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**Issue 3 - April 2000**



**What's News since the ICA Congress in Quebec City for Sectorial Organisations and Specialised Committees?**

The 9 different ICA Specialised Organisations (SOs) have all done a great deal of work since last September. That is also true for the four committees of experts (SCs) that support the ICA in its work. This was reported to the ICA Board in April and this is an edited version of that report.

**ICA Housing**

This is the organisation that represents housing co-ops in the ICA.

ICA Housing has had two board meetings since their GA in Quebec City. It also arranged a seminar in Glasgow, together with several of the housing co-operative movements in the UK, focusing on the transfer of public housing to co-operatives and other forms of tenant controlled housing.

The ICA Secretariat has offered to provide the secretariat for ICA Housing when the term of its present Secretary finishes.

**ICMIF (Insurance)**

Following the meeting of their two Presidents in Quebec City, Bruce Thordarson and Hans Dahlberg have been actively exploring opportunities for increased efficiency and cost reduction by working together in such areas as communication, development, management training and seminars. Another example of collaboration is on the large meetings. ICMIF has, like in Quebec, decided to hold its General Assembly in conjunction with the ICA General Assembly in Seoul in October 2001. Costs of, for example, technical equipment and interpreters are saved this way.

ICMIF has launched a new Series of Mutual funds, which have already attracted more than 35 million US\$ in investment. It has also started a co-operative management training programme for senior staff of member organisations; with the first one to be held this autumn.

**ICFO (Fisheries)**

The International Co-operative Fisheries Organisation (ICFO) organised two seminars on the theme, Business Development of Fishery Co-operatives in January, 2000, funded by the ICA/MAFF Government of Japan Project - Training Project for Leaders of Fisheries Co-operatives in the World

The first seminar was jointly organised with the Central Co-operative Society of Myanmar. The second of the seminars was jointly organised with the Tonga

Co-operative Federation TCF. The main discussion was about how interested fishermen, with governmental support, could form co-operatives.

The Secretary of ICFO participated in the WTO meetings in Seattle, where initial contacts were taken with World Wildlife Fund.

### **TICA (Tourism)**

The ICA Specialised Organisation for Tourism Co-operatives, TICA, has managed to revive its activity. It has now 8 paying members and a very active board. The main activities are focused on continued build-up and presence at large international tourism exhibitions, both in Berlin and Naples this year, prepared by the ICA secretariat, which provides full secretariat services to TICA.

### **Consumer Co-op International**

This merged (from INTERCOOP and ICCO) new organisation for consumer co-operatives has started its activities with several seminars (in Stockholm on Electronic Commerce and in Dublin on Food Quality). ICA HQ provides its secretariat.

It has also, together with ICA Development, started work on finding support for a project for Russian consumer co-ops

### **ICAO (Agriculture)**

The ICAO, ICA's organisation for agricultural co-ops, submitted a statement to the WTO secretariat in Seattle during the ministerial meeting last December. The ICAO study on the Development of Agricultural Co-operatives in Transitional Countries, assisted by an intern from CCA Canada, has progressed well and the final output was issued during March.

The ICAO has also started to work with International Agri-Food Network by participating in their delegation to the UN CSD-8 meeting in New York, to be held at the end of April as part of the UN's follow-up to the Rio Earth Summit. The next ICAO General Assembly, including a half-day workshop, will be held on 4 December 2000 at the occasion of the ICA/OCB events in Rio de Janeiro.

### **CICOPA (Workers and Producers)**

CICOPA, the organisation for Workers' and Producer-owned co-ops, has reached an agreement with CICOPA France-Development as well as Spanish worker co-operatives with access to development funds, that their development activities should be channeled through ICA's development structure (i.e. operationally through the ROs, and with HO in a co-ordinating role), including four countries in Asia

The overall CICOPA development work is currently under discussion inside their board. CICOPA has also decided to put more focus on its regional activities, always arranging regional meetings in conjunction with the ICA Regional Assemblies, with the objective of creating a new regional structure in CICOPA.

