



ICA Digest

Issue 47

March 2006

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www.ica.coop

Take a stand: Make gender equality a reality

Every year on March 8 - International Women's Day - the international community and the co-operative movement put the spotlight on gender equality.

This year, the joint message of the ICA Gender Equality Committee and the ICA President, "Take a stand: Make gender equality a reality", underlined the need to live up to the commitments made to give increasing opportunities to women in decision-making at all levels.

The ICA says, "We must ensure that women assume leadership roles for the benefit of the movement".

Gender equality is one of the ICA's fundamental organisa-

tional aims. In 2000, the ICA Board adopted the ICA Strategy for Promoting Gender Equality. It acknowledged issues and challenges, and adopted concrete targets including those for women co-operators in decision-making positions. "An equal sharing of responsibilities between women and men is not only a way to put into practice our values and principles and bring them alive, but is an essential element in promoting co-operative excellence in all fields - social and economic."

The message, "Take a Stand: Make Gender Equality a Reality" is available for downloading from the ICA www.ica.coop. See also pages 17-19.



"..An equal sharing of responsibilities between women and men is not only a way to put into practice our values and principles...but is an essential element in promoting co-operative excellence in all fields - social and economic...."

Meet ICA's leading women

The present ICA Board has more women representatives than ever - 5 of the 20 Board members are women. There is one woman from each of the ICA's regions plus the President of the European region of the ICA.



Pauline Green - UK



Gun-Britt Mårtensson - Sweden



Lourdes Ortellado
Paraguay



Aba Smith
Ghana



Rahaiah Binti Baهران
Malaysia

From the editor's desk



Garry Cronan
Editor

Welcome to the latest edition of the *ICA Digest*.

Our focus this month is on gender equality. We celebrate the contribution of women to the international movement. However, much more needs to be done to acknowledge women's contribution and ensure greater equality in our representative structures.

We also report on the continuing regionalisation debate. Governance is obviously at the heart of any

democratic organisation, so it is not surprising that such matters are receiving considerable attention.

However, the ICA has also been developing many new global initiatives over the last few months and these are reported on.

This issue also contains several reports from our sectoral organisations and our regions. Much is happening at this level of the ICA as well. Initiatives include poverty reduction,

Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR), business development and research facilities to name a few. As well we report on a number of new publications and review two century-old co-operative news organisations.

All this activity demonstrates, once again, the diversity and strength of the global movement. As usual we would welcome any comments.

Garry Cronan

cronan@ica.coop

ICA Board

ICA Board meets in Brussels



The most recent meeting of the ICA Board was held in Brussels, Belgium on 6-7 March. The meeting was hosted by *Co-operatives Europe*.

As the Director-General has elsewhere reported, the main focus of the meeting was the regionalisation issue.

Apart from this matter and the related report of the Governance Working Group, the meeting dealt with several other matters.

These include reports on the *Global 300* project and a detailed report on the tsunami. These matters are also examined in detail in other reports in this issue.

The meeting considered several membership applications and dealt with some exclusions from membership because of non-payment of subscriptions.

It also received a report from its International Accounting Standards Working Group, as well as a finance report.



Paul Hazen, NCBA CEO
looking forward to welcoming the ICA to Washington,

Preparations well advanced for Washington meeting

The next ICA Board meeting will be in Washington DC, USA on 3-4 May 2006.

ICA has been invited to Washington by the representatives of the US co-operative move-

ment. The ICA Board meeting will coincide with a series of high level meetings and Leaders Forum of the US movement.

Recently elected ICA Board member, Paul Hazen believes the series of meet-

ings will offer a great opportunity for US co-operatives to learn more about the ICA and for the ICA to learn about one of the largest movements in the world.

Director-General reports....

News from the Director-General, Iain Macdonald, will appear monthly in the *Digest*. A special Director-General's page will also shortly commence on the ICA website.

This month, Iain focuses on the ICA Board meeting, which took place in Brussels, 6-7 March.

Question of regionalisation dominates

Much of this board meeting was dominated by the ongoing regionalisation debate. The board agreed to set up 'Cooperatives Europe' as an interim legal entity which, in particular, will allow it to access European Union funding.

The regionalisation working group will, in consultation with the governance group, consider further courses of action for the restructuring of the European and other regions. This will be in the areas of roles and functions, financial resources, membership and legal status. After consideration by the board, these proposals will then go on to the regional assemblies later this year and be ratified by the General Assembly 2007.

The governance group also recommended that a special strategic planning meet-

ing of the board be organised in September in Stockholm. In my report to the board, I outlined plans for a strategic framework. The Stockholm meeting will obviously be key in future ICA development, affecting the regionalisation process itself as well as the operation of the board.

Plans were also outlined for expanding the role of the international accounting standards working group. With other regional groups forming, the importance of the coordination role of the global body was emphasised.

Tsunami update

Jan-Eirik Imbsen presented a detailed report and assessment on co-operative reconstruction programmes following the Tsunami disaster. Information on projects in Sri Lanka, Indonesia and India was made available and the report will be sent to all ICA members for funding opportunities. In-

deed many members had already very generously contributed to the Tsunami funds and this report also details how these funds were used. Such is the scale of the disaster however much more needs to be done.

Global 300

Garry Cronan presented an uplifting report on communications. Garry emphasised the importance of the website and highlighted how further developments would be taking place. Plans were also unveiled for a news aggregation site and further information was given about the increasing interest in the **Global 300** project. As part of this, attention was drawn to the first in a series of CEO forums which will be held in Imola, near Bologna, in Italy on the 18th and 19th of April.

DG's Report



Iain Macdonald

"I hope my new regular monthly reports will be seen as part of increased accountability by the ICA to its members"

Next steps for Regionalisation Working Group

Papers have just been sent out to the working group asking them to consider a variety of options which have been prepared in the four subject areas, quoted above in the DG report.

