



'Build a better world starting from communities'



Roberto Rodrigues
ICAPresident

This is my last message to Alliance in my capacity as president of ICA. Therefore, I would like to tell you some very personal things.

During these 13 years I had worked in several ICA organisations. I had the opportunity to visit nearly 80 countries, when I flew long times over oceans and continents, that allowed me

to think, study, read and write a lot.

The core query – “what are we doing here?” can only be answered by faith. But, if you cannot give a scientific answer for the meaning of life, it is necessary to give a meaning to this life – this wonderful gift, so short and so intense.

And the best meaning you can give to life is to help build a better world. This can be done by each one of us who has a disposal to teach everything he or she knows to the greatest number of persons possible. For that purpose, it is necessary to learn the maximum, from everybody who knows.

This is the meaning: learn the maximum, and teach everybody to help build a better world with peace, love and justice for all.

The world ALL which is present in this phrase presumes a collective approach and togetherness: learn everything, teach everybody, peace for everyone for a better world to all.

And togetherness means co-operatives.

This takes us to the new and important role of co-operatives worldwide, in defence of peace and democracy.

Organising economic communities, co-operatives of all sectors are becoming the bridge between the market and the well-being of the people, gathering them in the magnificent hope for a better future for humankind.

The co-operatives are, therefore, a magic instrument to reach the aim of building a better world, collectively.

Actually, in this Peace process between North and South Korea the co-operatives,

with their doctrine irrespective of ideologies, can hold a fundamental role, uniting both ‘brother people’ providing products and services for all: the bridge for both, the same bridge leading to happiness.

But in this modern world, with its global economy and liberal commerce, co-operatives have a new role of major relevancy.

In great parts of countries worldwide the governments are losing the capacity to solve people’s problems. What is guiding their life is the capital flow, which has no country, ideology or solidarity. Less and less governments can take care of what truly matters – at the local level – that affects the life of the citizens. This has led to hopelessness and loss of expectation. As an answer, people do not feel represented by their governments, or even institutions organising themselves as NGOs, in search of representation for their problems and their beliefs.

That is what we have seen, recently, in Genoa and before in Prague, Davos, Washington and Seattle.

These problems shall be solved within the communities, districts, inside the “clusters”: it is there where the persons, really, know what has to be done.

Very well. Within this scenario, the co-operatives, the economic arm of social organisation, can help to solve the “clusters” questions and, locally, with integration, allow access to bigger markets to their members.

Here is a wonderful utopia: build a better world starting from communities.

Time has come to bid farewell to my dear friends I made in so many places around the world. In each country I could see and feel the action of co-operatives struggling to give a better life for its members.

Wishing a great success in the construction of peace, democracy and well-being for the common people, I will remain, in my country, working along with all of you.

Thank you for your support and friendship.

Roberto Rodrigues

in this issue

2 - ICA PEOPLE

3 - ICA SECTORS

4-5 - FEATURE

6 - ICA REGIONS

7 - DOTCOOP

8 - ICA EVENTS



Excellence requires right members and right staff

Dr Venghese Kurien, chairman, National Cooperative Dairy Federation of India, is awarded the ICA's first Rochdale Pioneers prize. The architect of Operation Flood – the world's largest dairy development – Dr Kurien led a White Revolution benefitting 10 million farmer households in 80,000 villages. Alliance asked him how this movement started and what he thinks lies ahead.

Alliance: How and why did you come up with the idea to initiate these co-operatives?

Dr Kurien: I must clarify that I did not initiate the Amul co-operative. But it could be said that I have made some modest contributions in building Amul and later on in spreading the 'Anand model' to other parts of India through the Operation Flood programme. Amul was created by the vision of Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel, one of the giants of our independence movement and the first Deputy Prime Minister of India.

When I joined Amul in 1950, we were a newly independent nation. Our dairy co-operative was helping to bring economic independence to the dairy farmers of Kaira District. There were many challenges to overcome, many opportunities to seize. Part of it was the sense that what we were doing was important, to our farmers and to our nation. And part of it too was the reward that comes when farmers, whose lives depend on your efforts, appreciate what you are doing. Helping to shape a co-operative of milk producers, owned and commanded by them through their elected representatives, and with the help of professional managers made me realise how much could be achieved when the wisdom of our farmers is combined with professional management. And as I began to discover the power and goodness of co-operation I became more deeply involved with cooperatives, especially farmers cooperatives. It's been 51 years now and I have worked for the cause of co-operatives all along.

