International
Co-operative Alliance

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The Co-operative Decade – Executive Summary

The Co-operative Decade (2011-2020) is a blueprint to build on the achievements of the International Year of Co-operatives (2011-2012).

It marks the beginning of a worldwide campaign to take the co-operative way of doing business to a new level.

By 2020, the aim is for the co-operative form of business to become:
- The fastest growing form of enterprise.
- The model preferred by people.
- The acknowledged leader in economic, social and environmental sustainability.

The Co-operative Decade sits within the context of several, identified crucial global trends:
- Environmental degradation and resource depletion.
- An unstable financial sector and increasing income inequality.
- A growing global governance gap.
- A seemingly disenfranchised younger generation.

The starting point for the strategy for a global co-operative future is the powerful claim, which co-operatives make to the outside world: **that they have a way of doing business which is better than the one which is currently failing.**

- Co-operatives are better because they give individuals participation through ownership, which makes them inherently more engaging, more productive, and both more useful and more relevant to the contemporary world.

- Co-operatives are better because their business model creates greater economic, social and environmental sustainability.

The overarching agenda for the ICA, its members and the movement generally, based on the blueprint, is:
1. Elevate participation within membership and governance to a new level.
2. Position co-operatives as builders of sustainability.
3. Build the co-operative message and secure the co-operative identity.

COOPERATIVE ENTERPRISES BUILD A BETTER WORLD

4. Ensure supportive legal frameworks for co-operative growth.
5. Secure reliable co-operative capital while guaranteeing member control.

These challenges fall within a context of social change, namely:

- The growing emergence of the middle class, interconnected by myriad networks. As a result, citizens will want a greater say in their future than previous generations.

- Growing awareness that the demands and concerns of people in many different countries converge, with shared aspirations and shared grievances. This will contrast sharply with governments' capacity to deliver public goods, particularly those relating to improving quality of life, resulting in an expectations gap.

- Increased civil society pressure for direct participation in the political arena. Greater participation and knowledge coupled with a growing expectations gap may lead to tensions, revolt and conflict. The youth movements of 2011 – from the ranks of which many members of the power elite of 2030 are likely to emerge – are aware of the problems facing representative democracy.