



# ICA looks towards a bright future

*Take an innovative look at how we can improve our organisation to respond to global challenges. Introduce change, but preserve our co-operative identity.*



Ivano Barberini  
ICA president

Renewal, innovation, and more importantly a focused outlook are key concepts in how the ICA will tackle its future work programme. Members at the General Assembly were clear that we must review the role and structure of ICA to clearly identify the global strategic issues on which we should focus; and together continue to defend the co-operative identity. We must strengthen our network, globally, regionally and nationally; and promote active member participation within the ICA and co-operative development everywhere.

We have begun the task and will define a concrete plan of action which will enumerate the main opportunities for ICA to add value to its membership and address crucial issues. In doing so, we will fulfil our goal of promoting co-operatives worldwide, helping member organisations implement the co-operative values and principles and improve service to their own members, as well as contribute to solving the biggest issues of our time.

We are facing the challenges of globalisation and the information revolution. They have changed and improved relations among peoples and made the world smaller, but this has also resulted in growing disparities among peoples and countries.

We know that the world needs greater economic solidarity as a basis for more social solidarity; that globalisation needs human solidarity; that globalisation must benefit all people, those in the wealthier countries as well as the weaker members of our society who cannot be excluded. This means limiting the egoism of the richer countries and improving the capacity for the self-determination of individuals and the development of dialogue between different peoples and cultures. These are the essential conditions for building peace and living together in a civil society and our

movement knows well that together we can contribute to making the lives of our communities safer and better, where peace can again find its expression.

We must be clear that we can make a difference!

2001 brought us the “first war of the new century”. It showed that around the world we were unprepared and vulnerable and now we are afraid of what the future may bring. This widespread feeling of vulnerability is new and very significant. It has manifested itself not only with regard to terrorism and international financial instability but also in many other areas– disease, environmental disasters, migration, etc. We know and have seen that what happens in a single country, even a small one, has an impact worldwide.

The way forward must be global governance.

Many people think that it is impossible and yet there are organisations already working towards this aim. Non-governmental organisations are building a more democratic world, creating positive relationships between governments and managing human relations. Among these, we have ICA. The usefulness of the co-operative movement can be measured here in helping to achieve these lofty objectives.

Under our co-operative values and principles, we aim at bridging the gap between economic well-being and social progress.

The co-operative movement has aided in building open communities and in encouraging the democratic participation of citizens. The co-operatives of different sectors have been very active in their local communities. We must continue and strengthen our work as only in this way, can we contribute in building a different kind of globalisation. ICA has a role to play in bringing about

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## From Rochdale to the Information Age - co-operative identity today



.coop Founders together with the Rochdale Pioneers at Toad Lane.

*ICA brings value to members enabling co-operatives to function more effectively.*

in the times of the Rochdale Pioneers, use the latest technology to fulfil their objectives and move forward.

Co-operative identity in this perspective is not just philosophy, but an essential component of making co-operatives successful. It is for this reason that co-operatives look to ICA to assist them in ensuring that people and institutions better understand co-operatives, how they work, why they exist and what they need to help people help themselves.

In 2002, co-operatives will benefit from the work that ICA has undertaken with the introduction of the new top level domain name for co-operatives, .coop, and a number of policy instruments that will assist co-operatives in operations at the national and regional levels – the United Nations guidelines on co-operatives, the International Labour Organisation’s Recommendation on the Promotion of Co-operatives and the European Statute on Co-operatives. ICA has been an integral part of the processes to provide services to its members and the co-operative community worldwide.



### Global launch on 30 January

On 30 January 2002 the new internet domain name reserved for co-operatives will be offered to the worldwide co-operative community. What better way of ensuring that the values, principles, ethics and business competence that constitute the co-operative advantage for members and for the communities in which they operate than using .coop.

.coop is a major communication tool in the Information Age, bringing the co-operative message to the entire world and promoting co-operative identity. But .coop will also provide co-operatives with service to improve their business efficiency, to have access to products developed specifically for the co-operative market, and to support the creation of a Digital Divide Fund for co-operatives to assist co-operatives in their technological growth.

ICA members have been pre-qualifying names since International Day of Co-operatives 7 July 2001. They will be able to use their .coop domain names before the launch date to call attention to their co-operative identity.

## European Commission recognises co-ops

Co-operatives have an important place in our economy. They are enterprises that are capable of surviving and succeeding in a competitive environment without special advantages. Co-operatives nevertheless need a regulatory environment that takes account of their specific characteristics. This and many other points were made clear from the paper on “Co-operatives in Enterprise Europe” drafted by the European Commission’s DG Enterprise. The paper itself has in-depth sections on:

1. Analysis of the Co-operative Enterprise Phenomenon in Europe
2. Co-operative Legislation in the European Union
3. The Contribution of Co-operatives to Community objectives and
4. Ensuring an Accurate Understanding of the Sector.

