



# Weekly Digest

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## Editorial

Welcome to the second edition of the ICA's *Weekly Digest*. We have been most encouraged by the positive response we received to the first issue and hope that you will continue to find the newsletter interesting and useful.

This issue reports on several recent meetings held with United Nations agencies. Our consultative status within the UN system gives privileged access to these organisations. It enables us to represent the interests of our members within these global agencies. The signing of the MoU with the ILO is only the most recent outcome of this involvement.

## ILO/ICA Sign Historic Agreement

As foreshadowed in the first edition of *Weekly Digest* last week, the ILO and the ICA have signed an agreement to implement a "Common Co-operative Agenda" aimed at creating decent jobs and reducing poverty. The agreement, signed by Mr. Ivano Barberini, President of the ICA, and Juan Somavia, Director-General of the ILO, (see photo) strengthens the historical partnership between the two organisations and will enhance efforts to develop joint programmes and projects for promoting co-operatives worldwide.



"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 movement, must be considered a central actor for more just, more productive, more balanced societies", Mr. Somavia said. The MoU "reinforces the commitment to each other and to the co-operative movement" he added. The new partnership will also seek to address the UN Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) which aim to eradicate extreme poverty and hunger, promote universal primary education, gender equality and the empowerment of women, improve maternal health and reduce child mortality, combat HIV/AIDS and other diseases, achieve environmental sustainability and develop global partnerships for development.

Under the terms of the partnership, the ILO and ICA will seek to identify funding among major multi-bilateral donors and other development partners to finance the common activities foreseen under the "Common Co-operative Agenda". Mr Somavia concluded by suggesting "that Africa is a priority and

that the African Union's Summit of Heads of States later this year provides an opportunity to bring forward success stories on co-operatives -- examples of present but also future proposals of how co-operative enterprise can create jobs and bring people out of poverty."

## 7<sup>th</sup> Co-operative Ministers' Conference a Great Success!

The 7<sup>th</sup> Asia Pacific Co-operative Ministers' Conference was held in New Delhi, India 2-5 February 2004. The conference which was opened by the Hon. Mr. Lal Krishna Advani, Deputy Prime Minister of India, was organised by the ICA's Regional Office for Asia Pacific (ROAP). Over 180 participants from 24 countries attended, including Co-operative Ministers from 11 Asia Pacific countries. They adopted a declaration in calling for continued legislative reform, promotion of ILO Recommendation 193 and the involvement of co-operatives in the Poverty Reduction Strategies (PRSP process). It is available on the ICA ROAP's website at [www.icaroop.coop/newsDetails.asp?id=23](http://www.icaroop.coop/newsDetails.asp?id=23).

ICA holds Ministerial Conferences in both Africa and the Asia Pacific region. This farsighted initiative has played a key role in bringing leaders of the national co-operative movements into direct contact with Co-operative Ministers from their respective region. Its focus on co-operative legislation and policy along with accompanying series of critical studies has provided a framework for much of the subsequent legislative activity at the national level.

## ICA Participates in Preparatory Meeting for UNCTAD XI



ICA Deputy Director General Maria Elena Chávez Hertig (photo) recently participated in a consultation meeting with NGOs on the XI United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) which will be held in São Paulo, Brazil, 13-18 June 2004. Established in 1964, UNCTAD ([www.unctad.org](http://www.unctad.org)) is the focal point within the United Nations for the integrated treatment of trade and development and the interrelated issues in the areas of finance, technology, investment and sustainable development. If you are interested in finding out more about ICA involvement in UNCTAD you can contact Ms Chávez Hertig at [chavez@ica.coop](mailto:chavez@ica.coop)

## Networking Open Doors for Future Collaboration

Deputy Director Ms Chávez Hertig also represented the ICA at a recent meeting of the International Agri-Food Network [www.agrifood.net](http://www.agrifood.net). The IAFN facilitates informal liaison among the professional organisations in the agri-food chain at global level in which co-operatives are also represented. The recent meeting facilitated contacts with the UN's International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) ([www.ifad.org](http://www.ifad.org)) and the World Food Programme (WFP) ([www.wfp.org](http://www.wfp.org)) both of which were interested in seeking improved collaboration with the co-operative movement. The network provides an opportunity to share information on recent UN and industry initiatives, and has enabled ICA to work with partners to lobby the UN on enterprise and agricultural issues including rural development and food safety and security.

## Closer Links between Co-operatives and Trade Unions Explored

The third annual consultative meeting between the ICA and the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions (ICFTU) ([www.icftu.org](http://www.icftu.org)) was organised under the auspices of the ILO Bureau for Workers Activities (ACTRAV) and ILO Co-operative Branch in Geneva. The purpose of the meeting was to explore operational elements for strengthening collaboration between trade unions and co-operatives. The meeting discussed the on-going activities to promote ILO Recommendation 193 and reviewed a manual for trade unions on how to start co-operatives of all types. It also examined current technical co-operation programmes in which trade unions and co-operatives currently collaborate -- the SYNDICOOP programme

(see ILO website [www.ilo.org](http://www.ilo.org)). Future areas of collaboration include developing a conceptual frame to work on peace building initiatives as well identifying ways to raise the issue of co-operatives more prominently within the ILO. For further information, please contact Iain Macdonald [iain.macdonald@ica.coop](mailto:iain.macdonald@ica.coop)

## ICA Involved in UK Co-operative Development Initiative

The UK Co-operative College is leading a consortium of UK co-operatives in a campaign to develop awareness of the MDG's in their movement. The campaign will network with other agencies and build the capacity of the UK movement to undertake serious long-term development work with co-operatives in the South. DFID, the UK Government department responsible for promoting development and the reduction of poverty is providing core funding for three years under a Strategic Grant Agreement (SGA).



