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ICA to Host Global Business Opportunities Conference in Seoul (1998)

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ICA to Host Global Business Opportunities Conference in Seoul

Next October in the beautiful city of Seoul, Korea, the ICA and NACF will organise an event focusing on Asian co-operative development in the agricultural, consumer and financial sectors (including insurance) and also give numerous possibilities for business contacts.

The role of the ICA as a global facilitator of business will be developed with a special introduction on the subject by the new ICA President, Roberto Rodrigues. The meeting will specifically focus on how the new co-operative principle on Concern for Community can be applied in business.

Make a tentative registration today to be sure of getting a place by contacting Mats Ahnlund at the ICA Secretariat by fax at (41 22) 798 41 22 or by sending an e-mail to members@ica.org

World Overview - International (1998)

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World Overview - International

Cologne to Host Research Conference

The 22nd International Congress of CIRIEC International Centre
of Research and Information on the Public and Co-operative Economy,
will be held in Cologne, Germany, May 4-5, 1998. The general subject
of discussion will be "The management of human resources in public,
social economy and co-op enterprises".

(Source: Ciriec International, December 1997)

World Overview - Africa (1998)

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World Overview - Africa

GHANA

Japanese Bilateral Aid:

In a move likely to be the first for a Japanese insurer, Zenrosai is to help develop insurance in West Africa by providing direct assistance to the trade union movement of Ghana. It will send Hiroshi Okamura, ICMIF regional adviser, to Ghana for a year or two beginning January 1998 to support the development of co-operative insurance for popularly based organisations in the country.

World Overview - Europe (1998)

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World Overview - Europe

FINLAND

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New Co-ops in 1998

In the beginning of January 1998 there were 601 new co-operatives in Finland, of which worker co-ops are the biggest group, numbering 85 compared to 113 marketing co-ops and 61 supply-co-ops.

Social, health and welfare co-operatives are also increasing and now number 23. Cultural, publishing and communications co-ops are also a growing sector with a present total of 25 co-ops..

Young people have become increasingly interested in co-operatives as a form of enterprise. They are forming co-operatives in order to be able to use their own expertise in the fields of data technology, culture and marketing.

New co-operatives are also emerging in the countryside for village development, marketing of products, tourist services and various temporary services. Energy co-operatives have been formed to produce energy for communes and population centres. It is expected that the number of co-ops dealing with environmental issues such as recycling, waste management, development of quality systems and sustainable products will also increase.

20-30 new co-operatives are formed every month. The majority of the present 600 new co-operatives have been founded within the last two years. In 1995 the number of worker co-operatives was 40, in the beginning of 1996 it had increased to 82 and it now totals almost 300. This reflects the booming interest in co-operatives.

The business idea of the majority of Finnish worker co-operatives is to hire out various services. The most popular fields are construction, clerical work, ADP, bookkeeping and industrial services.

New co-operatives have now about 15, 000 members. Most of these new co-operatives have been formed by unemployed people wishing to employ themselves by joining together. According to the Ministry of Labour new co-operatives give jobs to 8,000 - 15,000 people.

-(Source: Finnish Consumer Co-operative Association (FCCA))

FRANCE

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Co-ops well-regarded by public opinion

On the occasion of the 50th anniversary of the passage of France's present co-operative law, the Groupement National de la Cooperation organised a seminar and press conference at the French Senate on 12 February in order to publicise recent developments in the sector.

GNC President Jean-Claude Detilleux described the vitality and diversity of the co-operative sector in France: 18 million members, 30 percent of the retail banking sector, and annual turnover of 600 billion francs in the non-financial sector.

According to a public opinion survey carried out by the national agency IFOP, 68 percent of the French population regard co-operatives as efficient, 58 percent describe them as modern and innovative, and 62 percent regard them as an important contributor to the fight against unemployment. However, while co-operatives are understood generally as groups of people working together for mutual benefit, two persons out of three have only a vague image of how they really operate.

During the seminar it was reported that the large savings bank sector (caisses d'epargne), with 28 million customers, intends to adopt a co-operative status in the future. "We have been practicing co-operation for many years without knowing it," said a senior official.

