

Intercooperation — we can do it!

The idea is gradually taking shape that the co-operative movement is a great worldwide network of businesses based on solidarity.

In my involvement in events held in the most diverse countries on all continents, I have seen the surprise and pride felt by co-operative members when they realise that they are part of an enormous army working for democracy and peace. There are nearly 800 million members of co-operatives of all kinds, and with their families and associates this number could touch 40% of humanity, brought together through the same values and principles, fighting against the concentration of wealth and social exclusion.

It is, in fact, a huge mass of people who, by working together, can make the world a better place.

But, to make this happen, it is essential that there be greater co-operation between co-operatives of the various branches within each country and internationally.

Unfortunately, this commercial solidarity is not yet common practice among co-operatives.

Rural producer co-operatives do not do business with consumer co-operatives, but in general through third parties, who take a

mark-up.

There are no special health co-operative programmes for workers co-operatives, nor special credits from co-operative banks for housing co-operatives.

Imagine what this could represent - a network of trade and services that covers all co-operatives. What economy might this result in for members throughout the world?

Imagine a worldwide network of co-operative banks operating together! And linked with the spectacular insurance sector led by ICMIF, together financing production, homes, consumption .

There would not be a single multinational that could keep up with us. It is quite true that there are already specific transnational co-operative projects, such as the consumer co-operatives of the Nordic countries. It is also true that development agencies in various rich countries are helping co-operative development in poor countries.

But we still have a long way to go in the practice of intercooperation.

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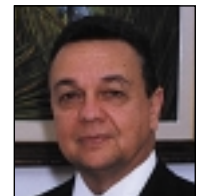
Dear co-operative friends

It is soon time for our first General Assembly of the new millennium. I am very pleased that it will be held in the beautiful city of Seoul, South Korea. Our host this time will be the Korean co-operative movement, under the leadership of the National Agricultural Co-operative Federation. Our Korean friends are already working hard together with the ICA secretariat in Geneva to prepare an event that will at least live up to the high standard set in Quebec in 1999.

The General Assembly meeting will of course be of particular interest and importance, with the election of a new ICA Board. As is now the tradition, the formal General Assembly will be preceded by a seminar devoted to experience

exchange, featuring a number of stimulating speakers from outside our own range. This seminar will be held on 16 and 17 October and will include both plenary sessions and business fora, a concept introduced so successfully a few years ago. The theme we have chosen this time,

Co-operation and Peace - in the era of Globalisation, will focus on present and future challenges to the co-operative movement. We will invite top-level keynote speakers from both outside and inside the co-operative world, whose names will be conveyed to you as soon as they are confirmed. We will paint the overall picture - the global environment for co-operatives - as well as suggesting possible answers with the help of co-operative thinkers. We will also show best practices -



Roberto Rodrigues
ICA president

Comings and goings

Bruce Thordarson, former ICA director-general, has been appointed Long-Term Advisor for the Governance Reform Support Project in Indonesia. The project, based in Jakarta, is managed by KPMG Consulting on behalf of the Canadian International Development Agency.

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Roy Berg Pedersen is named acting managing director of the Norwegian Federation of Co-operative Housing Associations (NBBL) following the death of Per Eggum Mauseth 9 January (see page 6). Appointed deputy managing director in 1994, he is an economist and has worked for NBBL for almost 25 years.

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Martina Donahower, ICA Europe assistant for two years and previously a receptionist, has left the ICA secretariat.

Putting sound management and competitiveness in focus for agricultural co-operatives in Korea

And getting ready to roll the red carpet for the ICA General Assembly in Seoul



Chung Dae-kun

These are but two of the current priorities for Chung Dae-kun, chairman since 1999 of the National Agricultural Co-operative Federation (NACF) or Nonghyup as it is known in Korea. He had previously been president of Samrangjin Agricultural Co-operative for eight consecutive terms since 1975. He tells Alliance what is on his mind.

Alliance: As chairman of NACF what principle has been uppermost in your mind?

Chung: I think that co-operatives should stick to the principle of serving and enhancing the interest of their members and customers. I always place great importance on the point that every business of NACF should extend substantial benefits to members and customers.

