



1999 ICA Congress & General Assembly

More than one thousand co-operative leaders from around the world are expected to attend the ICA's Millennium congress, scheduled to take place in Quebec City at the end of August, beginning of September. This will be the first ICA Congress since the organisation celebrated its centennial in Manchester in 1995. According to the new structure and rules, rather than being held every four years, Congresses will now only be held to mark special occasions. This Congress which will mark the end of the 20th century and the beginning of a new Millennium, is also the first ICA Congress to be held in the Americas region.

The Congress is being hosted by the Canadian Co-operative Association and the Conseil Canadien de la Co-opération, with support from the Mouvement Desjardins. Participants will have the opportunity to learn more about the movement in Canada through a series of articles in the Review 2/99, which will also include documentation for the meeting.

The global theme for the meeting is "Adding Value to Membership: A Co-operative Challenge for the New Millennium". The Congress Opening Ceremony will take place on the morning of Monday, 30 August. In the afternoon a series of short case studies will be presented on how co-operatives can improve their performance in various issue areas.

The following day participants can attend three Business Forums on the following subjects: New Financial Services in a Global Environment, New Challenges for Producers and



Québec city, Canada

Consumers in the Food Sector, and New Co-operative Services in the face of Deregulation and Privatisation. Each of these forums will feature presentations by ICA Specialised Organisations as well as ICA Member Organisations.

The third day (1 September) the Congress will continue in plenary session and participants will receive reports on highlights of the previous day's business forums. A special presentation from representatives of the Co-operative Youth Forum will also be featured.

The ICA General Assembly will meet on 1 September 1999, in order to conduct the ICA's statutory business. The ICA President, Roberto Rodrigues, will report to the membership on the lessons and highlights of the first two years of his presidency. The ICA's activity report, the conclusions of the ICA's organisational review, and proposals for improving the functioning of existing structures, will be presented on behalf of the Board. Elections to fill vacancies on the Board, the Finan-

cial Report, Motions, Resolutions, and a proposal regarding the venue of the next meeting will also be included in the agenda.

ICA Specialised Bodies will hold sectorial meetings on 28 - 29 August, including meetings on agriculture, banking, consumer, fishery, health, housing, and tourism. There will also be a women's conference, research conference, joint research and human resource meeting and a seminar on lobbying which will be organised by the Communications Committee.

The deadline for the receipt of registrations for the meeting is 31st May. For further information please visit the ICA Web Site (setting your browser to the following address: <http://coop.org/ica/icaevents/congga99.html> will bring you directly to the appropriate page) or contact Vivianne Dubini, Finance and Administration Officer, ICA, 15, route des Morillons, 1218 Le Grand Saconnex, Tel: (+41 22 929 88 30) Fax: (+41 22 798 41 22) or e-mail to admin@coop.org.



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E mail: ica@coop.org - Website: <http://www.coop.org>

Co-operatives Research Conference

The International Co-operatives Research Conference will be held on 29 August, 1999, Quebec City, on the theme, "Values and Enterprise for Co-operative Advantage".

The conference will consist of plenary and parallel workshops which will be loosely linked.

The main languages will be English and French. As usual ten papers will be published from the conference in a special Research Issue of the Review of International Co-operation.

Papers on all ICA sectorial activities and special issues can be sent by 31 June, 1999, in English to: Roger Spear, Tel 0044 1908 653054, Fax 0044 1908 652175 Email R.G.SPEAR@OPEN.AC.UK and in French to: Marie Bouchard, Email: bouchard.marie@uqam.ca Tel: 1-514-987-3000, ext. 4474, Fax: 1-514-987-3343.

Further information on Calls for Papers can be found at URL: <http://ica.coop.org/ica/icaevents/icaccrconf99.html>

HRD/Research Cttees Joint Workshop

A Joint Workshop of the ICA Global HRD and Research Committees will be held on 29 August 1999, Quebec city, on Building Co-operative Advantage through HRD and Research - the view from the other side.

