



Weekly Digest

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Editorial

Welcome to issue six of the ICA's new weekly publication.

This issue showcases a broad range of ICA activities, in particular, women and gender issues. The items demonstrate the diversity and breath of our work. It extends from high level engagement within the UN System to regional and national conferences. These top down activities are complemented by on the ground research and development initiatives.

As always we would welcome comments on the style and content of the newsletter.

UN Secretary General: Co-operatives do remarkable work in HIV/AIDS prevention and care

Kofi Annan, the United Nations Secretary-General lauded the important contribution of co-operatives in leading the global fight against HIV/AIDS. In his statement for International Women's Day of 8 March, he said:

"...In most countries and communities I have visited around the world, ... We have seen it is indeed women who have been the most active and effective advocates and activists in the fight against HIV/AIDS.

Everywhere that the epidemic is taking a severe toll, there are heroic women's groups and **co-operatives** doing remarkable work on prevention and care.

Supporting these women, and encouraging others to follow their example, must be our strategy for the future. It is among them, among these women, that the real heroes of this war are to be found. It is our job to furnish them with strength, resources and hope..."Photo shows Kofi Annan with Ivano Barberini.

Secretary-General's Message Reference SG / SM / 9186 – OBV / 408 – WOM / 1442 www.un.org/News/Press/docs/2004/sgsm9186.doc)



This statement is evidence of ICA's progress in making co-operatives more visible in international organisations and linking their important work to major social and economic issues like HIV/AIDS. As Vanda Giuliano (*photo opposite*) of the ICA Gender Equality Committee said, "this statement will enable us work with the UN and its partner institutions to help co-operatives tackle this major epidemic. It opens the door to making the already important work of co-operatives even more effective." ICA is currently working with UNAIDS to identify joint activities at the global and regional levels.

Gender Equality Key to True Development

ICA Deputy Director-General, Maria Elena Chavez Hertig recently participated in the opening days of the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) where governments and civil society came together to address progress in implementing the UN Beijing Platform for Action. Presentations on national experiences showed that although some progress was made, it was often very slow and uneven.



Themes addressed during the session included men as agents of change to attitudes; access to resources, and decision-making. These issues were identified as critical for the promotion of gender equality and women's human rights. The Commission noted the need for gender training of men and boys at the earliest age within formal and informal education structures. Examples of men in leadership positions being positive role models for gender equality were also noted. The role of the media in portraying non-stereotypical women and girls, and men and boys along with legislative reform were also highlighted. Training, visibility of women leaders and policy reform all echo the recommendations in the ICA Gender Strategy which targets both the ICA and its member organisations see www.ica.coop/ica/issues/genderstrategy2000.

As the representative of the World Bank noted in addressing the CSW “true development can not occur unless women enjoy equal rights, resources and voice with men. Achieving gender equality is important not only as a goal in itself, but also as a path to achieving a better life for all”.

ILO/ICA and UK Co-operatives Working Together

As reported in last week's Digest the second meeting of the UK Strategic Grants Agreement (SGA) group was recently held. A number of practical outcomes will result from this initiative in which the ICA is participating. These include a publication on Co-operation and the 2015 Targets that will be widely distributed in the UK and an information pack and practical guide to ILO Recommendation 193. This publication will include chapters on why the Recommendation is important and how to put it into practice.



The publication is being produced by the UK Co-operative College and is being prepared by College Associate Stirling Smith who formerly worked for the ILO. It is expected that the publication will be launched at the ILO's annual International Labour Conference in Geneva in June this year. Later in the year the SGA group will also be working with the ICA to help develop a global development strategy for the ICA. The photo

above is of Stirling Smith from the UK Co-operative College during a recent visit to Bangladesh, where, in addition to conducting work for FNV, the Dutch Trade Union Centre, he participated in an ethical audit of one of the Co-operative Group UK's garment suppliers. For further details contact [Jan-Eirik Imbsen development@ica.coop](mailto:Jan-Eirik.Imbsen@ica.coop).

Closer Working Relationship with Freedom from Hunger

The ICA has been holding discussions with the American based Freedom from Hunger organisation www.freefromhunger.org. ICA's Director General, Iain Macdonald (*photo opposite*) said “The focus of our discussions at the moment is on possible joint ICA and Freedom from Hunger initiatives particularly poverty reduction programmes targeting women”. Mr Macdonald (*photo opposite*) was recently invited to join the Ambassadors Council of Freedom from Hunger which includes a number of Nobel Laureate's and other leading international figures. Further details will be provided in future issues of the Weekly Digest.



Co-operative Woman Leader Honoured

On International Women's Day, Galina Kisseleva, Chairperson of the Centrosojuz Board, member of ICA Europe Executive and Vice-Chair of the ICA Gender Equality Committee received the Order of Honour from Russian President Vladimir Putin in his residence Novo-Ogarevo. This is a special honour and recognises the contribution Ms Kisseleva has made to Centrosojuz and the wider international co-operative movement. The photo opposite shows Ms Kisseleva being congratulated by President Putin.