One of the major impacts of the Asian financial crisis on agricultural co-operatives in Korea was the NACF merger with another ICA member, the National Livestock Co-operative Federation, on 1 July 2000. What benefits has this integration brought about?

First I would say that, thanks to the merger, the expanded NACF is able to reduce organisational inefficiencies and improve cost-effectiveness in the co-operative sector.

The true beneficiaries are farmers. They are able to sell products through over 3,000 integrated agricultural outlets of NACF, and can buy farm supplies at reasonable prices in quantity lots. Customers are also served well at over 5,000 financial branches that form the largest network in our country.

Following the merger, we introduced a chief executive officer system putting individual CEOs in full charge of the areas of their competence, such as supply and agricultural marketing, livestock, and banking and credit.

I am of the view that all these changes will certainly contribute to enhancing NACF's operational efficiency.

Do you have any further plans for reform in the future?

This year we will continue to make efforts to raise efficiency-savings in the new NACF. To put it specifically, we will continue to pursue further slim-lining of the organisational structure, wherever we consider it appropriate, selling out fixed assets which we think are not necessary, and

making the newly adopted CEO system fully operational.

What are some of the main priorities of NACF operations and businesses this year?

As I said earlier, NACF will commit itself to ensuring that it serves to raise the socio-economic interests of member farmers. NACF will support member co-operatives so they can be key players of agro-marketing in producing areas. We will assist member farmers in their efforts to increase agricultural production by reinforcing a streamlined agro-marketing system.

For NACF the businesses priorities are maximising its capability to lend support to member co-operatives and farmers, and encouraging member co-operatives to focus more on sound management and competitiveness.

How do you view the fact that the first ICA General Assembly in the 21st century is hosted by NACF in Seoul? And will we see North Korean co-operators in Seoul at the Assembly?

We believe the ICA General Assembly will be especially meaningful as co-operation, which surpasses competition and emphasises collaboration, is suggested as a curative philosophy in this present world where globalisation has been celebrated by some while bemoaned by others. Indeed the theme of the Assembly, Co-operation and Peace - in the era of Globalisation, is very appropriate and timely in the light of the current issues surrounding us.

I really hope that we are prepared to receive North Korean co-operators in October. I know that ICA is welcoming them as well. What these efforts will lead to, only the future can tell, but South Korean co-operatives will certainly help promote peace in this part of the world by building bridges to our co-operative friends in the North.

The ICA General Assembly requires a great deal of preparation. How is NACF

.coop is a major communications priority for ICA



...It's coming...

Karl Fogelström, ICA director-general, has declared that .coop must become a major priority for ICA communications over the coming months. His statement came during a two-day meeting of the ICA Communications Committee (ICACC) and ICA in Copenhagen 3-4 February. The meeting agreed that the new .coop Internet name goes right to the heart of defining the co-operative identity for the 21st century.

Many in the co-operative movement are still stunned by the success of the organisers of .coop in winning one of just seven new Internet top-level domains. Meanwhile others are completely unaware of the victory. Consequently the ICA has decided to put its weight behind a co-ordinated campaign to raise awareness among co-operative federations and sectorial organisations internationally.

A major issue is how quickly co-ops should move to use the .coop name when it is introduced. Many co-ops are running successful e-business strategies with website names ending in .com or a country code (like .uk, .fr or .se). Internet experts point out that there is no need to change from .com to .coop immediately. A web site can have multiple aliases all of which get to the right site. However, registering a .coop address means that consumers and others who specifically want to find co-operative businesses on the Internet will be able to do so more easily.

ICANN, the corporation responsible for Internet names, made its decision 16 November. Since then the .coop planning process has moved ahead rapidly. Led by Karl Fogelström, Paul Hazen, president/CEO of

the NCBA (sponsor of the .coop application), and Stuart Marsden, CEO of Poptel (the .coop registry operator), senior representatives of the partners plus a group of international experts met in London 15-17 January. The planning group is working to launch .coop in mid-2001.

Two schedules of activities were defined for the legal and operational structuring of the .coop, and for its technical implementation. A series of working groups have been set up to address the technical, legal, governance and marketing issues. The next big milestones include resolving the governance structure of .coop to ensure it has full international legitimacy, and the detail of name allocation and resolution of any disputes that might arise.