ICA's Director of Development, Jan-Eirik Imbsen, (photo) represents the ICA on the Steering Group. Its tasks include determining overall policy, defining goals and setting targets and evaluating performance against agreed targets. The first meeting of the Steering Group took place on 23 October 2003 in Manchester. That meeting approved the first six months action plan which includes education and awareness-raising (an information pack on Recommendation 193 will be produced), and carrying out baseline surveys. The next meeting is on 4 March 2004.

## ICA Development Efforts receive Boost from Canadian Co-operative Movement



The ICA's development efforts in Eastern, Central and Southern Africa received a significant boost with the decision of the Canadian Co-operative Association (CCA) ([www.coopscanada.coop](http://www.coopscanada.coop)) to commit CDN \$ 463,000 to a major new project over 3 years (2004–2006). The project objectives are to contribute to the improved policy and legal environment for co-operative development in the region; raise the profile of the co-operative model in the region with government, development agencies and other key stakeholders and strengthen the operational capacities of the ICA Regional Office for Eastern, Central and Southern Africa (ROECSA).

Director of ICA ROECSA, Bernard Kadasia welcomed the CCA's commitment and support and expressed his deep appreciation to all the CCA officials involved in negotiating the new funding arrangements.

## ICA involved in Council of Europe's NGO Liaison Committee

The ICA has been a member of the NGO Liaison Committee of the Council of Europe ([www.coe.int](http://www.coe.int)) since January 2000. The ICA's representative on the committee is Gabriella Sozánski, Regional Director for ICA Europe ([www.ica.coop/europe](http://www.ica.coop/europe)). The key role of the NGO Liaison Committee is to ensure that the interests of NGO's are heard in the deliberations of the Council of Europe.

The CoE is the only international organisation which has "upgraded" the consultative status of international NGOs to participatory status. The President of the Parliamentary Assembly, Peter Schieder addressed a special welcome to the INGOs invited to the Parliamentary session when the Resolution (2003)9 on the status of partnership was announced. The Liaison Committee has been the engine of the process which has led to this great achievement. At its recent meeting, Committee decided to take full advantage of the participatory status and establish regular contacts with the Committee of Ministers and various intergovernmental committees as well as with the Parliamentary Assembly and the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of Europe.

## ICA Calls for Greater Youth Involvement

The ICA Director General Iain Macdonald has written to all ICA members encouraging them to promote youth representation within their organisations. This follows other recent initiatives including participation by a youth representative on the ICA Board. “Our movement is an aging one and our survival depends upon new younger members joining and actively supporting their co-operatives” said Mr. Macdonald. “It is a challenge for us all. I hope ICA members will take the opportunity to review their current practices towards youth and think seriously about improving their appeal to younger members”

## Building a Culture of Solidarity

ICA President Barberini addressed the first Legacoop National Forum; a forum that enabled co-operatives to have direct access to government representatives. Mr. Barberini provided the delegates of the Legacoop General Assembly, Italian government and European Union officials, an overview of issues of concern to the international co-operative movement and the work of the ICA. Legislation, capitalisation, co-operative identity including the co-operative values and principles were highlighted. These issues were also reviewed by the President of Legacoop and invited speakers from the media and government.

The Legacoop President also presented input and commentary on a wide range of national social and economic policies which are currently being discussed, highlighting too that reform was needed to enable co-operatives to be effective contribute to sustainable development and contribute to a culture of solidarity. Co-operatives as ethical enterprises also received increasing attention especially in light of the Parmalat scandal which is fuelling uncertainty in the economy and in the private sector. Finally, Legacoop introduced the new Legacoop flag. Maria Elena Chávez Hertig of the ICA secretariat also attended.



## People in the News

The Presidium of the General Confederation of Agricultural Co-operatives in the European Union (COGECA) elected a new President. Mr. Eduardo Baamonde of Spain was unanimously elected for the period 2004-2006. He will be assisted by Joël Castany (France), Donal Cashman (Ireland) and Christer Eliasson (Sweden).

## In Memoriam

John Gallacher died on 4 January 2004. Lord Gallacher, a Labour Lord was appointed to the UK House of Lords in 1982 and served there with distinction until 1992. He was a life long champion of co-operation in the UK and internationally. His first job was with the Scottish Co-operative Wholesale Society. He was one of the earliest students at the College after its move from Manchester to Loughborough. After periods with the Royal Arsenal Co-operative Society and the Enfield Highway Co-op, he moved to the Co-operative Union, the national federal body of UK consumer co-operatives before assuming an international role as the full time Administrative Secretary to the ICA Board for the period 1963–1968. He will be remembered as a pillar of the co-operative movement. (*This memoriam draws on a longer obituary by Malcolm Hurlston, in The Independent, 9 January 2004*)

Copies of the Weekly Digest are archived on the ICA’s website [www.ica.coop](http://www.ica.coop).