



ICA Digest

Issue 58

October 2007

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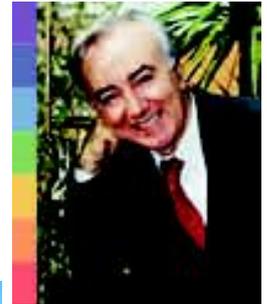
Co-ops show flair for innovation: ICA General Assembly 2007

Co-operatives will be urged to think creatively at the ICA General Assembly in Singapore, 14-19 October, 2007.

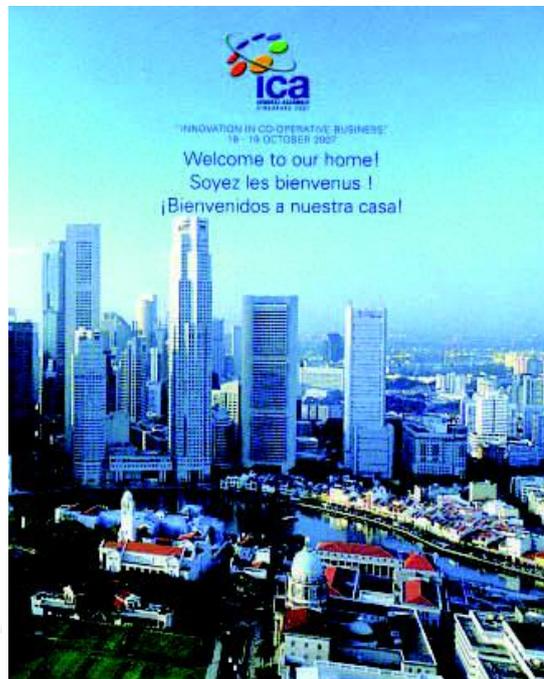
The theme *Innovation in Co-operative Business*, challenges the sector to be inventive and responsive in an era of globalisation, regional insecurity and environmental degradation.

"Innovation is the basis of co-operative survival - without this there is no future," says ICA President, Ivano Barberini. However, the process

of innovation is not without challenge, he goes on to explain. "The real changes are painful. It is not enough to develop something new without abandoning that which is not working. Innovation is about embracing new ways of thinking."



"Innovation is about the spirit of doing things together with a common sense approach and stronger co-operation between the generations."
Ivano Barberini



Singapore welcomes GA

Singapore's apex organisation for co-operatives, SNCF, is the host of the 2007 ICA General Assembly. This event builds on a history and a spirit of co-operation between the Singapore co-operative movement and ICA and ILO activities. Singapore's co-operative sector enjoys high visibility and support from senior level government representatives. At the recent launch of the 'AMK Hub' in Singapore - a complex housing a record number of NTUC co-operatives under one roof - Minister Lim Boon Heng said: "The primary purpose of the co-operatives is not to make money for the sake of making money. It is to make money but at the same time to deliver the best value for the customers". Lim Boon Heng will deliver a keynote address on day one of the General Assembly.



"This event will mark a milestone for the co-operative movement in the Asia-Pacific region."
Seah Kian Peng, Chairman SNCF

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Garry Cronan
Editor

“..communicating the co-op message more widely is becoming a key priority of the ICA....”

Garry Cronan

ICA poll

Over 80% of respondents to the icanews poll think co-ops are more socially responsible than profit oriented companies

From the editor's desk

Welcome to the fifty-eighth, General Assembly edition of the ICA Digest.

The ICA is in a period of change. The forthcoming General Assembly, reviewed extensively in this issue, may well come to be seen as a turning point for the movement.

From an internal perspective, delegates to the General Assembly will be considering major restructuring and membership changes. At the same time the Board is proceeding to implement corporate governance improvements.

The ICA also has a new mission and vision, one which champions the co-operative business model. In this con-

text the launch of the 2007 Global 300 and related programmes is expected to excite considerable interest.

General Assemblies however do not just happen; they require a large amount of work. In this issue we profile Maria Elena Chavez Hertig and Zulkifli Mohamed the two individuals who more than most have been responsible for organising this General Assembly.

Readers will also note that our communications efforts will be increased for the General Assembly with a range of new services for delegates and members.

Our featured interview is with ICA President, Ivano

Barberini. He offers a thoughtful reflection on the key role of innovation in co-operatives, the theme of our GA. This piece nicely complements the overview of the expected highlights by Iain Macdonald, the Director-General on the opposite page.

We also cover non General Assembly news, with reports on the social economy, forthcoming research conferences, and co-operative development activities along with regional and international updates.

As usual we welcome your comments on or contributions to the Digest.

Garry Cronan

From the polls

Are co-operatives more socially responsible compared with most investor-owned companies?

63% of you think co-ops are much more socially responsible than investor-owned companies.

25% think co-ops are more socially responsible, and 8% think co-ops and investor-owned companies are about the same in terms of social responsibility.

Ica.coop polls are conducted regularly. You can vote online. Visit the ICA homepage www.ica.coop to register your opinion on topics of current debate and concern to the co-operative community.

Have your say at GA: Resolutions

Three important resolutions dealing with carbon reduction, child protection and the DotCoop domain will be put to the General Assembly for consideration:

1. Climate change: Our co-operative commitment (submitted by Co-operative Group Ltd and Co-operatives UK Ltd)
2. Protecting our children against violence (submitted by the National Co-operative Union of Turkey)
3. Resolution on DotCoop (submitted by Co-operatives UK and National Co-operative Business Association, US)



Download the PDF of the resolutions:
www.ica.coop/calendar/ga2007/docs.html

Business innovators are our co-operative future

ICA Director-General, Iain Macdonald, previews the General Assembly and emphasises the importance of convincing a profit-driven world that the co-operative movement can help tackle global problems such as climate change, poverty and conflict through socially responsible business.

The theme of this year's General Assembly, *Innovation in Co-operative Business*, underlines the reality that ICA is at a watershed in its 112 year history. The very nature of the co-operative movement means we must keep reinventing, revitalising and refreshing our raison d'être. We have to keep reminding our members of the essential work we do, and through solidarity ensure the continuation of co-operative enterprise as a viable, exciting and modern alternative to the unfettered free market of the neo-liberal economy.

The General Assembly cannot ignore the growing debate on the environment and climate change, and our workshops will examine the theme from a number of perspectives.

The timely resolution from the UK will emphasise how the collective strength of the Co-operative Movement can be an enabling agent for real change. Not having profit as the bottom line gives co-operatives the advantage and potential to

tackle global problems such as climate change, poverty and conflict.

The GA will naturally see conflict resolution as a cross-cutting issue which is bound to be taken up by our Youth Conference.

The launch of the second

The challenge facing the Assembly is to convince national governments and international organisations of this reality.

As to the future, no doubt the General Assembly in 2009 will reflect on progress made since 2007. My prediction is that a fairer and more

equitable subscription formula will be in place. A strategic umbrella will overlay ICA, giving regions freedom of action within a global entity, and greater authority and influence for co-operation worldwide.

And in keeping with my tendency for plain speaking, need I remind that it's no good

talking to ourselves while the world implodes.

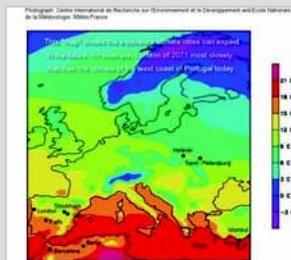
Above all, we must convince the rest of the world of the importance of the co-operative movement to their economic and social future. We need to spread the word about what we can offer the world in a time of crisis on many fronts including world peace justice, and socially responsible business.

2007 ICA General Assembly Resolution: Climate Change

The General Assembly will consider a resolution addressing the issue of climate change. Submitted by the Co-operative Group Ltd and Co-operatives UK Ltd, the resolution calls on co-operatives to reduce their greenhouse gas emissions and to motivate members towards a lower carbon lifestyle.

"Not having profit as the bottom line, gives co-operatives the advantage and potential to tackle global problems such as climate change, poverty and conflict."

Iain Macdonald



stage of our **Global 300** Project will arguably provide most discussion, and clearly represents the new direction of ICA. We now have serious data and statistics which challenge conventional thinking on co-operatives. The co-operative movement is at least the size of the tenth economy of the world which makes it a serious economic player on the world stage.

DG's Report



Iain Macdonald
Director-General

"The collective strength of the co-operative movement can be an enabling agent for real change."

You can read previous [DG's monthly reports](#) www.ica.coop/directorpage/index.html

GA 2007 Venue

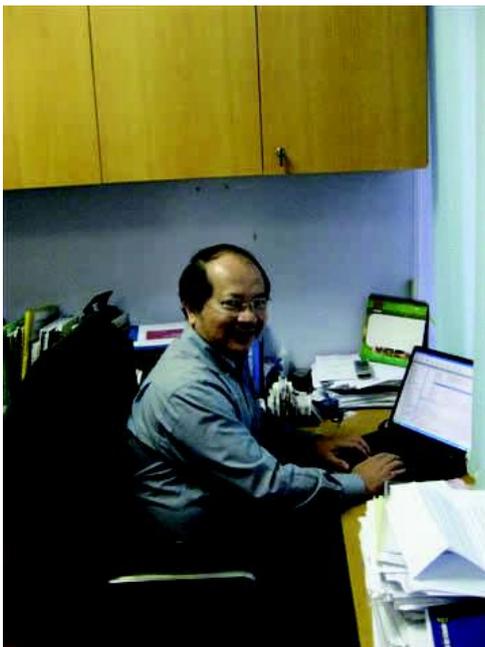
ICA General Assembly, Singapore, Raffles City Convention Centre, 14-19 October 2007

“..The 2007 General Assembly is shaping up to be the best ever.....”



Raffles City Convention Centre (RCC) is the home of the 2007 ICA General Assembly. RCC is an award-winning conference venue located in the heart of Singapore.