- (Source: Groupement National de la Cooperation)

GERMANY
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New Master's Course Offered

A new two-year Master's Course in Co-operative Economics will begin in October 1998 at the Institute for Co-operation in Developing Countries at the Philipps-University of Marburg. It is offered to applicants from the Newly Independent States as well as from countries in Asia, Africa and Latin America.

The programme covers general economics and business administration, with special emphasis on co-operative science and agro-economics.

Applications must be submitted by 1 July 1998. For those applicants wishing to take language training in German before starting the Master's programme the deadline is 28 February 1998,

Further information is available from the Institute for Co-operation in Developing Countries, Philipps-University of Marburg, D-35032 Marburg, Germany.

New Co-operatives Filling Government Gap

A survey conducted by the German Co-operative and Raiffeisen Confederation (DGRV) has shown that a total of 109 new co-operatives with more than 11,000 members were established in the years 1992-96. These do not include mergers or reorganisations. Among the new co-operatives, the majority were in the food production sector. Other growth areas were in data processing, medical services, and water supply.

According to Dr. Mathias Graumann of DGRV, the analysis illustrates that new co-operative businesses are emerging in a number of fields from which the State is withdrawing, such as education, water supply and waste water management, health services, and care of the elderly.

- (Source: IRU Courier, 3/97)

HUNGARY
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CO-OP HUNGARY Looks to the Future

In November 1997, the National Council of Hungarian Co-operatives decided that in future AFEOSZ - CO-OP HUNGARY will function as the national organ representing the interests of the consumer co-operative societies. AFEOSZ will represent the co-operatives before the Hungarian Government as well as internationally.

The 3rd Congress held on 10-11 December has confirmed that co-operatives have to focus on strengthening their joint purchasing organs - Pro-Coops , distribution centres, and CO-OP HUNGARY. It was decided to further develop the CO-OP chain store in order to project a uniform image in the market to customers and membership. Pal Bartus has been re-elected as President of AFEOSZ.

The Co-operative Research Institute has moved to their headquarters: 1054 Budapest, Szabadsag ter 14. Tel +361-1534222

-(Source: E-mail: Coop.H. Intern@mail.datanet.hu)

ITALY

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Consumer Co-operatives Progress

Italy's consumer co-operatives reported an impressive 6 percent growth rate in 1997, with 170,000 new members and a total turnover of US\$ 8.5 billion.

The large hypercoops played a particularly important role and now contribute more than 30 percent of the Co-op's total turnover. In 1998, 18 large new co-operatives are expected to open.

The movement has also published its annual Social Report outlining its action in the area of consumer protection, information, and the environment.

A "fair consumption" project has been initiated to promote and create awareness about fair trade and ethical production.

- (Source: Coop Italy)

SWITZERLAND

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Migros Well-Rated

Migros Co-operative, Switzerland's largest retailer, has received a rating of AA- from the Standard and Poors agency.

According to a spokesman from the rating agency, only the American Wal-Mart and Britain's Marks and Spencer have achieved a higher rating in the highly competitive retail sector.

- (Source: L'Hebdo, 29 January 1998)

Co-op Banks Fill Gap Left by Big Three

The Raiffeisen Co-operative Banks have become the fourth largest banking group in Switzerland, following the three large multinational banks.

According to Raiffeisen President, Marius Cottier, this development is a result of the "enduring character of Raiffeisen's commercial philosophy.

While our competitors are constantly closing their branches and releasing staff in order to maximise benefits for shareholders, Raiffeisen continues to concentrate on quality growth...at the local level, where we are represented in one county (commune) in three."

During 1996 the group's consolidated assets grew by 8.5 percent to 56.6 billion Swiss francs, while its year-end results rose by 38 percent.

- (Source: Union Suisse de Banques Raiffeisen, Rapport de Gestion 1996)

UNITED KINGDOM

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UK to Host European Debate on Social Economy

The 6th European Conference on the Social Economy will be held on 3-5 June 1998 at the International Convention Centre, Birmingham, UK. The conference is intended to enable social economy organisations to forge new partnerships and encourage the spread of best practice and innovative ideas across Europe.