The objective is to allow ICA Specialised Organisations to exchange ideas and best practice on how to make co-operative HRD and research relevant and productive in the processes of building co-operative advantage.

Participants will be the regional, global members and observers of both Committees as well as Members of other Specialised Organisations.

The Workshop will take place in English with simultaneous translation into Spanish and French. There is no participation fee and open to all interested parties.

Further information can be obtained from Jan-Eirik Imbsen development@coop.org

ICACC Lobbying Seminar

The ICA Communications Committee will hold a Lobbying Seminar on 29 August 1999. The theme will be "Lobbying Know-How: Influencing Decisions of the Decision-makers".

The Seminar will discuss topics such as Credit Unions, International Lobbying, Lobbying Know-How and Virtual Lobbyist.

For further information please consult URL: <http://ica.coop.org/ica/icaevents/lobbying.html> or contact Mary Treacy email: treacy@coop.org

HRD Executive

The Executive of the ICA Global HRD Committee will be held on Sunday 29 August.

The meeting will be a combined Executive Committee and General Meeting to allow for the election of a new Executive Committee as called for in the Constitution.

The agenda also includes a discussion on the HRD through electronic communication.

For further information please contact Jan-Eirik Imbsen email: development@coop.org

Overseas Development Assistance Seminar

The International Fisheries' Co-operative Organisation of ICA held its latest Overseas Development Assistance Seminar 11-15 January 1999 in Sao Paulo, Brazil. The Organisation of Brazilian Co-operatives (OCB) hosted the meeting. The title was: "Improvement of Management of Fisheries Co-operatives in Brazil". Bruce Thordarson, ICA Director General, was one of the speakers. According to participants, the seminar succeeded in stimulating greater interest by the Brazilian government in supporting fisheries co-operatives.



Roberto Rodrigues addressing the Seminar. On the left, Minister of Agriculture Sao Paulo State and on the right, Shoji Uemura, President of ICA Fisheries Committee

Europe - The European Council Meeting

The European Council members elected last October, met for the first time on 23-24 February 1999 in Bilbao, Spain. Javier Salaberria, one of the European Council members and President of the Confederacion de Co-operatives Euskadi hosted the meeting. The agenda included three major issues: a Membership Strategy, a Development strategy for Central and Eastern Europe and the ICA Organisational Review.

As a result of a membership survey an analysis was made on the expectations of European organisations. On this basis the European Council reviewed the priorities, setting some new ones as follows:

- Promotion of co-operative identity and image;
- Support to co-operatives in Central and Eastern Europe;

- Provision of a Centre of Co-operative Data and Information;
- Development of a Co-operative Resource Centre and Expertise.

could undertake to respond to these needs.

The proposals for concrete actions will further be discussed with a Task Force set up after the first European Development Workshop, 13 October, 1999 so that a strategy paper can be put forward to the next European Council meeting 28-29 October, 1999 in Berlin.

Considerable time was spent on the proposed Organisational Review of ICA. As an outcome of the long discussion with all members participating,

a European position paper was drafted and accepted by the Council members.

A visit to the extremely successful Mondragon co-operative completed the 2-day meeting. Members were also received by the President of the Basque Government.



Lars Hillbom, Juan José Ibarretxe, President of the Basque Government, Javier Slaberria, President of the Confederacion de Cooperativas Euskadi

The Work Plan of ICA Europe for 1999 had to be modified to reflect the new priorities.

As regards development, a background paper introduced the ICA Development Policy, outlined the major areas where Central and Eastern European members need assistance and suggested activities ICA

Africa - Agricultural Coops Seek Strategic Alliances

The ICA Regional Office for West Africa, in collaboration with the Technical Centre for Agricultural and Rural Co-operation and the Association of African Institutions for Development Funding, organised a seminar in the Ivory Coast during the last week of January 1999 on the theme of "The Promotion of Exchanges between and by Agricultural Co-operative Organisations in West Africa."

The seminar was based on a study conducted by the Regional Office on the potential for commercial exchanges between agricultural co-operatives both within and outside West Africa. The seminar's hand-picked participants focused on the proposed establishment of an Intercoop Commodity Exchange design-

ed to establish a regional network for trading information, technical and financial assistance, and distribution of agricultural commodities.