Everything you need to know about the venue and post-conference facilities including Amrita Spa, Asia's largest spa, and 70 restaurants, lounges, food courts, fast food restaurants and snack bars can be found on the GA website www.icasingapore.coop/



Profile: Zulkifli Mohammed

Meet Zul. He is the Singapore coordinator of the GA and Chief Executive Officer of the host organisation Singapore National Co-operative Federation (SNCF). Zul has worked miracles to ensure a successful Assembly, making sure that all delegates have a bed.

"With 2007 being a peak conference and convention year for Singapore, the Singapore Secretariat's ongoing challenge was to strive utmost to secure sufficient rooms for overseas delegates at the best possible tariffs," said Zul.

About Singapore

Area: 683 sq km/264 sq miles

Pop: 4.3 mill (2006)

Official languages:

English, Malay, Chinese & Tamil

Time Zone: GMT/UTC +8
(standard time)

Electricity: 230V 50 Hz

Currency: Singapore Dollar

S\$ or SGD

SNCF welcomes GA delegates

Singapore's vibrant co-operative movement is an important part of its social and economic fabric. The apex organisation for co-operative development in Singapore, and host of this year's General Assembly, is the Singapore National Co-operative Federation (SNCF).

SNCF Chairman Seah Kian Peng extends a warm welcome to delegates. "Thank you for giving Singapore the honour and privilege of hosting the ICA General Assembly 2007.

This event will mark a major milestone for the co-operative movement in the Asia-Pacific region. It offers

an excellent opportunity for the global co-operative community to explore and exchange creative and innovative ideas, which will inevitably have strong, positive spin-off effects. We are very excited to be given this major role in promoting the spirit of co-operativeness and growth in the co-operative movement."

GA 2007 Host



SNCF Chairman Seah Kian Peng

Singapore co-operates

Singapore's growing co-operative movement was established in the early 1920s at a time when money lending was a roaring business in the absence of banks or finance companies.

Between 1925, when the Singapore Government Servants' Co-operative Thrift & Loan Society started, and 1940, a total of 43 thrift and loan societies formed to cater for civil servants, teachers, customs officers and workers in the private sector. The co-operative principles of self-help and mutual assistance had well and truly taken root.

The National Trades Union Congress's launch of co-operative ventures in 1970 was the turning point for Singapore's co-operative movement and for the first time catered for working class citizens.

The *Co-operative Societies Act (1979)* revised earlier formative legislation, accommodating changing social and economic circumstances since 1925. The Act

also paved the way for the formation of the Singapore National Co-operative Federation (SNFC) in September 1980.

Today 72 co-operatives are affiliated to SNFC divided into four sectors, namely the Campus, Credit, NTUC (National Trade Union Congress) and Service co-operative sectors. Business activities range from insurance, property development and maintenance to health-care, environmental and thrift and loan services.

The co-operative movement in Singapore has been actively involved in ICA and ILO activities, with SNFC a member of ICA since 1985. In July 1999, ICA and SNCF

pledged to expand their co-operation when the ICA Asia-Pacific Business Office was established in Singapore. This led to a number of mutually beneficial developments for ICA and Singapore, with Singapore's co-operative leaders actively involved in the ICA Regional and Global Committees.

ICA is delighted to have the Singapore National Co-operative Federation (SNCF) host this year's General Assembly.

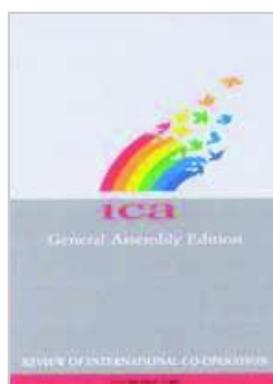
Read more background on Singapore in this year's ICA Review of International Co-operation www.ica.coop/publications/review/2007_issue1.pdf

"Welcome to Singapore, welcome to our home!"

Seah Kian Peng
chairman SNCF



FairPrice one of SNFC's members



Today 72 co-operatives are affiliated to SNCF - this includes two co-operatives which are included in the Global 300:

- NTUC Income
- FairPrice

GA 2007 Member Benefits



Garry Cronan

The meeting programme, documentation and speakers' biographies can be found on the ICA website in the ICA calendar.

[www.ica.coop/
calendar/ga2007/
index.html](http://www.ica.coop/calendar/ga2007/index.html)



ILO Director-General, Juan Somavia, and ICA President, Ivano Barberini earlier in the year. The ILO will be represented at this year's GA by José Manuel Salazar-Xirinachs and Hagen Henry

The people's GA: value-adding through networking

As the General Assembly draws near, it is timely to take a moment and reflect on what draws hundreds of co-operators from around the globe to this exciting biennial event.

ICA Director of Communications, Garry Cronan, says people attend because the co-operative movement is a people's movement and the General Assembly provides a fantastic way to meet other, like-minded, people.

"As well as being a great way to access leading co-operative thinkers, the GA offers abundant networking opportunities and the chance to discuss current trends and issues of importance to the global co-operative movement.

The GA brings the regions *and* the people,

face-to-face, to exchange views. "We are always saying that co-operation between co-operatives is one of the most important co-operative princi-

ples and the GA is a way to facilitate this dialogue and exchange of views.

Where else would you get the opportunity to walk along a corridor and bump into some of the key co-operative thinkers in the world!

"For those who can't attend in person, we have developed a variety of communication tools to access information flowing out of the event. As well as producing a daily newsletter in hard-copy, we've launched *GA Online*, an interactive website with audio and video clips, meeting documents and an electronic version of the newsletter."

"This new communications drive is part of our commitment to improve and expand on membership benefits," says Garry.

"We want to put communication at the heart of ICA activity. Now that we are building a strong evidence base through initiatives like *Global 300*, we have the opportunity to provide the co-operative movement with a higher profile through communications - not only getting the word out to members, but also to the world".

"The General Assembly gives members the opportunity to shape and determine the future direction of

the ICA," says ICA President Ivano Barberini. "GA 2007 will mark the end of a long process of reflection on our structure, and the functions of each part, allowing us to move forward in a more strategic manner. A four-year strategic plan will be put forward at the GA, alongside possible changes to the ICA rules and membership subscription formula.

"The GA is a unique event for co-operators from all over the world to come together to share newfound knowledge and rich experiences and, with the active participation of delegates, to identify ways forward," he says.

"The General Assembly is one of the key moments for members to come together at a global level to physically meet each other and share experiences, learn about good practices, be inspired to put in place new initiatives or innovate in their current activities," says ICA Deputy Director and coordinator of the GA, Maria-Elena Chavez Hertig.

"It provides the opportunity to the ICA sectoral organisations and thematic committees as well as a series of other groups to organise



Maria-Elena Chavez Hertig

The people’s GA (cont.)

their meetings whether at the global or regional levels or even national levels. In Singapore, more than 50 events will be held in addition to the GA sessions themselves.”

“The breadth of the programme gives delegates unprecedented insight and participation in all areas of ICA activity.

As well as hearing from leading international co-operative thinkers on sustainable business development, co-operative business innovation, the way the commitment to social responsibility provides a competitive edge to co-operatives and how international accounting standards are impacting co-operatives around the world, important

ICA statutory business will be enacted, including three resolutions, on climate change, dotcoop and protection of children.

We urge everyone attending to take full advantage of the entire programme,” says Maria-Elena.

GA 2007 Member Benefits



Delegates in Colombia for the last ICA General Assembly in Cartagena in 2005



Organisers hope to repeat the vibrant events and global reach of the last General Assembly held in Cartagena in 2005

GA 2007

Behind the scenes: putting on a great show



Maria-Elena
Chavez Hertig

What makes a successful General Assembly? “Years of planning and a commitment to serving member needs,” explains Maria-Elena Chavez Hertig.

“Planning starts early to accommodate the wishes of ICA members to meet. Discussions with the host of the Assembly start more than

two years before the date of the Assembly and Singapore was no exception,” explains Maria-Elena.

“Issues of logistics, interpreters, equipment and social events have required detailed attention from both ICA and our hosts SNCF. The thematic content and selection of speakers have been addressed by ICA senior staff at the global and regional levels. There is also continuous contact with the sectoral organisations and thematic committees to assist in their meeting planning and to generate participant interest.

All ICA staff at the global and regional levels are involved in this major event in one way or another.

“The challenge is to identify a timely and important theme and then to ensure the process of registering is as easy as possible including programme updates and practical details about venue and accommodation.

“We keep in mind cultural differences and try to respond to individual needs. We are committed to providing all our members with individualised attention, whether it is advising them about what to pack or meal options, giving them arrival information or advising on security issues and tourists attractions or whether it is helping to set up meetings between co-operative

leaders and individuals. Our aim is to make the General Assembly in Singapore a very pleasant and constructive experience for all. We are all committed to this.

“We already have more than 900 participants registered and we anticipate final numbers to exceed 1000 participants. But we are still struggling with the number of women attending. The ICA Gender Strategy adopted in 2000 set the target for at least 33% women’s representation at General and Regional Assemblies, so co-operatives still have some work to do around this issue.

We strongly encourage additional registrations from women co-operators. The good news is that our youth co-operators in Singapore have reached a good gender balance with 48% of those participating being women.”



Patricia Vaucher
managing the GA
Secretariat

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Gretchen Warner
managing registrations

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Don't forget your badge - GA Registration

The ICA Registration Desk will be located in the foyer of the Raffles City Convention Centre on Level 4. Badges are required for the General Assembly sessions, the welcome reception and farewell dinner. Delegates are encouraged to pick up their badges and other meeting information as early as possible.

ICA head and regional office staff will be onsite to meet and greet delegates in the registration area.

Read all about it: GA communications hits new heights

GA 2007 Communications

A team of communication specialists from around the globe will come together in Singapore to ensure that the GA has the most comprehensive communications strategy ever.