Further discussions are planned. Alliance and the ICA web site www.coop.org will keep you informed of progress.



What is .coop?

A new top level domain name to promote co-operative identity on Internet.

Who can register?
Co-operatives only.

When can I register?
By mid 2001.

Where can I register?
There will be a web site for registration.

How much do I pay?
Registration fee will be confirmed on due course.

How many can I register?
No limit.

Who are behind .coop?
NCBA, ICA, Poptel.

Further information at
www.coop.org
www.ncba.org
www.poptel.net

Building bridges to co-operative friends

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copied with all the arrangements?

We have for a few years had several people working on the preparations under the leadership of Lee Shil-kwan. Last year we had up to eight people working on different parts of the preparations and this year we have nearly 15. Collaboration with the ICA secretariat in Geneva has been smooth and I have big hopes for a successful meeting.

Do you have any special message about the General Assembly for ICA member

organisations and co-operators?

We have been doing our utmost to successfully host this global co-operative festival. I am confident the ICA General Assembly Seoul 2001 will be a precious opportunity to share the co-operative vision and experience and move forward co-operation and peace in the world.

On behalf of 19 million co-operative members of Korea, I welcome you all to Seoul this coming October.

There is a great lack of understanding of what co-operatives stand for - even within co-operative organisations.

ICA to strengthen co-operative identity

*By Karl-Johan Fogelström
Director-General*

ICA is reviewing its action plan. We call the plan THE ICA AGENDA, consisting of four major focus areas: Co-operative Identity and Image, International Co-operative Presence, Co-operative Development, and Networking.

Enhancing co-operative identity and image

There is a broad consensus that the co-operative identity and image need to be enhanced. The co-operative mode of operation is under attack. Demutualisation is a real threat. There is a great lack of knowledge and understanding about what co-operatives are and what they stand for. This is not only the case outside the co-operative sphere, but unfortunately, I believe, also within many co-operative organisations. This is alarming.

Enhancement and promotion of the co-operative identity and image is, therefore, without comparison, the most important focus area on the ICA Agenda.

The ICA secretariat is now taking steps to launch a comprehensive Co-operative Image and Identity Programme to be implemented over the next 2 - 3 years. The idea is that the whole ICA network - the secretariat, the five regional offices, the specialised bodies and

organisations in the ICA family and, last but not least, ICA's member organisations - is to be mobilised. Every part of the ICA network is expected to do its bit in pursuance of the aim of radically strengthening the co-operative identity and improving the image of co-operatives.

How else can the co-operative difference be translated into the co-operative advantage?

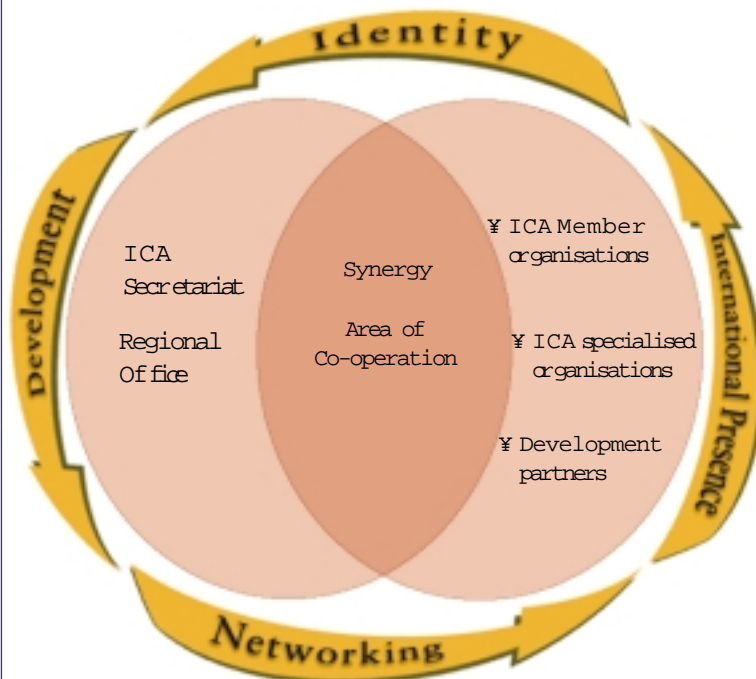
Co-operatives with a business efficiency and an efficient use of their capital at least on par with other actors in the various markets and with a clear profile of positive identity and image that is known, understood, recognised and appreciated internally and externally, is the concept for success - a concept and profile that would not be easy for other actors to copy.