Globalisation is both praised and condemned these days. What threats and opportunities is it posing for your movement? What is your view of globalisation as an economic, political and social reality?

I do not understand how a multinational that establishes an agriculture-based food processing business in India can work for the interests of those whose sweat and toil is responsible for having produced the crop in the first place? That multinational would only be interested in maximising its sale price even as it minimises the cost of all supplies. Sadly, while the rules of the WTO are meant to promote fair trade, it seems to benefit only

multinationals and other businesses of the advanced nations.

Globalisation is based on an all-encompassing belief that growth will address all the ills of our society. I would believe that by themselves, growth strategies may not be sufficient to improve the quality of life. There is growing evidence that the pursuit of a mere pro-growth strategy does not translate directly into human poverty reduction. Many aspects of deprivation - from poor health to discrimination - have little to do with income.

A key intervention for rural development is the opening up of democratic participation, not just through local government but through people's organisations and women's groups, often organised around income generating activities. What you see in our dairy cooperatives structured on the Amul model is this kind of economic growth through voluntary and democratic participation of large sections of our rural population.

The challenge for every organisation and movement is to overcome the hurdle of decline which often follows maturity in the cycle of growth. As the founder, what in your opinion will ensure a bright future for your movement?

continued on page 8

Comings and goings

Pascale Blyth was appointed programme officer of the ICA Regional Office for Europe on 1 August. Of dual British-French nationality, Pascale is 28 years old.

Dominick Kurstjens joined ICA on 15 July as finance and administration manager. A chartered accountant in Switzerland, his previous experience includes a position as head of finance and administration. Of Dutch nationality, Dominick also speaks English, French and German.

In memoriam



Jack Shaffer died suddenly at his home in Redondo Beach, California, USA, on 22 July at the age of 76.

A strong supporter of co-operatives internationally, he worked as director of the Peace Corps in Jamaica, co-operative development officer at the US Agency for International Development, and executive director of the Committee for the Promotion and Advancement of Cooperatives (COPAC) in Rome, Italy. Jack was a highly respected colleague and friend. As a World War II veteran he became a peace activist for life. ICA also remembers Jack as designer of the ICA peace poster.

After officially retiring in 1987, he served as a co-operative development consultant for ICA and the World Council of Credit Unions (WOCCU), and is the author of the "Historical Dictionary of the Co-operative Movement" which he presented to the ICA Congress in 1999 in Québec City. Jack's enthusiasm, dedication and warm personality will be missed by all.

Promoting agriculture through co-operatives in Central & Eastern Europe

The challenge of achieving sustainable agriculture in Central and Eastern Europe can be met only through pooling of farmers' resources and co-operation, a workshop held in Budapest has concluded.

The workshop was held by ICA Europe jointly with the International

Agricultural Co-operative Organisation (ICAO), a specialised organisation of ICA. It was the first time that ICAO had organised a meeting in Central and Eastern Europe inviting representatives from the national agricultural federations of CEECs. The programme, focusing on the "Promotion of rural development through agricultural co-operatives," was co-ordinated by the ICA Europe Regional Office. The Hungarian Federation of Agricultural Co-operators and Producers MOSZ hosted the meeting, which took place 17-20 June. Speakers explained how agriculture in CEECs has been split up into small-size production units as a consequence of land reforms returning earlier-collectivised land to the private property of farmers. Due to the lack of capital, production means and expertise, the restructuring of agriculture has entailed more problems than progress. Such problems are for instance, rural unemployment and the exodus of rural population. The agriculture of



CEECs is increasingly lagging behind in competition, which will have extremely serious consequences after the countries join the European Union.

Among topics covered were sustainable agriculture and the importance of farmer-owned local businesses in a globalised world, the present state of agriculture and the co-operative sector in CEEs, and the experiences of Korea in maintaining rural population. The fifty participants concluded that the need for co-operatives has to be made clear among farmers and to governments so that they are able to forget their prejudice towards and lack of trust in co-operatives. They agreed that, despite the different stages of development in the various CEE countries, increased collaboration and more exchange of experiences can definitely contribute to a better preparation for joining the European Union.