### **IHCO (Health)**

IHCO, The International Health Co-operative Organisation, has mainly worked with the World Health Organisation, which is preparing for the WHO Fifth Global Conference on Health Promotion in Mexico City. IHCO has submitted

reports on two "best practices" dealing with co-operative housing in South Africa and Honduras, showing how this way of empowering people can also lead to better health conditions for poor people.

IHCO's Asian and Americas regions have also had several activities since September.

### **ICBA (Banking)**

ICBA, the organisation of co-operative banks, is one of the oldest ICA SOs.

Since Quebec ICBA has worked on its new web-site, a service provided by the ICA HQ, and published the papers from its Plenary and Seminar in Quebec City.

Its Executive Committee will meet in Tel Aviv in April.

### **HRD (Human Resources Development)**

The Global Human Resource Development Committee, one of the four ICA committees of experts, agreed, at its last meeting in Quebec, to follow up the idea of establishing a virtual education/training centre. With funding from the ILO Coop Branch, a feasibility study will be carried out in the near future. The results of the study will be discussed at a workshop which will be held in Bratislava in October in conjunction with the European Regional Assembly.

### **Global Women's Committee**

The ICA Global Women's Committee has prepared messages for the International Women's Day 2000 and the Rural Women's Day. Its chairperson has participated in high level FAO consultations on Rural Women. The Committee is now preparing an ICA Global Gender Project and seeking partnership with the ILO.

A revision of the rules of the Committee is presently underway.

### **Research Committee**

The International Co-operative Research Conference in Quebec, with more than 70 co-operative researchers from universities and institutes world-wide, exchanged the results of their work and their views on co-operative trends. Selected papers from the Conference will be published in the forthcoming Review of International Co-operation, which is now being printed.

Last October, the ICA European Co-operative Research Sub-Committee held a conference on "Continuity, Transition and Renewal: New Trends in European Co-operation" in Weimar.

Two regional co-operative research conferences will be held in co-ordination with this year's ICA Regional Assemblies. The Asian Co-operative Research Sub-Committee is organising a meeting in Singapore in June, and ICA Americas' Co-operative Research Sub-Committee will organise a conference in Rio de Janeiro in December.

### **Communications Committee**

The ICACC held two events in Quebec. The first was an Executive Committee meeting, which was also attended by the ICA President, Roberto Rodrigues and Director-General, Bruce Thordarson, to discuss new directions for the ICA's Communications programme

The second was a seminar on Lobbying Techniques entitled "Lobbying Know-how: Influencing Decisions of the Decision-makers".

Following its mandate to assist the ICA in implementing its communications programme, the Committee produced three issues of a newsletter in English and French versions during the Congress in collaboration with the host organisation, with Iain Williamson, Vice President of the Committee acting as Editor.

The Committee will hold its next executive meeting in Bratislava in October 2000 to coincide with the European Regional Assembly.

[Mats Ahnlund](#)

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## ICA Web Site Nominated for Award

ICA's institutional site (<http://www.coop.org>) was recently nominated for an award by the International Francophone Organisation (OIF) for organisations which have endeavoured to make their web sites multilingual.

Nominated sites had to meet high standards regarding the number of languages used, the amount of information available in each language, and the frequency with which the different language pages were updated.

In the NGO category, ICA was one of six sites nominated out of 150 sites that were examined. The winner was the International Union of Food, Agricultural, Hotel, Restaurant, Catering, Tobacco and Allied Workers' Associations, whose site is located at <http://www.iuf.org>

Photos during the ceremony, [click here](#)

Mary Treacy

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## ICA Board to Review an ICA Gender Strategy

The ICA Board at its upcoming meeting in Tel Aviv, will consider adopting an ICA Gender Strategy. The draft Strategy outlines a series of concrete actions to increase ICA's institutional capacity to address gender issues as well as promote equality between men and women in all decision-making and activities within the co-operative movement. Specific recommendations also are included to build the capacity of ICA staff and membership on gender issues, to ensure balance of elected officials and staff, ensure accountability and monitoring as well as ensure adequate human and financial resource allocation

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The ICA Board's consideration of a gender strategy is timely given that in June of this year, the United Nations will review the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action which included references on how co-operatives could contribute to improving the status of women.

