



Weekly Digest

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Editorial

Welcome to issue twenty-three of the Weekly Digest. This week we report on a wide range of forthcoming co-operative conferences in Africa, Europe and Asia. The ICA's European Regional Assembly and related series of events will be held in mid September in Warsaw. Several research conferences are being held in both Europe and Asia. Finally, we lead with a report on the forthcoming Head of Government meeting and Social Forum in Africa. All up a rich mix of co-operative events.

Co-operative Message to be Heard at African Heads of States Summit and Social Forum

ICA President Ivano Barberini has been officially invited to attend the Extraordinary Summit of African Heads of State and Government on Employment and Poverty Alleviation in Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso 8-9 September 2004.

The special summit is intended to reach a regional consensus on a sound employment agenda for Africa designed to help alleviate poverty. It is hoped that this will subsequently guide the formulation and adaptation of policies at the national level. The Summit will be attended by African Heads of State and Government, the African Ministers in charge of Labour and Social Affairs, Workers and Employers' representatives, the Director-Generals of FAO and ILO, senior officials from many other UN agencies and the representatives of bilateral donors and NGOs.

It will be preceded by a Social Partners Forum (Ouagadougou, 3-4 September) that will produce a Joint Statement as an input into the deliberations of the Summit and to the documents that the Summit will discuss and eventually adopt. The Social Partners Forum will bring together 50 representatives of workers' organizations, 30 representatives of employers' organizations and 20 civil society organizations, including co-operatives. Co-operatives are indeed expected to play a major role in the discussions during the Social Partners Forum and the Summit itself.



Norway Assists African Co-operators attend Summit

The ICA and the ILO Co-operative Branch are also organising a pre-summit meeting of African co-operative organizations in Ouagadougou on 2 September 2004 to develop a position paper. This paper will feed into the Social Partners Forum and later into the deliberations of the Summit itself.

The Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs is assisting twelve co-operative leaders to attend the pre-summit co-operative meeting as well as the Social Partners Forum. One of the twelve co-operative leaders, Ousseynou Dieng from Senegal, *photo above*, who is also an ICA Board member will attend the Heads of State summit with the ICA President.

Another International Co-operative Trade Fair – this time in Brazil



A very successful International Co-operatives Fair, FENACOOOP was held in São Paulo city, Brazil, from 4 to 7, August, 2004. More than 120 booths displayed the great diversity of co-operatives products. The Fair received 5000 visitors all around the world. A delegation from China (All China Federation of Supply and Marketing Co-made good contacts with Brazilian co-operatives, demonstrating once again the opportunities which exist for co-operative to co-operative trade.

During the Fair an International Congress of Co-operatives Development took place. At the opening ceremony of the Congress presentations were made by former ICA President and now Brazilian Minister of

Agriculture, Roberto Rodrigues, the current ICA President, Ivano Barberini and the OCB President, Márcio Lopes de Freitas.

The above photo shows the Brazilian Minister of Agriculture, Roberto Rodrigues, Jorge Morales, Director of CONINAGRO, the Agricultural Co-operatives Confederation of Argentina along with members of the Chinese delegation.

Iran - ICA President writes to UN Secretary-General

ICA President Ivano Barberini recently wrote to United Nations, General-Secretary, Kofi Annan raising concerns about the detention of Iranian co-operators in Baghdad. Mr Barberini's representations follow the dispatch of a similar letter from Mr. M. Ramezani, Secretary General of the Iranian Central Chamber of Co-operatives (ICC) to the UN Secretary-General.



The ICA President notes that "having recently returned from Iran, the ICA is aware how committed the Iranian Co-operative Movement is to helping rebuild Co-operative business in Iraq. It is regrettable therefore that these efforts are being hampered in this unnecessary way. ICC is one of the most valued members of the International Co-operative Alliance". Mr Barberini further noted the well known support Mr Annan has for the Co-operative Movement and the values it represents, we would wish you to use your influence in allowing our Iranian colleagues to continue their work." The photo above shows an earlier meeting between Ivano Barberini and Kofi Annan.