The document suggests orientations for potential future community policies and activities to reinforce the contribution of co-operative enterprises towards improving European competitiveness and achieving a wide range of other objectives of the

European Union. The document makes recommendations of relevance to the regulation of co-operatives in member states where appropriate. It also draws attention to the need for more enabling and comprehensive European regulation in the form of the European Co-operative Statute.

Those who have worked on this paper want to be absolutely sure that it reflects the real concerns and priorities of the co-operative sector. Therefore, a hearing will be organised in February 2002 with experts from the co-operative sector in order to ensure that when the paper is published, it will form a sound basis for future actions. It will constitute a principal tool for co-operative organisations to strengthen their negotiating power with regard to their governments and parliaments.

The European policy paper joins the policy guidelines that have been developed by the United Nations (UN) and the International Labour Office (ILO) – see below. Together these policies will assist co-operative growth and prosperity.

## UN and ILO focus on co-operative policy and legislation

Effective policy instruments must include the internationally recognised definition of co-operatives as stated in the ICA Co-operative Identity Statement. The ICA membership was clear during its General Assembly in October this year that this was one of the keys to ensuring that the policy instruments are effective tools for co-operatives.

The United Nations “Guidelines aimed at creating a support environment for the development of co-operatives”, officially recognised in late December 2001, include a specific reference to the co-operative values and principles, but go further in identifying specific recommendations with regard to co-operative legislation, and support policies. Today, co-operatives around the world can use the guidelines to negotiate with their governments on changes to policy and legislation that effect co-operatives.

The challenge ahead is the discussion of the new ILO Recommendation on the Promotion of Co-operatives. ICA has already provided specific comments on the draft Recommendation and will be convening a working group of co-operators in early 2002 to review the specific language of the recommendation. However, co-operatives must mobilise themselves to be part of their national delegations during the discussions at the ILO Conference in June. ICA urges its members to be part of the governmental, employers and/or workers delegations. Participation of co-operatives in the discussions will be key to ensuring that this policy instrument too will be useful to co-operatives to be even more effective in their actions. ICA will be co-ordinating actions with regard to the negotiation of the new Recommendation, so please let the ICA Secretariat in Geneva know if co-operative representatives will be on national delegations. We must bring one message from the movement to the ILO.



Co-operatives:  
Make your  
voices heard.



Be a part of  
national  
delegations for  
discussions on  
co-operatives.



## Calendar of Events 2002-2003

22 March	ICA European Council, Prague, Czech Republic
19-20 April	ICA Board Meeting, Columbus, Ohio, USA
9-12 May	ICA International Research Conference "Local Society and Global Economy: The Role of Co-operatives", Naousa, Thessaloniki, Greece
Mid-May	UN/COPAC/Government of Mongolia Seminar "A Stakeholder Dialogue on Supportive Environment for Co-operatives: Definitions – Prerequisites – Process", Ulan Bator, Mongolia
4-20 June	90 <sup>th</sup> International Labour Conference (Discussion of ILO Recommendation on Co-operatives), Geneva, Switzerland
June	ICA/ECE/Habitat Symposium on Housing Co-operatives, Ankara, Turkey
6 July	80th International Co-operative Day / 8th UN International Day of Co-operatives
August/ September	ICA Regional Assembly for the Americas, Paraguay
September	ICA Regional Assembly for Africa, Mauritius
8-12 October	ICA Regional Assembly for Europe/ICA Board, Lisbon, Portugal
3 January 2003	ICA Regional Assembly Asia & the Pacific, Philippines
3 September 2003	ICA General Assembly, Oslo, Norway

## President's message

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changes, but we must be innovative both in looking at how we impact the world around us and how we ensure that our own organisation can be improved to respond to the global challenges. We must introduce change, but, at the same time, preserve our co-operative identity.

We must strengthen the vision for the future of the co-operative movement and continuously renew its "raison d'être".

I do believe that we have the human resources, motivation and knowledge, as well as good businesses and a co-operative system on which to build our future.

*My very best wishes for 2002.*

**Ivano Barberini**  
**ICA President**

## Thanks to outgoing staff

A number of staff members will be leaving the ICA in early 2002. We would like to thank Mats Ahnlund, Fanja Rasolomanana and Ronald Alvarez for their contribution to the work of the ICA. We wish them all the best in the future.

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