"This year, we are expanding our usual offering of a daily printed newsletter, to include an online platform for GA news. Delegates can still look forward to picking up a copy of the newsletter, which offers, news, photos and interviews, in the lobby each morning. But they can also go 'online' to pick up other information," says Garry Cronan, ICA Director of Communications.

ICA Web Manager, David Griffiths and Felix Lozano from Wave Design, will maintain the GA online site, where you can find video and sound content as well as photos and written material.

A team of reporters will be onsite to report news as it unfolds. Cooperatives Europe Communications Director, Ray Collins, Suzanne Henderson and Melina Morrison, Associate Editors of *ICA Digest*, Peter Eneström, IHCO, and Greg Lucas will report news and canvas your views as well as conducting interviews with speakers.

Look out for our mobile film crew who will be getting short interviews and live commentary to be posted to *GA Online*.

ICA Asia-Pacific Communications Manager, P Nair, assisted by Suzanne Henderson, will edit the Assembly newsletter and make sure it is 'hot-off-the-press' in time

for breakfast.

"It's a total team effort and we really hope to inject some buzz into the event with the widest possible coverage," says Garry.

Speaking of 'buzz', Singapore based media consultants, *Buzz Communications*, will be disseminating news to the global media community.

"We also have a team dedicated to developing a media strategy for our **Global 300** launch," says Garry.

Richard Watson, Melina Morrison and Ray Collins are working with Garry Cronan on an integrated media strategy to promote the launch and tell the whole 'story' of the GA, not just the **Global 300**.

Hassan Kashif is providing Global 300 data support, with Graham Mitchell providing the IT backup.

ICMIF, a strong supporter of **Global 300**, has committed expertise and human resources for the launch of this year's **Global 300** list. Garry Cronan is delighted to have John Gully, Director of Communications from ICMIF, helping to disseminate media on the launch at the GA on 16 October, 2007.

For further details in relation to communications activities at the General Assembly contact Garry Cronan cronan@ica.coop



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Sommerson
Communications



Suzanne Henderson,
Sommerson
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Ray Collins,
Cooperatives Europe



P Nair, ICA Asia-
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IHCO

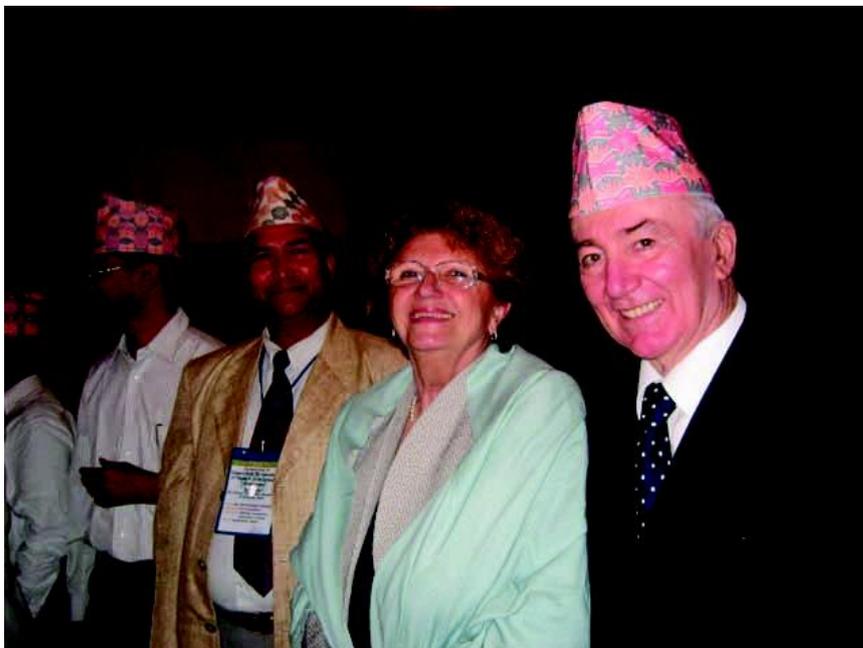


Richard Watson

Digest Interview: Ivano Barberini

“Embracing innovation—letting go of the obsolete”

ICA President, Ivano Barberini has visited over 90 countries from Asia, Africa and Europe to Latin America, Central and North America, since he was elected to the ICA Presidency at the 2001 General Assembly in Seoul. Ivano reflects on the challenges and opportunities for the co-operative movement after six years ‘on the job’ and the importance of innovation for the future survival of co-ops worldwide.



Our globe-trotting President with his wife in Nepal earlier this year

“Without self-help we cannot have a real and sound co-operative development.”

DIGEST: In your role as ICA President, you have travelled the world visiting co-operatives and spreading the co-operative message. What has inspired you in your travels? Is there common ground in the co-operative movement?

IB: “Generally it’s true to say that people are closer culturally and behaviourally and there is more commonality between societies. ‘Individualism’ is also being subsumed - although in some countries, society is based more on solidarity. Africa is one example.

This shift presents a new environment for co-ops. Co-operatives today have a great opportunity because societies need co-operative activity.

Co-ops are rooted in local communities. This is the main difference between co-operative enterprises and other businesses. The type of development that co-ops are promoting is self-help by the people - their members.

The co-operative concept of economic development is closely linked to improving the social fabric of people’s lives. Multinational corporations are not established with a local and global sense of social responsibility. They have a closed, purely economic concept of development even if, recently, some large capitalistic companies have shown a new sensitivity towards social responsibility and have introduced some consistent initiatives.

Everywhere co-ops need, for their development, some external conditions such as an

appropriate co-operative legislation, a positive social and political environment, linked to some internal factors such as an effective entrepreneurial strategy, good leadership and good management, a strong identity, an active membership and the customers’ loyalty.

In some countries, particularly in Africa but also in other regions, co-operatives are still trying to overcome a bad reputation caused by several reasons. First of all by the lack of independence from governments that has prevented a democratic management based on the active participation of the members of co-operatives. Government control of co-operatives also limits their ability to innovate. The international institutions (ILO, UN, EU and others) give some positive acknowledgements and some national governments encourage and support the co-operative role and development.

A final aspect I want to highlight is the need for stronger co-operation between co-operatives from the northern and the southern parts of the world, focused on development.

Without self-help, we cannot have a real and sound co-operative development. However, in Africa, for example, co-operatives need assistance to prepare young leaders and good managers to build effective enterprises.”

Ivano Barberini

DIGEST: *How important is reputation for the social visibility, economic performance and future of co-operatives?*

IB: "A good reputation represents a common, essential goal for the whole co-operative movement. We have experience that reputation is the result of individuals as well as a common responsibility of co-operatives at local, regional and global levels. Therefore the whole movement needs to be responsible for developing a strong reputation for reliability. Every co-operative should understand that the future of the movement depends on this. Where there are failures, it makes it difficult for future co-operative development.

The basic co-operative values and principles are inspired by ethics, democracy and good management. Therefore they represent useful guidelines for the governance and the reputation of co-operatives everywhere."

DIGEST: *The theme of the GA is Innovation in Co-operative Business. Why is innovation important? Are co-ops good at innovating?*

IB: "Innovation is the basis of co-operative survival - without this there is no future, but it is easier to talk about it than to make it happen. The real changes are painful. It is not enough to develop something new without abandoning that which is not working. To be truly innovative, co-ops need to abandon what is old and

obsolete. Innovation is about embracing new ways of thinking. In management, it is important for new leaders and board members to take up the challenge - to be prepared to learn new ways of doing things. Younger leaders can help innovate and they need encouragement and opportunities. This is something we can do better in the co-operative movement. Innovation is about the spirit of doing things together with a commonsense approach and stronger co-operation between the generations. If younger people have an innovative spirit and older people have experience - it's about mutual advantage. A good way to practise innovation is to create strong links between local and global issues. At the General Assembly, we'll be discussing some critical environmental issues from the local and global perspectives. Good practice is where families, social organisations and governments agree on the best way to manage contradictions and overcome problems.

Organisations like ICA and the regional and sectoral bodies are important for setting broad agenda - we are part of a global network. At the same time, co-operatives are implementing activities, strategies and programmes at the local level. In a growing number of countries, we have a history of inviting members to initiate 'good practice' in their own homes, such as energy and water conservation. What is important is that co-ops already have over 20 years experience in environ-

mental protection, which provides a sound basis for further innovation."

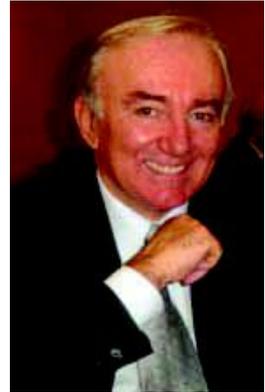
DIGEST: *What is the future for co-operatives around the globe? What are the main challenges and some of their strengths?*

IB: "The future of the movement is based on a clear understanding of the real needs of people, the members and stakeholders, encouraging their participation and working against the trend towards closed communities. By being inclusive we have to encourage people to have the freedom to think creatively and to be more innovative. Our movement needs to be stronger than ever to meet the global challenges of economic prosperity, regional security and environment.

ICA is in the process of renewing its structure - part of the development of the co-operative movement globally. Our Board has a responsibility to promote innovation in its own structure. A lot of excellent activities aimed at a stronger co-operative movement are being carried out by the global and regional offices.

Membership improvement is essential for the future of ICA. To be successful when recruiting new members, we have to have effective membership programmes. Co-operation among co-ops is one of the seven co-operative principles, but it is perhaps the most difficult to achieve. Unity and co-operation among co-ops are the most important aspects - as valid today, as 100 years ago."

Digest Interview (cont.)



ICA President, Ivano Barberini

"Innovation is the basis of co-operative survival - without this there is no future, but it is easier to talk about it than to make it happen."

