



ICA Digest

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ICA General Assembly 2007 Meeting tomorrow's needs, today



Inside—Full report from GA 2007

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International Co-operative Alliance: “uniting, representing and serving co-operatives worldwide”

From the editor's desk



Garry Cronan
Editor

Welcome to the fifty-ninth edition of the *ICA Digest*.

We feature the recent General Assembly in Singapore with special reports on the key themes and issues arising from discussion, summaries of keynote speeches and a round-up of major outcomes for ICA, our regions and sectoral bodies.

Our communications team has worked hard to make as much GA material accessible on the ICA website. The *Digest* provides a guide to what's available online. Look out for the web-links to speaker presentations, meeting documentation and GA Resolutions.

As well, we have our regu-

lar features, global news, member news, appointments, communications and awards and our calendar of events and conferences.

Dr Balakrishnan, Singapore Minister for Community Development, Youth and Sports and our Guest of Honour at the opening of the General Assembly described the event as a 'mini UN'. Certainly the GA was an exciting time to reflect on the diversity of our movement and our cover page of photos from the GA shows that we truly are a *global movement for a global village*.

As the world prepares to assemble in Bali, Indonesia for the UN global climate change summit (3-14 Dec), the co-operative movement

can look to the Climate Change Resolution passed at the General Assembly as an indication of the seriousness with which we view the role of co-operatives in securing a sustainable future for everyone.

'Sustainability' emerged as the big theme of the Singapore congress and as our reports in this *Digest* show there are many inspiring examples of co-operative innovation and leadership in implementing sustainable practices, although there is also much more to be done.

We always welcome your comments on or contributions to the *Digest*.

Garry Cronan
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EXPO 2008

Lisbon to host first world co-op expo



The EXPO 2008 World Co-operatives Exhibition—is ICA's first official global fair to promote co-operative business. EXPO 2008 will give co-ops worldwide the opportunity to showcase the economic potential of the movement.

EXPO 2008 was launched at the GA on Tuesday 16 October. President of the Fair, Luiz Branco told delegates and guests, including ICA President Ivano Barberini and ICA DG Iain Macdonald, that the Expo would run 23-25 October 2008 at Feira Internacional de Lisboa (FIL).

EXPO 2008 was presented to various ICA Committees. ICAO, CCW and CICOPA have confirmed full support for the event.

Information on EXPO 2008 is available from ICA regional offices. Exhibition space can be reserved by contacting the organisers.

The EXPO website is:
www.icaexpo.coop



Our DG launches EXPO 2008

Mr Branco said, "Our purpose here was to officially launch and advertise the event, but we left Singapore with 1200 square metres of exhibition spaces booked which proves the great business potential of co-operatives."

“Let’s remember who we are!”

ICA Director General, Iain Macdonald’s address to the ICA General Assembly rallied members to take the movement forward in a purposeful and effective manner. Iain summarises the main points.

“In my address, I expressed both pride in the scope and reach of the global co-operative movement and frustration that our influence and importance continue to be overlooked. As confirmed by this year’s Global 300 listing launched at the GA, we are a large part of the world economy—indeed, the tenth economy of the world. But, we need some serious support from governments.

ICA is growing at an effective rate with 20 members joining since 2006. The President and I are always impressed by the huge enthusiasm for ICA whether in the UK, Italy, US, China, Vietnam, Peru, Tanzania, Sri Lanka, Lesotho or Mexico. We constantly strive to provide our members with more relevant and effective services such as the 300 and Expo 2008 - the first world co-operative fair.

But what I also told the GA is that we need *your* help to make all this work through your participation at regional and general assemblies as well as your input for regional programs. Most importantly, we need to convince our governments of the rectitude of our case.

As indicated in our annual reports, 2005 and 2006 have been a watershed in ICA history. We have supported COPAC (Committee for the Advancement and Promotion

of Co-operatives) and our UN links with three major conferences. We have established the International Accounting Standards Working Group. We support DotCoop as the most obvious definition of the co-operative model. We have developed a special relationship with ILO, particularly through the efforts of ICA Deputy Director, Maria Elena Chavez Hertig. We continue to link more closely with World Council of Credit Unions (WOCCU).

In the difficult field of development in Africa, we are working hard by taking some tough but effective decisions and I thank our partners, particularly in Canada and Sweden, for their work. Indeed, the Tsunami showed that we can all work together, and a worldwide disaster protocol is now in place. *Co-operating Out of Poverty* is building all the time, too, with the ILO, and all our regions have increased their efforts in this area.