IAS 32 Consultation Period Ends 13 September



Readers are reminded that the consultation period for IAS 32 concludes on 13 September. ICA Director-General, Iain Macdonald, (*photo opposite*) has written to all ICA members and Sectoral Organisations asking them to support the recommendation of the International Financing Reporting Interpretation Committee (IFRIC), see [Weekly Digest 22](#) for details. It is felt, particularly by the European Association of Co-operative Banks that the IFRIC recommendation, is at this stage a satisfactory solution. However, Iain Macdonald said, that "dialogue will continue with the International Accounting Standards Board to ensure that in future they have a clearer understanding of the nature of co-operative enterprise".

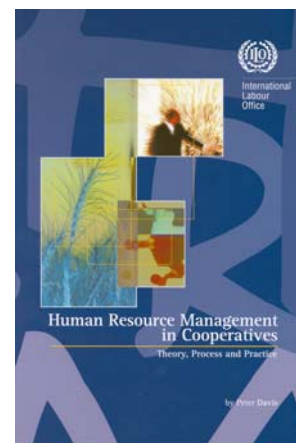
Co-operative Youth Conference in Malaysia

ICA Director-General, Iain Macdonald and the youth representative on the ICA Board, Jo Bibby-Scullion will be special guests at the forthcoming ICA Regional Co-operative Youth Seminar in Malaysia 5 -7 September 2004. The theme of the seminar is "Co-op Youth Participation in the Changing Environment". For more information see the [ICA ROAP](#) website.

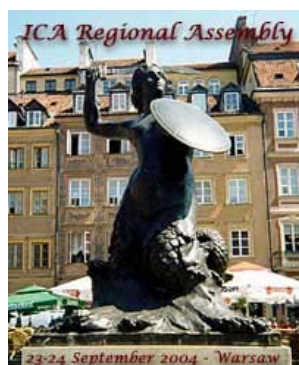
New Publications

The International Labour Office (ILO) has recently launched a new book on co-operative management. The publication *Human Resource Management in Cooperatives* is by well know co-operative researcher and author Dr Peter Davies. Dr Davies a member of the ICA's HRD Committee is also Director of the Unit for Membership Based Organisations, Leicester University, UK.

In this book, Dr Davies takes the view that human capital led people management strategies will become widespread in enterprises of all kinds as knowledge based approaches grow in importance. Such strategies have, he argues a unique synergy with the co-operative purpose, ownership structure and values. The volume also builds on some of the key elements contained in the new ILO Recommendation on the Promotion of Co-operatives. Contact the ILO's Co-op Branch coop@ilo.org



Preparations Well Advanced for ICA Europe's Regional Assembly



An exciting series of seminars, meetings and forums are planned to coincide with the next Regional Assembly of ICA Europe. The Assembly will celebrate the 10th anniversary of the creation of ICA Europe. It will be held in Warsaw, Poland on 23-24 September 2004. The theme is "Building a Co-operative Europe - Thriving in a Competitive Europe".

The Assembly programme includes presentations from a wide range of leading international and European co-operative leaders. The Polish Prime Minister and senior representatives from the European Commission are also expected to be making presentations. A special feature of this year's Assembly will be a series of concurrent workshops on a wide variety of co-operative topics.

Several of ICA's sectoral organisations will also be holding special seminars and conferences. These include a banking seminar on the *Role of Co-operative Banks in a Modern Economy*; a housing conference on *Housing Co-operatives in the Context of the Enlargement of the European Union*, a joint ICAO/IFAP seminar on *Policy Environments in Promoting Agricultural Co-operatives*. Seminars are also planned on consumer and health co-operative topics. As if that is not enough, a youth workshop, a communications forum and a meeting of the ICA HRD committee will also take place.

Events such as this are very popular with our members. They provide an unrivalled opportunity to network with similar co-operative individuals and organisations while accessing the very latest ideas driving co-operative success. Visit ICA Europe's website <http://www.ica.coop/europe/index.html> for more details. Next week's digest will feature a pre-regional assembly interview with ICA Europe's, President Dame Pauline Green.