In this context it should be stressed that the launching of the new top level domain dotcoop on the Web has the potential of becoming one of the most important means to communicate co-operative identity and image.

International co-operative representation and presence

The co-operative sector needs to be more visible globally, regionally and nationally and to make the co-operative mode of operation known, recognised and appreciated on all these levels. The co-operative sector should speak up on important issues of our times and live up to the values, principles and mission - simply, co-operatives should walk their talk.

The ICA secretariat is currently preparing a strategy on this to be presented to the ICA Board in April. The next step will be to prepare an action plan in the form of a 2-3 year programme with a global as well as regional outreach.



Providing support to co-operative development

Development is one of ICA's core areas. There is ample historical evidence that co-operatives - agricultural, consumer, savings & credit, etc. - played an important role in the economic, democratic and social development in most industrialised countries. We know that good grassroots co-operatives and their structures play that role today in many developing countries.

Also here it is a question of walking our talk. Economic and social co-operation in democratic forms - the very essence of the co-operative idea - is a powerful and efficient way for poor and disadvantaged groups of people to improve their living conditions, to get a voice and to speak up for themselves. Support to co-operative development makes sense. Co-operatives contribute to peace in the world because co-operatives are about people in democratic institutions participating in the creation of economic growth. And economic growth shared by many and democracy are the two most important factors for peace in the world.

ICA, the secretariat and the five regional offices will continue the efforts to promote and support co-operative development in

partnership with our member organisations and our development partners. Each of the regional offices has concrete plans for the development work in their respective regions. The role of the secretariat is to support and facilitate the regional development programmes.

Networking - keeping the ICA family together

This is an area having a multiple of dimensions where one would find aspects of networking both as objectives and as means of achieving objectives. It has been a traditional ICA core area since ICA's inception more than one hundred years ago. The whole rationale for forming the ICA was to create a common global platform, an arena where co-operatives could meet and exchange experiences, learn from one another and discuss what they could do together to add value to their members in their own countries. That rationale is as valid today as it was a hundred years ago. The challenge now is to develop and adjust to the modern context.

The ambition of the secretariat is to take on this challenge - to keep the ICA family together - and to do what is perceived as relevant by ICA's member organisations.

Economic growth shared by many and democracy - two most important factors for peace

Are you a modern co-operative Pioneer?

Or do you know someone else who is?

Or maybe you belong to or know a co-operative that has been distinctly innovative - and successful?

If so, international recognition may be on the cards: the Rochdale Pioneers Prize which the ICA Board established in December.

The purpose is to recognise a person or a co-operative society that has contributed to innovative and financially sustainable co-operative activities significantly benefiting the membership.

The prize will be awarded every two years in conjunction with the ICA General Assembly and the first winner will be presented at the next Assembly - in Seoul, Korea, 17 October.

The prize itself will be a certificate signed by the ICA president and the director-general. Prizewinners will be featured in



Alliance and on the ICA web site.

The contribution made by the laureate must have the following attributes:

- ¥ Beneficial to members of the co-operative in a visible way
- ¥ Innovative - a present-day version of the Rochdale era
- ¥ Financially sustainable - at least break-even, preferably producing a surplus
- ¥ Permanent or lasting, not temporary, in effect

Other merits to be considered are

- ¥ Measurable promotion of gender balance

- ¥ Concern for the community

Nominations must be received at the ICA Secretariat by the end of March.

*Showcasing
best
practices*

3,000 met in Rio: is that a record?

At the joint event RioCooperativo 2000 held in December, the three organisers - ICA, ICA Americas and OCB (Organisation of Brazilian Co-operatives) - saw 3,000 people gathering! That peak, which may well have set a world co-operative record, came during the ICA Global Forum opening session 5 December with Oscar Arias, the Nobel Peace Prizewinner, Rubens Ricuperro, secretary-general of UNCTAD, and Roberto Rodrigues, ICA president, as speakers.

During that session the Rio Co-operative Declaration was approved.