[MariaElena Chavez](#)

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## ICA Development Meetings in Israel

A number of development meetings will be held in conjunction with the forthcoming meeting of the ICA Board in Tel Aviv in April.

The Regional Directors' meeting brings together the people responsible for ICA's development programme at the regional as well as head office level. The RDs meeting, which is a semi-annual event, provides a forum for inter-regional exchange of ideas and experiences. It also gives us the chance to discuss matters of common interest, to discuss global strategies, and to plan joint activities. This meeting is usually chaired by the Director-General. New 4-year strategies, resource mobilisation, and inter-regional communication are important items on the agenda in Tel Aviv.

The Development Advisory Committee was established to provide advice on development matters to the ICA Board. Its membership include some of ICA's long-standing partner organisations (SCC, NORCOOP, CCA, JCCU, DGRV, ILO, FAO, IFAP), as well as selected individuals whose expertise ICA's development programme is privileged be able to draw upon (Prof. Münkner, Dr. Davis). The meetings of the Development Advisory Committee also give the members an opportunity to network and discuss joint activities and matters of mutual concern. Product development is a major item on the agenda of the meeting in Israel, and there will be presentations of ICMIF's successful simulation programme, ICA ROAM's own innovative material on Identity and Social Audit, and a discussion on the plans for a co-operative virtual training programme.

The newly established Development Committee within the ICA Board, ensures the political support and supervision of the development programme. The committee will also take the opportunity to organise a meeting in Tel Aviv.

[Jan-Eirik Imbsen](#)

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## Development Pamphlet to be Launched

The ICA last year contributed to the writing of a policy document, initiated by the British co-operative movement, on assistance to self-help organisations. The paper was presented to the Minister of Overseas Development. The Co-op Party in Britain will now launch a pamphlet based on the paper. The pamphlet, entitled "Helping Self Help", will be launched at an event in the House of Commons in April 2000. It is hoped that the paper will serve to establish self-help organisations, like co-operatives, on the agenda of development organisations like DFID (the Department for International Development). The new ICA development brochure will be distributed during the launching ceremony.

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## International Day of Co-operatives

This year's United Nations International Day of Cooperatives will be celebrated under the theme of "Cooperatives and Employment Promotion". It will link to the five year review of the World Summit for Social Development which focused on promoting productive employment, social integration and reducing poverty.

As in past year's COPAC - the Committee for the Promotion and Advancement of Cooperatives - will provide materials for the press pack which is prepared and printed by the ICA and sent to over 2000 organizations and individuals. This year the press pack including messages from the ICA and the United Nations Secretary-General, should be available well in advance on the day to enable members to use the materials in the celebration of both the UN International Day of Cooperatives and ICA' own International Co-operative Day.

Members are encouraged to inform the ICA Secretariat of the events or materials being prepared for the celebration of the Day.

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## Survey of Rural Savings and Credit Co-operatives in Tanzania Completed

A survey to establish the current status of Rural Savings and Credit Co-operatives in Tanzania has just been concluded.

The survey carried out between February 28 and March 17, 2000 was a major achievement in terms of partnership development and strategic joint action for the ICA Regional Office for East, Central and Southern Africa. The Regional Office played the role of Lead Agency for the Mission while the U.K. Department for International Development (DFID) co-ordinated Donor Agency participation. The other agencies besides ICA and DFID were the Swedish Co-operative Centre (SCC), Danish International Development Agency (DANIDA), Royal Netherlands Embassy (RNE), Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA), Ministry of Agriculture and Co-operatives (MAC), the Bank of Tanzania (BOT) and the Savings and Credit Co-operative Union League of Tanzania (SCCULT). A team of ten national and international consultants carried out the survey.

The general objectives of the survey were:

- To provide a status report on the existing co-operative rural finance services;
- To analyse the regulatory environment for co-operative rural finance which could hinder innovative interventions;
- To identify key elements which enhance the capacity of SACCOs to serve the productive poor, especially women;
- To identify ongoing innovative practices;
- To provide possible forms of collaboration between SACCOs and other actors in the microfinance industry.