UN session marked by co-operative presence Housing seminar planned for CEE and CIS

When the world leaders met in New York in June at the UN General Assembly Special Session on Housing and Shelter - called HABITAT II + 5 - the co-operative movement was represented. ICA and ICA Housing had been invited to participate and show results of the co-operative follow-up on the HABITAT Agenda over the past five years.

That Agenda, together with a Global Plan of Action, had been set at the first HABITAT in Istanbul, which acknowledged the governments' recognition of "co-ops as important actors in promoting sustainable human settlements."

This year in New York we were able to present that work in the plenary session of "Committee of the Whole," says Jan Eirik Imbsen, ICA director of development. "It includes several initiatives with the HABITAT Secretariat, such as a Memorandum of Understanding listing both our intentions and possible points and ways of collaboration."

Both at the plenary session and outside meeting rooms, ICA and ICA Housing also presented a new booklet called "Best Practice - Innovative Approaches to Co-operative Solutions of Housing Problems of the Poor," by Dr Hans-H Münkner.

ICA Housing Vice-President Dr Claus Hachmann also spoke at a seminar on co-operative financing.

One result of the ICA participation in HABITAT II + 5 is a plan to hold a seminar in 2002 entitled "Stimulating development of the co-operative approach in the shelter sector in Central and Eastern Europe and the CIS."

How tourism co-operatives may make low-budget travel attractive

TICA, the International Association of Co-operative Tourism, and the ICA Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific together held a seminar on tourism in Kuala Lumpur in June. Some 40 people, mostly from small tourism co-operatives in the region, attended the seminar hosted by ANGKASA, the National Co-operative Organisation of Malaysia.

The seminar leader, Romulo Villamin of the ICA Project Office in Singapore, engaged the participants into practical group work. Every group had to present an itinerary for a trip covering at least two countries that could be presented to co-operative customers. A number of inspired proposals came out and attractions of the mainly low-budget programmes included services provided by different co-operatives, ranging from busses, hotels and chalets to survival courses and "green" tourism in the jungle.

Valuable business contacts were established for the future.

Intercooperation: initial steps pr

In Alliance 5, Roberto Rodrigues, ICA president, called for "greater co-operation between co-operatives of the various branches within each country and internationally." In his message, titled "Intercooperation - we can do it," he said: "Imagine a worldwide network (of cooperatives) ...together financing production, homes, consumption.... There would not be a single multinational that could keep up with us." In keeping with his vision, ICA members across the world have pursued intercooperation within their regions, taking initial steps that may lead to broader multinational collaboration.

Any such collaboration should involve more than ideological grounds and there must be real benefits, says Tan Kin Lian, chairman of the Singapore National Co-operative Federation and chief executive of NTUC Income. "These benefits - tangible and intangible, financial and social - should be established before collaboration begins." In varying degrees the four cases on the ground featured here measure up to the leaders' vision and standards

Coop Norden, a merger of activities

To strengthen competitiveness and increase the growth-rate and scope of Nordic collaboration, the consumer cooperative movements in Denmark, Norway and Sweden formed Coop Norden AB, late 1999. The building of a Nordic platform for the Fast Moving Consumer Goods (FMCG) trade lies at the heart of the project, although common ventures are already in operation, e.g. in hypermarkets in Denmark and in home electronics in Sweden, Norway and Finland (Coop Elektro).

Coop Norden's intention is to become the strategic centre for the co-ordination and development of the cooperative FMCG trade in the Nordic countries. It will develop values for members and customers, while strengthening the market position of consumer cooperative retailing and the cooperative values in the long term.

Together, the Danish, Norwegian and Swedish consumer cooperative movements have almost 4.9 million members and about 29 per cent of the FMCG trade in Scandinavia.

In the increasing international consolidation in the market place, a larger structure will increase the possibilities for a more efficient operation with reduced costs. Its strongest benefits of scale lie in the ability to spread the development costs for both IT and new concepts over a large operation through the application of best practises.

An operational structure will be in place

by the beginning of 2002 with a head office in Göteborg, Sweden.