Influence, communications and intelligence is where we have probably become most evident. Our websites and the *Digest* are now well-established sources of important information, and what about *Global 300*, *Developing 300* and *National 100*? We are a major economic force and we now have the tools to project this.

At last, governance and restructuring are really happening with major progress in all directions. At the GA, I took the opportunity to present

the *Draft Strategic Plan 2009-2013*. My role in preparing the Global plans will include consultation with the four regions and their directors on how they would like the plan to be presented collectively to the Board. The final will be approved at a special General Assembly in 2008.

I particularly look forward to our sectoral organisations being on our Board, and our Youth Representation becoming a full member.

Finally, let’s remember who we are! We are for rich and poor, for the disadvantaged and the necessities of business, for the alleviation of poverty through socially responsible and sustainable enterprise, for commercial success with social awareness, for peace and social justice—a superior business model for a fair globalisation and ethical competition. Let’s be bold and proud about who we really are—not capitalist business, not state-controlled—but people-based democratic enterprise.”

DG’s Report



Iain Macdonald
Director-General

“Let’s be bold and proud about who we really are... people-based democratic enterprise.”

Glasgow ‘09

Swap your sarong for a kilt. In 2009. The next ICA General Assembly will be held in Glasgow, Scotland from 27 Sept - 2 Oct 2009.

GA 2009 will be hosted by Co-ops UK and Co-operative Development Scotland.



Visit www.ica.coop for regular updates.

Read the DG’s previous monthly reports:
www.ica.coop/directorpage/

GA 2007 Vision

The business of sustainable development: Co-ops embrace 'future needs' at GA 2007



Dr Balakrishnan addressed the opening of the 2007 GA

“Do what you say and say what you do,”

Dr Balakrishnan urges transparency in co-ops.

Fireworks and drumming dazzled delegates at the opening of the 2007 GA



the movement to succeed in commercial terms but stay true to its core values.

“Co-operatives must be more than viable businesses... ask yourself each day, are you true to your cause be it empowerment of women, sustainability or elimination of poverty”

“The Global Movement is more important than ever” - was the overriding message from Guest of Honour, Dr Vivian Balakrishnan, at the opening of the 2007 ICA worldwide General Assembly in Singapore on Thursday 18 October. Dr Balakrishnan, Singapore Minister for Community Development, Youth and Sports, spoke off-the-record and from the heart to a packed Assembly about the role co-operatives can play in today's context of unprecedented economic opportunity but growing socio-economic disadvantage. He described the more than 1000 co-operators from 70 countries as “a mini-UN”, and issued a challenge to

Dr Balakrishnan said co-operatives must earn the trust of their members and the community. They must



Democracy in action. Delegates vote at the General Assembly.

insist on transparency and they should maintain competence in the business they carry out, in governance and accountability.

Echoing Dr Balakrishnan's remarks Keynote speaker, Minister Lim Boon Heng said, “While globalisation has create wealth, it has also brought about sharp inequalities within countries and between countries. Such social imbalances will be exacerbated if enterprises do not perform the

social and ethical duty to counter such imbalances.

“I cannot imagine a type of enterprise better suited to reflect profit making as the means to generate social good than the co-operative model.”

The 2007 GA provided a week-long opportunity to discuss economic, environmental and social challenges for co-operatives worldwide. The issue of sustainable development was top of the agenda, from the perspective of co-operatives providing leadership on sustainable business practices and from

the need to ensure the ‘sustainability’ of co-operative enterprises themselves. Speakers urged co-operatives to be creative, dynamic and proactive in addressing the challenges of co-operative business in the new millennium—in other words ‘to keep innovating’.

Sustaining our co-ops: Make your voice heard, urges ILO

In his Keynote address to the GA on Thursday 18 October, Michael Henriques, Director, Job Creation and Enterprise Development Department, International

lack of recognition of their contributions to national economies; as well as a general feeling that they are not major economic and social players. Henriques stressed

the need for statistical information to redress the situation.

“One cannot underestimate the impact of these figures. The UN, the EU and other institutions that recognise the potential of co-ops to contribute to economic and social development are keen to access and raise aware-

ness of these facts.”

Labour Office (ILO), reaffirmed the synergy between the objectives of the ILO and the co-operative movement. But co-ops must do more to improve their ‘visibility’ he said.

“The movement is on the vanguard of the contemporary quest for a fair globalisation. But there is scope to more effectively highlight the co-operative contribution to CSR.” Whilst the Assembly was showcasing some innovative experiences in implementing CSR—there are many others that go unnoticed.

Despite advances, there continues to be a lack of understanding of co-operatives; a

featured at this Assembly. Clearly without appropriate policies and laws, co-operatives will be hindered in their ability to improve livelihoods.”