Further information is available from the ICA Regional Office for West Africa in Burkina Faso.



Participants at the Seminar on the "Promotion of Intercoop Exchanges"

Canada

Two Pools Merge

Two of the largest agricultural co-operatives in Canada, Alberta Pool and Manitoba Pool elevators, have amalgamated and have created a new co-operative called Agricore. With 70,000 farmer members in the four western provinces, Agricore becomes the largest marketer of crop protection and plant nutrition in Canada, and one of the largest grain handlers.

The largest of the three prairie pools, Saskatchewan Wheat Pool, has remained outside the merger. Agricore's chief executive, Gordon Cummings, says that the result will be a head to head battle for market share between the two large agribusiness co-operatives.

(Source: CCA Intersector, winter 1999)

Denmark

Agri Co-ops' 100th Anniversary

The Federation of Danish Co-operatives celebrated its 100th anniversary on 18 February at the Copenhagen Town Hall. The day-long event was attended by some 550 guests, including the Danish Queen, Prime Minister, and several other official representatives.

ICA was represented by its President, Roberto Rodrigues, and Director-General, Bruce Thordarson.

Agricultural co-operatives continue to play a major role in the Danish economy. Their current market share for various products is: butter (98 percent), fur (97 percent), pork (96 percent), milk (95 percent), cheese (86 percent), and eggs (50 percent). Two-thirds of their products are exported.

(Source: FDC Press Pack)

Finland

100 Years of Co-op Activity

The 100th Anniversary of co-operative activity will be celebrated in Finland this year. The anniversary ceremonies of both co-operative activity and Pellervo - Confederation of Finnish Co-operatives, will take place at Finlandia Hall on October 2, 1999. Finland's first Co-operative Act dates back to 1901.

Also a high-level international economic seminar will be arranged in Helsinki on June 11, 1999. Pellervo and Pellervo Economic Research Institute will jointly be responsible for the practical arrangements.

France

Director Training on Increase

Crédit Mutuel reports that 40 percent of the 27,656 board members in its group received training in 1997, compared with 26 percent the previous year. Its annual director training budget consequently rose to 14 million French francs (over 2 million USD) from 12.3 million.

In addition to the normal training topics, the introduction of the Euro has received particular attention in the training sessions as part of Crédit Mutuel's extensive education programme concerning the impact of the new European currency.

(Source: La Lettre du GNC - January 1999)

Italy

One Billion Lire for the Refugee Emergency

According to a letter from Giuseppe Fabretti, President of the Associazione Nazionale Co-operative di Consumatori in Roma, Italy, the Italian Co-op has decided early this April to join the Government's humanitarian initiative named "Mission Rainbow" to help Kosovo's refugees, in sending necessity goods to Puglia worth one billion lire (520.000 Euro).

He also mentioned, that, other initiatives will be added depending on further urgency needs .

Switzerland

Migros to Remain Co-operative

Following efforts by some members to transform Migros, Switzerland's largest consumer retailer, from a co-operative into a joint stock company, Migros President Jules Kyburz has voiced his strong opposition. The competitive nature of a business depends on more than just maximising of profits, he says. "An enterprise is competitive if it has a solid substance, if its activities are based on an idea, and if it optimises its gains over the long term through a satisfactory growth and on the basis of profit criteria."

Other arguments against the change in status according to Mr. Kyburz, include:

- a co-operative cannot be taken over as easily as a stock company;
- the value base of Migros leads to customer loyalty;
- if Migros were a stock company, its extensive social and cultural engagement could not be maintained;
- efficient management depends on people, not on structures;
- the influence of individual shareholders is larger in a co-operative.

(Source: *Construire*, 12 January 1999)

United Kingdom

World Habitat Awards Call for Entries 1999

Entries are currently being sought for the 1999 World Habitat Award and Projects are needed from both developed and developing countries, which offer sustainable futures to residents and provide solutions to current housing problems.