Coop Norden is formed by Coop Norway, FDB in Denmark and Kooperativa Förbundet (KF) in Sweden

Coop Norden facts

- Turnover to consumers SEK 76 billion (EUR 8 billion)
- Including retailing in local cooperatives the turnover is SEK 93 billion (EUR 9.8 billion)
- Substantial share of everyday commodities market - Sweden 24%, Denmark 38%, Norway 25%
- 1, 100 shops (plus 1, 900 in local cooperatives)
- 26, 000 employees (plus 25, 000 in local cooperatives)

Cabal: a horizontal integration experience

Cabal, a regional co-operative credit card, was founded 20 years ago to satisfy the strategic needs of the Argentinian co-operative financial system. Cabal now serves sectors of society that traditionally have had difficulty getting credit, especially small and medium enterprises. In a world dominated by multinationals, Cabal is a strategic instrument for an integrated and independent continental response to concentration,

After taking root in Argentina, Cabal got established in Uruguay, Paraguay, then in Brazil with the help of Asociación de Cooperativas de Inversiones y Consumo (ACAC), Cooperativa Nacional de Ahorro y Credito (COFAC), Cooperativa Universitaria, and Banco Cooperativo do Brasil. Now its network has been extended to Chile, Cuba and the Dominican Republic. Negotiations are also underway with the Mexican and Bolivian savings and credit co-operatives. Today, more than a million cards are in use in the region and annual transactions surpass USD800 million.

As a result of Cabal's focus on young people and women, a "University" Cabal was introduced for students and a "Mujer" (women's) card is being enthusiastically promoted. Cabal is also particularly attractive for members of associated groups. It offers efficiency and quality while generating a surplus for reinvestment in other programmes.

In Africa a co-operative commodity exchange

An African Inter-co-operative Commodity Exchange is one way ICA plans to assist farmer co-operatives that are facing increasing competition after liberalisation of commodity

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se real benefits

prices and marketing.

Made up mostly of small-scale producers, these co-operatives in West Africa are weak. Competition and price fluctuations make it difficult for them to plant crops, allocate resources, obtain credit and even recover costs. This has led to increased poverty and the financial collapse of many agricultural co-operatives. Communication and intercooperation are often non-existent or at best weak.

For these reasons, ICA and its members in West Africa are conducting a feasibility study for the creation of an African Interco-operative commodity Exchange, applying a new approach to ensure the future of farmer co-operatives dealing with raw materials. The study is on-going in seven sample (pilot) countries: Ghana, Nigeria, Mali, Senegal, Côte d'Ivoire, Benin and Cape Verde. It is the follow-up of a survey conducted in 1997 on the potentials, constraints and conditions of commercial exchange in West Africa and of the conclusions and recommendations of the ICA regional seminar organised in 1999 on the same topic.

The objectives of the Commodity Exchange will be to set up a commercial information system and network and bring technical and financial support to co-operatives in their commercial transactions.

Many co-operatives, too, are restructuring. Both Northern and southern co-operatives need to take advantage of opportunities created by privatisation in processing and export. The Exchange will help them establish alliances, partnerships, economic and marketing or financial joint ventures.

Global co-operation – responding to disasters

Co-operation between co-operatives does not need to be limited to the expansion of trading relationships between co-operatives, as important as this undoubtedly is. Global co-operative responses to crises and disastrous

events can substantiate the value of being part of an international network of organisations having common goals and values.

From the very earliest times, when international links between co-operatives began to develop, they have shown a readiness to help one another and demonstrate solidarity in times of crisis. This can take the form of financial assistance and or the provision of technical assistance. Recent appeals, which have resulted in a significant response from the international cooperative community include: the Kenya Bombing and Hurricane Mitch - Central America, 1998 and Gujarat earthquake, 2001. There were other crises where co-ops supported other co-ops without directly going through ICA: the earthquake in Turkey, 1999 and Hurricane George in Haiti, 1998.

When the US National Cooperative Business Association (NCBA) teamed up with the Cooperative Development Foundation of Canada (CDF) to help victims of the recent earthquake in El Salvador, they worked with local cooperatives and used funds raised from US and Canadian cooperatives to supply temporary housing, using a wood frame and plastic sheeting. Funds have also been provided to purchase medical and other relief supplies; additional follow-up assistance is also planned.

Support for earthquake-damaged co-operatives in Gujarat, India was provided by British co-operative societies to help restore education. A total of

GBP70,000 was donated to United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF). Facilitated by the UK Co-operative Bank's record of charity work, UNICEF was the chosen route for the donation to earthquake recovery. Most of the funds are being used in rural areas where access to education has always relied on local teachers and small community schools.



