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June, 1998

(Source: ICA News, Issue No.2/1998, pp.1)

### ICA Board meets in Japan

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Decisions made by the ICA Board during its April meeting in Japan included the following:

- \* To establish a legislative working group, headed by Dr. Ivan Prikryl of the Czech Republic, which will begin work on developing a legislative data base and will propose follow-up action to the next meeting of the Board;
- \* To authorise management to follow-up with members interested in participating in a new working group on "Green Issues and Ethics", and to hold a preliminary meeting in Paris in October;
- \* To strongly encourage members to send more women to this year's Regional Assemblies and to next year's Congress/General Assembly;
- \* To organise a Youth Forum, and essay contest, in conjunction with next year's Congress/General Assembly in Quebec City;
- \* To co-opt Madame B. Padanou, member of the Board of the National Federation of Savings and Credit Co-operatives of Benin, to the ICA Board;
- \* To recommend to the 1999 General Assembly that the General Assembly in the Year 2001 be held in Korea;
- \* To approve a new ICA Development Policy which will serve as the basis for discussions with development partners and for implementation of regional strategies;
- \* To approve membership applications from USIMEC Colombia, Mongolian Association of Private Herders' Co-operatives, and Myanmar Union of Co-operative Syndicates; and to note with regret the decision of Co-op Switzerland to terminate its membership at the end of 1998;
- \* To approve the 1997 financial statements, which show a small end- of-year surplus, as well as the 1998 budget and 1999 indicative budget.

The next Board meeting will be held in Paris on 17 October, at which time the Board will focus on the current economic challenges facing co-ops in all regions and on policy changes which the ICA might introduce in its structures and activities as a result.

On 18 October the Board will meet with leaders of the ICA Specialised Bodies in order to continue this discussion about future trends and necessary changes.

(Source: ICA News, Issue No.2/1998, pp.2-4)

News from the Regions - Europe

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ICA's Official Status with the Council of Europe

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The ICA has been granted consultative status with the Council of Europe (CoE) as an international NGO, as from 15 January 1998.

The Council of Europe is the oldest political inter-governmental organisation in Europe and will celebrate its 50th anniversary next year. Based in Strasbourg, it has 40 member states and is concerned with strengthening political, social, legal and cultural co-operation and promoting human values throughout Europe. Its Parliamentary Assembly consists of members of the national parliaments.

The difference between the CoE and the European Union is that the EU has only 15 member states and its primary aim is to achieve economic and political integration. The European Parliament is the assembly of the European Union whose members are directly elected in European elections.

The present number of NGOs enjoying the same status as ICA has increased substantially during the past few years and has reached 350. This figure indicates the growing attention the Council of Europe pays to the role of NGOs in the national political and economic structures as well as in promoting the objectives of the Council of Europe.

The consultative status entitles ICA to take part in the annual plenary meeting of NGOs. The first one ICA attended took place on 28 January in Strasbourg. It was organised by the liaison committee of NGOs that has been in existence for the past 20 years.

For the first time in its history the NGO Committee was invited to the summit of the Heads of State and Government last October and submitted a statement. ICA will also be entitled to take part as an observer in the Parliamentary Assemblies.

Before the ICA Regional Assembly for Europe was set up in 1994, the countries entitled to belong to the European Region were defined according to the criteria of the Council of Europe.

The CoE has created special schemes of co-operation with Central and Eastern European countries (CEEC) to help them establish their democratic reforms and involve them in the CoE activities. Today 16 CEECs are members and some others are permanent invitees.

The activities carried out in the Council of Europe affect all our lives, and its work programme covers a broad range of questions of crucial importance to society, many of them of direct interest to the ICA member organisations.

These are the following:

Human rights, media and communication, social and economic affairs, education, culture and heritage, sports, youth, environment, local and regional government, legal questions.