Henriques’ paper can be downloaded from the ICA website:

www.ica.coop/calendar/ga2007/index.html

GA 2007 Promotion

“Social responsibility is just one area where the movement must be more vocal.” Michael Henriques ILO



ILO's Michael Henriques



Ramsey Margolis, NZ Cooperatives Association, supporting Dot.Coop Resolution at the GA



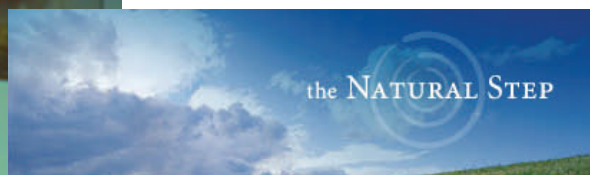
GA backs Internet branding

A Resolution on DotCoop, strongly endorsed by the General Assembly raised the bar for the co-operative movement to show real leadership and action around the issue of identity and branding in the era of Internet marketing. “From web sites and e-mail addresses to promotional media, the use of DotCoop makes the job of identifying co-ops easier for consumers and for businesses looking for a co-operative business partner,” said Carolyn Hoover, Director DotCoop.

The Resolution passed on Friday 19 October was sponsored by NCBA (US) and Cooperatives UK. Download a PDF version: www.ica.coop/calendar/ga2007/docs.html

GA 2007 Leadership

Sustainable futures: Co-ops must lead



From the business of sustaining co-operatives, to sustainable co-operative business practice—'sustainability' was a strong theme throughout the GA.

ICA President Ivano Barberini set the tone for debate in his opening remarks to the Assembly, when he spoke strongly of the threat to environmental sustainability posed by unchecked capitalism. "The mere goal of profit-making can only lead to destruction of the environment. Economic development must meet today's needs without compromising the future," he said.

Keynote speaker, David Cook, Chief Executive Officer "The Natural Step", discussed the link between innovation in co-operative business and sustainability. He made the connection between environmental responsibility, ethical actions and CSR reminding the Assembly that these are all part of sustainable development. "Dealing with them separately doesn't make sense. There are ways in which you can get to grips with sustainable development – and you need to," he said.

Sustainable Development is the new context for business but it is not a new concept. The Brundtland Commission in 1987 defined sustainability as, "Meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their

The challenge to be climate leaders

Co-ops must do more than acknowledge the threat of global warming, they must become climate leaders says Bob Burlton, Co-operative Group UK. "I can't think of any other issue which has the capacity to unite co-operatives globally and to galvanise us to action."

The Climate Change Resolution passed by the Assembly on Friday 19 October calls on co-ops everywhere to commit to reducing carbon emissions and to lobby government for change. Read the Resolution: www.ica.coop/calendar/ga2007/docs.html



"The great ideas behind co-operation have found new reasons to be pursued."
Ivano Barberini

GA meeting program, documentation and speakers' biographies can be found on the ICA website:

www.ica.coop/calendar/ga2007/index.html

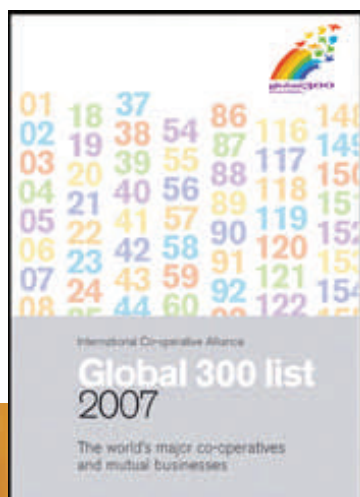
own needs." Cook said sustainable development is development which gives everyone the opportunity for a fulfilling life, without the kind of environmental and social damage we have seen in the past. He emphasised the important role co-operatives can play in development of sustainable business practice.

sign up to the
Co-operative
campaign against
**Global
Warming**



The case for data: 2007 Global 300 launched

The **Global 300** listing for 2007 was launched to assembled media at the ICA GA on Tuesday 16 October.



Global 300 is part of the movement towards an evidence based approach to making the co-operative case. Speakers at the GA acknowledged that the focus had now shifted to manipulating the data to provide a more detailed picture of the sector.

Co-operative leader, Hans Dahlberg articulated the need for data that can equip the movement to, "Speak out with a convincing voice and argue our case".

Garry Cronan, Global 300 Director said, "We need analysis. We need to manipulate the data, benchmark performance over years, and spot trends and themes. We also need to break data down by sector and region."

This ability to disaggregate the Global 300 data will prove valuable for those needing a more defined picture of performance.