There were many other sessions in Rio, among them case studies on how co-operatives are dealing with globalisation, and five business fora with some 30 speakers showing best practices in the co-operative sector.

Another highlight was the ICA Ibero-American Conference following the ICA Americas Regional Assembly.

The ICA meetings were all held outside the city away from the tourist attractions, in the functional RioCentro



From left: Miguel Cardozo, Bai Licheng, Francisco Dornelles, Dejandir Dalpasquale (president OCB) Fernando Henrique Cardoso, Anthony Garotinho, Oscar Arias, Carlos Conde, Partiny de Moraes (Brazilian Ministry of Agriculture), and Roberto Rodrigues, (ICA president).

In memoriam

International co-operative movement loses two leaders from Norway

Co-operators in Norway and around the world note the life-time contribution of two leaders who advanced the movement's capacity to serve the interests of its members: Per Eggum Mauseth, vice-president of ICA, who died in January, and Peter Sjøiland, vice-president of ICA 1972-84, who died the month before.

Per Eggum Mauseth was 56 years old. He became managing director of the Norwegian Federation of Co-operative Housing Associations (NBBL) in a period of great difficulties in the housing sector in Norway. He embarked on a process of renewal and restructuring aimed at giving the housing co-operatives a stronger position in the market as well as ensuring decent housing for the average Norwegian family.

Through his untiring efforts, the NBBL today is a solid and credible organisation whose first priority is to look after the interests of its members, says Mats Ahnlund, secretary of ICA Housing.

Per was also very interested in



Per Eggum Mauseth

the international aspect of his work, as a strong supporter of the international programme of his own organisation and, since 1999, an active vice-president of ICA Housing.

Per was highly respected as a hard working and committed leader and much loved as a warm person with a big heart, says Mats. We shall miss him as a colleague and friend.

Peter Sjøiland is remembered in the following personal tribute by Iars Marcus, former president of ICA:

It adds to the picture of Peter Sjøiland that he was born on the national day of his country. Norway has fresh air, clear waters and high mountains. Peter was like that - open, outspoken and with a vision of what is fair. He was a fighter with clear weapons.



Peter Sjøiland

Peter returned to his country from a concentration camp in Sachsenhausen in 1945 to soon be elected a very young chairman of NKL, the national consumer co-operative. When at the same time the postwar ICA was formed he was a candidate for the Central

In search of possible answers

Continued from page 1

good examples of co-operatives that are successful in the new global reality.

As usual, many of our sectorial and other specialised organisations will also meet on this occasion. Both the organisations of workers co-operatives, CICOOPA, and the ICA Research Committee are planning major events on the days before our General Assembly. The Gender Committee (previously called Global Women s Committee), ICAO (Agriculture), CCI (Consumer) and TICA (Tourism) will hold other seminars.

We can count on the generous hospitality of our hosts. Spectacular events are already planned for the opening session, reception and dinner. The Korean tradition of welcoming guests guarantees that nobody will be disappointed.

Several hotels are located adjacent to or in walking distance of the conference centre COEX. By registering early you can have a room at one of these hotels guaranteed. Other hotels will require extensive bus shuttling. However, COEX is located next to an underground station, so alternative transport will be possible.

I wish all ICA members a productive and enjoyable visit to Seoul from 12 to 17 October.

Roberto Rodrigues
ICA president

Host organisation NACF, that is, NongHyup

The National Agricultural Co-operative Federation (NACF) - called NongHyup in Korea - was established in 1961 as the apex organisation of agricultural co-operatives in Korea, with the mandate to increase agricultural productivity and enhance the economic and social status of member farmers, thereby securing a balanced development of the national economy as stated in the Agricultural Co-operative Law.

NACF conducts diverse functions including marketing, processing, supply of farm inputs and consumer goods, credit and banking, insurance, warehousing, transportation, farm extension, and relevant support activities such as research and publications.

With 1,177 member co-operatives and over 10,000 various business centres, NACF has set up the largest and most competitive business network, serving five million Korean farmers and rural communities.

It holds about 40 percent share of the local agricultural market and its banking operation consists of one of the largest deposit banks in Korea. At the end of 1999, NACF had 13,505 staff members, with an additional staff of 38,723 at member co-operatives.