Member States

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There are currently 40 member states in the Council of Europe. These are: Albania, Andorra, Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Moldova, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Russia, San Marino, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden,

Switzerland, "the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia", Turkey, Ukraine, United Kingdom.

## Belarus Welcomes ICA Europe

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Lars Hillbom, President of ICA Europe and Gabriella Sozanski, Regional Director visited Belarus on 11-13 May. The purpose of the trip was to get acquainted with the activities of the 147 consumer co-operatives integrated in Belcoopsoyuz. As the President of the movement, Victor Vladyko, explained, their activities are developing dynamically. Several stores have opened in the capital although the majority of their units are still in rural areas where co-ops are the only service providers. Private businesses is, however, starting to grow. Consumer co-operatives are involved in a wide range of activities such as retail trade, production of various consumer goods, purchasing and processing of agricultural products, export-import business, public catering, construction and transport. In recent years joint ventures have been launched with Germany, Italy, Switzerland, Poland, Hungary, Latvia and Russia. Belcoopsoyuz has set up its own bank and an insurance company.

Close to 2 million members belong to the consumer societies where in addition to working members some 118 000 employees are engaged. Roughly 50% of the population use the services of consumer societies.

There being no legislation regulating co-operatives, agreements are signed annually on collaboration with the government. A law is being drafted as it was mentioned during a meeting with Mr. Sergei Ling, Prime Minister of the Republic of Belarus.

## Regional Assembly for Europe

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The meeting will take place in Paris, 15-16 October 1998. The main theme of the Assembly will focus on the challenges co-operatives are facing today both in the Eastern and Western parts of Europe.

Keynote speakers will share with us their experiences on very real threats to co-operatives - for example the attempt to buy out CWS or "demutualisation", the conversion of co-operatives into companies - analyse the reasons and propose solutions. Others will talk about opportunities for expanding co-operative activities, setting up new co-operatives and creating jobs.

A feature of this year's Regional Assembly will be the election of the ICA European Council. Nominations for a Chairperson, two Vice-Chairpersons and ten Council members must reach the ICA Regional Office for Europe by 14 September at latest. Possible candidates should be discussed now and women encouraged to submit their nominations.

The Regional Assembly will be preceded by meetings of several ICA Specialised Organisations and of the Regional Directors.

Immediately after the Assembly the ICA Board and the COPAC Board will meet.

The French host organisations are planning to provide a pleasant environment during both the work sessions and the social events.

For any further information please contact ROEP, the ICA Regional Office in Geneva, Gabriella Sozanski, Regional Director, at fax (4122) 798 4122 or e-mail [icaeurope@coop.org](mailto:icaeurope@coop.org). More information can be found on the new ICA Europe Web page: <http://www.coop.org/europe>.

## ICA European Workshop - Conclusions and Recommendations

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In order to evaluate the provisional results of the ICA-EU Project "Statistics and Information on European Co-operatives" and to support its final stage of implementation, the ICA European Workshop on Statistics and Information on European co-operatives was held on 7-9 May, 1998 in Geneva at the ILO HO Conference Room 4. Participants totalling 34 from 16 European countries and two European Associations

(Acme and Cecop), ICA staff and consultants, ILO observers and EU-DG XXIII representatives were present. Analyses, lectures and discussions focused on:

- the provisional results on European co-operatives statistics; technical characteristics of ICA Databank;
- co-operative statistics and information by country; guidelines for future data updating and distribution;
- testing the ICA Databank at ICA Head Office.