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"The Role of
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 Organizations in Crisis
 Resolution and Socio-
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Integrating the young into the movement



Diversity is one of the major challenges that a community has to face in this globalised world. Bringing together people of different generations, different cultures can lead to a synergy of forces which could strengthen a

community or lead to a set of misunderstandings polarising it and breeding unrest. Experience shows that the more we are exposed to diversity, the more we are open to learn from others.

ICA has a long history of fostering multicultural exchange through international conferences and meetings. Integrating the young generation into the movement is an emerging priority but only for some co-operative organisations – although co-operatives are used to reaching young people through education.

As Roberto Rogrigues asked in a speech in 1997, “What is the future of a social movement without young people?” It is the young that will continue the movement’s present work. They need to be

exposed as early as possible to the co-operative system. The more they know about co-operatives, the more likely they are to embrace the movement as a vehicle for meeting the challenges of their communities. In Asia and the Pacific, the ICA Regional Office and its members greatly encourage the involvement of young people in the co-operative world. In June, some co-operative leaders and young co-operators from different countries in Asia gathered for three days in Tokyo. Experienced co-operators presented the current economic trends, and the opportunities and difficulties facing the co-operative movement. Youth with their unrestrained idealism expressed views on how to improve co-operatives and what they would like to find in co-operative organisations. This multicultural event gave participants the opportunity to understand differing customs and habits, to break barriers and share experiences. Young people expressed the need to extend regional exchanges to the international level, to have more interrelations among generations and to be actively involved in issues and decision-making, especially related to youth and the future of co-operatives. Diversity could then be a springboard for the co-operative movement to be a leading force for peace in the years to come.



Co-operative Oscar for ICA vice-president

At celebrations of this year’s International Co-operative Day, Lars Hillbom, vice-president of ICA and president of ICA Europe, was granted the highest distinction of the Polish co-operative movement. The Co-operative Oscar Prize is in recognition of Mr Hillbom’s contribution to the development of the Polish co-operative movement in the transition period.

ICA members in Asia-Pacific celebrate anniversaries

Japan

- JCCU – Japanese Consumers’ Co-operative Union – 50 years, member of ICA since 1977
- ZENKYOREN - National Mutual Insurance Federation of Agricultural Co-operatives – 50 years, member of ICA since 1977

Korea

- NACF - National Agricultural Co-operative Federation (NACF) – 40 years, member of ICA since 1963

Kuwait

- Union of Consumer Co-operative Societies – 30 years, member of ICA since 1981

Mongolia

- Mongolian Association of Private Herders’ Co-operatives – 10 years, member of ICA since 1998

Singapore

- SNCF - Singapore National Co-operative Federation Ltd. – 20 years; member of ICA since 1985

International

- ACCU - Association of Asian Confederation of Credit Unions – 30 years; member of ICA since 1981

.coop: an exclusive opportunity

.coop gives co-operatives the internet names that instantly tell the world that they are a co-operative. That is why ICA is encouraging its members to use .coop and promote their co-operative identity and add value to their co-operative businesses. It is also why ICA is offering its members an exclusive and limited opportunity to claim .coop domain names before registration opens up to the worldwide co-operative community.

ICA announced the launch of pre-qualification to its members on the occasion of International Co-operative Day 7 July. Members received information by e-mail and fax on how to start pre-qualifying names and purchasing their usage rights shortly after.

Member organisations in North and South America, Europe and Asia-Pacific have begun to take advantage of this opportunity and have pre-qualified between 1 and 176 domain names per organisation, reported Karl Johan Fogelström, ICA director-general. These ICA members know that pre-qualification of .coop names now will ensure that the names they need to have a strong and easily recognisable web presence in the future will be theirs.

Only a small number of organisations have been given this opportunity as founders of .coop. These include members of the National

Cooperative Business Association (NCBA) in the United States, the Co-op Union of the United Kingdom, and two sectoral US co-operative organisations. During pre-qualification, members of .coop founders will have the ability to register an unlimited number of names. Do not miss this opportunity. Register now!