Particular attention will be paid to membership

and legal status and after a further physical meeting towards the end of April, it is hoped that the working group will present a series of recommendations to the board meeting in Washington, DC, USA on May 3-4.

Some of these issues have been unresolved for many

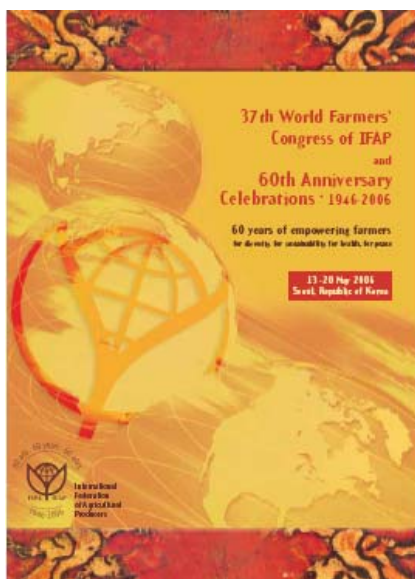
years so it will be of great credit to the working group if progress can be made.

The group does not underestimate the difficulty of the task, but is determined to see it through.

"...we are determined to see it through..."

Iain Macdonald

Agriculture Korean co-operative movement to host IFAP World Congress



Visit IFAP's website
www.ifap.org/en

ICA member the [National Agricultural Co-operative Federation](#) is set to host the 37th World Farmers Congress of the International Federation of Agricultural Producers (IFAP) to be held in Seoul, Korea 13-20 May 2006.

Chung Dae-Kun, who is chairman of NACF and also an ICA Board member, has expressed great pleasure in being able to host this important global event.

He said, "The globalisation of the world economy has been very disruptive to agriculture and rural communities in Korea, but farmers are doing their best to meet the challenge. For example, they are using IT in agriculture and focusing

on environmentally friendly farming in pursuit of not only answering the needs of customers but also endeavouring to maintain diversity and sustainability of agriculture". For further information on the Congress, [more...](#)



Chung Dae-Kun

Close working relationship between IFAP and ICA

Agricultural co-operatives are one of the largest parts of the international movement. They also constitute a significant percentage of the **Global 300** and continue to be very successful and competitive businesses.

It is obvious then that there are real benefits to be gained by a close working relationship between ICA, which represents the global co-operative movement and IFAP which represents the interests of

agricultural producers, including co-operatives.

This relationship is further strengthened through both organisations membership of the Committee for the Promotion and Advancement of Co-operatives, [COPAC](#). Jack Wilkinson, the President of IFAP is also the current chair of COPAC.

IFAP also has a special committee on agricultural co-operatives. This committee will be one of many

IFAP committees meeting at their World Congress.

ICA Deputy Director-General, Maria Elena Chavez and ICA Legislative Advisory Committee chair, Hagan Henry have both been asked to present papers on taxation and co-operative legislation at the next IFAP Committee on Agricultural Co-operatives meeting which will be held at the World Congress. See [IFAP](#) website for recent speeches by Jack Wilkinson and other information.



Jack Wilkinson
President of IFAP and current chair of COPAC

COGECA representing European agricultural co-ops

As an officially recognised representative body of all agricultural and fishery co-operatives in the EU, [COGECA](#) represents their general and specific interests vis-à-vis the Community authorities: European Commission, Council of Ministers, European Parliament, Eco-

nomic and Social Committee, Committee of the Regions.

COGECA works very closely with the Committee of Professional Agricultural Organisations in the European Union, (COPA).

COGECA/COPA has

some of the best statistics on agricultural co-operatives available - they are accessible on their website. COGECA is a member of *Co-operatives Europe* and collaborates closely with ICA's global agricultural sectoral organisation ICAO.



www.cogeca.be

International fisheries co-operative seminar held in Sri Lanka

Fisheries

A major seminar on the development of fishery co-operatives and resource management was held in Sri Lanka from 20-23 March 2006 at Goldi Sands Hotel, Negombo, Sri Lanka.

The seminar was jointly hosted by ICA's global

Leaders of Fisheries Co-operatives in the World. It was focused on the development of fisheries co-operatives in Sri Lanka. As well the resource management of the fisheries business.

This was the second seminar co-organized by the ICFO and NFFCS in Sri Lanka. Over 60 representatives from the re-

development of leadership in the fisheries co-operative sector.

The first seminar was held in November 1987. According to ICFO Secretariat, this project will be finished and a new project will be finished under the name of *Capacity Building Project: Fishery Resource Management for*



fisheries organisation, the International Co-operative Fisheries Organisation (ICFO) and Sri Lanka's National Federation of Fisheries Co-operative Societies (NFFCS).

The title of the seminar was *Training Project for*

regions' fishing industry attended the event, made possible through funding from the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries, under the Japanese Government's Official Development Aid program.

The main emphasis of the seminar was placed on the

Small Scale Fisheries will commence from the start of the Japanese fiscal year 2006. Further information Contact: icfo@zengyoren.jf-net.ne.jp

Agriculture

Reviving agricultural co-operatives in Afghanistan

ICA Asia-Pacific is supporting the Afghan Government in the formation of new co-operatives, particularly in the agricultural sector.

The government is seeking to revive co-operatives and so far 600 agricultural co-operatives have been registered in various provinces with the target of 4000 in the future.

The ICA Asia-Pacific Regional Director, Shil Kwan Lee and Special Advisor, B. D. Sharma recently discussed future collaborations with the Minister of Agriculture, Mr Ramin, in the areas of:

- capacity building of government officials and co-operative leaders
- training of trainers
- formulation of co-operative policy at a national level
- helping the ministry to reconstruct the Co-operative Training Institute

Draft co-operative legislation has been submitted to the Ministry of Justice for recommendation to parliament. The legislation is based on ICA's co-operative identity statement and incorporates vital details on definitions and principles of the co-operative model. The ICA



officials also visited two agricultural co-operatives and offered some recommendations for the effective longevity of the business.