GA 2007 Themes

Innovation in Singapore: themes and highlights of the 2007 ICA General Assembly



Iain Macdonald

“The theme suggests a new and vibrant approach and our agenda does not disappoint”

Iain Macdonald

The biennial programming of the ICA General Assembly is an opportunity to not only spread the co-operative message around the world and bring co-operators together for the value-adding benefits of networking and cross-fertilisation of ideas, but also to take stock of our achievements as a collective movement and to define the way ahead.

ICA has chosen to examine within a framework of innovation - the theme of the GA - a number of serious challenges affecting co-operatives.

“The theme suggests a new and vibrant approach and our agenda does not disappoint,” says ICA Director General, Iain Macdonald.

“Each of our sectoral organisations is involved with relevant and investigative examinations of their areas of work. Whether it is consumerism and the green agenda, agriculture and the WTO, housing and affordability or health as an alternative to the tyranny of the private sectors, we are at the forefront of the debate.”

ICA President, Ivano Barberini agrees: “In the globalised world, where the challenge is economic as much as cultural, the co-operative system must consist of visionary enterprises setting the objectives of achieving excellent business performances and building a stronger distinctive identity.”

The General Assembly will focus on building the business case for co-operatives (*Global 300*); addressing sustainability in co-operatives (including a resolution on climate change); and the future direction of ICA through the ongoing restructuring and governance process.

Ivano says, “Our commitment to make the ICA more effective has really improved in the period of time between the last ICA General Assembly, which took place in Colombia in 2005, and this



GA to be held in Singapore.”

“The International Co-operative Alliance is called to do its duty, improving its project, its role and its way of working at global, regional and sectoral level.”

Iain says, “Our destiny is to constantly renew. A major report will detail the latest version of this, indicating ICA’s determination to continually develop. The exciting changes promoted by Cooperatives Europe will be highlighted. So too, the work that has occurred in Asia-

Pacific and the Americas. Instead of being hidden, the problems in Africa will be presented and addressed.”

Ivano says, “Now in office for two years, the ICA Board has worked hard to make proposals to the Singapore GA. A workshop promoted by the Governance Working Group in Stockholm in September 2006, made the first step toward an agreed global strategy for the ICA. Helping the ICA to be a focused organisation, providing tangible benefits for its members, has been the main goal.

“Documentation produced by the Working Group triggered an unprecedented and serious debate within the ICA Board, thanks to RWG Chair, Alban D’Amours and his organisation. Reaching an effective and widely shared conclusion on new membership criteria and subscription formula is indispensable

to putting a new strategy into practice.”

On the vital issue of climate change, the resolution from the Co-operative Group UK will emphasise how the movement can take an important lead on this issue, demonstrating our collective strength as an agent for real change.



Alban D’Amours

Global 300 gathers momentum

The launch of the second stage of the *Global 300* Project will be a highlight of the General Assembly. Since the list's inception in 2006, there has been growing recognition of how important this data is to demonstrate the competitive edge of co-operatives and how they address a series of business challenges.

"One of the most surprising revelations since the launch of the first list of the largest 300 co-operatives and mutual businesses, is the sheer size of these organisations. They are equivalent to the 10th largest economy in the world and between them they share a turnover of close to one trillion dollars!" says Garry Cronan, ICA Director of Communications.

This year's list, launched at the GA on Thursday 18 October, will arguably provide most discussion and clearly represents the new direction of ICA according to ICA Director General, Iain Macdonald.

"From a basically simple idea, Garry Cronan has developed an increasingly valuable tool for use by our members in both an economic and social environment. Whether comparing co-operatives with one another, checking our social accountability and adhering to our values and principles or encouraging intercoop trade, this is an extremely valuable development."

"This year we have greatly expanded our financial analysis of the largest co-

operative and mutual businesses in the world. The data will tell us which ones are performing best and what sectors are competing most effectively in the global marketplace," says Garry.

Global 300 has been a highly cost-effective and sustainable tool helping to dispel some myths around the co-operative movement according to ICA President Ivano Barberini.

"The co-operative system is a very complex phenomenon. All too often, co-operatives are victims of warped information, carried out by people or organisations that ignore or mystify the facts."

The financial findings on the world's largest co-operatives has to date raised interest and amazement, as we saw at the launch of the first *Global 300* listing at the Responsible Globalisation Forum in Lyon, France last year.

"This work has been made doubly difficult because the largest co-operatives have adopted a number of different structures or legal forms. In its first stage, the *Global 300* project aimed to classify the co-operatives on the basis of their annual turnover. In addition to a more complete and precise statistical analysis, the work in progress will provide more qualitative information.

The use of additional parameters will allow us to more effectively highlight the performances achieved by co-operatives in all economic sectors," says Ivano.

Two new features of this year's *Global 300* programme are:

- A new (draft) measure of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR). Case studies and best practice examples will be unveiled at the launch.
- A new *Developing 300* list of co-operative businesses drawn from up to 30 developing nations.

GA 2007



Launch of the first *Global 300* listing last year in Lyon, France

Global 300 - National 100 lists

A number of countries are starting to develop their own *Top 100* list based on the *Global 300* methodology. At a *National 100* workshop on 16 October, speakers from the UK, France, Canada, Australia and US will discuss the benefits of creating databases of co-operative enterprises at national and global levels.

"The interest in this new, evidence-based approach to measuring the efficacy of co-operatives is testament to the success of the *Global 300* project," says Garry Cronan.



Jean-Louis Bancel, Chair of ICBA, spoke at the 2006 *Global 300* launch

GA 2007

.coop



Carolyn Hoover,
Director of Dot-
Coop Operations

Renewed commitment to .coop domain

On 1 July 2007, Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers (ICANN) renewed the contract for the .coop TLD. For those involved in the process, it was no small achievement. When the .coop domain was proposed in 2000 and launched two years later, it was entering uncharted territory. Accordingly the renewal of the contract is an appropriate time to reflect on the first five years of the .coop domain's operation and accomplishments, as well as the challenges that remain.

The international co-operative community supported .coop primarily to promote co-operative identity on the Internet. A .coop domain name immediately identifies the website as belonging to a company with a different focus. The strict verification process used by .coop ensures that domains using their

Better uptake of the domain name would help project the strength of the co-op business model more widely and help spread the message that co-ops are part of a global community of businesses with a similar structure and focus.

"As members of the co-operative community we need a renewal of the com-

of the co-operative business model by expanding markets and membership.

Internet business continues to expand and provides direct markets for co-ops around the world.

Use of .coop makes the job of identifying co-ops easier for consumers and for businesses looking for a co-



2007 ICA General Assembly Resolution: .coop

The 2007 ICA General Assembly will consider a resolution addressing the challenges for .coop. Submitted by Co-operatives UK and the National Co-operative Business Association the resolution calls for the co-operative community to promote greater uptake of the .coop domain.

operative business partner.

"Coop is one simple but effective way by which each ICA member and their member co-ops can promote co-operative identity and build an understanding of co-ops throughout the world," says Caro-



lyn. address are businesses that operate according to co-operative principles and values. But while around 3000 co-ops currently operate with .coop domains for their web identity and email, many eligible co-operative organisations have still to join the .coop Internet community.

mitment to expanding the use of the .coop domain that so energised the original proposal to ICANN in 2000," says Carolyn Hoover, Director of DotCoop Operations.

To this end ICA continues to spearhead support of .coop and Cooperatives Europe and ACI Americas have programmes to provide registration and support of .coop domains within their regions.

Promoting co-operative identity is the most effective way to increase the benefits

lyn.

.Coop is reviewing its structure to identify ways to move toward a broader-based, multinational ownership of .coop domain.

Midcounties Co-operative Society is providing the technical infrastructure for the domain. Expanding the ownership base is a natural step to involve more co-ops in .coop and to reduce the costs for future registrants.

Singapore GA - landmark for young co-operators

The ICA has long recognised the vital role played by young people in the co-operative movement. Not only do they supply an on-going injection of enthusiasm and ideas to today's leaders, but are also stretching their wings as the co-operative leaders of tomorrow.

ICA Youth Network was established at the ICA Global Youth Conference in Norway in 2003 to help young co-operators across the world connect and share experiences, and to provide an environment where they can learn more about the co-operative movement.

These objectives were promoted by ICA General Assembly in Norway, when it was agreed to have a Youth Representative on the ICA Board. Jo Bibby Scullion from the UK was the first representative. In 2005, at the ICA Global Youth Conference in Colombia, Juan Carlos Mejía Cuartas was elected Youth Representative.

The 2007 General Assembly will host to the 3rd ICA Global Youth Conference. The conference on 14-15 October 2007 is jointly organised by Singapore National Co-operative Federation Youth Committee and ICA Regional Youth Committee for Asia Pacific.

Dr Hagen Henry, Chief of the Co-operative Branch, International Labour Organisation (ILO) will give the keynote address *Co-operative Business Innovation through Youth* and Ms Elim

Chew, Managing Director of 77th Street Singapore, Founder of the Young Entrepreneur Mastery will speak on social entrepreneurship. There will also be presentations on youth employment and a Q & A forum. The closing address will be given by Mr Teo Say Hong, ICA AP Youth Representative and SNCF Youth Committee Chairman.

ICA global youth conferences, held in conjunction with ICA General Assemblies, have provided young people with an opportunity to network and share progress on their participation in co-operatives.

Such forums have created continuity for youth action and raised expectations on what is possible for ensuring broader participation of young

A second event, a *Global Workshop on University/Campus Co-operatives* on 16 October 2007 will provide the opportunity for all those interested in growing the movement of campus co-operatives through co-operative services such as bookstores and canteens.

University co-ops are widespread in the Asia-Pacific and actively contribute to enhancing educational and research opportunities.

The programme will include case studies from Japan, Malaysia and Canada.

More than 100 young co-operators from all over the world are expected to participate in each event.



Young co-operators at the 2005 GA,

people in co-operatives.