Further information from Stephanie Lennon, Unity Trust Bank, 4 The Square, 111 Broad Street, Birmingham B15 1AR, Tel: 0121 616 4149

-(Source: UK Social Economy Forum, December 1997)

Agricultural Co-operatives Growing

Britain's agricultural and horticultural co-operatives achieved impressive growth rates in 1997 despite difficult trading conditions, according to the 1998 edition of the UK Directory and Statistics of Agricultural Co-operatives and other Farmer-Controlled Businesses published by the Plunkett Foundation.

Total turnover of 545 U.K. farmer-controlled businesses was up 9 percent to 7.4 billion pounds sterling. It is estimated that they handle about one-third of total agricultural output, with higher figures in sectors such as dairy (85 percent of the market) and fruit (67 percent).

Copies of the 1998 directory are available for sale from the Plunkett Foundation, 23 Hanborough Business Park, Long Hanborough, Oxford OX8 8LH, UK.

Superstores to go in Co-op Shake-up

The CWS is cutting 20 million pounds from its supply costs and is planning to withdraw from superstores. Restructuring plans include a management shake-up to help CWS cross-market to customers its financial services, travel, optician, pharmacy and food stores, etc.

A 5pc dividend card will be re-introduced nationally by the spring. CWS's 19 superstores will be reviewed and the proceeds reinvested in convenience stores and medium-sized supermarket and stripping out costs in the supply chain falls.

-(Source: The Daily Telegraph, December 1997)

UK Supermarkets Leery of PVC

Two leading UK supermarkets, Tesco and the Co-operative Wholesale Society, have said they will phase out their use of PVC unless manufacturers improve standards. The retailers want the PVC industry to agree on a deadline to improve production methods and adopt "exceptional" standards. These may be based on the industry charter of the European Council of Vinyl Manufacturers, a voluntary code which includes some discharge and air emission limits. Compliance would be assessed by independent audits.

For further information contact: Co-operative Wholesale Society:
E-mail: <http://www.publish1.co-op.co.uk> Tel: (00 44) 161 827 5292

-(Source: <http://www.tomorrow-web>)

World Overview - the Americas (1998)

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World Overview - The Americas

BRAZIL
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Sustainable Development in the Amazon

Some 200 co-operative and community leaders from the nine countries of the Amazon River basin met in Manaus, Brazil, in December to discuss programmes of economic and social development based on the sustainable use of natural resources. Priority themes were the marketing of alternative products, eco-tourism, fish-handling, agro-forestry, and applied research.

The seminar organisers, the ICA Project Office in Brazil and the Organization of Co-operatives of Brazil, were asked by the participants to organise a follow-up meeting next year.

Further information is available from Celso Claro de Oliveira at the OCB-ICA office in Brasilia (fax +55-61-321 6431).

- (Source: Informativo OCB, September 1997)

Brazilian Co-operative Congress

The Organisation of Co-operatives of Brazil (OCB) organised a National Co-operative Congress in November 1997 to discuss changes in organisational, managerial, and legislative issues resulting from the current national and international economic environment.

It is the first time that Brazilian co-operatives have organised a national Congress since 1988 when, under the chairmanship of Roberto Rodrigues, they succeeded in amending the country's constitution to guarantee the independence of co-operatives.

- (Source: Informativo OCB, September 1997)

OCB Appoints new Executive Director

The OCB President, Dejandir Dalpasquale, has announced the appointment of Amilcar Gramacho as Executive Director of the country's apex co-operative body. He succeeds Americo Utumi, who will take over the newly-created position as Chief of Staff in Brazil for Roberto Rodrigues, the newly-elected ICA President.

- (Source: Informativo OCB, September 1997)

Support for Agricultural Co-operatives

The Organization of Co-operatives of Brazil (OCB) has entered into an agreement with the Brazilian Government to establish an Agricultural Co-operatives Revitalization Programme (RECOOP).