Photo shows Shil Kwan Lee, B, D, Sharma with Afghan colleagues

Health

Health co-operatives active in Americas

Members of International Health Co-operative Organisation (IHCO) one of the ICA's nine global sectoral organisations are meeting in San Paulo, Brazil on March 28.



From left, UNIMED's Dr. Almir A. Gentil and FAESS's Dr. Ricardo López

They will also visit [Unimed do Brazil](#), one of the biggest medical co-operatives in the world. IHCO members will be welcomed by Unimed's President, Celso Correa de Barros, and IHCO's Vice-President, Almir A. Gentil.

On March 30-31, the workshop *Healthcare co-operatives in America: Present reality, necessity of the future* will take place in Buenos Aires,

Argentina. This meeting is jointly organised by the Federación Argentina de Entidades Solidarias de Salud (FAESS) and Unimed and sponsored by IHCO.

The main objective of this international workshop is to exchange experiences, generate synergies among the participating countries and health organisations and to strengthen the development of the co-operative health model in the Americas.

The meeting will tackle issues relating to the present perspectives and future de-

velopments of health co-operatives in the American region, the co-operative commitment with communities and the current challenges of public health in the Americas.

Speakers at the opening session include Argentina's Minister of Health, Dr. Ginés González; IHCO president, Dr. José Carlos Guisado; and FAESS president, Dr. Ricardo López.

Following the closure of the workshop on the 31 March, the IHCO board will hold their meeting.

More information can be viewed at: www.faess.com.ar/jornadasdesalud/ingles.htm



Visit ICHO recently updated website www.ica.coop/ihco

HIV/AIDS and Co-operatives

The UK Co-operative College has just published a report on HIV/AIDS and co-operatives.

It echoes the strong message of the ICA Strategy for Co-operatives Fighting HIV/AIDS (www.ica.coop/coop/hiv-aids/2004-hiv-aids-strategy) that co-operatives internationally have a role to play in the challenge of confronting the HIV/AIDS pandemic.

The report which is based on research and materials

provided by the ICA, the International Labour Office (ILO), and Canadian Co-operative Association, addresses the issues of why HIV/AIDS matters, why HIV/AIDS has a special impact on women and what is the economic and social cost of HIV/AIDS on co-operatives.

It also provides examples of how co-operatives around the world are addressing the issue. Copies of the report are available from the Co-operative

College UK, enquiries@coop.ac.uk.

This report on HIV/AIDS and co-operatives adds to material already produced by the ILO, *Guidelines on HIV/AIDS for co-operative board members*, and by the ICA Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific which is currently running a series of programmes to address HIV/AIDS in co-operatives in the region.



ICA meets with UNCTAD

The ICA Director-General, Iain Macdonald and Deputy Director-General, Maria Elena Chavez recently meet in Geneva with the Secretary-General of UNCTAD, Supachai Panitchpakdi, as part of a general consultation with Geneva based NGO's. on the role of

UNCTAD.

UNCTAD, the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development has the role of forging links between trade and development at a global level.

The ICA made clear to UNCTAD the key role the ICA could play in assisting

this process. It also raised the possibility of establishing a MoU between UNCTAD similar to that which the ICA has with ILO, FAO and UN Habitat.

For further information contact macdonald@ica.coop

United Nations



Supachai Panitchpakdi,
Secretary-General,
UNCTAD

European Commission - Responsible reporting conference

The European Commission is holding a conference on *Responsible Reporting* in Brussels, Belgium on 3 April 2006.

This conference is being organised by DG Employment and Equal Opportunities in association with European Sustainability Reporting Awards ([ESRA](#)).

The conference will examine the latest developments in CSR reporting and assurance in Europe. It will also provide a perspective on the views of stakeholders on issues

such as the impact of CSR reporting, its drivers, the trade-off between diversity and convergence in reporting formats, the identification of issues and indicators which are material to CSR performance and the efforts to ensure credibility of CSR reporting.

During the conference ESRA will award its European Award for the Best Sustainability Report. After the Co-operative Bank plc (2002), Novo Nordisk A/S, Denmark (2003) and Co-operative Financial Services (CFS) (2004), which company will receive the

ESRA Award for the year 2005? Will it again be a co-operative?

Nominees for the 2005 ESRA award are Adidas (Germany), Anglo American (UK), BBVA (Spain), BT (UK), EDP (Portugal), Kesko (Finland), Novo Nordisk (Denmark), Rabobank (Netherlands), Roche (Switzerland), SAS (Sweden), Suez (France), Storebrand (Norway), Dexia (Belgium), ESB (Ireland) and Migros (Switzerland).

Europe - CSR



Rainer Schlüter, Co-operatives Europe Director working on improving the visibility of co-ops in the European CSR debate

Seminar on Encouraging International Co-operative Business in the ICA Americas region

ICA Americas region is seeking to encourage the development of co-operative enterprises in the region.

A seminar on *Encouraging International Co-operative Business* will be held in San José, Costa Rica on 11-12 May 2006.

The objective of the seminar is to:

- To encourage com-

mercial integration of co-operatives in the region;

- To help this approach by building a platform to enable the exchange of information, and business opportunities between co-operatives in the region.

For further information contact Manuel Mariño direccion@aciamericas.coop

ICA Americas

ENCUENTRO INTERNACIONAL DE NEGOCIOS COOPERATIVOS

11 y 12 de mayo - San José, Costa Rica

ALIANZA COOPERATIVA INTERNACIONAL
INTERNATIONAL CO-OPERATIVE ALLIANCE
ALIANZA COOPERATIVA INTERNACIONAL

www.aciamericas.coop/

News about *Global 300* co-operatives



What are the trends affecting the largest co-operatives in the world? Would you like to work with the ICA to better understand these developments?