The workshop provided the opportunity for all the national co-ordinators to present and comment on their National Co-operative Statistical Profile, approving it and/or asking for amendments. After a day and half of very open and intense debate, which put in evidence the specific national and sectoral classifications and statistics, the participants approved the following conclusions and recommendations:

- to agree on the finalisation of the actual ICA-EU project, assuring the collaboration of the country co-ordinators for the validation of the co-operative statistics by 15 June 1998;
- to make efforts to progressively improve the elaboration of essential comparable co-operative statistics within Europe and to render more coherent the traditional classification by economic sector;
- to analyse the convenience of adding new types of co-operative classification, based on the relations existing between co-ops and their members and the characteristics of the co-operative membership (users/consumers; entrepreneurs; workers);
- to ensure that the co-operative statistics and information be updated annually on the ICA's initiative with the collaboration of national co-ordinators, permanently appointed by decision of the ICA members of each country;
- the next updating should be supported by revised simplified questionnaires and proposals for sector classifications and co-operative definitions (e.g. subsidiary enterprises aspect);
- to present the validated statistics of European co-operatives at the Regional Assembly for Europe, Paris.

#### Development Workshop

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A European Development Workshop will be held in Paris on 13 October, immediately before the Regional Assembly.

Information on development needs as well as on assistance offered has been received from members in response to the questionnaire circulated within the framework of the European Statistical Project. The survey indicates that assistance is most needed in the areas of management training, financial services, marketing and legislation.

As a follow-up to the survey, and wishing to respond better to the requests for assistance, ICA Europe would like to organise a workshop to discuss development issues. The workshop aims at providing a forum for discussion between East and West as well as provide an opportunity for the ICA to identify development areas of common interest that could form the basis of regional or sub-regional programmes.

All ICA interested member organisations in Central and Eastern Europe and the Newly Independent States will soon receive a letter requesting more detailed and specific information on their development needs. A discussion paper based on these contributions will be prepared and submitted to the Workshop for discussion.

#### Did you know?

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The European Flag was chosen by the Council of Europe in 1955. It is composed of a circle of 12 gold stars on a blue background. The number of stars is invariable, 12 being the symbol of perfection. The same flag was adapted by the European Community (now European Union) in 1986.

The European Anthem, adopted by the Council of Europe in 1972, is a musical arrangement by Herbert von Karajan of the Prelude to the Ode to Joy from Beethoven's 9th Symphony.

Europe Day, which has been celebrated since 1964 on 5 May (the anniversary of the Council of Europe's foundation), aims to involve Europe's citizens more fully in the process of European unification.

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(Source: ICA News, Issue No.2/1998, pp.5)

News from the Region - Asia & Pacific

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### ICA President Visits Singapore

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During his visit to Singapore in April, ICA President, Roberto Rodrigues, pointed out that the Singapore Co-operative Movement could play a major role in helping co-operatives in the region to better meet the economic and social needs of their members.

The Singapore National Co-operative Federation (SNCF), with a membership base of some one million, has been a member of ICA since 1984. The Singapore Co-operative Movement has always shown support through its participation in activities and programmes organised by ICA and its regional office.

In his meeting with the Prime Minister's Office, the Ministry of Community Development and a Member of Parliament for East Coast, Mr. Rodrigues explored the possibility of setting up a project office in Singapore where co-operatives in the region could learn from the Singapore experience and adapt and implement this co-operative movement's success formula in their own countries. The project office could also be used as a springboard to propagate the co-operative ideals and principles to the region. Mr. Rodrigues also touched on various business opportunities and collaboration in co-operative development projects, one of which is tourism. He suggested that co-operatives in the region could come together and brainstorm on ways in which their respective countries could be promoted as tourist destinations to co-operative members.

Discussions also covered new ICA programmes and activities that are being formulated by ICA and its Regional Office for the purpose of meeting growing social and economic needs of this region. Discussions were also held with NTUC.

This was Mr. Rodrigues' first visit to Singapore in his capacity as President of ICA. He was accompanied by the ICA Director-General Bruce Thordarson and ICA Regional Director for Asia Pacific, Robby Tulus.

### ADB Recognises Co-ops

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The Asian Development Bank has established a focal point within its head office in Manila to liaise with co-operative organisations involved in economic and social development in the Asia-Pacific region. The decision was announced by ADB President M. Sato during a February meeting with ICA Director-General Bruce Thordarson and Asian co-operative leaders who were in Manila for a "think-tank consortium" organised by the ICA's Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific and ICA's member-organisation NATCCO.