The main objective of the programme is to improve the capitalisation of agricultural co-operatives. Eligible co-operatives will be chosen on the basis of an analysis of their growth potential as set out in a development project. Financing is expected to begin in the second half of 1998.

- (Source: OCB)

International Study Visit

The UK-based Building and Social Housing Foundation is organising a 5 day study visit to the World Habitat Award Winning project of Urban Management in Curitiba City, Brazil from 22 - 26 June 1998.

This city-wide project is a shining example of how an imaginative and innovative city planning approach has created a sustainable urban environment and a strong sense of citizenship. Housing provision is an integral part of urban development and brings together a range of innovative programmes. World famous public transportation and waste management systems have earned the city its reputation as one of the most sustainable cities on earth.

Bursaries may be available to help meet the travel and accommodation costs of representatives from developing countries who wish to participate in this study visit.

Bursary application forms and further details can be obtained from Mrs Diane Diacon, Building and Social Housing Foundation Tel: 44 0 1530 510444, Fax: 44 0 1530 510332, E-mail: 100567.3433@compuserve.com

- (Source: Building and Social Housing Foundation, Leicestershire, UK, December 1997)

CANADA

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CDF Celebrates Half a Century

The Co-operative Development Foundation of Canada is 50 years old this year. To mark the occasion, CDF is launching an anniversary appeal asking co-operatives, credit unions and individuals across the country for their support.

In partnership with the Canadian Co-operative Association, CDF assistance is channelled to co-op and credit union projects around the world. Through CDF, Canadian organisations and individuals prove their commitment to the global co-operative family and, in turn, secure generous funding from the Canadian government through the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA).

For more information contact Angela Splinter at CCA: Tel: (613) 567-0658

- (Source: Co-operative Development Foundation of Canada, Dec. 1997)

Deep Roots New Growth

Canada's foremost event for co-op and credit union people from every region and sector is the Congress organised annually by the Canadian Co-operative Association (CCA). This year's event entitled Co-operative Leadership, Deep Roots, New Growth will take place in Winnipeg from 23 - 26 June, 1998.

CCA has assembled a roster of dynamic keynote speakers and workshop leaders to challenge and inspire and, as an added bonus, will be offering sessions for special interest or professional groups, including: youth, CEOs, presidents, directors, communicators, information specialists, financial and government affairs specialists.

For programme or registration details contact the CCA, 275 Bank Street, Suite 400, Ottawa, ON K2P 2L6; Fax: (613) 567-0658; e-mail: congress@coopcca.com; web site: www.coopcca.com

- (Source:CCA Info)

SWP Reports Landmark Year

Canada's largest co-operative, Saskatchewan Wheat Pool, increased its net earnings in 1996 by 48 percent to 48.4 million Canadian dollars. It also successfully completed its conversion into a "publicly-traded co-operative".

Under its equity conversion programme, existing member share capital was converted into Class A (voting) and Class B (non-voting) shares. The Class B shares, listed on the Toronto Stock Exchange, increased in value during the year. Class A shares are held only by active farmer-members in order to maintain member control. Based on revenues, SWP is now the 54th largest company in Canada.

- (Source: Saskatchewan Wheat Pool Annual Report, 1996)

URUGUAY

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New Co-operative Bank Established

The ICA member organisation ACAC (Association of Savings and Credit Co-operatives) has become the majority shareholder in a newly-incorporated Co-operative Bank called Banco ACAC S.A. The other shareholder is France's Caisse Nationale de Credit Agricole. ACAC, whose president remains Ricardo Stirling, will continue its operations as a separate organisation.

USA

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1998 Festival of America's Co-operatives

The theme for this year's Festival of America's Co-operatives will be Celebrating Economic Opportunity for Every American. NCBA will host this fourth annual festival in Washington, D.C. at the Banquet Rooms of Rayburn House Office Building on Capitol Hill. The festival will feature display booths of co-operatives of all kinds, refreshments and many opportunities to meet Members of Congress and their staff. Further information available from Richard Dines at (202) 383-5442 or by e-mail at rdines@ncba.org.