2007 Global 300 launch, L-R Garry Cronan, ICA Communications and Intelligence Director and Global 300 Director, Seah Kian Peng Chair, SNCF, Alban D'Amours, CEO Desjardins Group, Iain MacDonald, DG ICA

The 2007 list extends and consolidates the original data, launched last year in Lyon, confirming that the top 300 co-ops generate almost \$1 trillion USD in revenue equivalent to the tenth largest economy in the world. Co-operatives and mutuals are among the world's most sustainable businesses with ten coops in the 300 list established before 1850. They are among the most profitable too. Private equity has started to hunt out some of the top performers and eight co-ops in the list are currently subject to takeover.

"In many cases, co-operatives are market leaders in their own country and sometimes world leaders in their business sector. But we have a problem with lack of awareness of the size, success and diversity of co-operatives outside of our own movement," he said.

"By developing a first class database on co-operatives we will be able to extract useful business intelligence, and better demonstrate the size, success, diversity and business efficiency of co-ops."



GA 2007 Intelligence

Stop press... GA Top 100

A Working Group of countries wanting to develop a standardised methodology for creating Top 100 lists for every country, held their first meeting during the GA. Contact Garry Cronan cronan@ica.coop

Media take down the details at the Global 300 launch

GA 2007 CSR & Developing 300

The case for data (cont.)

ICA has launched two complementary research projects to enhance the **Global 300 Project**.



Developing 300, is a project to rank the importance of co-operatives in developing economies.

"We started with simple data collection on turnover and assets in the Global 300 list but soon realised that to be inclusive, we must also examine the role of large co-operatives in developing countries," said Garry Cronan. Many co-ops in developing countries are major players in their national economies and contribute to national economic development. ICA's Developing 300 list will initially survey 30 developing economies using the same methodology as the Global 300.



"The Global 300 is a powerful model to show governments that an efficient alternative exists."

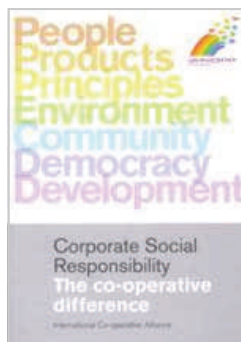
*Alban D'Amours
CEO Desjardins
Group*



Nelson Kuria, MD, CIC Insurance Ltd on *Global 300* and *Developing 300*

"This is one of the best developments ever initiated by ICA. It greatly helps disabuse the notion that co-operatives are an 'endangered species' and the pernicious argument that they are old fashioned and unsustainable."

I have been using this information when I address meetings in Kenya. Many co-operators themselves do not realise the importance of their institutions. I have noted with great pride that many people develop a positive attitude and respect for co-operatives the moment they discover the truth from the Global 300 data."



A separate report on **Corporate Social Responsibility** principles and their practice by co-operatives provides case study examples across the CSR streams.

Our historical leadership in social responsibility has been part of our credibility but preliminary research shows that co-ops are not reporting CSR performance in a consistent way. ICA has developed a draft CSR methodology which incorporates aspects of mainstream CSR reporting while also taking account of the co-operative difference.

Download a PDF of the reports: www.global300.coop/



"Our task now is to use the data; add to the data; and deepen our understanding of what the numbers tell us."

*Carol Hunter, ED
Canadian Co-operative
Association*



"With data on our economic performance we can stand-up to the private and institutional investors who hold a negative view about the efficiency of co-operatives and who influence the opinion of business journalists."

*Hans Dalhberg, ICA
Global 300*

Co-ops seek IAS reform

Reforming and converging international accounting standards in favour of co-operative enterprises continues to be a topic of concern for ICA. ICA's IAS Working Group met during the GA to discuss current concerns.

Paul Hazen, CEO NCBA said: "The international co-operative community needs to coordinate and make sure the co-op voice is heard. As IASB takes on the role of global standard setter, it will be difficult to achieve a rapid response, international coordination, representatives to

go before IASB and to consistently track and analyse the changes IASB makes. In the US we have found it critical to devote time and resources to educating and advocating the standard setters about the co-operative model. Our challenge will be to speak with one voice and react quickly as an international community to proposals put forward by IASB. The ICA is the logical group to take the lead and the members must provide the financial support to make it happen."



Tricia O'Malley, Coordinator, International Financial Reporting Interpretations Committee (IFRIC) of the International Accounting Standards Board (IASB) addresses delegates at IAS seminar.

GA 2007 IAS Gender Youth

"Speak with one voice and react quickly."

