



Weekly Digest

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Editorial

Welcome to the first edition of the ICA's new weekly digest. Our intention is to provide you with a brief weekly update of the latest news and events from the ICA and its member organisations. The first issue focuses on issues related to the last ICA Board meeting in Genoa. Decisions taken at Board meetings provide the context for subsequent activities undertaken by ICA staff. We report on a number of these activities and foreshadow others. We would welcome your comments on the style and content of the digest. Please send your comments to the editor Garry Cronan at cronan@ica.coop.

Appeal on Behalf of Iranian Co-operators

The ICA President and Director-General have signed a joint letter calling on ICA members to help their Iranian colleagues affected by the devastating earthquake on 26 December 2003. More information is available at our website www.ica.coop.



ICA Board Meeting: Genoa, Italy

The ICA Board met on 12-13 December 2003.

It was the first Board meeting in Genoa and was hosted by Legacoop Liguria. The Board agreed to admit to ICA membership the following organisations:

- SOK Association SOKL – Finland
- National Institute of Co-operative Development – Sri Lanka
- Cooperativa de Ahorro y Crédito de Médicos y Otros Profesionales de la Salud – Puerto Rico
- Cooperativa del Magisterio (CODEMA) – Colombia

On the more general issue of membership the Board called for a detailed report to be discussed at the next Board meeting (*see below*). The Board approved the 2004 budget and work plans, which included an overall 5% increase in membership subscriptions. It was also agreed that ICA budgets would be prepared on a 3 year, rather than the annual basis at present. Additionally, for the first time in its 109 year history a youth representative participated in the Board meeting (*see below*). The results of recent research based on a survey of ICA members were presented to the Board by Professor Mazzoleni, University of Milan. Copies of this research are available at the following website: www.mariomazzoleni.com.

Youth Involvement at Board Meetings

Youth representation within the ICA has received a major boost in recent months. The Oslo General Assembly supported moves for youth participation on the Board. As a result the Genoa Board meeting included, for the first time a youth representative. This is a significant development. The new representative Jo Bibby Scullion from the UK is very keen to ensure that as many young people as possible from as wide a variety of countries are involved in the newly created youth network. She can be contacted at s0347030@sms.ed.ac.uk.

ILO Recommendation 193: Implementation Workshops

An ICA Europe-ILO Joint Conference on the Implementation of ILO Recommendation 193 is to be held in Budapest, Hungary on 1-2 April 2004. This is the second in a series of conferences designed to consider in detail implementation strategies for this key co-operative recommendation. The first was held in St Petersburg in October 2003. It was organised by ICA Europe-Centrosoyuz-Inter-Parliamentary Assembly of Member Nations of the Commonwealth of Independent States in collaboration with the ILO. For further details on these conferences contact Gabriella Sozánski at sozanski@ica.coop.

ILO/ICA Moving Forward on Common Co-op Agenda

ICA officials have been meeting over the last few weeks with the International Labour Organisation (ILO) to finalise a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU). This initiative followed the invitation for closer formal ties by the ILO Director-General to the Oslo General Assembly. The MoU will provide a framework for the extensive series of joint co-operative development activities currently being undertaken by both organisations.



Board to Examine Membership Issues

Following the last Board meeting a *Membership Working Group* has been established within the ICA Secretariat to prepare a detailed report on membership issues. It will be undertaking a detailed analysis of subscription histories of members; a review of the subscription form and associated administrative procedures. It will also be seeking solutions to the problem of the lack of reliable statistical information from members. A report will be provided to the Board at its next meeting.

Director-General Challenges Co-op Myths

Iain Macdonald, ICA Director-General addressed the recent conference of the UK's South West Co-operative Party. His presentation focused on the role of the ICA and its current priorities for 2004. It also dealt with some of the common myths surrounding co-operatives. Namely, that they fail, are irrelevant in today's global world, are poorly managed and under funded, and that Co-operative Principles are incompatible with commercial success. The Director-General challenged these misconceptions. He highlighted that globally co-operative enterprise provides 100 million jobs worldwide - far more than multinational corporations!

Conference on Co-operatives and Culture, July 2004

Genoa, Italy has been named European Capital of Culture for 2004. To coincide with these activities Liguria Legacoop and the ICA are organising a conference on 2-3 July 2004 on the theme of, [The Culture of Development, Globalisation and Co-operative Enterprises](#).

Greater Co-ordination of ICA Sectoral Organisations

The Oslo General Assembly considered the *Restructuring of the ICA 2003 Report*. Among the recommendations approved by the General Assembly was the need for greater co-ordination of the various ICA sectoral organisations. A meeting of the chairpersons and secretaries of all ICA sectoral organisations has been organised by the ICA Secretariat for the 13th February 2004. It will be held in Geneva. It is expected that this will be an important step towards achieving the recommended goal of greater co-ordination between ICA and the sectoral organisations and promote collaboration among each other.

International Trade Fair, Beijing

The All China Federation of Supply and Marketing Co-operatives (ACFSM) are organising an International Trade Fair from 26-28 April 2004 to be held in Beijing, China, with the support of the ICA. As ACFSM is also hosting the ICA Board Meeting just prior to the Trade Fair, a number of ICA Board members will also be participating. For more information visit ACFSM website at www.expo.coop.

ICA Housing Elects New Chair and Considers Strategic Partnership



The Board of ICA Housing, one of the oldest of ICA's sectoral organisations met on 19 January at ICA headquarters in Geneva. Jens Heiser, President of the ICA Housing announced his intention to retire early, in September 2003. The board agreed on Mike Doyle (photo) from the Cooperative Housing Foundation (CHF) in the USA, currently a Board member as Jens Heisers' replacement. The meeting also received a report from the UN Economic Commission for Europe's Housing and Urban Management Advisory Network (HUMAN). It agreed to investigate the possibility of a closer working relationship between ICA Housing and HUMAN.

Co-operative Author Visits ICA/ILO

Well known co-operative historian and author Dr Johnston Birchall recently met with ILO Co-operative Branch and ICA head office staff in Geneva to discuss the preparation of a new publication focusing on co-operatives contribution to the United Nations Millennium Goals. The new title will build on Dr Birchall's earlier work published by the ILO *Rediscovering the Co-operative Advantage: Poverty reduction through self-help* which focused on the role of co-operatives in reducing poverty. The new title will expand the focus to cover the contribution of co-operatives to all the UN Millennium Goals.



Communications Survey: Have Your Say !!!

As part of the revamp of communication activities being undertaken within the ICA we will be shortly conducting a survey of members to help determine priorities. This will be an opportunity for you to have your say on the quality, regularity and content of our publications, website and other communication activities. There is widespread agreement that we need to do more on the communication front, not just with our members but also the wider community. So, stay tuned and get ready to complete your questionnaire.

Copies of the Weekly Digest are archived on the ICA's website www.ica.coop.