Contact:
Garry Cronan
cronan@ica.coop

As part of the **Global 300** project the ICA has begun to regularly monitor news reports on the activities of these co-operatives. We will be expanding this service over coming months as part of our new news aggregation and analysis services. Listed below are some recent reports about **Global 300** co-operatives.

- **DZ Bank**
[DZ Bank](#) is one of Germany's largest financial services organisation. It was recently reported (FT.com) that it is considering a partial listing see msnbc.msn.com/id/11928208/
- **Fonterra/Campina**
[Fonterra](#) is a New Zealand dairy co-operative - it is also the world's largest dairy exporter. [Campina](#) from the Netherlands, is one of the top European dairy co-operatives. It has recently been reported that these co-operatives will be establishing a joint venture to produce ingredients used by the pharmaceutical industry. See NZ's National Business Review for [more information](#) Also in other Fonterra news it has been reported, that an outside company is offering to pay money to farmer members of Fonterra "to put equity into farms at up to \$6 a Fonterra share, see www.stuff.nz. Farmers retain ownership and voting rights of the shares, while the outside company receives the value-added component of Fonterra's payout".
- **New European purchasing alliance**
A new purchasing alliance of European retailers has been formed. The new alliance will be the second-biggest retailers' group in Europe - together, the members of Coopenic have 10% of the European supermarket sales. It includes, Co-op Swiss, Switzerland; REWE, Germany; Conad, Italy; Colruyt, Belgium; and E.Leclerc, France. [More....](#)
- **Co-op Norden**
Co-op Norden has announced a 3% increase in sales for 2005. Sales for 2005 were 9.6 billion euro with a profit of 140 million euro. [Source....](#)

Windfalls or shortfalls - The true costs of demutualisation

What has been the true cost of the demutualisations which have greatly reduce the UK Building Society and financial mutual sectors?

This question is answered in a just released UK *All Party Parliamentary Inquiry Report*.

Among the main conclusions are:

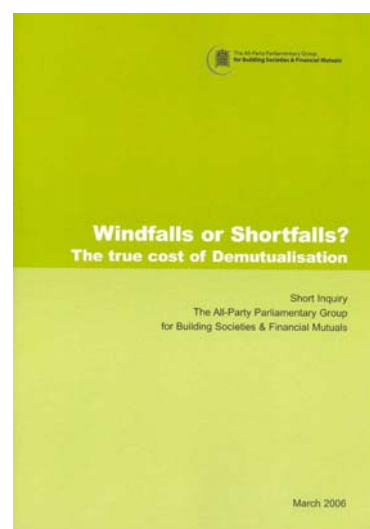
- UK Mutuals have largely outperformed their plc rivals, consistently topping "best buy" tables
- Previous demutualisations have had a largely

negative impact on customer choice and financial service provision in the UK

- The true economic value of members interests have often not been satisfied by the level of their windfall, suggesting that an independent valuation is essential.

For more information on demutualisation see

- www.mutuo.co.uk/
- www.australia.coop
- www.icmif.org/



"...the balance of the evidence.... was that mutuals, ..performed better than their plc rivals..."

Contact Matthew Ball at
m.ball@mutuo.co.uk for a copy of the report

Africa

“the development of an African co-operative facility has the potential to significantly support genuine local development...”



Co-operative Facility in Africa

The UK Government (DFID) has funded a 12-month ILO research project to assess the potential of co-operatives to create decent employment, economic activities, basic social protection and representation in the rural and informal sector of African economies. The ultimate objective is to pave the way for development of a Co-operative Facility in Africa.

The facility is seen as a means of networking among the co-operative apex organisations, co-operative HRD institutions and co-operative support structures.

Last September, a first conference was held in Nairobi, Kenya and eleven consultants were briefed to carry out case studies on co-operatives in their re-

spective countries.

These case studies form the basis of a report on the *Employment and Growth Potential of African Co-operatives*. Two other reports have been produced: a state of the African Co-operative Report and an African Co-operative Traditions Report.

The second research conference took place in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, 13-15 March 2006, at the UN Conference Centre.

The purpose of the conference was to provide the opportunity for the researchers, the African co-operatives and their development partners to present the reports and their findings and to discuss the co-operative facility and its future ownership by the African co-operative movement. Opening the conference,



Ethiopian Federal Co-operatives Agency Director, Haile Gebre said “the efforts exerted on the movement and the attitude towards co-operatives has changed dramatically. People especially co-operatives members, are becoming increasingly aware of the role co-operatives could play in improving their lives”.

ICA Director of Development, Jan-Eirik Imbsen who attended the conference said “the ICA and ILO attribute great importance to the development of a co-operative facility for Africa because of its potential to significantly support genuine local development”. Further information - contact: imbsen@ica.coop

Moshi University College of Co-operative and Business Studies set to become one of Tanzania’s leading universities

Moshi University College of Co-operative and Business Studies is one of Tanzania’s premier institutions of higher learning with a student body of

about 1000 undergraduates and 70 post-graduates. It has recently been announced that the Tanzanian Government has elevated

the Co-operative College to university status. It is expected that this may also later become a fully fledged co-operative University for Africa.

Banking



Eugeniusz Laszkiewicz
President of ICBA

Annual ICBA Seminar held in Sri Lanka

The Annual ICBA Seminar was held on 25 February in Colombo, Sri Lanka. This year its organisers were Regional Co-operative Banking Association for Asia-Pacific, SANASA Development Bank and People’s Bank from Sri Lanka.

The theme of the Seminar was *Corporate Governance of Co-operative Banks*. The event attracted a large

number of co-operators from the region.

The ICBA Secretariat General is planning to issue a publication of the Seminar presentations to share our insights on corporate governance of co-operative banks. The document will soon be available on the [ICBA’s](http://www.ica.coop) website.

Regional representatives of the ICBA met on the previ-

ous day for the Executive Committee meeting in Bangalore, India to discuss the ICBA’s communication and promotion strategy, activities of regional offices, its cooperation with ICA, as well as membership and subscription issues.