The Conference held in Cartagena (Colombia) in 2005 was a breakthrough in youth involvement. Singapore 2007 promises to be a step forward in strategic discussions on co-operative development and the role young co-operators play in that challenge.

Email globalyouthconference@sncf.org.sg for information on the Youth Conference and icas-ing@icaroop.org.sg for the Global Workshop on University/Campus Co-operatives.

GA 2007 Youth Conference



Tsubasa Nakamura, organiser of the events, ICA-AP Singapore Business Office



Juan Carlos Mejía Cuartas, ICA youth representative on the Board



Jo Bibby Scullion the first youth representative on the ICA Board

GA 2007 HRD



Yehudah Paz, retiring
as Chair, of HRD
Committee

Expanding role of HRD in co-operative future

ICA Human Resources Development (HRD) Committee will hold an executive committee meeting, a full HRD committee meeting and an HRD workshop in conjunction with the 2007 ICA General Assembly. The meeting agenda includes a report on the future of the Co-operative Learning Centre (CLC) which the HRD Committee has been working on for some time.

While the lack of a funding source has slowed progress on the CLC, Yehudah Paz, Chair, ICA HRD Committee says, "We hope that when we meet in Singapore it will be possible to make a formal announcement of the availability of funding for the CLC project."

"We have also been extremely fortunate in that our Indian colleagues of NCUI have maintained their commitment to initiate, operate and to finance the global listing and network of co-operative training institutions . . . on the CLC portal."

Professor Ian MacPherson, Chairman of the British Columbia Institute of Co-operative Studies (BCICS) - the CLC focal point - and Bhagwati Prasad, Chief Executive of the National Co-operative Union of India (NCUI), will report on plans for the future of CLC. All ICA member organisations are invited to send a representative to the HRD committee meeting.

Elections for a new chair, vice-chair and executive committee members will be held. Yehudah Paz will not be standing for re-election due to ill health while Dr Kim Jin-Kook will continue as Secretary of the Committee.

An HRD workshop on the theme *Towards the Future: How Can HRD Best Contribute to Cooperatives Today?* will be on Tuesday 16 October. The panel consists of leading HRD and co-operative practitioners including:

- Hagen Henry, Chief, ILO Cooperative Branch
- Seah Kian Peng, MP and Chair, Singapore National Co-operative Federation
- Ian MacPherson, Director, British Columbia Institute for Co-operative Studies
- Bhagwati Prasad, Chair, HRD Committee, ICA Asia-Pacific Region and NCUI
- Mervyn Wilson, CEO and Principal, Co-operative College UK.

Dialogue about HRD's role in the co-operative future is vitally important for the future work of the Committee according to Yehudah Paz.

Visit the Global HRD Network for Co-operatives www.hrd.coop/index.aspx

Housing



Mike Doyle, Chair of
ICA Housing

Housing sector tackles sustainable development

An ICA Housing seminar on 17 October at the GA will address the role that the co-operative housing sector can play in combating climate change. Kent-Olof Stigh, President of HSB, the largest housing co-operative organisation in Sweden, will discuss what HSB is doing to combat climate change. HSB Risksförbund, the Tenants' Savings and Buildings Society, develops, manages and represents housing co-operatives in Sweden. Gun-Britt Mårtensson, Chair of the Council for Climate and Energy Issues for the Swedish National Board on Housing will draw on her experiences and involvement in HSB Risksförbund to discuss solutions.

The Swedish National Board on Housing, Boverket, is the central government authority for planning, management of land and water resources, urban development, building and housing under the Ministry of the Environment. Boverket monitors the function of the legislative system under the Planning and Building Act, and proposes regulatory changes if necessary. To ensure effective implementation, Boverket also provides information to those engaged in planning, housing, construction and building inspection activities.

International accounting standards: actions undertaken

GA 2007

The impact of international accounting standards on co-operatives will be the focus of discussion at a panel presentation on actions undertaken by the ICA's IAS Working Group held during the GA on Friday 19 October.

Trish O'Malley, Co-ordinator, International Financial Reporting Interpretations Committee (IFRIC) of the International Accounting Standards Board (IASB) will deliver the keynote address.

The IAS Working Group was established by the ICA Board in December 2004 to work on the international accounting standards and promote recommendations on behalf of co-operatives to the international accounting standard setters, IASB (the London-based IAS setter) and the American standard setter FASB.

Since its inception the ICA IAS Working Group has met five times. The next meeting will be held on 17 October at the GA.

A key issue for the IAS Working Group is the distinction between equity and liabilities. This is particularly important for co-operatives because the member shares, which constitute co-operative capital, are at stake.

Currently the IASB and the FASB are going through a convergence process according to an

agenda adopted in 2002. Their goal is to reduce the differences between both sets of accounting standards and to define a new common standard.

A new approach to equities and liabilities was presented in a joint meeting between IASB and FASB in April 2007 in London. According to this 'loss absorption' approach, participation in losses is understood to be a decisive, stand-alone criteria for distinguishing between liabilities and equity.

This 'loss absorption' approach could be the answer to co-operative concerns, allowing co-operative shares to absorb losses whenever they happen, and as a consequence, be treated as equity.

A letter and resolution prepared by the IAS Working Group in December 2006 was sent to IASB and FASB Presidents in early 2007, urging them to consider the special features of the co-operative business form in the future development of IAS.

ICA IAS Working Group will continue to promote the co-operative position in the ongoing consultation process.

ICA IAS Working Group
President, Jean-Claude
Dettileux

IAS Working Group welcomes GA Delegates



Tricia O'Malley, Coordinator, International Financial Reporting Interpretations Committee (IFRIC) of the International Accounting Standards Board (IASB) and former IASB Board Member will join the IAS Working Group for an informal discussion on 16 October.

GA delegates are welcome to participate. Trish O'Malley will address the ICA GA on 19 October.

The impact of international accounting standards on co-operatives will be the focus of discussion at a panel presentation at the General Assembly



GA 2007 Research Conference



Lou Hammond Ketilson

Exploring innovation in co-ops: ICA research conference

The ICA's International Research Committee will host a one day symposium, titled *Innovation, Co-operatives, and Research: Considering the Connections*, at the GA on Tuesday 16 October.

Dr. Lou Hammond Ketilson, Chair of the Committee on Co-operative Research, suggests it is the "... unique combination of economic and social innovation active within co-operatives that makes the topic of innovation and co-operatives so complex, and so compelling."

"Typically, innovation has been defined in the business administration literature as a dimension of business strategy, where communication, adaptation, creative acts and learning experiences within organisations come together at the intersection of structural changes and innovative behaviour."

Dr Ketilson sees this juncture as offering opportunities for improved competitiveness and improved organisa-

tional efficiency. Others contend that, "When extended to co-operatives, the objectives and outcomes of innovation broaden out to incorporate additional goals such as social emancipation, a concern for the quality of the environment, more democratic governance, and personal and collective empowerment."

Topics such as, "*What are some of the most important innovations taking place in co-operatives today?*" and "*How can an innovative culture be encouraged within co-operatives?*" will be examined by:

- Ivano Barberini, ICA President
- Chris Clamp, University of Southern New Hampshire Graduate School of Business
- Garry Cronan, ICA Director of Communications
- Hans Dahlberg, former CEO of ICMIIF
- Yashavantha Dongre, Professor and Direc-

- tor, Post Graduate Centre, University of Mysore
- Lou Hammond Ketilson, Director, Centre for the Study of Co-operatives, University of Saskatchewan and Chair, ICA Committee on Co-operative Research
- Roger Herman, Centre for the Study of Co-operatives, University of Saskatchewan
- Ann Hoyt, Professor, University of Wisconsin Urban Co-operative Initiative, and former Chair, NCBA
- Jin Kook Kim, Agricultural Advisor and Sectoral Information Manager, ICA
- Akira Kurimoto, Director, Co-operative Institute, JCCU
- Ian MacPherson, Director, British Columbia Institute for Co-operative Studies, University of Victoria
- Kin Lian Tan, former CE, NTUC Income Insurance Co-operative, Singapore
- Robby Tulus, past AP Regional Director, ICA.



CICOPA

CICOPA shines light on industrial and service co-ops

CICOPA will hold an open seminar on industrial and service co-operatives on Wednesday 17 October to highlight and discuss the development of industrial and service co-operatives in the world in their various forms—as worker co-ops, social co-operatives or co-ops of individual artisans—and to show how important this phenomenon is within the co-operative movement.

Data indicates that this sector makes up a small percentage of total co-operative membership (between 3-10 per cent depending on the region) but a very high percentage of total co-operative employment (between 20-50 per cent). This makes the industrial and service co-operatives sector one of the main job creators of the co-operative movement, especially among the poor and disadvantaged.

The World Declaration on Worker Co-operatives, approved by the ICA GA in Cartagena, will be discussed including an adaptation of the Statement on the Co-operative Identity to the situation of worker-member and a call for the whole co-operative movement, government, trade unions and business organisations to contribute to the promotion of this co-operative form based on *ILO Recommendation 193*.

The seminar will attempt to define CICOPA's role within ICA in a phase of renewal. GA delegates are welcome to attend. Details are available on www.cicopa.coop or email Olivier Biron at cicopa@cicopa.coop.

NCBA awarded \$8million for cotton co-ops in Africa

Co-op Development

The Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, one of the world's largest private philanthropic foundations, has added *co-operative development* to its project portfolio, with the announcement of an \$(US)8m grant to the National Cooperative Business Association (NCBA), through its international development programme, CLUSA.

The grant will fund *The Cotton Value Chain Improvement Project*, a five year project to improve the livelihoods of 60,000 small scale cotton farmers in Mozambique, by increasing farmers' cotton yields.