Paul Hazen NCBA

Women and co-ops: We can do more

Women's participation in co-ops, particularly at senior management and Board level continues to be a topic of debate. The ICA Gender Equality Conference on Tuesday 16 October addressed the GA theme of innovation from the perspective of gender equity. Stefania Marcone, Chair, ICA Gender Equality Committee said: "Innovation is an important factor in giving greater impetus to equal-

ity but we need to develop the pathways to fill the existing gender gaps.

The concerns of some delegates about the level of women's participation at the GA was raised during statutory business on the final day. ICA President Ivano Barberini drew attention to the fact that women made up just 17% of GA participants, surely something to be improved upon.



Delegates at ICA GA Gender Equality Conference



Global Youth Representative,
Teo Say Hong

Pathways for young co-operators

The new Global Youth Representative on the ICA Board, Teo Say Hong is a young co-operator with a mission.

"When we say 'youth are the future' it needs to be more than mere rhetoric. We must provide a structure and a framework to ensure the next generation of young people come through and

there is no loss of momentum," said Teo.

Teo puts succession planning at the top of his agenda for his two year term on the ICA Board. He is also looking forward to joining discussion on all aspects of ICA activity as a full Board member, the first time this status has been accorded to the position of Youth Representative.

"Co-ops are about people. Through co-ops we can recognise our common humanity and therefore help to build global peace."
Teo Say Hong

GA 2007 Europe

New era for Europe

The new Cooperatives Europe statutes and the Common Agreement with ICA were formally adopted at the General Assembly representing a milestone in the relationship between the Europe office and the central organisation. At nearly half the voting population, European delegates also had considerable input to GA business. The three resolutions adopted by the GA were proposed by European member organisations.



Rainer Schluter, RD
Cooperatives Europe

“We will have a more modern and restructured ICA that can meet the challenges of our ever changing world.”
Rainer Schluter

“The Singapore General Assembly has the potential for being a watershed in the life of our ICA. We witnessed just a few of the exciting initiatives that are being implemented by member organisations across the globe and an indication of how we can have an effect on the big issues like climate change and business innovation whilst remaining true to our co-operative principles. Our global and regional structures now have to be capable of supporting the ‘Co-operative Difference’ and to be able to use tools such as *Global 300*, *National 100* and the

The Board adopted a timetable for consultation on the rule changes and new membership fee system with an extra-ordinary General Assembly planned for early June 2008 in Europe to decide on the new structures. The Cooperatives Europe General Assembly will be held at the same time. Rainer Schlüter, Regional Director [Cooperatives Europe \(www.coopseurope.coop\)](http://www.coopseurope.coop) reflects on some GA outcomes and the way forward for a modernised global organisation.

DotCoop web domain for the full benefit of our member organisations.

and we are looking forward to the prospects with co-operatives in Africa.

Next year’s Special General Assembly will put in place a new working structure for the ICA that will benefit the regions and the members. A new membership fee system and budgeting process will clearly identify the benefits that an alliance of co-operatives locally, regionally and internationally can bring.

What is most important for Cooperatives Europe is that we will have a new relationship with the ‘centre’ of the ICA, a relationship that clearly supports the balance of tasks between the centre and the regions. We can build working models with the other regions – Americas and Asia Pacific

Cooperatives Europe is working hard to ensure Europe’s co-operatives have a say in the restructuring process and that our work programs, budgets and all administrative processes can synchronise with the proposed global changes.

We are, through our newly adopted vision and mission statements, striving to address the challenges presented to co-operative enterprises in Europe, so it is imperative that we continue to develop our internal structures and the resources available to us.”



Cooperatives Europe Co-President, Pauline Green addresses the European delegation

Asia shows co-operative strength

With this year's ICA General Assembly located in Asia, there was a focus on the strength and reach of co-operatives not only in Singapore but across the region. Asia Pacific Regional Director Shil Kwan Lee, reports on the hard-work of ICA AP in organising a Global Youth Conference, a Workshop on University/Campus Co-operatives and other regional meetings at the GA.

“One of the major regional meetings held at the Singapore General Assembly was the Asia-Pacific Standing Committee. We reviewed the activities and financial report for 2007, and the proposed work plan for 2008. The budget will be finalised in December.

gional Youth Committee, as the new Youth Representative on the ICA Board.

A global workshop on University/Campus Co-operatives was another outstanding event, attracting almost 100 delegates both regional and international.



Shil Kwan Lee, Regional Director ICA AP

GA 2007 Asia-Pacific

“For the first time, the Youth Representative on the Board Will be from Asia.”
Shil Kwan Lee



Attentive delegates at University / Campus Co-operatives Workshop

The report of the Restructuring Working Group was also discussed highlighting concerns with the proposed subscription formula.