ICBA President, Eugeniusz Laszkiewicz and all delegates were grateful for the opportunity to get to know the specifics of the Indian co-operative banking sector.

From the journals

This month, in our regular review of the journals we feature some milestone publications, including the world's oldest news organisation, and the oldest co-operative newspaper.

Knowledge
Exchange

USA: Associated Press

Founded in 1848, Associated Press is the largest and oldest news organisation in the world.

It is a not-for-profit co-operative owned by its 1500 U.S. daily newspaper members. It has 3,700 employees working in more than 240 worldwide bureaus.

Every day more than a billion people read, hear or see AP news. In the United

States alone, AP serves 1700 newspapers and 5000 radio and television stations. Add to that the more than 8500 newspaper, radio and television subscribers in 121 countries, and you'll have some idea of AP's reach.

AP's mission is to be the essential global news network, providing distinctive news services of the highest quality, reliability and objec-



tivity with reports that are accurate, balanced and informed.

AP has received 48 Pulitzer Prizes, more than any other news organisation in the categories for which it can compete. It has 29 photo Pulitzers, the most of any news organisation.

<http://www.ap.org/>

UK: Co-operative News

Co-operative News is the oldest co-operative newspaper in the world - and also, arguably, the oldest democratically controlled paper. In September, *Co-operative News* celebrates 135 years of continuous weekly publication.

Co-operative News began life with £400 in share capital and a selling price of a penny. The founders intended the paper to be indispensable reading for members of co-operative societies, which were go-

ing through a period of rapid expansion at the time.

The Co-operative Press Limited, which publishes *Co-operative News*, is a secondary federal co-operative society owned by other co-operative societies and sympathetic organisations.

The press board has stated its determination that co-operators need an independent source of information to enable them to ensure accountability and participate fully in the affairs of their co-operatives and the wider-



movement. As well as ensuring an independent source of co-operative news, the paper prides itself on its crusading role. Early examples were advocacy of the movement's entry into the milk trade, and helping to establish the first national organisation for working class women, which became the Co-operative Women's Guild.

www.thenews.coop/index.php

Canada: The Atlantic Co-operator

The *Atlantic Co-operator* has a circulation of 17000 and is published nine times a year by Atlantic Co-operative Publishers.

The newspaper, printed in French and English, is distributed throughout Atlantic Canada and les Îles-de-la-Madeleine in Québec.

The paper is "Atlantic Canada's voice of people and community" and exists to promote community ownership. It covers all aspects of co-operation values and principles.

The paper began in 1933 as The Extension Bulletin. In 1939 it became The Maritime Co-operator and in 1977 it

became The Atlantic Co-operator, expanding its coverage to Newfoundland and Labrador. The paper includes feature articles, news, events and opinion pieces. This month's issue examines the state of play for the organics industry in Atlantic Canada.

www.theatlanticco-operator.coop



Part 2 - Tsunami one year on



Jan-Eirik Imbsen
ICA Director of Development

“...the role of co-operatives as partners in the national reconstruction effort was appreciated...”

Impressions from a visit to Banda Aceh - Jan-Eirik Imbsen

The trip to Lhok Sedu took us through areas that had been totally devastated by the tsunami.

One village that had been particularly hard hit and where the majority of the population were still living in tents, had put up a sign-board saying that smiling is obligatory in the village.

Here we met members of the Bungong Jeumpa Fishery Co-operative which lost about half its members in the tsunami. A new palung was high on their list of priorities.

A training event was taking place when we arrived for members of the Kami Sepakat Women Credit Co-operative. The members are mostly tsunami widows taking care of tsunami orphans. Some are members also of the Bungong Jeumpa Co-operative. This co-operative will also receive support to carry on its activities.

Before I left Banda Aceh, I was also able to visit other co-operatives that will receive assistance. These

co-ops are dealing with agriculture and distribution.

In the co-ops that I visited I saw the same determination to work for its members and their community. What struck me in all those societies was their mentality in their approach to the assistance offered; a surprising modesty in expressing needs and strong determination to contribute themselves.

Before the flow of external aid, families and communities are already the first to restore their own livelihoods and renovate their dwellings, and external agencies should only play a supportive role.

With so many (close to 160 NGOs still working in Aceh), we need to understand possible long term implications in terms of inadvertent creation of dependency, apathy, petty rivalries internally, and competition externally.

Local initiatives and local resources must take priority.

building peace and democracy. We believe that co-ops are particularly suited to drive such a process.

From Banda Aceh, I went to Medan to participate in a seminar on co-operative reconstruction in Aceh and Nias. The seminar was attended by co-operators from the stricken areas, as well as government officials from Jakarta, North Sumatera and Aceh.

Dr Choirul Djahhari who had been the government's coordinator for reconstruction in Aceh prior to becoming Deputy Minister for Co-operatives represented the central government. He was very appreciative of the role that co-operatives can play in the rehabilitation and reconstruction work.

This meeting brought together people from different parts destroyed by the tsunami and gave them the opportunity to share experiences. The plea to not forget the people of Nias who, in addition to being hit by the tsunami, also experienced an earthquake shortly after, made a strong impression.

Before I left Indonesia, I had the opportunity to meet the State Minister for Co-operatives, Small and Medium Enterprises, Mr Suryadharma Ali and his three Deputy Ministers.

The role of co-operatives as partners in the national reconstruction effort was acknowledged as was the need to let them work without government interference.

During my visit, I was encouraged to see the co-operative principle of concern for community and the co-operative value of caring and sharing being practised. Given the history of armed conflict and displacement in Aceh, development programming in this area must also go hand in hand with



Speakers at the seminar in Medan on Co-operative reconstruction in Aceh and Nias

Tsunami update provide to recent ICA Board meeting

Jan-Eirik Imbsen, ICA Director of Development, presented a detailed report on co-operative reconstruction programmes following the Tsunami disaster to the Board at the meeting in Brussels, 6-7 March.