-(Source: Co-operative Business Journal, December 1977)

Future Co-op Leaders Conference

NCBA will sponsor the 7th annual Future Co-op Leaders Conference from 22-25 April in Washington, D.C. Designed to develop co-operative leadership in order to build a stronger co-operative community, the programme provides scholarships for staff, directors and members of co-operatives to attend a training and educational event held annually in Washington, DC.

The programme will include participation in the 1998 Co-operative Conference including the annual meetings of the National Co-operative Business Association and the National Co-operative Bank, "The Festival of America's Co-operatives" and leadership workshops on co-operative issues. Applicants must be recommended by their co-operative and there is a limit of one applicant per co-operative. Applications will be mailed to NCBA members in early January. For additional information or applications, call Leta Mach at (202) 638-6222 or send an e-mail to lmach@ncba.org. The application deadline is 6 March 1998.

- (Source: Co-operative Business Journal, December 1977)

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World Overview - Asia and the Pacific

INDONESIA =====

Facing the Future with Strength -----

All co-operatives in Indonesia have now been united under one banner through DEKOPIN, the National Co-operative Council, which has now become the sole apex organisation in Indonesia. Last July the Indonesian Government supported the organisation of a regional Asian Pacific Seminar, Conference and Trade Exhibition which led to the establishment of the Coop Business Network (ICBN) with a temporary secretariat in Jakarta. This was the first step in consolidating the movement in Indonesia. The establishment of a unique apex is a second step in giving the movement the strength it needs to face the threats of the coming 21st Century.

- (Source: Dekopin Dewan Koperasi, December 1997)

JAPAN =====

Insurance Co-operatives Retain Strong Presence -----

In spite of the problems being experienced by the Japanese economy, insurance co-operatives continue to maintain their strong market share.

Taken together, the co-operative insurers in the agricultural, fishery, forestry, consumer, and co-operative enterprise sectors had 34 percent of the general insurance policies and 12 percent of the total sum insured in 1997. Their number of life insurance policies was 16.6 percent, with the total sum insured amounting to 17.8 percent.

- (Source: Japanese Co-operative Insurance Association, quoted in the Zenrosai Annual Report, 1998)

KOREA =====

Subsidiaries for Agricultural Co-operatives -----

The National Agricultural Co-operative Federation (NACF) of Korea and ICA organised a joint forum in Seoul during the last week of October 1997 in order to study experiences of agricultural co-operatives in using subsidiary companies.

Senior managers from the Netherlands, Germany, Britain, Portugal, Canada, and Japan described the ways in which subsidiaries can be used by co-operatives to increase managerial efficiency, provide new services to members, and access external capital. Participants from Denmark, the

Czech Republic, India, Sri Lanka, and Vietnam also shared their experiences.

NACF Chairman and President Churll-Hee Won, newly-elected member of the ICA Board, stressed that co-operatives must study and introduce the most appropriate kinds of organisational reform in order to meet the diversified needs of their members in the face of growing competitive pressures.

Copies of the papers presented at the forum are available from Won-Sik Noh (E-Mail: noh@coop.org), Agricultural Adviser at ICA Geneva.

PHILIPPINES

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MSU-IIT Co-op Opens 2nd School Site

The MSU-IIT Employees Multi-Purpose Co-operative opened its second school site at Barangay Upper Hinaplanon in January.

The co-op school opened its doors to students eleven years ago and today has a total of 347 pupils with seven faculty and three staff members 1,000 regular members and over 3,000 high school and college associate member-student depositors.

-(Source: E-mails:raud@iligan.com, January 1998)

Co-op People (1998)

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format by the International Co-operative Alliance (ICA)

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Co-op People

Wallace J. Campbell, 87, who founded CARE (Co-operative for Assistance and Relief Everywhere) and was a member of the US Co-operative Hall of Fame, died of pneumonia on January 7, 1998. Mr. Campbell represented the ICA at the founding conference of the United Nations in 1945 and was ICA's permanent representative to the Economic & Social Council of the UN from 1975- 89.

