



INTERNATIONAL
CO-OPERATIVE
ALLIANCE

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ICA Press Release

ICA President Calls on FAO to Reverse Decision to Cut Co-operative Programme

Geneva, Switzerland, 3 December 2003, for immediate release - The ICA President, Ivano Barberini today made one last call on the Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations (FAO) to reconsider proposed budget cuts to its co-operative programs in 2004 -2005.

In a strongly worded statement to the 32nd FAO Conference in Rome Mr. Barberini said “such cuts will have the effect of virtually closing down the FAO’s Co-operatives and Rural Organisation unit by the end of 2004”.

He added, “It is very difficult to understand why the FAO, an organisation that continually expresses its commitment to eliminating rural poverty and hunger in numerous fora, is now proposing to virtually eliminate its support to strengthening farmers’ organisations and co-operatives. This is especially the case when it is these very organisations that small farmers and the poor use to more effectively access services and markets to improve their livelihoods”.

Mr. Barberini told the conference, “It is regrettable that at the very moment when FAO is moving away from support to people-centered development approaches such as rural co-operatives and producer associations, the number of government requests for FAO technical assistance in this field is growing stronger”. He strongly urged delegates to rethink this proposal to ensure that FAO continue to play a strong role combating poverty and promoting food security.

The ICA is not alone in calling on the FAO to reconsider its decision. A number of other organisations, representing farmer interests, including the International Federation of Agricultural Producers (IFAP), the International Fertiliser Industry Association (IFA), the Asian Network for Development of Agricultural Co-operatives (NEDAC) as well as co-operative organisations from India, Kenya, Nepal, Tanzania, and the United States, have all sent letters to the FAO Director-General asking that this proposal be seriously reconsidered.

Mr. Barberini concluded by acknowledging the pressure the FAO faced in delivering “zero-real and zero nominal growth” budgets; but nevertheless urged Member States to find alternate proposals to distribute FAO’s limited resources that will enable it to retain a specific technical focus on farmers’ organizations and co-operatives. Mr. Barberini also restated the ICA commitment to work with the FAO together to address poverty eradication and hunger and find effective solutions to these current budgetary problems.

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ICA PRESS RELEASE

ICA calls on the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations to save co-operative programme

Geneva, Switzerland, 25 June 2003, for immediate release – The International Co-operative Alliance (ICA) addressed the FAO Council on 24 June 2003 to express its concern on the proposed cuts to the 2004-2005 FAO budget that will negatively impact support for the development of farmers' organisations and co-operatives.

ICA Board Member, Stefania Marcone, addressed governmental delegates in Rome (Italy) underlining the need to upgrade rather than reduce FAO's ability to provide technical assistance to support co-operative growth. The budget reductions proposed could lead to the end of any central focal point for co-operatives with FAO by the end of 2004 and compromise on-going activities that support FAO member states and co-operatives in those countries.

ICA reminded delegates of the FAO Council that co-operatives had been recognised in a variety of fora as being effective means for people to find ways to solve their economic and social problems. Citing the World Food Summit Plan of Action, the United Nations Guidelines, the International Labour Organization's Recommendation 193, as well as the European Co-operative Statute, ICA underlined that just at a time when policy makers were finding ways to facilitate co-operative growth, FAO was effectively reducing its capacity in the area of co-operative capacity-building, assistance in restructuring and enhancing co-operative entrepreneurial skills to increase incomes which ultimately would also impact the ability of co-operatives to engage in policy dialogue on issues of food production and food security.

ICA reminded FAO that co-operatives could make significant contributions to realising the UN Millennium Development Goals and provided vital statistics showing just how much co-operatives today were already doing.

Co-operatives are a means for people around the world to fight poverty and hunger, create and maintain decent employment especially in rural areas, and enable civil society to engage in ways that enable people to help themselves. ICA is convinced that the FAO must retain if not increase the resources made available to co-operative development in order to fulfill its own aims of fighting poverty and hunger around the world.

ICA calls on its members, development agencies and government authorities to contact the Director-General of the Food and Agriculture Organization expressing their concern over the proposed budget cuts and their impact on co-operative development.¹

See ICA Statement to the FAO Council at www.ica.coop

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¹ The Director-General, Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, Viale delle Terme di Caracalla, 00100 Rome, Italy.