A General Assembly to highlight the gains made by co-operatives to peace

Building a true co-operative alliance

Continued from page 6

Committee and the Executive as well. He remained in the ICA leadership until his resignation in 1984.

For three decades ICA offered an arena for fights between the West and East, between democrats and communists. ICA then had its strength from the consumer co-operative membership. It had started to ask for support for colleagues in the Third World.

Peter Sjiland, tall and courageous, fought for a true co-operative alliance, to serve members and not political interests of outsiders. Regardless of differences of opinion he was everyone s personal friend. He was someone who kept a promise and could be trusted.

I met with Peter in ICA in 1976 and came to work with him in the Executive four years later. By then the internal conflicts had started to fade away. But he had kept his dominating role by giving more of his time to

international work.

Together with the Norwegian co-operative movement, he created the Royal Norwegian Society for Rural Development to support co-operatives in developing countries. Of special importance to us in ICA was that he brought the financial support which created our Regional Office of West Africa. But he also took a strong part in an ILO project for co-operative training in Southeast Asia - MATCOM.

To listen to Peter and interact with him on issues and themes were always a pleasure and most often an adventure. I have many reasons to miss his warm personality, his personal generosity and the voice, which carried his message for democracy and human rights. The memory left of him is bright indeed.



Mugunghwa

The Korean national flower, Mugunghwa, or the rose of Sharon, is admired for its beauty and perseverance. Mugunghwa means endless, symbolising the permanence of the Korean nation and the endurance of its people.

ICA General Assembly

Dates: October 12-17, 2001

Venue: Seoul, Korea

(COEX, ASEM Convention Center)

Date	Event
October 12 (Fri)	ICA Board Meeting
October 13 (Sat)	ICA Board Meeting
October 14 (Sun)	Specialised Bodies Meeting
October 15 (Mon)	Specialised Bodies Meeting Welcome Reception
October 16 (Thu)	Opening Ceremony Lunch General Assembly
October 17 (Wed)	Business Forum General Assembly Farewell dinner

Schedule of Additional Events 14-19 October 2001

- ¥ Coop Expo (Co-operatives Exhibition)
- ¥ Rural Landscape picture festival
- ¥ Rural children's picture exhibition
Venue: Lobby of the COEX Convention Hall
- ¥ Food Korea (Seoul International Food Exhibition)
Venue: Atlantic Hall of the COEX

At the forefront of globalisation, COEX (Convention and Exhibition Center) provides a high-tech venue for international exhibitions, meetings and culture in the 21st Century. COEX's 198,000-square-meter convention and trade show facility is the nucleus of a 50-acre commercial and hotel complex. With four stories above ground and four basement levels, COEX offers space, services, communications facilities and advanced system and equipment to accommodate large-scale international conferences as well as the latest high-technology exhibitions.

Habitat commits to promoting housing co-operatives

On 22 February 2001, ICA and the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (UNCHS-Habitat) signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to promote co-operatives contribution to sustainable human settlements and housing co-operatives in particular. The signing ceremony held in Nairobi (Kenya) headquarters of UNCHS-Habitat, provided ICA officials an opportunity to discuss the role of co-operatives with the recently-appointed Executive Director of the UN Centre for Human Settlements, Mrs. Anna Tibaijuka.

The first concrete activity emanating from the MoU is an ICA/UNCHS-Habitat seminar entitled, Stimulating development of the co-operative approach in the shelter sector in Central and Eastern Europe and the CIS, which will be held in the latter part of 2001 in Turkey. Work has already begun with the UNCHS-Habitat and the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe in drafting a program and identifying potential resource persons and participants. ICA and ICA Housing are working with them in close consultation to ensure the success of the event.

Another specific activity is foreseen in Africa to follow-up a recently concluded ICA/UNCHS-Habitat study on establishing housing co-operatives in the region.

ICA and UNCHS-Habitat will also continue their joint activities evaluating the current status of the contributions of housing co-operatives to housing and social services development in other regions and seek ways to enhance their effectiveness and scope of activities.

The ICA-UNCHS-Habitat MoU is the second of what ICA hopes will be a series of agreements to promote co-operatives contribution to sustainable human settlements.

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