The two Award winners will receive £10,000 plus an individually designed and crafted silver trophy. The Awards are presented each year on World Habitat Day.

Preliminary submissions should reach the address below before 1st July 1999. Further details are available from Mrs Diane Diacon, Deputy Director, Building and Social Housing Foundation Memorial Square, Leicestershire, Tel: (44-0) 1530 510444, Fax: (44-0) 1530 510332, e-mail BSHF@compuserve.com and URL: <http://www.bshf.org>.

(Source: *corresp. from Building and Social Housing Foundation, 1998*)

USA

Increased Funding for Co-operative Development

The new federal budget proposed by the Clinton administration contains significant increases in funding for co-operative programmes of the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA). Included in the budget is a three-fold increase, to \$5million, in the Rural Co-operative Development Grants programme. This will support a legislative initiative to enable USDA to provide assistance to non-agricultural co-operatives as well as to the agricultural sector in the future.

(Source: *NCBA Cooperative Business Journal*, Jan /Feb. 1999)

48% more employee support to UCA in 1998

The United Co-op Appeal (UCA), a US based campaign to support co-operative economic development in the USA and overseas, has reported an increase in employee participation in 1998.

Forty-eight percent more employees contributed to the campaign in 1998 compared to 1997. This contribution raised nearly \$95,000.

UCA, which began in 1992, helps to find a long-term solutions to many's of today's economic problems such as affordable childcare, rural housing options for senior citizens, jobs for welfare-recipients and increased opportunities for minority famers.

Employees can support this campaign on an entirely voluntary basis.

For further information please contact : Diann Vaughan at the Cooperative Development Foundation, tel: (1-202) 383-5457 or via email: dvaughan@ncba.org

Future Co-op Leaders & Co-op Conference

The National Co-operative Business Association (NCBA) held its 1999 Future Co-op Leaders programme last April 20-24, in Washington.

It focused mainly on developing co-operative leadership skills and participants' knowledge of co-op enterprise's benefits. The purpose was to increase the involvement of co-operative leaders within the co-operative movement.

The programme was held in conjunction with the NCBA Co-operative Conference which included NCBA's annual meeting, the Festival of America's Co-operative on Capitol Hill, inductions into the Co-operative Hall of Fame and various workshops. The theme of the conference was "Moving Co-operation into the 21st Century" and had the objective to highlight "the New NCBA". Paul Hazen, President & CEO reported on the 1998 activities and focused on the future of the membership association.

Further information can be found at URL: <http://www.co-operative.org/conf> or contact Leta Mach via email: lmach@ncba.org

(Source: *Business Journal*, vol.13, no 2., March 1999)

Revision of ILO Recommendation No. 127

On 24 March 1999, the ILO Governing Body with the joint approval of the Workers' and Employers' groups and support from the majority of Government members, agreed to place Recommendation No. 127 concerning the Role of Cooperatives in the Economic and Social Development of Developing Countries on the agenda of the International Labour Conference in the years 2001, for revision and updating.

ILO recommendation 127 is the only ILO standard addressing cooperative issues in a comprehensive manner. The political, economic and social conditions which pre-

vailed at the time it was adopted in 1966 have changed fundamentally. The full text of the Recommendation can be found on the COPAC website at the following address: <http://www.copacgva.org/mempubs> or <http://www.copacgva.org/mempubs.ht>

The lengthy procedure will shortly commence whereby the ILO Cooperative Branch will have to ascertain best legal practices, prepare and send out questionnaires and compile three legal reports for consideration by ILO member States. At present there is no proposed text for the revision as this will depend upon the ILO member States.



Juan Somavia, newly-elected Director-General of ILO, met with Roberto Rodrigues and other ICA leaders in Geneva on 11 March to discuss future collaboration

ILO Deliberations support Co-operatives

During the November meeting of the ILO's Governing Body, which discussed future priorities for the organisation, the topic of Promotion of Co-operatives received considerable support.

Both the Worker's Group and the Employer's Group spoke in favour, as did government representatives from Brazil, Egypt,

Sweden, Germany, South Africa, Korea, Congo, France, U.K., and Swaziland.