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ICA Press Release

ICA Welcomes Middle East Peace Proposal

Geneva, Switzerland, 3 December 2003, for immediate release - The ICA welcomes the signing of the “Geneva Accord”, a blueprint for an Israeli-Palestinian peace agreement. This Middle East peace initiative has received strong public support from a wide range of leading international figures including Nelson Mandela and former presidents Jimmy Carter and Bill Clinton from the United States and Lech Walesa from Poland.

Leaders of the ICA and the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions (ICFTU) were among the many public figures, political and cultural leaders and Nobel Prize laureates invited to join the Israeli and Palestinian delegations at the launch of the Accord in Geneva. The ICA and the ICFTU are among the largest non-governmental organisations in the world, and since 1946 have been recognised by the United Nations as leading civil society organisations.



Dr Yehudah Paz

“It is no accident that the leaders of ICA were invited to attend the launch”, said Dr Yehudah Paz, ICA Board member and Chairperson of the Negev Institute for Strategies of Peace and Development in Israeli. “The promotion of peace has been at the heart of international co-operation since its beginning in the 1890’s.”

The ICA draws its membership from over 100 countries. It includes members who practice the Christian, Moslem, Jewish and other faiths and beliefs. “The ICA has members in both Israeli and Palestine. We have sought to work together, whatever our differences, for the mutual benefit of all. Co-operation is obviously preferable to conflict – that has been our history and tradition”, he added.

Dr Paz, who has been involved with the Israeli peace movement for many years, noted that the ICA will be working to strengthen its ties with its co-operative members in both Israel and Palestine as part of its contribution to these peace efforts.

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ICA Press Release

ICA Supports Call for Further Action on AIDS



Geneva, Switzerland, 27 November 2003, for immediate release – December 1st is United Nations World AIDS Day. The UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan has called on countries and others to do more to stop the spread of this disease. The ICA supports this call for further urgent action on HIV/AIDS.

Jan-Eirik Imbsen, ICA's Director of Development has been a long time advocate for greater action in this area. "The ICA has known for some time the seriousness and scale of this issue - our involvement goes back to the mid 1990's and a joint World Health Organisation WHO/ICA initiative on HIV/AIDS," he said. More recently, the ICA Gender Equality Committee focused attention on HIV/AIDS in a seminar held during the ICA General Assembly in September where it highlighted how co-operatives are already addressing the issue in Africa and Asia. There, Vanda Giuliano, Chairperson of the Committee urged co-operators to promote training and awareness building for the prevention and treatment of HIV/AIDS particularly aimed at women who not only are the most affected group but are also in the first line of stopping the disease.

The case for action is compelling

- > HIV/AIDS has claimed 20 million lives and infected another 42 million people – more than the carnage of the first and second world wars
- > This year alone roughly 10 million children will lose their mothers to AIDS
- > Southern Africa is home to about 30% of people living with HIV/AIDS worldwide, yet this region has less than 2% of the world's population
- > 95% of people living with HIV are in low- and middle-income countries



"The member focus and local orientation of co-operatives are in fact ideally suited to play a part in AIDS education and prevention programmes," said Mr. Imbsen. "A good example is women in Kongoussi an arid and marginal northern part of Burkina Faso in Africa. These women brought together through their shared membership of a local horticultural co-operative society knew that they needed to do something about this disease. With a high proportion of women and men suffering from HIV/AIDS, they initiated sensitisation on HIV/AIDS in the local community. Through the mobilisation of resources made possible by the co-operative, these women are able to make a contribution to the building a healthy and sustainable community."

Similar self-help responses are being carried out in many other communities. These efforts deserve support. The ICA and its partners are currently assisting with programmes in a number of African and Asian countries. More is planned for 2004.

"Much has been done but much more needs to be done. We will be working with our partners and lead organisations like UNAIDS to assist in whatever way possible" Mr. Imbsen concluded.

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ICA GENDER EQUALITY COMMITTEE

[Home](#) [About the GWC](#) [Membership](#) [Activities](#) [Links](#) [Site Map](#)

Health, Gender and HIV/AIDS:



Co-operatives Care!