ICA Domus Trust met during the GA to discuss proposed construction of a new ICA building in India next year.

The Global Youth Conference organised by ICA Regional Youth Committee was a great success with almost 150 delegates participating. The Youth Conference elected **Teo Say Hong**, Chair of the Re-

ICA's regional committees including the Women's Committee, Co-operative Banking Association, Subcommittee on University/Campus Co-operatives, and Consumer Co-operative Committee met during the GA. The AP Office participated in the joint seminar held by the Consumer Co-operative Committee and Consumer Co-operatives Worldwide.

Regional members are delighted that Surinder Kumar Jakhar, Chair of Indian Farmers Fertiliser Co-operative (IFFCO) was elected to the ICA Board in Singapore.”

Farming heritage inspires work for rural poor



New ICA Board member, Surinder Kumar Jakhar has worked for more than three decades to improve the lives of rural poor through co-operatives. His interest in co-ops was inspired by his father, Dr Balram Jakhar, former Minister of Agriculture and Speaker for the Parliament of India. As Chair of IFFCO, Mr Jakhar interacts with more than 55 million farmers through membership of more than 38,000 co-operative societies. He is Chair of Indo-Egyptian Fertiliser Company; IFFCO Kisan Sewa Trust; IFFCO Kissan Sanchar Ltd; Klean International Trading FZE; Director, IFFCO Foundation; and Director of the Board of IFFCO-Tokio General Insurance Company.

GA 2007 Africa

Africa consolidates restructure

The Commission for Africa, established by the ICA Board last year, submitted its sixth and final report in Singapore. The report aims to develop a new co-operative strategy for Africa with worldwide collaboration. ICA's Jan-Erik Imbsen reflects on current outcomes for Africa and the next stage of restructuring.

"We appeal to members and stakeholders to join us in re-establishing ICA as the representative organisation of the co-operative movement in Africa"
Jan-Erik Imbsen

"The General Assembly offered opportunities for interaction among African and other delegates about Africa's co-operative future and emphasised the importance of collaboration. The GA also provided the opportunity for a regional 'consultation' on the restructuring of ICA in Africa, the process of formulating a strategy of renewal, and planning the Regional Assembly in 2008.

The financial situation is still constrained, however the office structure has been created and the relocation to new premises (provided by the Kenya Union of Savings and Credit Co-operatives) has been completed. The West Africa office has closed and the remaining office has moved to Nairobi. We are grateful to KUSCCO for its valuable support.

The Africa office is currently implementing two regional programs funded by the CCA (Canada) and the SCC (Sweden) respectively.

A recent report by CIDA (Canada) raised concerns that further restructuring should focus on communicating the benefits to both members and partners, of ICA in Africa. Hence, ICA will undertake activities to re-establish ICA Africa as a major member-driven co-operative organisation in the region. Two consultations are planned in 2008. Partner organisations will provide input on how ICA can use its unique position as the world's largest network of co-operatives to add value to their development programs. Partner organisations will also help develop our renewal strategy.

A Members Forum in early 2008 will discuss how ICA can function effectively in Africa, what support co-operatives need from ICA, and what constitutes a 'relevant' service delivery serving the interests of the region. Members will debate how they can take ownership of their own organisation.

The outcome of discussions will be a *Draft Four-year Renewal Strategy*, part of ICA's *Draft Strategic Plan 2009-2013*. The Africa Regional Assembly is scheduled in late 2008 in Abuja, Nigeria. A report with recommendations will be submitted to

the Regional Assembly for approval.

Recommendations of both the Africa Commission and CIDA report emphasise that the co-operative movement in Africa has a crucial role to play in improving the lives of many marginalised populations. The development of appropriate frameworks to encourage and enable meaningful pan-African ownership and responsibility for the co-operative sector is a priority."



2008 Rochdale Pioneer, Esther Gicheru receives her award from our President



*Delegates from across the African continent. (Top to bottom) Owolabi Adeyemi, **Nigeria**, Leonard Msemakweli, **Uganda** and Japeth Magomere, Chair CIC Insurance **Kenya***

Legal framework for Latin American co-ops

ACI-Américas 15th Regional Conference was held in Santo Domingo in the Dominican Republic on 1-5 October. Almost 800 co-operators from 22 countries gathered to discuss the theme “Cohesion and Social Inclusion: Co-operatives’ contribution to a world in equilibrium.”