The result of the meeting was that, of 34 issues considered by the Governing Body, Promotion of Co-operatives was listed as the third priority for consideration in the ILO's future work programme.

Celebrate the IYPO, 1999

The United Nations Secretary-General, Kofi Annan, launched the International Year of the Older Persons IYOP on 1 October 1998 on the occasion of the International Day of Older Persons. The observance of the Year will run from 1 October 1998 to 31 December 1999 during which a number of activities are being organised on the theme "Towards a society for all ages". Events should create support so that opportunities are provided for willing and capable older persons to participate in and contribute to the ongoing activities of society. IYOP will also highlight the UN Principles for Older Persons which address the issues of independence, participation, care, self-fulfilment and dignity of older persons.

The World Health Organisation is presently seeking partners to celebrate ageing by organizing walking events worldwide. One ICA member has already responded to the invitation for partnership. The Japanese Consumer Co-operative Union sponsored and organized a national walk event during 1998 to begin focusing public attention on the needs and potential for contribution of older persons in Japan.

Organisations willing to organize similar walk events at the national or local level should contact, WHO Ageing and Health Programme, fax +41 22 791 4839, e-mail kalachea@who.ch or consult the IYPO Website at: <http://www.un.org/esa/socdev/iyop/index.html>.

ICA President recognises International Women's day

Roberto Rodrigues, President of the International Co-operative Alliance, says that the world-wide co-operative movement strongly supports the increased participation of women at all levels of decision-making within co-operatives.

Speaking on the occasion of the United Nation's International Day of Women, Mr. Rodrigues said that co-operatives, as people's organisations, have a special responsibility to involve women in their structures. While much has been accomplished, he says, much more remains to be done.

"Achieving the goal of equal participation of women and men in decision-making would provide the balance that is needed in order to strengthen democracy and promote its proper functioning," says the ICA President.

ICA President Speaks out for Equality

At the Opening Ceremony of the ICA Regional Assembly for the Americas in Uruguay on December 2, 1998, the ICA President, Roberto Rodrigues spoke out in favour of equality, stressing the need both to promote women into leadership roles and to attract young people in order to ensure the future of the movement. He suggested that the movement adopts guidelines which would advocate the policy of recruiting at least one woman and one young person to each co-operative board and also ensure that a percentage of managerial positions are offered to them.

However, the President had other important issues to address on this occasion - capitalisation, democracy and development are key issues for co-operatives everywhere, regardless of economic sector or geographical location, he stressed but, the way of addressing these issues depended on the situation of the co-operators involved.

In 1995 the ICA's General Assembly adopted a resolution on "Gender Equality in Co-operatives." Since that time the ICA has been asking its members to provide gender disaggregated data for membership and employees. It has initiated special education and training programmes for women through its Regional Offices, and has developed regional gender policies for the Americas and for Europe. The ICA has also adopted policies to ensure that at least one woman from every region is represented on the global ICA Board.

"In the final analysis," says Mr. Rodrigues, "co-operatives should be leading their societies in the involvement of women, just as the Rochdale Pioneers were strong advocates of women's rights in last century at the time of the founding of the co-operative movement."

On the one hand we have the demands of the market, he explained, but on the other we have the needs and aspirations of the people. The second wave of co-operation must look to the roots and origins of the co-operative ideal in order to balance these two forces.

The President warned that the biggest threat which co-operatives are facing today was the globalisation of the economy, which left a trail of unemployment and posed a threat to democracy. Strong co-operatives can provide job opportunities, he said. He also stressed that Coops should play a role in promoting democracy and world peace.

The ICA President's position was later supported by the President for the Americas region, Miguel Cardozo, who said it was the responsibility of co-operative leaders to devise a strategy that will give economic progress a human face.

Women Leaders, Philippines

With the support of the Asian Co-operative Development Fund of JCCU, women co-op leaders from Asia are able to exchange their experiences with co-op members in Japan. Three meetings were held in Miyagi, Kanagawa and Tokyo in mid-March for further mutual understanding.