*31 August 2003, Holmenkollen Meeting Room (33rd Floor),
Radisson SAS Plaza Hotel, Oslo (Norway)*

FINAL AGENDA

Welcome of Participants

Dr. José Carlos Guisado, Chairperson, IHCO

Vanda Giuliano, Chairperson, ICA Gender Equality Committee

[Keynote Address](#) -- (PowerPoint slides)

Bai Bagasao, Chief of Partnership, [UNAIDS](#)

GENDER, CO-OPERATIVES AND HIV/AIDS

Gender, Co-operatives and HIV/AIDS -- [PDF](#)

Vanda Giuliano, Chairperson, ICA Gender Equality Committee

HIV/AIDS Crippling African Co-operatives -- [PowerPoint slides](#) -- [PDF](#)

Mary Mathenge, General Manager of the National Co-operative Housing Union NACHU, Kenya

Asian Co-operators: Waking up to the HIV/AIDS crisis -- [PowerPoint slides](#) -- PDF

Savitri Singh, Gender Programme Advisor, ICA Regional Office for Asia & the Pacific ICA ROAP, India

HEALTH CO-OPERATIVES AND HIV/AIDS

Overview of Health Co-operatives and HIV/AIDS

Dr. José Carlos Guisado, Chairperson, IHCO

Health Co-operatives in West Africa

A.S. Kibora, Director, ICA Regional Office for West Africa ROWA, Burkina Faso

Closing Remarks

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Posted: 15 September 2003

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ICA Press Release

Youth to Play Larger Role in International Co-operative Movement

Geneva, Switzerland, 24 November 2003, for immediate release -

In a historic move the International Co-operative Alliance has for the first time formally invited a youth representative to participate in ICA Board meetings.

The new Youth Network representative is Jo Bibby Scullion from the United Kingdom. She recently visited the ICA's Head Office in Geneva to speak with the Director-General and Stefania Marcone, youth liaison person from the Board. Her visit was in preparation for the next Board meeting in Genoa (Italy) on 12-13 December 2003.

Jo who is a first year student at Edinburgh University is very enthusiastic about the opportunities this position presents. "Basically I was impressed by the energy, enthusiasm and commitment of the ICA staff - there's loads of opportunities for young people to get involved," she said. "I will be encouraging my colleagues in the youth network to take up this offer."



Jo Bibby Scullion, Iain Macdonald, Stefania Marcone

Jo was particularly impressed by the opportunities to work with the ICA in its development and anti-poverty programmes. "I am sure the ICA programmes and campaigns will be of great interest to our members". "I didn't realise how much co-operatives were doing to help reduce poverty, particularly in Africa. It is actions like this, not just words which will encourage youth to see the relevance of co-operatives".

The Youth Network includes members from over 20 countries. It is open to all young persons who have an interest in or are involved with co-operatives.

ICA Director-General, Iain Macdonald is also a strong supporter of youth participation on the Board. "I think this is great opportunity for young co-operators" he said. "The ICA is serious in valuing and wanting their contribution," he said. "I know many young people are idealist and looking to make a difference in the world. The co-operative movement is based on values and I know this appeals to young people," Mr. Macdonald concluded.

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ICA Press Release

Accounting Standards Threaten Co-operative Identity

Geneva, Switzerland, 20 November, for immediate release -

The ICA today announced it will continue to challenge the proposed International Accounting Standards Board (IASB) attempts to apply new accounting standards to co-operatives.

IASB has proposed a new accounting treatment for the way equity is reported in balance sheets - IAS 32 (Financial Instruments Disclosure and Presentation).

Iain Macdonald, ICA's Director-General said today, "This is not an issue that is only of interest to accountants. If the proposed changes go ahead they will have a real and potentially very serious affect on the viability of many co-operatives throughout the world."

Under the new standards much of what has always been categorised as equity in the balance sheets of co-operatives may have to be reclassified as debt. This may well threaten the viability of many existing and successful co-operatives.

"The IASB has a clear and worthwhile policy outcome in mind in developing the new standard," Mr. Macdonald said. "They have however, failed to take account of the special character of co-operatives. Co-operatives are different. And we need that difference acknowledged in the way we operate and report our activities," he added.

The ICA is as concerned as anyone, perhaps more than most to ensure a high level of integrity in financial reporting. Many co-operatives have been among the leaders in providing more detailed reporting of their activities. It is not a matter of wanting special treatment but fair treatment.

