guiding principles. Thus the value base, the vision and the mission statement become important (in fact indispensable) practical working tools for the leadership and employees. This is the essence of the expression walking the talk. My view is that ICA should walk its talk!

In the case of ICA, the values and mission are clearly spelled out in the ICA Rules. The missing link, as I see it, is a vision statement. That's why I have ventured into formulating something that could be developed to a full-fledged ICA Vision. My understanding of vision is a state that you may reach within a time frame of 5-10 years.

Alliance: So what could the ICA vision look like? I have been thinking along three different lines:

Vision 1

That the co-operative mode of operation, the co-operative difference, is visible, appreciated and recognised, and that ICA as well as the entire network of ICA-affiliated organisations are perceived and identified as value-based organisations contributing to society's good.

Vision 2

That the co-operative method is globally recognised as a powerful and effective means for disadvantaged people to improve their living conditions through their own efforts, economically and socially.

Vision 3

That ICA is the globally recognised and leading body for the co-operative mode of operation.

Why is it so important with vision statements?

Well, this short article is about the way forward. I feel it is an advantage if one has a clear idea in which direction one is heading. When looking forward, there are 180 degrees to choose between. The vision will inform you which of the 180 degrees you should choose. Another important function of a vision is: When there is a shared vision people excel and learn, not because they are told to, but because they want to. (Senge:

Learning Organisations). A truly shared vision serves as an energiser for the entire organisation.

So, clearly, a shared vision is indispensable for an organisation with ambitions to achieve results or impact. That's why I have taken this initiative towards such a vision for ICA.

With a shared vision in focus, the guiding principles should then be translated into policies, strategies, plans and budgets with measurable impact targets. That's where we are at present, i.e., somewhere in this translation process. The Most Valued Areas according to a recent survey carried out among the ICA membership, are

- ¥ to provide the co-operative sector with an internationally recognised identity
- ¥ to represent co-operatives in the United Nations and elsewhere internationally
- ¥ to provide support in developing countries and in countries in transition; and
- ¥ to do networking, provide meeting places for co-operatives, to organise useful meetings, and to provide co-operatives with access to the various specialised bodies in the ICA family.

In addition to these areas there are important cross-cutting thematic issues that should be integrated into all actions and activities such as, peace, gender equality, poverty focus, democracy, environmental concern and youth.

These are the main areas and issues on which the ICA Secretariat, ICA's regional offices and the specialised bodies should focus. Key words are coherence, consistency,

co-ordination and quality. This is the highway forward.

With this message I wish all readers of the Alliance Season's Greetings.

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diverse group of journalists and other specialists from across the continents whom, says Iain Williamson, former vice-chairman of the committee, she coaxed, press-ganged and inspired to become involved in a variety of extremely worthwhile, though often massively time-consuming, projects. Iain adds: "These projects included running two highly successful international workshops for young co-operative journalists; organising seminars on a range of communications topics; and working on daily news bulletins published during the ICA's principal world gatherings - often throughout the night! Memories of watching the dawn break over Congresses in Stockholm, Tokyo and Manchester spring to mind."

Many communicators and co-operators are grateful for her wise counsel, new ideas and - above all else - comradeship. We wish her well in her new fields of endeavour.

"Further information on communication projects initiated by Mary can be found in ICA News No. 2, 1999. The Report on her most recent work is in the Annual Report 1998-1999 Vol 92 No.3. and her latest communications strategy is summarized in the Review of International Co-operation Vol.90, No 3/1997, pp: 51 - 55, also accessible at <http://www.wisc.edu/uwcc/icic/orgs/ica/pubs/review/ICA-Review-Vol--90--No--3--1997/index.html>"

Iain Williamson

Everything that is decided and done in the organizations should be checked off with its guiding principles.

Review of Recommendation 127

ICA members will need to lobby governments as ILO drafts new standard on co-operatives

The International Labour Office (ILO) has received more than 175 replies to a questionnaire about co-operatives from member states - replies that are to form the basis of a new draft legal standard on co-operatives.

This new standard will succeed Recommendation 127, which ILO adopted in 1966 and which has since served as the only comprehensive international standard on co-operatives. Though a useful tool in negotiations with government, Recommendation 127 for a while has been ripe for a review. The cycle of structural changes in the world order beginning in the late 1980s, in particular, has transformed the relationship between co-operatives and government in many countries.

In May this year ILO published a first report on co-operatives which included the questionnaire asking member states if a new standard was needed and, if so, what it should include. ICA members also received a copy of the report so they could take contact with governments in their own countries and feed their views into the replies.

The new standard, taking into account member states' comments, will become part of a second ILO report on co-operatives. ICA will inform its members of the report and ask them to lobby their governments.

A main objective of the lobbying is to ensure that the new standard reflects the wishes of the co-operative movement. There is a need to persuade national governments to enact policies and legislation upholding the principle of non-discrimination of co-operatives, creating a level playing field between co-operatives and other enterprises. At the global level ICA has worked with ILO and the United Nations to point out the need for a broad framework that guides the formulation of national co-operative policy and legislation.

The review of the ILO Recommendation 127 is an important step to assist governments in getting the policy right. It also effectively puts co-operatives on the agenda as one of three

priority topics to be addressed at the 89th Session of ILO's International Labour Conference in June 2001.

Aside from placing co-operatives in a better position to address current issues such as unemployment and social exclusion, the new standard could enable ICA members in the former communist countries to cope with structural adjustments in the economy.

Privatisation and liberalisation there have in most cases gone beyond land reform referred to in Recommendation 127, involving manufacturing facilities and service infrastructures. While some formerly communist-type co-operatives have been transformed into genuine ones, others have been bought out by individuals. And ILO is fielding an increasing number of requests from both developing and transition countries for technical assistance in co-operative organization, training and policy and legislative reform.

In industrialised countries it is the changing structure of co-operative enterprises, new forms of co-operatives, and competitive pressure from other enterprises that have contributed to the call for application of new standards. The co-operative model of joint ownership and management is also increasingly being used by employees to buy out their enterprises in the transport, service and manufacturing sectors, protecting and generating jobs as globalisation and technological change cause downsizing.

In addition, in many countries, fiscal pressure is forcing government to limit its involvement in economic and social affairs - requiring the civil society to take a more active role in social welfare. The state's role is increasingly limited to providing the political, legal and administrative frameworks for the development of organizations including co-operatives, which in turn strengthen democracy.

The new ILO standard will focus on this particular role of the government.

ICA Calendar

(for updated information, please visit the ICA site at www.coop.org)

FEBRUARY

- 1-2/ ICA Europe Lobbying Seminar - Brussels, Belgium
- 3-4/ ICA Communications Committee Workshop - Copenhagen, Denmark
- 5-9/ ICA Head Office and Regional Offices meeting
Gender Seminar - Geneva, Switzerland
- 10-11/ ICA Development Advisory Board meeting /
Workshop - Marburg, Germany
- 26-27/ European Council - St Petersburg, Russia

APRIL

- 18-20/ ICA Board meeting - Roma, Italy

JUNE

- 25-27/ ICA ROAP/JCCU Regional youth summit - Tokyo, Japan

JULY

- 7/79th International Day of Co-operatives / 8th UN Co-operative Day

OCTOBER

- 12-13/ ICA Board meeting - Seoul, Korea
- 14-15/ ICA Specialised Body meetings - Seoul, Korea
- 16-17/ ICA General Assembly - Seoul, Korea

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