Writing of the report of the survey has started and a final printed version is expected to be out during the month of May 2000.

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## Mozambique's Agricultural Coops Appeal for International Assistance

AGRARIUS - the Agricultural Producers Association of Mozambique have launched an appeal for help to the worldwide movement. Mozambique is going through the most critical period of its history due to the flooding of the rivers Pioaia, Elineo and Felicis which have caused a major disaster in the South and Center provinces of the country, mainly, Maputo, Gaza, Inhembane, Sofala and Manica with incalculable losses both material and human especially in Gaza province where the major cities are under water. The population of these provinces have lost everything: homes, crops, livestock, and are left in a very precarious position.

Agrarius appeals to fellow cooperators to help them during this time of need. The appeal was initially made through OCPLP (The Organization of Cooperatives from Lusophone (Portuguese Speaking) Countries). However, Manuel Canaveira de Campos, Secretary General of INSCOOP, Geral Instituto Antonio Sergio do Setor Cooperativo, has forwarded this appeal to ICA feeling sure that cooperatives worldwide will want to assist their brothers in Mozambique.

Help should be channeled through the Every Mozambique Red Cross but details of your intention to donate should be sent to Agrarius, Avenida Agostinho Neto, 264, Postal Box n. 2986, Maputo, Mozambique, - Tel: 00 258 49 09 43. Agrarius will then give details of how the assistance should be channeled. ICA would like to be copied on any correspondence in order to record and publicize cooperative assistance in the region.

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## First Asia Pacific Co-operative Forum

We remind our members and partners once again that "The First ICA Asia-Pacific Co-operative Forum" will be held at the Mandarin Hotel in Singapore from 27-29 June, 2000. The theme of the Forum is: "Co-operatives in the 21st Century: Are we changing?"

There will be panel discussions on

- Co-operative Governance,
- Capital Mobilization,
- Globalization,
- Co-op Trade,
- Co-operative Legislation, and
- Innovation.

Three prominent experts will speak on each of the sub-themes. These speakers will include well-known authors, CEOs, Co-op and Industry leaders, distinguished personalities from Asia, Europe and North America.

The forum will also provide opportunities for Networking. Separate rooms have been arranged for networking meetings on Business and trade, Educators and Trainers, CEOs and sectoral interests.

(Note: Registration Fees for the Regional Assembly will be US\$150/-, for the Co-operative Forum US\$350 and for the Regional Women's Forum it will be US\$150/-. Any one who participates in all the above three events will be able to avail of a special rate of US\$500/-; Co-operative Forum and any one of either Regional Assembly or Regional Women's Forum will get a special rate of US\$425/-. However, these special rates are applicable only if they register before May 15, 2000. For more information on these meetings and for registration, please contact: ICA Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific; Tel. (91-11) 683-5123; Fax: (91-11) 683-5568; E-mail: [icaroap@vsnl.com](mailto:icaroap@vsnl.com)).

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## ICA Regional Women's Forum

Building on the grand success of the first Regional Women's Forum in Seoul, Korea, held in October 1998, the second one will take place at the Mandarin Hotel, Singapore on 26th June, 2000. It is expected that participation will be much higher than the first one, and ICA ROAP expect that both women and men will actively participate in this Forum. The theme of this Forum will be *"Transcending Glass Ceilings and Glass Ladders in the New Millennium - Challenges to Co-operatives"*.

The delegates from member countries will bring and present their experiences in respective countries and the conclusions and recommendations of national level women's forums held in respective countries. The delegates will discuss on these and come out for strategies for improving women's active participation in decision-making positions in co-operatives. Distinguished speakers on this subject are expected to give their presentations at the Forum.

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## Legislation for New Generation Co-ops

The recent success of "new generation co-operatives" in the United States, which are characterised by closed membership and high equity investment, has aroused interest in other countries. However, the absence of enabling legislation has often hindered their development.