The ICA understands the importance of this issue to co-operatives and is joining with a number of its member organisations in making representation to national, European and international organisations. The campaign to oppose these changes is building and meeting with early success.

The ICA's member in the United States, the National Co-operative Business Association (NCBA) has announced that as a result of its representations the standards-setting board in that country has deferred indefinitely the application of a similar standard to US co-operatives.

The ICA President and Director-General are meeting with the representatives of the European Union to further discuss this matter.

This is a fundamentally important issue and we intend to redouble our efforts in this regard Mr Macdonald concluded.

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ICA PRESS RELEASE

New Communications Manager for International Co-operative Movement



Geneva, Switzerland, 6 November 2003, for immediate release --
The International Co-operative Alliance (ICA) is pleased to announce the appointment of Garry Cronan as its new Communications Manager.

Mr Cronan has over twenty five years involvement in the co-operative movement. He was most recently the General Manager of the Australian Centre for Co-operative Research and Development (ACCORD) in Sydney. Garry Cronan commenced his new role on 3 November 2003. He will be based at the ICA's Head Office in Geneva.

One of Mr Cronan's key tasks would be to establish a stronger image for the ICA as a leading global entity. Most people are aware of co-operatives but very few appreciate their real importance, Mr Cronan said. If anything, their relevance is growing. The ICA through its member organisations represents over 760 million individuals throughout the world. There is virtually no country where they are not active. Co-operatives employ twenty percent more people than the large multinational corporations! - a truly surprising figure that speaks to their capacity to create jobs and offer practical solutions.

The ICA's role is critical, Mr Cronan added. It is one of the oldest and most trusted international non-governmental organisations. It will continue to be the voice of the international co-operative movement. My task will be to ensure that its achievements and those of its members throughout the world become better known, he concluded.

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ICA Press Release

Co-operatives for Social, Economic and Democratic Development

Geneva, Switzerland, 25 September 2003, for immediate release -- Nearly 800 co-operators gathered in Oslo, Norway from 30 August – 5 September 2003 for the General Assembly of the International Co-operative Alliance and related events. Hosted jointly by Coop NKL BA, the Norwegian Federation of Co-operative Housing Associations (NBBL) and the Federation of Norwegian Agricultural Co-operatives (Norsk Landbrukssamvirke), the Assembly was successful in highlighting the role co-operative enterprise can play both in alleviating poverty but also in effectively organising economic activity even in the most developed nations of the world.

Keynote speakers underlined over and over the importance of the co-operative movement. “*Whether it is voice and representation in the community, creating jobs and reducing poverty, combining values and profits, or making globalisation more fair and inclusive, the co-operative enterprise, the co-operative movement, must be considered a central actor for more just, more productive, more balanced societies*” said Juan Somavia, Director-General of the International Labour Office in his inspiring address.

Prime Minister Kjell Magne Bondevik of Norway commented too that, “*The co-operative movement has a long-standing record in contributing to social progress and social equality in Norway. Agricultural, fisheries, consumer and housing co-operatives have produced concrete results and have over the years made a difference in people’s everyday lives.*”, while former ICA President and now Minister of Agriculture of Brazil, Roberto Rodrigues, commented on the renaissance of the co-operative enterprise and its ability to respond to the changing needs of people around the world. Hilde Frafjord Johnson, Minister of International Development, Norway also noted that, “*The co-operative model has much to offer, in the developing as well as the developed part of the world. Not only have co-operatives contributed significantly to economic development, they have also been instrumental in promoting democracy and good government and governance.*”

Pledges were also made both by the United Nations and the International Labour Office to work more closely with the ICA in promoting co-operative enterprise. The United Nations Secretary-General Kofi Annan in his message noted, “*The International Co-operative Alliance, for its part, is a good and long-standing partner of the United Nations, and I look forward to continuing our common quest for the common good.*” ILO Director-General, Juan Somavia put forward a proposal for the ICA and ILO to develop a multi-year programme to promote and implement the ILO Recommendation 193 on the promotion of co-operatives which calls on governments to encourage the growth of co-operative enterprise.