A highlight was the first Institutes of Promotion, Development, Monitoring and Cooperative Credit Meeting to discuss the draft of a new legal framework for co-operatives in Latin America. At the meeting the co-operative institutes signed a statement that recognises the co-operative model as an instrument for economic and social development.

Manuel Mariño, Director,

ACI-Américas said input on the draft framework is still welcome. Email the taskforce by 15 December:

proyectos@aciamericas.coop

ACI-Américas is now the exclusive representative for the *Dotcoop* domain in Latin America and the Caribbean. Co-ops do not have to have a current website or change to a new Internet provider to take advantage of ACI-Américas special discount for new users. Email to register a *Dotcoop* domain: info@aciamericas.coop

José Antonio Chávez Villanueva from Mexico is the new representative on ACI-Américas Youth Advisory Council. He specialises in marketing and organisational development and has worked with co-operatives for a decade.

On 5 November, the Swedish Cooperative Center’s President Nina Jarlbäck and Vice-president Gun-Britt Mårtensson (also ICA Board member and Chair of ICA Governance Working Group) visited ACI-



Américas to find out more about the SCC’s projects with ACI-Américas and its work in the region.

Regional News ACI Americas

Manuel Mariño & members of the co-operative institutes sign a statement recognising the co-operative model

Education pioneer receives Rochdale Award

Esther Gicheru, Principal of the Co-operative College, Kenya is one of the recipient of this year’s prestigious Rochdale Pioneer Award. Each year ICA recognises individuals for their contribution to the international co-operative movement. Also honoured were **Professor Ungku Aziz**, National Co-operative Organisation of Malaysia and **Francisco Ceballo Herrero** Union of Consumer and User-owned Co-operatives of Spain.

Co-operatives have been a part of Esther’s life since early childhood. The local farming co-operative sustained her family and provided the resources to send her to school. Today, Esther

stresses the potential role co-operatives can play for the poorest people in Africa. “Co-operatives can provide a much needed opportunity for self-determination and empowerment,” she said.

Esther has played an important part in the co-operative movement internationally through her participation in ICA gender and human resource development committees. Esther believes co-operatives offer a way forward for increasing numbers of people, many of them women, now earning their living in the informal economy.

On accepting her award from ICA President Ivano Barberini on the final day of the General Assembly, Esther said: “I

pledge to continue working towards the transformation of co-operatives in my country into genuine co-operatives through development and implementation of appropriate HRD programs. I am even more motivated by the theme and topics of this year’s GA. It has reaffirmed the need to proudly pursue the co-operative purpose and to innovate ways to raise the profile of Co-operatives.”



Awards

“Co-operatives are about human dignity and peace.” Esther Gicheru

Member News

Home of credit union celebrates 25 years

The birthplace of the North American caisses populaires and credit union movement, Maison Alphonse-Desjardins in Lévis Québec is celebrating 25 years as a public museum. Alphonse Desjardins is described as the founder and

prophet of the credit union movement in America. His home served as the head office for the first caisse populaire from 1900 to 1906.

www.desjardins.com/visitthehouse



Co-op People

New ICA A&CC members elected

The ICA Audit and Control Committee has two new members. **Toshifumi Yamashita**, President of Japanese Consumers' Co-operative Union (JCCU), began his career in the co-operative movement in 1967. Mr Yamashita has played important roles in the organisation of a business federation and seeking amendments to the Consumer Co-operative Society Law. He is Vice Chairman of Consumer Co-operatives

Worldwide. He is a member of ICA Governance Group and ICA Working Group on International Accounting Standards.



Maduwill Gamarachige Seneviratne Silva, General Secretary, National Co-operative Council of Sri Lanka (NCC) is an expert in micro-finance and micro-insurance. He is a consultant to various NGO organisations including Oxfam, CARE, World Vision, and NGO Management Development Centre (NGOMDC). He lectures in economics and statistics at the University of Colombo.

New member

Karachi Co-operative Housing Societies Union of Pakistan became ICA's 222nd member after remitting its first subscription payment on 29 September 2007. Karachi is a service co-operative that sub-leases land to 24 co-operative

housing societies. Karachi develops the land and provides and maintains the municipal services. They also develop roads, sewage, electricity, educational institutions, mosques, hospitals and other public services.

COSMart became a new member on 29 September 2007, not 15 September as reported in Digest 58

Global News

World bank backs co-ops

The World Bank has pledged \$944 million in loans to three Indian government projects aimed at expanding rural credit and boosting employment generation, including \$600 million toward a co-operative credit project.

Co-op university

India will soon have its first co-operative university. The Jawaharlal Nehru Co-operative University, the first of its kind in South-East Asia, will be established in Pune. The concept is for a co-operative university to counter the challenge posed by private players. The university will

specialise in courses that focus on the co-operative sector.