Now the Canadian province of Saskatchewan has adopted new legislation for new generation co-operatives, containing three major differences from traditional co-operatives:

- a tied contract setting out delivery rights and obligations
- a membership limited to those persons who purchase delivery rights
- higher levels of equity investment by individual members

According to the Canadian Co-operative Association, a number of groups have recently launched equity drives in order to establish new generation co-operatives.

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**NCBA Seeks Help to Find "False" Co-operatives**

"False co-operatives" -- businesses presenting themselves as co-operatives when they are not co-operatives has become such a serious problem to the co-operative community that the National Co-operative Business Association (NCBA) has launched a new initiative to identify and stop such businesses.

"They are clearly misleading consumers and trying to misuse the co-operative business structure for their personal benefit. Unless they are stopped, the integrity and good name of co-operatives could be damaged," declares NCBA President Paul Hazen. The problem, he explained, has become more prevalent with the advent of e-business and group purchasing. The businesses may be trading on the good will that the public has for co-operative businesses or may be ignorant of co-operative operating principles. "Regardless of the reasons for these false claims, NCBA's mission is to support and protect co-operative enterprise," he said.

NCBA is calling on members and other interested co-operators to identify suspect businesses calling themselves co-operatives.

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## A Co-operative Without Shares?

As a result of last year's decision to amalgamate the 15 regional societies of Co-op Switzerland into one national organisation, to be effective at the beginning of 2001, the individual members of the regional societies have been informed that the co-operative will no longer have member shares. Therefore, each member of Co-op Geneva is being offered 15 Swiss francs as reimbursement for his share.

"We wish to point out", according to the communiqué from Co-op Geneva, "that you remain a full member of our society in spite of the reimbursement of this share."

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## New Internet Bank Will Make You Smile

<http://www.smile.co.uk> an initiative of The Co-operative Bank, is the first full service Internet bank to be set up in the United Kingdom. The press release released by the coop bank states that this radical new bank is guaranteed to put a smile on the face of customers and wipe it off the face of the competition. Smile went live in October 1999 offering the best terms for current accounts in the UK market, paying 4.00 per cent gross on credit balances, an automatic, no fee £500 overdraft with an authorized overdraft rate of just 9.9 per cent. The bank offers a whole range of new services including a special account for students, with a totally free overdraft of up to £2,000.

Announcing the arrival of smile, Mervyn Pedelty, Chief Executive of The Co-operative Bank, said: "This is a brand new bank which offers all the products, services and convenience of a Street bank but based on the Internet. This means we will pass on to customers the benefits of our lower costs."

Mary Treacy

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**COPAC Event on Cooperatives and Employment Promotion (28 June 2000, Geneva)**

The Committee for the Promotion and Advancement of Cooperatives COPAC, will organize an Open Forum to highlight the contribution of cooperative to creating, retaining and expanding job opportunities in both industrialized as well as developing countries. The Open Forum entitled, "Decent Work: Cooperatives can make a difference" will be held on 28 June 2000 in Geneva.

Organized in close collaboration with the Coop Branch of the International Labour Office, the Forum will be one of the side events hosted by the ILO during the United Nations Special General Assembly (Geneva 2000) which will review progress in the implementation of the World Summit for Social Development (Copenhagen, 1995) especially with regard to advance in promoting productive employment, social integration and reducing poverty. It will also be an advance event to celebrate the International Day of Cooperatives (1 July 2000).

The Forum will include presentation on the experience of the US cooperative movement, the Mondragon movement, the Scandinavian new cooperatives, and the role of agricultural as well as financial cooperatives in creating quality jobs.

The Forum will also underline the fact that if cooperatives are to significantly contribute to employment promotion, governments must provide the appropriate policy environment for cooperatives to exist. In this way COPAC hopes to promote support for the adoption of UN guidelines on cooperative development and the revision of ILO Recommendation 127 on cooperatives.

Participation will likely include representatives of government, non-governmental organizations and the academic community. The meeting will have English, French and Spanish simultaneous interpretation to encourage participation.

The COPAC Open Forum is open to all interested. There is no registration fee, however participants are encouraged to inform the COPAC Secretariat of their intention to attend. Please contact COPAC for more information - [copac@coop.org](mailto:copac@coop.org).

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