Ms. Caring, Chairperson of the Perpetual Credit Co-operative (membership 19,000) and Ms Ludy, Managing Director of City Integrated Multi-Purpose Cooperative on the southern Island of Mindanao (membership 2,660), were invited to the meetings. From Japan, women leaders from Miyagi Co-op, Kanagawa Co-op and Tokyo Co-op attended the meetings which gave them a deeper understanding about life in the Philippines, credit co-ops and the lives of women in the Philippines.

Following the meetings, Ms Ludy and Ms Caring had the opportunity to observe Japanese co-op operations. They said that the wonderful aspect of Japan's co-ops is their ability to respond to the needs of their members and reflect the membership in their operations.



From the right, Ms Lucy, Ms Caring, and Ms Yamauchi, Acting Manager of International Department, JCCU

Bob Burlton, Chief Executive of Oxford, Swindon & Gloucester Co-operative Society, has been awarded the Co-operative Movement's highest national honour by being elected President of the Co-operative Congress. He will preside over the 1999 Co-operative Congress, the Co-op's annual "parliament", which will be held in Brighton on May 30 and 31 this year.

Chung Dae-Kun has been elected as Chairman and President of the National Agricultural Co-operative Federation, Korea. A long-time member of the NACF Board, and most recently its Standing Auditor, Mr. Chung succeeds **Won Churll-Hee**, who resigned from the presidency in early March.

Vanda Giuliano from Legacoop, Italy, was elected as the new

Chairwoman during the Plenary Meeting of the ICA Global Women's Committee held in Paris on 14 October, 1998. She succeeded **Britten Lagerqvist-Tranströmer**.

The ANCC National Council unanimously elected **Giorgio Riccioni** as the New President of the Associazione Nazionale Cooperative di Consumatori in Italy. **Gian Luca Cerrina Feroni**, President since 1996, left his position last February.

Jan Wiesner President of the Union of Czech and Moravian Producer Co-operatives was elected as President of the Board of the Co-operative Association of the Czech Republic and is the successor of **Petr Brozek** who continues as Vice President.

OBITUARIES

Dr. S.K. Saxena, Director of the ICA between 1968 and 1981, died on 10 January while visiting his family in London. He was 72. Prior to serving as ICA Director, he was the first director of the ICA training centre and regional office in New Delhi from 1960 to 1968. Following his retirement in 1981, he moved to Canada, where he worked as a consultant, university lecturer, and writer on co-operatives.

K.K. Taimni passed away on 6 January, 1999. He was the Regional Co-ordinator of ILO Coopnet/Coop Reform programmes for Asia and the Pacific.

ICA CALENDAR

- 8-10 June 1999
ICAO International Seminar
Copenhagen, Denmark
- 2-8 August 1999
ICA Africa Ministerial Conf.
Swaziland, Africa
- 26 August 1999
ICA Global Women's Executive
Quebec, Canada
- 27 August 1999
ICA Board
Quebec, Canada
- 28 August 1999
ICBA Central Executive
Quebec, Canada
- 28 August 1999
ICA Global Women's Plenary
Quebec, Canada
- 28-29 August 1999
International Co-operatives Research Conference
Quebec, Canada
- 28-29 August 1999
ICHO Seminar
Quebec, Canada
- 29 August 1999
ICA Global Women's Conference
Quebec, Canada
- 29 August 1999
ICACC Lobbying Seminar
Quebec, Canada
- 29 August 1999
TICA General Assembly
Quebec, Canada
- 29 August 1999
ICBA Central Plenary session
Quebec, Canada
- 29 Aug.-1 Sept. 1999
Youth Seminar
Quebec, Canada
- 30 Aug.-1 Sept. 1999
ICA Congress & General Assembly
Quebec, Canada
- 3 September 1999
CICOPA General Assembly
Quebec, Canada
- 3-6 September 1999
ICMIF Insurance Conference
Quebec, Canada
- 10-14 October 1999
ICA Asia/Pacific Ministerial Conference
Beijing, China