The Board Directors of Folksam Life and Folksam General have appointed Tore Andersson as the new Chief Executive Officer of Folks. Tore Anderson has been Acting COE since June and was most recently Executive Vice President and Head of Group Insurance at Folksam.

In accordance with the Federal Law on consumer co-operation in the Russian Federation certain structural changes have been carried out, The Council of Centrosojuz of the Russian Federation was set up as the governing body and the Board as the executive body. Valentine Ermakov was elected to the post of the Chairman of the Council. Galina Kisseleva was appointed by the Council as a Chairwoman of the Centrosojuz Board, and Nina Goriacheva as the first deputy chairwoman of the Board.

Retired chairman and CEO of the Nationwide Insurance Enterprise, USA, John E. Fisher, died of cancer on 13 January 1998. He was 68.

The OCB President, Dejandir Dalpasquale, has announced the appointment of Amilcar Gramacho as Executive Director of the country's apex co-operative body. He succeeds Americo Utumi, who will take over the newly-created position as Chief of Staff in Brazil for Roberto Rodrigues, the newly-elected ICA President.

National Co-operative Business Association President and CEO Russ Notar has been appointed chair of the Overseas Co-operative Development Council (OCDC). Other officers are Vice Chair Martha Cashman, Land O'Lakes; Treasurer Anthony Gayoso, World Council of Credit Unions; Legislative and Government Affairs Committee Chair Jay Howell, National Council of Farmer Co-operatives; and Co-operative Development Committee Chair Judith Hermanson, Co-operative Housing Foundation.

Mervyn Pedelty has become Chief Executive of The UK Co-operative Bank, following the retirement of Terry Thomas who has served as Managing Director of the Bank from 1988-1997 .

Etienne Pflimlin has been re-elected for a new 5 years mandate as President of the Mutual Credit National Confederation at the General Assembly on 8 October 1997.

Simon Rawlinson, CEO of Milk Marque, Europe's largest milk wholesaling co-operative, has been appointed as Chief Executive of the Plunkett Foundation, effective 1 January 1998. Edgar Parnell, who has been Chief Executive for the past fourteen years will be undertaking consultancy assignments for the Foundation.

ICA Calendar (1998)

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ICA Calendar

- 20 March 1998 - ICA European Council, Helsinki, Finland
- 30 March 1998 - ICACC Exco, Geneva, Switzerland
- 31 March 1998 - SB Chairs & Secretaries, Geneva, Switzerland
- 1-2 April 1998 - Regional Directors' Meeting, Geneva, Switzerland
- 2 April 1998 - ICCO Exco, Rome, Italy
- 2 April 1998 - IHCO Board, Malaga, Spain
- 16-18 April 1998 - ICA Housing Board & Seminar, Cairo, R. A. Egypt
- 21-22 April 1998 - ICA Board Meeting, Tokyo, Japan
- 3-8 May 1998 - ICAO General Assembly, Manila, Philippines
- 13-17 May 1998 - ICA Research Committee, Cork, Ireland
- June 1998 - ICACC Trade & Communications Sub-Committee,
Cupertino, CA, USA
- 8-9 June 1998 - INTERCOOP Working Group on Food Laboratory,
Stockholm, Sweden
- 4 July 1998 - International Day of Co-operatives, Worldwide Event
- August 1998 - Regional Assembly for Africa, Lusaka, Zambia
- 13 October 1998 - INTERCOOP/ICCO Seminar on Fair Trade, Paris,
France
- 14-15 October 1998 - ICA European Council, Paris, France
- 15 -16 October 1998 - Regional Assembly for Europe, Paris, France
- 17-18 October 1998 - ICA Board Meeting, Paris, France
- 27-29 October 1998 - Regional Assembly for Asia & the Pacific, Seoul,
Korea
- 29 Oct.-1 Nov. 1998 - ICA Global Forum, Seoul, Korea
- October 1998 - ICA Housing Board & Seminar, Algarve, Portugal
- 30 Nov.-3 Dec. 1998 - Regional Assembly for the Americas & Regional
Conference, Montevideo, Uruguay.