Information on projects in Sri Lanka, Indonesia and India was made

available.

ICA's main focus has been on longer term reconstruction projects based on a comprehensive needs assessment. A report detailing this approach has been prepared and pilot reconstruction identified.

The report was circulated to Board members. This report will be sent to all

ICA members for information and possible funding opportunities.

Jan-Eirik also outlined in his report to the Board lessons learnt in the co-operative response to the disaster. These included the need for greater coordination of effort among international co-operative agencies and the need to fully engage with local affected communities

Tsunami update

“..some key lessons have been learnt..”

Development

How can co-operatives contribute to development?

Mervyn Wilson, Principal of the UK's Co-operative College seeks to answer this question.



“The majority of workers in the world today are in the informal economy. They have no choice in the matter. They get whatever work they can. It may be hazardous; it may mean they cannot spend time with their families; it may not match their skills and it almost certainly will not provide earnings much above subsistence level.

Informal economy workers rarely benefit from labour inspectorates or

social security safety nets. And because they do not have an organisation, they have no representation in the decisions that impact on their lives.

Co-operatives and trade unions offer an alternative. A joint project of the International Labour Organisation, the International Co-operative Alliance and the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions has been promoting this approach.

So far, SYNDICOOP has been operating in Africa, but a new publication has distilled the SYNDICOOP model for global use. Published by the Co-operative College, UK, on behalf of the SYNDICOOP coalition, it is a tool for co-opera-

tives and trade unions to help them organise informal economy workers.

The manual, called *Let's organize!*, has been written by Stirling Smith of the Co-operative College. He explains the philosophy behind SYNDICOOP: “Both trade unions and cooperatives are membership based organisations for workers. And because they are membership organisations, they can be accountable.

This is a crucial difference for many NGOs. All the development plans to achieve the Millennium Development Goals will come to nothing unless people are empowered - and the major organisational forms available to the working poor are co-operatives and trade unions.”



Mervyn Wilson,
Principal of the UK Co-operative College

A PDF version of *Let's Organize!* will be available on the Co-operative College website from the end of March www.co-op.ac.uk

New study on co-operatives and fair trade underway

The UK Co-operative College was recently successful in gaining EU project funding to explore the relationship between co-operatives and fair trade in Europe. The project, called *Co-operation, Social Responsibility and Fair Trade*

(COSRAFT), was based on partnership between the College, the Swedish Cooperative Centre, HIVA at the University of Leuven in Belgium, and CTM Altromercato from Italy, with support from the ICA. This initiative builds on an earlier COPAC Open Forum on Fair Trade.

Stirling Smith
Author of several UK
Co-op College publications
on co-operatives



Fair trade

Youth

building
co-operative
futures

4th Annual International Youth Conference

24-27 May 2006

Manchester & Rochdale, UK

The Fourth Annual International Youth Conference will be held in the UK, 24-27 May 2006.



Participants at the last International Youth Conference in Canada in 2003

The Co-operative College, with support from the UK co-operative movement, is hosting the conference in Manchester and Rochdale,

the birthplace of the international co-operative movement.

Participants are expected

from Europe, Africa, Asia and North America. It's a unique opportunity to learn from young co-operators, swap ideas and stories of co-operation in action and see the way young people have made a difference.

The conference will comprise activities, workshops, plenary sessions, and key note speakers, as well as study visits and social events. Speakers include: Gareth Thomas MP, Parliamentary Under Secretary of State at the UK Government Department of International Development; Erica Kyere, Information Offi-

cer, Kuapa Kokoo, Ghana; and Edgar Comeros, WCCOU, Afghanistan.

"A billion people live in extreme poverty, earning less than \$1 a day. Collective action through co-operatives offers the most effective tool for ending poverty... This conference will show how young people have made a difference and are getting involved."

Further information email: bcf@co-op.ac.uk or visit www.co-op.ac.uk or www.bcics.uvic.ca/youthzone

Young co-operators and the Global Village

The [Global Village](#) is looking to work with the ICA Youth Network to participate in a festival, hosted by the Woodcraft



Folk. Delegates at the XXIIIth Congress of the

International Falcon Movement (IFM) listened enthusiastically as Woodcraft Folk chair, Tamsin Pearce, outlined the plans for the event. "It will be 60 years since the Woodcraft Folk last hosted an IFM event", said Tamsin, "...and we are really excited about the prospect of young people from as many as 50 countries coming to Britain to take part in this camp".

The festival will be held in Britain in summer 2006 (29 July – 9 August) and co-operatives will be one of the major themes for the event. Activities will include simulation games on trade, governance, co-operatives and gender equality. Fair Trade and Truck Stop will run as youth co-operatives on the festival site.

[Woodcraft Folk](#) is a UK educational organisation for young people - its aims include peace and co-operation.

Woodcraft and the Global Village project

The Global Village project is being undertaken by the Woodcraft Folk on behalf of the International Falcon Movement (IFM-SEI). This project aims to empower young people to become actively involved in achieving the Millennium Development

Goals. Through the Global Village programme, young people will explore ways in which such a human-centred, democratic approach to future peace, development, and justice can be constructed by children and young people.



The [Woodcraft Folk](#) is part of the [International Falcon Movement](#) (IFM-SEI), around the world.

The ICA Gender Equality Committee

The Gender Equality Committee ([ICA GEC](#)) is one of the ICA's four global Thematic Committees.

It promotes equality between women and men and gender integration in the co-operative movement

and society.

The Committee has been active in shaping ICA priorities. It proposed an ICA Strategy for Promoting Gender Equality (2000) and an ICA Strategy for Co-operatives Fighting HIV/AIDS (2004), both of which were

adopted by the ICA Board.