"NCBA is enthusiastic about this opportunity from the Gates Foundation which allows us to apply our 54 years of international experience to help raise the incomes of small farmers in Mozam-

business partners Dunavant Mozambique, an international cotton trading company and GAPI, Sarl, a Mozambican financial services company that promotes investment in small and medium-sized businesses.

"We believe that the combination of NCBA's long experience in organising farmers, plus Dunavant's progressive management approach, production expertise and long-term commitment to the African farmer, and GAPI's unique approach to value chain lending in rural areas will create a successful model that can be replicated in other regions or countries," said Hazen.

NCBA believes that the best approach to improving small farmer incomes and productivity in isolated parts of rural Africa is to work closely with progressive companies such as Dunavant, which views African farmers as a crucial element to their



NCBA currently has 26 projects operating in 10 countries, helping to lift people and communities out of poverty. Its CLUSA International Program has been successful in empowering organisations - co-operatives, group enterprises, community health committees, community-based natural resource management organisations and others—to manage their own development in a participatory and sustainable manner.

Domestically, NCBA provides services to co-operative businesses in all sectors including agriculture, childcare, credit unions, finance, food, healthcare, housing, purchasing and utilities.

NCBA

National Cooperative Business Association ■ www.ncba.coop

bique," said Paul Hazen, President and CEO, NCBA.

"NCBA's co-operative development work focuses on organising farmers and building their capacity in production, marketing and business management," he said.

The project brings together the CLUSA International Program with

company's success.

Small farmers comprise 99% of all rural households in Mozambique and provide 95% of agricultural Gross Domestic Product (GDP). Cotton farming is the main income earner for some 300,000 rural households and generates thousands of jobs. The subsector generates nearly 40 million USD in agriculture exports per year.

"...The Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, one of the world's largest private philanthropic foundations, has added co-operative development to its project portfolio...."

Co-op capital

“...innovative approaches to capital raising to be discussed at meeting...”

Innovative capital raising for co-ops

How can co-operative enterprises raise capital? What are some innovative approaches to financing co-operative businesses and what alternative capital products are there?

Co-operative leaders from the USA, Canada, the UK, New Zealand and Australia are planning to meet in Singapore to discuss this crucial topic. Recent international events have examined capital innovation.

At the 2007 World Credit Union Conference (www.mra-services.com/clients/woccu/2007/)

[pag_con.asp](#)) held 29 July to 1 August in Calgary, Canada, Mark Genovese, CEO of the Maritime Workers of Australia Credit Union, provided insight into the prudential, commercial and legal challenges confronting 21 credit unions in Australia on entering the market to raise AUS\$100 million in tier one and tier two capital.

This capital innovation received the CFO Award for *Structured Finance Deal of the Year* in Australia. This was the first co-operative capital-raising initiative where credit unions effectively pooled their balance sheets to se-

cure "mutual friendly" affordable capital.

The National Cooperative Business Association's 2007 conference held 2-3 May, 2007 in Arlington Virginia, addressed the issue of access to capital for co-operatives.

A report from the NCBA task force and a proposal for a co-operative investment fund was discussed.

Download the PPT from this session.

www.ncba.coop/serv_conf_conf4_PPTs.cfm

Social Economy



Thierry Jeantet, president of Association Les Rencontres du Mont-Blanc

Social economy responds to question of sustainability

Since 2004, the social economy has held its own international summit, The Mont Blanc Meetings, grouping together leaders from mutuals, associations, co-operatives and foundations from around the world.

On 9-10 November 2007, international social economy leaders will meet for the 3rd Summit of the International Forum in Chamonix-Mont Blanc.

The meeting will focus on the production, distribution and sustainable consumption of energy. This vital topic affects all countries because so many conflicts and environmental issues, not to mention economics and politics, are directly or indirectly linked to supplies of energy.

Participants will discuss the response of the social econ-

omy to each stage of the energy crisis, the role of the social economy in providing effective and beneficial solutions to energy concerns, as well as opportunities for sustainable development of these solutions. The Mont Blanc Appeal, a worldwide declaration from leaders in the social economy will also be launched.

Other topics include co-operatives in Japan (Seikatsu Clubs) and Switzerland (Migros), animal traction in Madagascar (Mita), an "intelligent" building in the UK (CIS), a solar village in India (Kamataka) and the Energie-Cités network in Europe.

The meeting will be chaired by Thierry Jeantet, President of Association Les Rencontres du Mont-Blanc. Leaders attending include:

-Jean Fabre, deputy director,

European Bureau of the United Nations Development Programme (UNPD)

- Ivano Barberini, ICA President
- Preben Maegaard, President, World Wind Energy Association
- Yannick Glemarec, Executive Coordinator, Global Environment Facility
- Zdravko Genchev, Vice-President, UN Energy Efficiency 21 Project
- Ignacy Sachs, initiator of eco-development and integrating development concepts

The Mont Blanc meetings began in 2004. They aim to give the social economy (also known as the Third Sector) greater international prominence and to encourage the development of joint projects. The meetings also ensure that the values of the social economy are recognised by organisations such as the WTO, the World Bank, ILO and the EU.

First African credit union roundtable

World Council of Credit Unions (WOCCU) and the Canadian Co-operative Association (CCA) held the inaugural African Credit Union Regulators' Roundtable on 28-29 in Africa.

Forty eight attendees from seven countries - officials from ministries of finance, central banks, ministries of co-operatives and the savings and credit co-operative (SACCO or credit union) industry - met in Nairobi, Kenya to discuss pressing legislative, regulatory and supervisory issues.

Topics included key differences in legislation between microfinance institutions and SACCOs, access to clearing and settlement systems, transparency in reporting, strategies for supervising large numbers of small SACCOs, prudential and operational standards for SACCOs and service to non-members.

"The workshop was an eye-opener and a tremendous learning experience for the participants, as it provided regulators with a platform to appreciate the intricacies and challenges of supervising SACCOs," says Noel Mkulichi, Director of Non-Bank Supervision at the Reserve Bank of Malawi. "Being the first of its kind, the forum has created a springboard for harmonising supervisory practices that will help grow and sustain SACCOs in Africa."

Bill Knight, former CEO of Credit Union Central of Canada, who has just retired from his most recent post as Commissioner of the Financial Consumer Agency of Canada presented a paper on *Prudential vs. Non-Prudential Regulations—Global Trends*.

The Canadian International Development Agency provided some funding for the roundtable which was co-hosted by the Kenyan Ministry of Co-operative Development and Marketing. For more information, email John Julian, Director, International Communications and Policy, Canadian Co-operative Association: John.Julian@coopscanada.coop.

Credit Unions

"...inaugural African Credit Union Regulators' Roundtable held...."

Swiss consumer giant reaches 2 million



Consumer Co-ops

Migros, the giant Swiss consumer co-op has reached two million members. In a country with an estimated 7.5 million population, this means 26.6 per cent of the population is a member of this co-op. Estimates suggest that 100 per cent of the population shops with Migros at one point or another.

So ubiquitous is this co-operative chain that it would be nearly impossible to live in Switzerland and not have some service provided by Migros. Their services extend to food, banking, leisure, culture, gasoline and fuel for heating, furniture, sporting goods, do-it-yourself goods, phone services, personal apparel, fitness clubs, golf courses and language courses. Migros is a member of ICA.

UN/ILO Activities

Co-ops and rural employment: ILO Fact sheet

In preparation for a major discussion on rural employment at the International Labour Conference in 2008, the ILO Co-operative Branch has issued its first fact sheet. It underlines the important role played by co-operatives in providing income and employment in rural communities. This is not surprisingly since the majority of co-operatives are found in the agricultural sector.

operatives maintain a farmers' ability to be self-employed, given that for many farmers the fact that they are members of a co-operative and derive income from their services, allows them to continue to farm and contribute to rural community development. The economic impact of co-operatives on rural populations helps create additional employment through multiplier effects. These include enabling other rural enterprises to grow and in turn provide local jobs.

vision of financial services (banking, credit and loan, insurance), health, electricity, telecommunications and water, consumer, housing, tourism, and handicrafts to name only a few.

It provides some salient figures on the impact of co-operatives on rural employment, collected through replies to a questionnaire as well as provided by ICA.

The fact sheet is the first in a series planned to highlight how co-operatives contribute to addressing ILO priority issues of work. It will shortly be made available on www.ilo.org/coop and www.copac.coop.

Fact Sheet Cooperatives & Rural Employment

Summary

Over 100 million jobs have been generated by co-operatives around the world. An agricultural sector remains the major source of income and employment in rural areas and the majority of co-operatives are found in the agricultural sector, co-operatives are also found in other sectors such as services, health, education, housing, electricity, telecommunications and water, consumer, housing, tourism, and handicrafts to name only a few.

Cooperatives provide jobs in all sectors of the rural economy

Cooperatives are found in all sectors of the rural economy - agriculture (production, processing, marketing, purchasing and sales), but also in the provision of financial services (banking, credit and loan, insurance, health, electricity, telecommunications and water, consumer, housing, tourism, and handicrafts to name only a few).

Cooperatives provide income and employment in rural areas through increasing the ability of the farming sector, improving market access for their products and strengthening the farmers' position in the agricultural sector, increasing farmers' living standards, improving rural development and generating the viability of rural communities.

Cooperatives are also the only providers of services in rural communities from the regional economic office that is unable to provide these services or where the services are not available. This is the case for the provision of services in the field of electricity, or management of water resources, or consumer goods that are not available in rural areas.

Further, the majority of co-operatives in rural areas are owned and controlled by their members. For example, in a number of countries, new forms of co-operatives are being formed especially in rural areas. In rural Canada, individuals, local authorities and other enterprises have formed the co-operative form of enterprise to address various periods for their communities and to bring to an existing rural sector and providing rural community services. Other countries too are forming "community interest co-operatives" to address the needs of people in rural areas.