Ethical photo library breaks new ground

Community Interest Company Majority World launched its ethical photo library one year ago to provide a platform for photographers, photographic agencies and image collections from the developing world to gain fairer access to global image markets.

Through its website, advocacy work and mentorship,

image buyers can access the wealth of fresh photographic talent emerging from these often misrepresented regions. Majority World says an increasing number of users have come to appreciate for the first time the quality of photographers from Asia, Africa and Latin America.

Further information:

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Communica-
tions

Website development

We've introduced some improvements to the ICA website to provide better service to our members. **Recent News** is a section that lists all new material on ICA websites. You can keep abreast of new pages, new sections, documents and

reports which have gone online with a quick look at Recent News. Watch this space for more ica.coop improvements.

General Assembly News

4 editions of the ICA GA Digest were published during the event. Download a PDF version of the newsletters:

www.ica.coop/publications/



Recent News

International Co-operative Alliance General Assembly Presentations

Published 11/2/2007

All the presentations made at the International Co-operative Alliance General Assembly, 18 - 19 October 2007, Singapore, are now available including the resolutions on climate change, children and DotCoop and the Governance Working Group and Restructuring Working Group reports.

Divinely co-operative

Divine Chocolate has been named Best Social Enterprise 2007 at the Enterprising Solutions Awards, organised by the UK's Social Enterprise Coalition. The award was presented by Phil Hope, UK Minister for the Third Sector. Divine Chocolates are part-owned by Kuapa Kokoo the Ghanaian cocoa producers co-op that supplies all their chocolate.

www.enterprisingsolutions.org



Protect our children

A Resolution: Protecting our children against violence, submitted by National Co-operative Union of Turkey was amended and adopted by the ICA General Assembly on 19 October. The Resolution calls for ICA to work with the UN and EU in order to reduce violence and work towards the elimination of child labour.

Read the Resolution online: www.ica.coop/calendar/ga2007/

Ethics

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Calendar of ICA events and related co-operative activities

- 5 Dec 2007** 45th Anniversary of COOPERAR, Co-operative Federation of Argentina
www.sitiocooperativo.com.ar/
- 6-7 Dec 2007** ICA Board Meeting, Geneva, Switzerland
- 21-22 January** 15th Indian Co-operative Congress, New Delhi, India. Contact
ncui_coop_congress_jan2008@yahoo.co.in
- 13-14 Feb 2008** Living Cooperatively Symposium: Affordable Housing-Sustainable Communities with visiting guest speaker, Gun-Britt Mårtensson. Sydney Australia.
Information: peter.gates@mercury.org.au or sommersonl@optusnet.com.au
- 26 March 2008** ICA Board meeting
- 29 April 2008** Co-operatives Europe General Assembly, Brussels, Belgium
- 14-16 May 2008** Third Sector and Sustainable Social Change: New Frontiers for Research, 8th ISTR International Conference & 2nd EMES-ISTRY European Conference, Barcelona
- 14-16 May 2008** EMES European Research Network, 3rd Fair Trade International Symposium, Montpellier, France. Call for Papers
www.ftis2008.org/cice2008_en/appeal_a_communication
- 5-6 June 2008** Extra-ordinary ICA General Assembly and ICA Board meeting, Rome, Italy
- 22-27 June 2008** MBA course "Global Cooperative Business: Food, Retail and Finance", Nyenrode Business Universiteit, Vrije University Amsterdam and the Netherlands Institute for Cooperative Entrepreneurship (NICE), Brochure: www.ica.coop/calendar/SummerSchool2008.pdf or Email Dr. Onno van Bekkum o.f.vbekkum@nyenrode.nl

Nyenrode Business University, Vrije University Amsterdam and Netherlands Institute for Cooperative Entrepreneurship (NICE) presents:

Global Cooperative Business: Food, Retail & Finance 22-27 June 2008, Netherlands

An **accredited** MBA 'mini course' focused on the food, retail and finance sectors. It will be an evidence based, case study approach featuring many of the co-operatives included in the **Global 300** ranking.

The course is aimed at senior staff and co-operative Board members with an interest in internationalisation, mergers and acquisitions, corporate finance, governance, marketing, communication and general management.

The Netherlands is a strongly co-operative orientated country. On average every Dutch person is a member of 1.3 co-ops/mutuals. Total co-operative sector turnover is estimated at EUR 85bn equating to 16% of GDP, among the very highest in the world.

More information www.nyenrode.nl/nyvu or nyvu@nyenrode.nl

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