At the .coop founders planning meeting held in August in Washington DC (USA), from left: Carolyn Hoover (.coop), Sandra Painell (Ligacoop, Puerto Rico), Pauline Green (Co-op Union, UK), Andy Brown (NRTC, USA), Paul Hazen (NCBA, USA), Chuck Snyder (NCB, USA), Mary Allen (.coop), Juan Diego Pacheco, José Matos Berrios (Ligacoop, Puerto Rico), Byron Henderson (.coop), Bob Burton (Co-op Union, UK), Maria Elena Chavez (ICA), and Malcolm Corbett (Poptel, UK)

*A foundation
for promoting
co-operative
identity on the
internet*

.coop has a new look!

Introduced on the occasion of International Day of Co-operatives 7 July, the new .coop logo with its vibrant colour and modern typeface exemplifies the innovativeness of the co-operative movement.

The tagline - "one member, one, vote, one

domain" - focuses on the most important attribute differentiating co-operatives from investor-owned businesses - their democratic governance and the principle of democracy on the basis of one member, one vote.



.coop in Seoul

An information stand on .coop will be set up during the ICAGeneral Assembly in Seoul to help ICA members register domain names. Meet some of the people that will assist in managing .coop! Stop by the .coop information stand in COEX just in front of the main entrance to the General Assembly Hall and have your questions on .coop answered and register .coop domain names.

For more information contact the ICA Secretariat (chavez@coop.org) or the .coop Operations Center in the United States (choover@ncba.org) or the .coop web site: www.cooperative.org

Dr Kurien

continued from page 2

To have an excellent record of getting work done you must have the right members and the right employees. And, in selecting the right people what our institutions look for is integrity, first and foremost. Second comes loyalty, a complete commitment, not to an individual but to the institution. Individuals come and individuals go. But if you are a member or for that matter an employee in an institution and you do not have a commitment to the ideals for which the institution exists, then you have no right to be here. To fight decline and keep the organisation focused on its mission one may forgive mistakes, but never forgive corruption or the lack of loyalty to the values and principles of that institution.

There is an international demand for your advice and consultation. Could more be done to transfer your movement's know-how to other countries in need? And what more could ICA do as a global body to help with that?

Even in the past, India's National Dairy Development Board has offered technical help and assistance to some of the developing countries in dairy development projects. We would be happy to look at ways of offering possible assistance and support to those who need our services.

Celebrating new members in Seoul

A small ceremony at the General Assembly in Seoul following the plenary session 16 October will recognize new members that have joined ICA since the 1999 Assembly in Quebec.

It will include a welcome speech by the ICA president, handing over the ICA flag, and cocktails and snacks to celebrate the addition to membership.

New members coming to Seoul are being informed and invited individually.

Incoming head of the WTO is keynote speaker in Seoul



Dr Supachai Panitchpakdi, director-general designate of the World Trade Organisation (WTO), will be

the keynote speaker at the ICA General Assembly in Seoul.

The theme of the Assembly is "Co-operation and Peace - in the Era of Globalisation," which will be the starting point of his speech.

"We are very happy to get Dr Supachai," says Mats Ahnlund, ICA director of member services and meetings. "Most of our members are concerned about globalisation and the role of WTO. And by inviting the next director-general of WTO, ICA shows that those concerns are taken seriously. We will have a great opportunity to get his views about the future first-hand and co-operative leaders will have several occasions to present the movement's concerns to him in private discussions."

The audience - ICA members - have a mix of opinions about globalisation, free trade, protectionism and the WTO role, adds Mr Ahnlund. "We have, for example, strong co-op members in the USA sympathising with their government's view. We have many strong European co-ops, some agricultural some consumer. They do not always

agree with one another, but many are rather positive towards globalisation. We also have strong Japanese and Korean agricultural co-ops that look upon it from another perspective, being very worried and protective about their members, the rice farmers. And we have several members from the least developed countries (LDCs) that probably agree with the 77 LDCs' statement last June, claiming that most of their members were not getting any benefit from the globalisation process.

Dr Supachai has been asked to present his personal view as well as the official view on the role of WTO and the possibilities for co-operation and peace today and in the future, particularly involving co-operatives and other NGOs in a globalised world.

Dr Supachai will succeed Michael Moore as director-general of the WTO for a term of three years beginning September 2002.

From 1997 to March 2001 he served as Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Commerce of Thailand and has been actively involved in international trade, playing an instrumental role in the drafting of Thailand's major economic policies. Dr Supachai also has experience in the private sector, as president of the Thai Military Bank and chairman of Nava Finance and Securities.

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