Salient figures

A number of countries are reporting growth in co-operatives over the last five years especially in rural areas. For example, Finland reports a growth of 30% in the 1990s, 17% in the 2000s, 10% in the 2000s. A particular source of interest and inspiration is the renewable energy sector with the creation of local co-operatives in Brazil, Mexico, Thailand, India, and the United States and rural development in Canada, Thailand and the United Kingdom. Also, nearly 50% of the total number of all the banks in the world are co-operatives.

- Agriculture: 30% of total electricity in 2007 was provided by co-operatives without which the agricultural sector, responsible for 8% of the GDP, would be compromised and jobs in rural communities would be lost [1]
- Health: The world's first rural co-operative electricity (RECOOP) is providing electricity services, including affordable micro-finance and 100 services to 170,000 individual members, 90% of which are rural [2]
- Finance: 90% of banks in the agriculture sector are co-operatives providing 50% of their services through co-operatives [3]
- Finance: 10,000 members of 2,200 agricultural co-operatives provide over 150,000 jobs [4]
- Health: the world's 10% of total health care is provided by co-operatives [5]



As ILO reminds, co-operatives provide direct employment, as well as seasonal and casual work. Furthermore Co-

The fact sheet notes that co-operatives of all types are found in the rural context - in agricultural (production, processing, marketing, purchasing and sales), but also in the pro-

UN report on co-ops and job creation

UN Secretary-General highlights co-operatives' contribution to employment.

The United Nations underlines the importance of co-operatives in national economies through their capacity to create and maintain jobs in its recently released report

The UN Secretary-General's report on co-operatives is issued every two years. This year it focuses on the current contribution and future potential of co-operatives to create and maintain employment and provides statistical information on the importance of co-operatives as employers

at the national level. To prepare the *Cooperatives and Social Development (A/62/154)* report, the UN sent a questionnaire to all UN member states and organised in conjunction with the ICA an expert meeting on employment in Shanghai in May 2006 hosted by ICA's member All China Federation of Supply and Marketing Co-operatives.

The UN also consulted members of the Committee for the Promotion of Cooperatives (COPAC), one of which is the ICA.

ICA provided statistical information and commentary to the report and

encouraged ICA members to urge their governments to reply to the questionnaire. The report highlights ICA's special role in promoting co-operatives.

The UN General Assembly - i.e. governmental representatives of UN member States - will consider the report in its 62nd Session currently being held in New York. A resolution to adopt the report and its recommendations is expected in December 2007.

The report is available as a PDF in English, French, Spanish, Arabic, Chinese and Russian. See www.copac.coop.



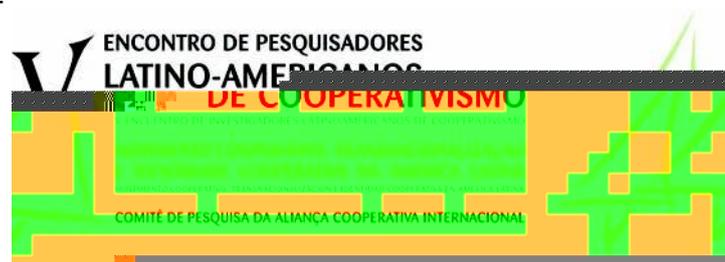
Latin America Co-operative Research Conference: Call for papers

Research

The Latin American Co-operative Researchers Network and ICA's Latin American Regional Committee on Co-operative Research invite papers for the 5th Latin American Co-operative Research Conference to be held in São Paulo, Brazil, 6-8 August 2008. The theme is *Co-operative movement, Transnationalization and Co-operative Identity in Latin America*. Conference topics include:

- Business internationalisation
- Co-operative identity, values and governance
- Legislation, jurisprudence and accounting aspects
- Business efficacy and efficiency, innovation and co-operative integration
- The state, economic blocks and co-operatives
- Co-operatives' role in the fight against poverty, for fair trade and dignified work
- Youth, education and co-operatives
- The social picture organisation and co-operative education
- Social and economic management of co-operatives

Email abstracts (max 200 words) to pesquisa_ica_la_2008@fundace.org.br by 21 December 2007. Visit www.fundace.org.br/pesquisa_ica_la_2008



Co-operatives and the pursuit of peace

Publications

Soon to be released from Rochdale Press, *Co-operatives and the Pursuit of Peace* features articles by co-op studies experts and practitioners around the world. Contributors come from Sri Lanka, India, Indonesia, Israel, Columbia, Nepal and Kenya.

In June last year, 38 co-operators from 16 countries met in Victoria BC at the *Co-operatives and the Pursuit of Peace* conference, to review how co-operatives address conflict and reflect on the current practices of co-operatives operating in areas deeply divided by political, economic and social injustice.

This book is a collection of essays presented at the conference as well as papers by

co-operative studies experts.

Contributors share their experience, knowledge and insights on the challenges for co-operatives in conflict situations, and how co-operatives and regional co-operative movements respond and contribute to peace-making and sustainable development.

The collection is edited by Joy Emmanuel and Ian MacPherson.

Email Joy Emmanuel joybcics@uvic.ca or rochdale@uvic.ca



Member News

“...COSMart of Bolivia ICA's newest member....”

COSMart has four member societies and more than 57,000 members of which 60 per cent are women....”

New Latin American members from Peru, Bolivia and Guatemala

On 25 July 2007, the Cooperativa de Ahorro y Credito La Rehabilitadora Ltda. N° 24 (COOPAC LA REHABILITADORA) of Peru became an ICA member. COOPAC LA REHABILITADORA is a primary savings and credit co-operative. It provides financial services to its members and carries out education and training programmes for managers and employees as well as community services such as health and education campaigns, gender activities and solidarity campaigns.

With 6,742 individual members and 28 employees, COOPAC LA REHABILITADORA's capital and reserves for 2006 totalled approximately CHF 3.9 million. According to COOPAC LA REHABILITADORA, it is experiencing the highest membership growth rate in the Peruvian Co-operative Movement. Visit [coopera-](mailto:coopera-tiva@larehabilitadora.com.pe)

tiva@larehabilitadora.com.pe for more information.

On 24 August 2007, Confederación Guatemalteca de Federaciones Cooperativas, Responsabilidad Limitada (CONFECOOP) of Guatemala became ICA's 220th member.

The apex organisation of the Guatemalan Co-operative Movement, CONFECOOP is promoting the integration of co-operatives in Guatemala and producing policies for the growth and strengthening of the movement. CONFECOOP numbers eight national federations in its membership, bringing together 737 active co-operative societies with approximately 800,000 individual members. Visit confe-coopgu@guate.net.gt.

On 15 September 2007, Cooperativa de Ahorro y Crédito "San Martín de Porres" Ltda. (COSMart) of

Bolivia became ICA's newest member. COSMart is a saving and credit co-operative providing financial services to individuals, enterprises, associations and other co-operatives. It provides a health service to members. COSMart has four member societies and more than 57,000 members of which 60 per cent are women. In 2007 it ranked first in Bolivia in assets, and second in loan portfolio and deposits. The co-operative has branch offices in a number of provinces in Bolivia. Visit www.coopsanmartin.com for more information.

There are now 221 member organisations from 86 countries.

JCCU celebrates fair trade and co-op produce



Almost 30,000 members, non-members and school children attended the 2007 Dietary Food Festival organised by Japanese Consumer Co-operative Union (JCCU) on 27-28 August.

Participating organisations included consumer co-ops, agricultural co-ops, manufacturers and government agencies. Attendees were introduced to co-operative products including fair trade coffee and chocolate products from co-operatives in Europe and Asia, at a display hosted by ICA.

Visit <http://www.jccu.coop/> for more information

Health challenges for co-operatives: JCCU forum

Health Cooperative Association of the Japanese Consumer Cooperative Union (HCA-JCCU) will hold the 3rd International Health Co-operative Forum to celebrate 50 years of its existence in Tokyo, 21-22 October 2007.

The theme *Considering today's role and tomorrow's challenges of health co-operatives* will bring together representatives of the global health co-operative movement to discuss a future programme which can be carried out locally and globally.

Representatives from 15 countries, UN agencies (ILO, WHO, UNICEF and UNFPA) and other organisations including Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA), the World Bank and Medecins du Monde will be attending.

Email Nobumasa Kitajima, nb_k@jhca.coop or <http://www.jhca.coop>



Member News



A co-operative approach: change management, entrepreneurship and leadership in the era of globalisation

Globalisation, liberalisation, increasing concentration of business and the rapid advances of technology have created an urgent need for co-operatives to make radical changes in structures, processes, policies, products and services. Increasingly today's co-operative leaders face the challenge of developing innovative responses to the business environment in the face of threats of environmental degradation and loss of social and cultural identity.

The NEGEV Institute for Strategies of Peace and Development (NISPED) will conduct an international course on *Change Management, Entrepreneurship and Leadership in the Era of Globalisation: A Value Based Cooperative Approach* in Israel from 4-13 December 2007.

The course will enable leaders engaged in development issues to meet, share experiences and learn about successful paths to poverty alleviation and sustainable human development. NISPED'S division, the International Centre for Co-operative Studies (ICECOS) conducts education and training programmes focused on the promotion and development of co-operatives, people-centred enterprises and similar endeavours. ICECOS is recognised as a co-operative training centre by the Global HRD Committee of ICA, COPAC and by MASHAV, the Centre for International Co-operation of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the State of Israel. Email Gidon Oren, Coordinator, International Courses, Negev Institute gidon@nisped.org.il or visit www.nisped.org.il for further information and registration details.



Courses

Co-op People

New President for French co-op

Philippe Mangin, President of Coop de France was elected on 19 June 2007 to the Presidency of the National Confederation of Self-aid, Co-operation and Agricultural Credit (CNMCCA). He succeeds Jean-Marie Sander, President of the National Federation of the Crédit Agricole, who has held this position since 2004.