ICA President, Ivano Barberini inspired participants in his opening address to the Assembly. “*Co-operation, by definition, is an undertaking together and on equal terms - a choice bringing together business and solidarity and therefore, useful and effective in our present situation, as was also the case at the beginning of the last century*” He reviewed the challenges facing our world underlining that today’s unprecedented economic growth lived side by side with poverty and hunger. He highlighted in particular gender issues, the challenging situation in Africa and involving young co-operators in building the co-operative movement for the 21st century.

The Assembly also included practical experiences from co-operatives around the world on how they were making development happen. Chaired by Rahaiah Baheran ICA Board Member and Vice-

President of ANGKASA (Malaysia), the session included presentations from the ICA Regional Directors, A.S. Kibora, Bernard Kadasia, Manuel Mariño, Shil Kwan Lee, and Gabriella Sozanski, as well as respected co-operators including Bernard Ouedraogo, President, Groupement NAAM (Burkina Faso), Héctor Cordova, General Manager, Federación de Cooperativas de Ahorro y Crédito de El Salvador FEDECACES, , Isami Miyata, President of Japanese Joint Committee, Shugo Ogura, President of Japanese Consumer Co-operative Union, (Japan), Lennart Hjalmarsson Director, Swedish Co-operative Centre SCC (Sweden), Vidar Kaperlund, Deputy Managing Director, Royal Norwegian Society for Development (Norway), and Nina Jarlbäck, Deputy-Chairperson of the Board, Coop Norden & President, Kooperativa Förbundet KF (Sweden). ICA's Director for Development, Jan-Eirik Imbsen, concluded reminding participants of the important work on the ICA in development and how it contributes to the Millennium Development Goals.

Important statutory matters were addressed by the General Assembly. Representatives approved the restructuring of the ICA based on recommendations made by a Task Force that reviewed the ICA structure and finances, and resulted in the need for modification of the ICA Rules and Standing Orders. A new set of ICA Rules was adopted in Oslo. The Assembly was also invited to fill vacancies to the Board and Audit and Control Committee. Ms Gun-Britt Mårtensson (Sweden), Mr Isami Miyata (Japan), Mr Pál Bartus (Hungary), and Mr Ousseynou Dieng (Senegal) were elected to the ICA Board while Mr Shugo Ogura (Japan) and Mr Roy Berg Pedersen (Norway) were elected to the Audit and Control Committee.

The Assembly also adopted a resolution on “Co-operative Development” in which it reminded members and partners of the important role of women in all development activities and the need to include a gender and youth perspective when addressing co-operative development. It called for a greater contribution by governments, international donor organisations and other development agencies to co-operative development and requested ICA members in the industrialised world to increase their efforts to promote development in the developing world. Finally, members affirmed their resolve to actively support ICA's development programme and the campaign against poverty.

The Assembly also invited young co-operators to participate actively in the activities of the movement. “*Another world is possible - and this is a start,*” was the message from the Youth Conference to Assembly. In recognition of the important role of youth in the present and future of the movement, the ICA Board invited a youth representative to attend all future Board meetings.

The events in Oslo also enabled ICA to discern a series of important awards. The ICA recognised two distinguished co-operators for outstanding lifetime service to the Co-operative Movement and granted them the Rochdale Pioneers Award. Francisco Luis Jiménez Arcila of Colombia and Lloyd Wilkinson from the United Kingdom were the 2003 recipients of this honour. ICA also presented a prize for the best .coop website to the Canadian Co-operative Association CCA.

The venue for the next ICA General Assembly in 2005 will be Cartagena, Colombia.

Texts and presentations delivered at the General Assembly can be found on the ICA website at:

<http://www.ica.coop/ica/ica/icaevents/ga2003>

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ICA reminded delegates of the FAO Council that co-operatives had been recognised in a variety of fora as being effective means for people to find ways to solve their economic and social problems. Citing the World Food Summit Plan of Action, the United Nations Guidelines, the International Labour Organization's Recommendation 193, as well as the European Co-operative Statute, ICA underlined that just at a time when policy makers were finding ways to facilitate co-operative growth, FAO was effectively reducing its capacity in the area of co-operative capacity-building, assistance in restructuring and enhancing co-operative entrepreneurial skills to increase incomes which ultimately would also impact the ability of co-operatives to engage in policy dialogue on issues of food production and food security.

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