The Committee has also been active in collecting gender disaggregate statistics to map the situation of women in the co-operative movement. Its secretary is Maria Elena Chavez Hertig chavez@ica.coop

Gender



Leadership Training Manual for Women Leaders of Co-operatives

This training manual was developed jointly by the ICA Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific through its Regional Women's Committee, and the International Labour Office (ILO).

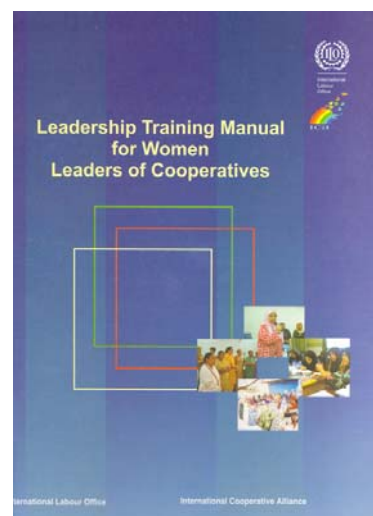
It is designed to be used by co-operative trainers and aims at facilitating gender equity and equality

at all levels of co-operatives. The manual consists of seven modules, comprising several units, and draws upon existing ILO tools on gender analysis, equality, and development.

The topics broadly cover fundamentals of co-operatives, gender sensitisation and self transformation, leadership, coping with chal-

lenges, organisation and enterprise management.

ISBN: 92-2-117066-7, International Labour Office, 2005, pp 394.



ICA America issues statement in support of women

On this year's International Women's Day, ICA Americas took the opportunity to issue a statement.

The statement reminded co-operators of the commitments taken by governments in the United Nations Beijing Platform for Action. ICA Americas called on co-operators to push the implementation

forward by fighting against sexual discrimination, promoting economic and social opportunities and improving the condition of women around the world.

The third ICA Americas meeting of Women will take place at the time of the Americas Regional Assembly in Lima Peru, in August.

Contact: gen-ero@aciamericas.coop



Active Asia-Pacific Women's committee

ICA's Asia-Pacific region has a very active and effective Women's Committee. The committee is chaired by ICA Board member Rahaiah Baheran from Malaysia. The main activities for 2006 include a meeting of the

ICA Regional Women's Committee in Colombo, Sri Lanka in August along with a conference which will focus on the committee's project of *Collection and establishment of gender disaggregated data in co-operatives*.

Savitri Singh, since March 2002, ICA - Asia & Pacific Gender Programme. Advisor



International Women's Day special

Interview with ICA Gender Equality Committee Chair - Stefania Marcone

Stefania Marcone is the recently elected chair of the Committee. Prior to this she was a very active member of the ICA Board. She retired from the Board at the 2005 ICA General Assembly in Cartagena, Colombia. She was interviewed for the **Digest** late last year prior to her retirement from the ICA Board.

Digest: How did you get involved in the co-operative movement?

SM: "...it's a nice story...the first job I had was in a national bank...[and] to be frank with you, despite the fact

So started my involvement in a national apex organisation.

Over the years I have had the privilege to work with four national presidents, many board members and managers, national associations, regional co-operatives, members...co-operators, women and men, who have contributed to making Legacoop (and its member co-operatives) a relevant actor at local, national and international level."

Digest: Tell me something about your work at Legacoop?

SM: "Legacoop represents over 15,000 co-operatives active in almost all the economic sectors, with over 400,000 employees and more than 7 million members. I am in charge of the International Relations Office.

In recent years the board has decided to also focus on promoting the internationalisation process of our member co-operatives.

We are trying to support them in establishing relations with national governmental departments and organisations devoted to this goal - embassies, chambers of commerce, local authorities and so on...

We are focusing on some geo-political areas of interest. The aim is to have a common seat of discussion

and information exchange on these issues, as well as promoting the exchange of experience among the most internationalised co-operatives and those who have recently started to look at foreign markets. "

Digest: Tell me about your involvement with the ICA

SM: "I was elected the first time in 1997. I was really astonished by my electoral results showing the trust many colleagues from all over the world had in me, an outsider...I remember when Mr. Barberini, President of Legacoop at that time, called me saying that in line with the decision of the ICA Board, and the strenuous support of the only woman member of the board at that time, Mrs. Raija Itkonen, and the [support of the] Women's Committee and its Chairperson, Mrs. Katarina Apelqvist – he wanted to submit my nomination to the Legacoop Board, the Board of AGCI and Confcooperative for their approval.

I like to quote this, in recognition firstly of the trust he had in me...Secondly, I do hope that in future many presidents of co-operative organisations will provide a chance for their younger members...to understand the importance of the co-operative movement not only in their respective



Stefania Marcone speaking in favour of more gender equality prior to the ICA Board elections at the 2005 General Assembly in Cartagena, Colombia

that the job was good and also the environment, I felt that it was not my place. And so with nine colleagues we decided to establish a co-operative society...

One of the first decisions we took was to submit the membership request to Legacoop...it was 1987.

After an eight-month trial I was hired by Legacoop.

Stefania Marcone interview...continued

countries but also thousands of miles away, in developed and developing countries. To see directly with their own eyes the diversity and the uniqueness of the co-operative experience, the difficulties and the successes, the manifold issues at stake.

Of course over the years the world has changed, the co-operative movement has changed and also the ICA, which has made huge efforts to be able to respond to its members' needs and to reposition the organisation in the global scenario.

As ever...there is a crucial role to play for a multilateral global body like the ICA and we should all contribute to making it stronger and stronger, being a board member or not.

In the end, each of us belongs to a country, to national experiences and organisations but all of us are ICA members, so the ICA is our organisation, it is the common house of the world co-operators.

Digest: What about the question of gender equality in the movement?

SM: "If it is true that in the world there are almost 800 million co-operators, one can reasonably presume that half of them are women.