The Presidency of the CNMCCA is alternatively held by its members which include Groupama, MSA, Coop de France and Crédit Agricole. The National Confederation of Self-aid, Co-operation and Agricultural Credit represents the interests of the French mutual and agricultural co-operative sectors at a national and international level.



Mr Philippe Mangin,
president of Coop de
France

Africa

Co-operative Facility for Africa launched

The Co-operative Facility for Africa - CoopAFRICA was launched on the 1-2 October 2007 in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania.

Dar named Coop facility for Africa HQ

By GOODLOVE LWAYI

DAR ES SALAAM has been named the headquarters of the Co-operative Facility for Africa (COOPAFRICA) project, which involves 15 African countries.

The Minister for Agriculture, Food Security and Cooperatives, Mr Stephen Wasira, who launched the project yesterday, mentioned the countries which will participate in the project as Botswana, South Africa, Lesotho, Swaziland, Mozambique, Namibia and Zimbabwe. Others are Zambia, Malawi, Tanzania, Kenya, Uganda, Rwanda, Southern Sudan and Ethiopia.

Mr Wasira said that the project would enable Tanzania to introduce and promote the cooperatives, which prevail in the country before, supporting many African development activities.

"Cooperatives represented some of the earliest self-organized efforts of small holders and farmers to engage in business, local economic development, wealth creation and social protection", he said. Meanwhile, the Deputy Minister for Labour, Employment and Youth Development, Mr Emmanuel Beharira, has said that his ministry has formulated objectives for labour relations and institutional arrangements at the workplace.

Daily News dated 03 October 2007

The ICA has been involved in preparing the project which will be implemented by the ILO. Agencies co-operating with the ILO on this are, among others, the Department for International Development - UK (DFID), the Committee for the Promotion and Advancement of Co-operatives (COPAC), the Co-operative College of the United Kingdom, and the International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC), and the ICA.

The project to be located at the ILO Office in Dar es Salaam will work in close collaboration with national co-operative organisations, government ministries

responsible for co-operative development, co-operative training institutions, and relevant NGOs.

The project aims at improving the governance, performance and efficiency of local co-operatives in order to strengthen their capacity to create jobs, access markets, generate income, reduce poverty, provide social protection and give people a voice in civil society. In the Eastern and Southern Africa region. It will initially be implemented in 15 countries, namely: Botswana, Ethiopia, Kenya, Lesotho, Malawi, Mozambique, Namibia, Rwanda, South Africa, Southern Sudan, Swaziland, Tanzania, Uganda, Zambia and Zimbabwe.

The launch was preceded by a workshop of stakeholders (representatives of apex organisations, co-operative training institutions, governments, and international organisations) who had constructive discussions on project content, delivery, roles and functions.

The launch was attended by large number of co-operative leaders from the Africa region and international representatives who heard testimonies from Tanzanian co-operators.

The ICA was represented by the ICA Vice President for Africa, the ICA Director-General and the ICA Director of Development who is also acting Regional Director for Africa.

The project was officially launched by the Minister for Agriculture, Food Security and Co-operatives, Hon Stephen Wasira, in the presence of the ILO Director for Africa, Mrs Regina Amadi-Njoku,



Jan-Eirik Imbsen, ICA Director of Development

Research Conference

Conference members in Prague



New directions in Prague

The 2007 ICACCR European Research Conference was held at Czech University of Life Sciences in Prague from 13-16 September. The conference was co-hosted by Faculty of Economics and Management and ICACCR European Research Committee. Professor Ing Bohuslava Bouckova, Czech University, and Professor Yohanan Stryjan, Chair ICA European Research Committee, were instrumental in organising the event.

A small but highly cosmopol-

itan audience came together to discuss the theme *New Directions for Co-operative Development*.

Delegates came from Iran, Malaysia, Armenia and Africa. A selection of papers from the conference will be published in the Czech Scientific Journal of Agricultural Economics.

Visit wwwold.pef.czu.cz/ica/index.php?p=home or email [Professor Yohanan Stryjan Yohanan.Stryjan@sh.se](mailto:Professor_Yohanan_Stryjan_Yohanan.Stryjan@sh.se) for further information.

Position vacant: CoopAFRICA

Jobs

CoopAFRICA pursues the overarching goal of mobilising the co-operative self-help mechanism to solve a variety of development constraints such as unemployment, lack of social protection, lack of empowerment and poverty.

Expected to evolve from a nucleus of initial target countries (four in East Africa and four in West Africa) the programme will foster continental technical co-operation.

One of its key roles will be to oversee and distribute three funds covering capacity building, technical twinning arrangements and innovative co-operative ventures. During its implementation phase, other development partners are likely to join the programme.

The ILO is seeking a highly qualified individual for the

position of Chief Technical Adviser (CTA).

The CTA will be based in Dar es Salaam and will report administratively to the Director of the ILO field office, and technically to a steering committee.

Also based in Dar es Salaam, the CTA will supervise a second international expert in co-operative HRD, as well as a 'Focal Point' based in West Africa. The Chief Technical Adviser will closely collaborate with a CoopAFRICA liaison officer based in the ILO Cooperative Branch in Geneva.

CoopAFRICA's interventions will be planned, monitored and evaluated by a regional steering committee composed of five elected co-operative leaders (representing the five African subregions), a representative

of the African Union secretariat, the ILO, the ICA Regional Office for Africa, the ITUC Regional Office for Africa, the UK Cooperative College, and DFID. The steering committee will meet twice a year. It will be open to additional development partners who would like to join CoopAFRICA.

Position title: Chief Technical Advisor (CTA)
Project title: Co-operative Facility for Africa
Organisation Unit: ILO Dar es Salaam
Duty station: Dar es Salaam
Duration: 12 months (with possible extension)
Deadline: 4 October 2007

For any questions related to this post, please email Jürgen Schwettmann, Director, ILO Dar es Salaam jschwettmann@ilo.org

From the journals: *Compartir*

Co-op Journals

Compartir is the magazine of the Espriu Foundation and is published quarterly with subscription free. The Espriu Foundation is a social medicine organisation established by Doctor Espriu who devoted his life to social medicine and to serving the idea of integral health co-operation.

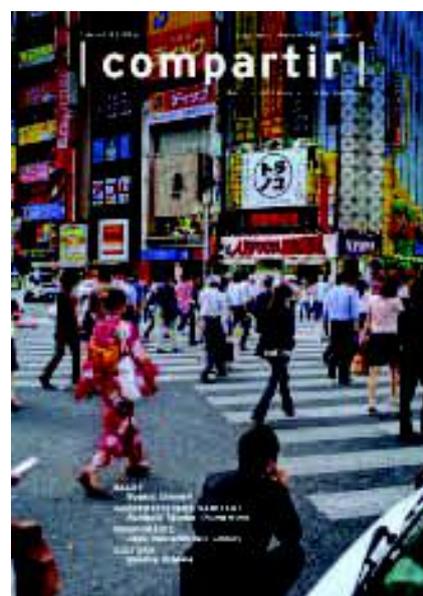
Compartir is an interesting mix of medical, co-operative and wider Spanish and social economy news. It features essays, research, reports, opinion pieces and even poetry.

The latest issue features a report on public-private co-

operation in health systems; WHO agreement on access to bird flu vaccine; and a special feature on Japan Health co-operative Movement.

The Espriu Foundation has been a member of the ICA since 1990.

Visit www.fundacionespriu.coop/numero/ultimo/index.php?Mw==.



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ALLIANCE

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2007 Calendar of ICA events and related co-operative activities

- 9 Oct** Simposio Internacional: Cooperativismo en Alemania y Venezuela. Reflexiones en Ahorro y Crédito, Vivienda y Agricultura. Auditorio Naranja de la Facultad de Ciencias Económicas y Sociales – FaCES de la UCV. [See program \(only in Spanish\)](#)
- 13-14 Oct** Series of pre-General Assembly ICA meetings, Singapore. ica.coop/calendar/ga2007/index.html
- 14-15 Oct** ICA Youth Conference *Co-operative business innovation through youth*, Singapore. www.icasingapore.coop/portal/accessInd.asp?proc=youth
- 15 Oct** Meeting of ICA Sectoral Organisations Chairs, Singapore. Email kim@ica.coop
- 16-17 Oct** Meetings of sectoral organisations and thematic committees. ICA General Assembly, Singapore. ica.coop/calendar/ga2007/index.html
- 18-19 Oct** ICA General Assembly, Singapore. Visit www.icasingapore.coop/
- 21-22 Oct** 3rd International Health Co-operative Forum: *Considering today's role and tomorrow's challenges of health co-operatives*. Tokyo. Information_nb_k@jhca.coop <http://www.jhca.coop>
- 22-24 Oct** 1st World CIRIEC research conference on the Social Economy, Victoria, British Columbia. www.socialeconomynetwork.ca/hub/index.php?page_id=124
- 8 Nov** Meeting for co-operative development agencies, UK Co-operative College. Email Mervyn Wilson Mervyn@co-op.ac.uk
- 9 Nov** 1st Meeting of the network América Cooperativa y Mutual (ACYM), Montevideo

2008

- 14-16 May** EMES European Research Network, 3rd Fair Trade International Symposium, Montpellier, France www.ftis2008.org. Call for Papers available at: http://www.ftis2008.org/cice2008_en/appeal_a_communication
- 23-25 October** ICA Expo 08, Lisbon, Portugal Contact Iain Macdonald macdonald@ica.coop

ISTR and EMES call for papers for their joint conference

The Third Sector and Sustainable Social Change: New Frontiers for Research 8th ISTR International Conference & 2nd EMES-ISTR European Conference, Barcelona, 9-12 July 2008.

“We invite you to participate in this conference to exchange ideas and research findings about the Third Sector, the social and solidarity-based economy, social enterprise and social entrepreneurship, among other themes.”

Call for papers available in six languages. Email info@emes.net



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