ICA-ROECSA Gender Committee Established



The first meeting of the recently re-established ICA Gender Committee for East, Central and Southern Africa was held on 4 February 2004 in Nairobi, Kenya. The meeting was organised by Jenny Struyk, an intern with the Canadian Co-operative Association working at the ICA Regional Office East, Central and Southern Africa (ROECSA) as Gender and Development Officer. The founding members of the new committee include Esther Gicheru, (*photo opposite*) ICA Board Member from the Co-operative College of Kenya, Evelyn Mngodo of the Kenyan Union of Savings and Credit Co-operatives (KUSCCO), George Onyango of Community Empowerment and Enterprise

Development through Co-operatives (CEEDCO), Judith Nthiga of Kenya National Farmers Co-operative (KNFC) and Nancy Muriuki of the Co-operative Insurance Company of Kenya. The goals of the new committee include promoting gender equality within the co-operative movement and society; equitable representation of women and youth in all levels of co-operatives; sharing experiences on gender issues; and providing a vehicle for applying for donor funding for gender projects. Ms Struyk can be contacted at struykitup@yahoo.com.

Opportunities for Collaboration Between ICA and ICMIF

The last ICA General Assembly in Oslo recommended greater coordination and collaboration between the ICA and its sectoral organisations. The oldest and largest of these sectoral organisations is the International Co-operative and Mutual Insurance Federation, (ICMIF) www.icmif.org. ICA staff recently met in Manchester, UK with Hans Dahlberg, Chief Executive, (*photo opposite*), Shaun Tarbuck, Chief Finance Officer, Sabbir Patel and Kazuo Shioiri, Vice Presidents and other senior ICMIF staff. Issues discussed included greater coordination of communication and knowledge management activities. Of special interest are micro-finance projects including insurance and ICMIF's Takaful project – Islamic insurance. These and other specific projects will be reviewed when the Allnations Steering Group of ICMIF meets in Geneva at the end of June. The ICA has been invited to participate in this meeting.



ICA Global HRD Executive Committee to Meet



The first meeting of the new Executive of ICA's Global Human Resource Development Committee (HRD) will be held in Geneva at ICA's Head Office, 25-26 March. The agenda for the executive meeting includes consideration of the proposed Co-operative Learning Centre (CLC), the creation of a global educational advisory board, coordination with the regional HRD committees, networking and the effective utilisation of existing HRD institutions as well as general administrative matters. The photo opposite shows ICA Board member and Chair of the Global HRD Committee, Yehudah Paz. For more information please contact its secretary Jan-Eirik Imbsen development@ica.coop.

Large Numbers Expected at Beijing Co-operative Trade Fair



The 2004 International Co-operative Trade Fair will be held on 26-28 April at the China National Agricultural Exhibition Centre in Beijing. The Trade Forum will be hosted by the All China Federation of Supply and Marketing Co-operatives (ACFSMC). To date the organisers report that 380 booths will present 300 domestic business entities plus 70 international manufactures. Over 144 international buyers are already registered to talk with producers from 25 states and regions in China. Participants will see a great variety of commodities

ranging from food, agricultural machineries, home appliances, textiles, office supplies, gift and other small items. The Trade Fair is co-sponsored by the Co-op Atlantic of Canada, the Co-operative Group UK and NTUC Fairprice of Singapore with the support of global ICA and its Regional Office for Asia and Pacific (ROAP). For more information and registration, please see www.expo.coop.

What Motivates People to Participate in the Governance of Co-ops?

Recent research is providing some insights into what motivates people to participate in the governance of their co-operative. Researchers Johnston Birchall and Richard Simmons undertook the study which was carried out as part of Stirling University's Mutual research programme, in partnership with the UK Co-operative College, Co-operatives UK and funded by the UK Economic and Social Research Council. In this study the authors examine what motivates people to participate in a very large consumer co-operative. The database consists of 500 members of the UK Co-operative Group's area committees, and around 100 members who are not currently active. The findings suggest strategies which may be relevant for a broad range of co-operatives. The research will be shortly published by the Co-operative Group. If you are interested in making comments on the draft of a longer paper that the authors have also produced on this research, please contact Johnston Birchall, johnston.birchall@stir.ac.uk.

First Meeting of ICA European Council for 2004

The next meeting of the ICA European Council, (www.ica.coop/europe) will be held in Budapest, Hungary on 31 March. The meeting has been timed to coincide with the 100th anniversary celebrations of the establishment of the first consumer co-operative in Hungary. It will be considering ICA Europe's 2004 workplan as well as a report on planning for the Regional Assembly for Europe in Warsaw, Poland on 23-24 September 2004.

The ICA's European Development Task Force will also be meeting in Budapest on the morning of 31 March. The Development Task Force will be receiving reports on the ICA's global development activities, including its proposed poverty campaign. The meeting will also receive a report on its "Co-operatives in Europe – Strengthening Co-operative Cohesion" project and review its European Development Strategy. The European Council meetings will be followed by an ICA/ILO conference on Recommendation 193.

ICA Head and European Office New E-mail Addresses

ICA Geneva has moved its e-mail addresses to its new domain ica.coop. Please update your directories.

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