The ICA Gender Equality Committee, the board, the regional structures, the specialised organisations have made strong commitments and taken several actions toward the gender issues in the co-operative movement,

stressing not only that the promotion of gender equality policies and practices is a social obligation for co-operative organisations and enterprises that abide by the co-operative principles and values, but also that it makes good economic sense.

The programmes and initiatives carried out by the ICA at global, regional and sectoral level are manifold, however we should admit that we are far away from a true implementation of the ICA Gender Equality Strategy, which established concrete targets to be reached...

I do hope that the new board, the women co-operators who will be elected will put [the] gender issues among the first priorities.

challenge that we cannot lose.

In conclusion, we can say I think...that co-operation all over the world represents a tool for millions of women, to count [for much] in society and the economy.

But we should be capable of producing that much needed cultural change to remove barriers and obstacles that still persist at all levels.

Thanks to the work and involvement of many distinguished co-operators, women and men, a lot has been done, but it is not enough.

If it is true that we are affected by the societies in which we operate, it is also true that we are a powerful agent of change.

Let's try to affect the socie-

Gender

"If it is true that in the world there are almost 800 million co-operators, one can reasonably presume that half of them are women..."

Stefania Marcone



I know that much effort will be made at the national and regional level, but [you see] many women co-operators around the world look at the ICA with hope and trust, that the ICA can be an example, calling on its member organisations to commit themselves with stronger policies and actions. This is a global chal-

ties in which we live also on these issues as we have already done in other domains throughout the world."

At the recent GEC Microfinance Forum, left to right: Franciso Estevez (WOCCU), Leonard Roland (Oikocredit), Maria Elena Chávez Hertig (ICA-ICA GEC), Stefania Marcone (ICA GEC), Rahaiah Baهران (ICA GEC-ANGKASA), Gérard Leseul (Crédit Mutuel)

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to be paid by 31
March 2006.*

*Contact
chavez@ica.coop*

[Click here further 2006
ICA and related
events.....\)](#)

Copies of the ICA
Digest are archived
on the ICA's web-
site www.ica.coop

2006 Calendar of ICA events and related co-operative activities

6-7 April	COPA - COGECA Seminar, <i>Public perception of the Common Agricultural Policy – analysis and ways of communicating policy</i> , Brussels, Belgium. Contact: grazyna.las@copa-cogeca.be
18-19 April	ICA CEO Forum, Imola, Italy. Contact: Garry Cronan, cronan@ica.coop
21 April	ICA Audit and Control Committee meeting, Geneva, Switzerland. Contact: Guy Malacrida, malacrida@ica.coop
3-4 May	ICA Board meeting, Washington, DC, USA. Contact: Iain Macdonald, macdonald@ica.coop
11-12 May	Seminar on Encouraging International Co-operative Business in the ICA Americas region, San José, Costa Rica. Contact: Manuel Mariño direccion@aciamericas.coop
15-26 May	<i>Co-operative policy and law</i> seminar, ILO International Training Centre, Turin, Italy. See http://learning.itcilo.org/entdev/coop/
18-19 May	COPA - COGECA Seminar, <i>Reinforcing Agricultural Co-operatives in the New Member States</i> , Brussels, Belgium. Contact: grazyna.las@copa-cogeca.be
23-24 May	Seminar on <i>Influence of the co-operative sector in the development of the Public Policies in Latin America</i> , Panama. Contact: incidencia@aciamericas.coop
24-27 May	4th Annual International Youth Conference, Manchester, UK. Contact: UK Co-op College, Mervyn Wilson, mervyn@co-op.ac.uk
21 June	International Health Co-operative Organisation (IHCO) Board meeting, Stockholm, Sweden. Contact: direccion@fundacionespriu.coop
23-28 June	Peace and Co-operation Workshop, Vancouver, Canada. Contact Ian MacPherson, cluny@uvvm.uvic.ca
1 July	International Day of Co-operatives (celebrated on the first Saturday of July every year)
17-21 July	ICA Americas Regional Assembly, Lima, Peru. Contact: Manuel Mariño, direccion@aciamericas.coop
17 July	ICA Americas, IV Meeting of Parliamentarians, Lima, Peru. Contact: banca@aciamericas.coop
19 July	ICA Americas Women meeting, Lima, Peru. Contact: genero@aciamericas.coop
19 July	ICA Americas, Youth meeting. Contact: genero@aciamericas.coop
19 July	ICA Americas, Universities Network meeting. Contact: genero@aciamericas.coop
27-30 July	2006 World Credit Union Conference, Dublin, Ireland. See www.woccu.coop/
14 Aug	Meeting of Regional Co-operative Banking Association for Asia-Pacific, Colombo, Sri Lanka. Contact: Shil-Kwan Lee, sklee@icaroap.coop
17 Aug	ICA Asia Pacific Co-operative Forum, Contact: Shil-Kwan Lee, sklee@icaroap.coop
18 Aug	7th ICA Asia-Pacific Regional Assembly, Colombo, Sri Lanka. Contact: Shil-Kwan Lee, sklee@icaroap.coop
22-23 Aug	ICA Asia-Pacific Co-operative Research Conference, Colombia. Sri Lanka. Contact: Akira Kurimoto, akira.kurimoto@jccu.coop
2-6 Oct	ICA Africa Regional Assembly, Arusha, Tanzania. Contact: Ada Suleymane Kibora, skibora@icaafrica.coop
19-22 Oct	ICA Research Conference, Dourdan, France. Contact: Caroline Naett cnaett@entreprises.coop or Yohanane Stryjan Yohanane.Stryjan@sh.se
25-29 Oct	International Economic and Social Forum , Lyon, France. Contact: Jacques Terrenoire,
6-8 Nov	Gender Integration in co-operatives -- 10 Years before and after", Tagaytay City, Philippines. Contact: Savitri Singh, savitrisingh@icaroap.coop
8 Nov	Meeting of the ICA Communications Committee, Manchester, UK. Contact: Garry Cronan,