Communications Forum to be held in Warsaw



The first ICA [Communications Forum](#) for a number of years will be held in Warsaw on Wednesday 22 September 2 – 6 pm. It will follow the first meeting of the newly reconstituted ICA Communications Committee earlier. The forum is open to all delegates and observers attending the ICA European Regional Assembly see above. It is free of charge.

The forum features speakers from Australia, the United Kingdom, Italy, Denmark, India and France. Topics to be covered include *Co-operative Communications: Falling on Deaf Ears*; *Walking the Talk: How the experience of co-operation can help communicate the message*; *Communicating the Co-operative Message in a Country that Understands Co-operatives, Italy – online and multimedia strategies plus the role of celebrity*; *Communicating with Your members in the Context of an International Co-operative Merger – The Co-op Norden example*; *Re-branding the Movement: A Modern Image for Co-operatives*; and finally *Creating and Marketing Co-operatives as a Global Brand*. Contact Garry Cronan cronan@ica.coop

Forthcoming Co-operative Research Conferences

A number of co-operative research conferences will be held over the next few weeks. They include:

- “*Vertical Markets and Co-operative Hierarchies: The Role of Co-operatives in the International Agri-Food Industry*” 3-7 September 2004 A EuroConference on the Strategies and Organisation of Agri-Food Co-operatives: Quality Assurance and Vertical Coordination in Chania, Crete, Greece. The programme for the conference outlines the issues to be addressed.



“Agricultural co-operatives exist in most agro-food industries and in most countries. A large share of the markets for agricultural commodities is handled by co-operatives. During the last decade or so, many co-operatives have undergone notable organizational changes. Often hybrid forms have been created, as the co-operatives have adopted characteristics of

investor-owned firms. At the same time, some co-operatives keep to their roots, remaining collectively organized and monitored. Which are the driving forces behind these diverging trends? Which solutions do the various types of co-operative chose when it comes to ownership and financing, management and control, product and market strategies, etc? What will agricultural co-operatives look like in the years to come, and why so?” See <http://www.esf.org/euresco/04/sc04171>

- *International Co-operative Forum: Competitive Advantage of the Co-operatives' Networks - How should the co-operative network and its governance structures be designed to be competitive within the current framework?* 7 – 9 September 2004, Westfälische Wilhelms-Universität Münster, Germany. The programme sets out the intention of the conference.



“At the beginning of the 21st century new technologies and globalisation make the organisation of firms meet new challenges. Companies reduce their vertical range of manufacture, their boundaries break up and they increasingly operate in networks. Virtual size, realised through co-operations, becomes more important. For co-operatives this is a chance as well as a risk: a chance because co-operatives gain in importance – a risk because competition is intensifying. The 15th International Co-operatives Forum (ICF) addresses these chances and risks. A program of top-class speakers will forecast the main future trends of the organisation of co-operations and co-operatives”. See <http://www.wiwi.uni-muenster.de/~06/igt/>

- *Colloquium – 100 Years Co-operative Credit Societies Act, India, 1904 – A worldwide applied model of co-operative legislation* 10 – 12 September 2004, Institute for Co-operation in Developing Countries, University of Marburg, Germany. A specialist seminar focused on the role one co-operative legislative model has played in the developed of the co-operative movement throughout the world. Contact Prof Hans Münkner muenkner@wiwi.uni-marburg.de
- *How can co-operative enterprises empower communities in a global economy?* 4 – 5 September 2004 UK Society for Co-operative Studies Annual Conference, Leicester University. Contact Richard Bickle richardbickle@cooptel.net
- *Third Asia Pacific Co-operative Research Conference* – 30 November 2004, Chiangmai, Thailand. The conference will address three main themes: Widening the areas and scope of Co-operative Action; Co-operative Governance and Globalization and Role and Dynamics of Women's Co-operatives. For more information please contact P Nair, ICA ROAP Communications Officer nair@icaroap.co-op or Madhav V. Madane mvmadane@pne3.vsln.net.in

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