Mr. William J. Staub, Senior Social Development Specialist, has been designated as the co-operative focal point within the ADB. President Sato also said that the ADB would send a senior representative to participate in the ICA Global Forum to be held in Seoul, Korea, on October 29-31, following the ICA's Asia-Pacific Regional Assembly. ICA will hold further discussions with the ADB during the ADB's 31st Annual Board of Governors Meeting, which will take place later this year in Geneva.

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(Source: ICA News, Issue No.2/1998, pp.5)

New from the Regions - The Americas

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Feed the World

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World Food and Agrobusiness Congress VIII is to be held in Punta del Este, Uruguay, from 30 June through 2 July 1998. The Congress is being sponsored by IAMA, the International Food and Agrobusiness Management Association, in co-operation with Associacao Brasileira de Agrobusiness, IAMA Capitulo Argentina, Universidad ORT - Uruguay and PENSA-USP.

The International Food and Agrobusiness Management Association (IAMA) is an association of food and agrobusiness industry leaders from around the world - managers of public, private, and co-operative commercial organisations, educators, scientists, policy makers and others united by a common concern. They believe that the value-added food and fiber chains should be economically efficient, responsive to nutritional and other human needs, global and sustainable. To address these issues, IAMA brings business leaders from all segments of the global food and fiber chains together with the academic and scientific communities and public policy makers at its annual World Food and Agribusiness Congress.

(Source: IAMA conference brochure)

(Source: ICA News, Issue No.2/1998, pp.6-7)

## Co-ops and the Internet - The Virtual Community for Co-op Education

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### The Virtual Community for Co-op Education

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The Virtual Community for Co-operative Education (VCCE - soon available at <http://edu.coop.org>) is a new, interactive web site which will give co-operative educators, developers, researchers, learners and communicators a platform through which they can collaborate for the advancement of co-operative education and research. Through co-operative efforts, the VCCE web site will soon contain a treasury of materials relevant to co-operative education and research. This site aims to benefit from the Internet's multi-medium platform in order to offer innovative education materials to the international co-operative community. The structure is therefore organised to classify information in a variety of formats to suit different needs: web sites, text, images, photographs, videos, sounds, java applications, etc.

By sharing course materials, course content, research, illustrations and other related material for the purpose of co-operative education, this community will contribute to the development of the co-operative movement and to a stronger co-operative identity.

This web site has been set up by the international co-operative movement as a centre for co-operators to come together to achieve this goal. As in any co-operative, member participation is of paramount importance to the success of the project. This virtual community is therefore designed to enable co-operators to express their needs and work together to fulfill those needs through sharing and pooling resources and to contribute by any means within their potential for the benefit of other members.

Apple Computers is currently working with the ICA to set up the VCCE which is founded upon the same principles as Apple's Educational Object Economy (EOE).

### What is the Educational Object Economy (EOE)?

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The EOE is a down-loadable model available to anyone wishing to create a database driven web site generated and maintained by its members. It relies on the creation, sharing and use of resources incorporating existing material for web-based learning.

"The EOE is a research project developed by Apple scientists and funded by a National Science Foundation Grant with matching funds from industry and government agencies and universities. It is based on the following three initiatives:

- Creation of an open community that unites educators, developers, and other interested parties around their common interest in promoting an efficient, productive learning process through appropriate - and imaginative - use of advanced technology.
- Development of an innovative licensing approach that encourages the efficient reuse of existing content and appreciation of intellectual capital.
- Use of cross-platform technology standards (...) to build a massive content library of interoperable resources.

Although still in its infancy the Educational Object Economy project is already providing community members with an on-line resource for sharing content, airing ideas about ways to improve the quality of web-based educational objects, exploring innovative licensing and business models for educational software, discussing ways in which to work together, and developing scenarios of future learning environments."

(Source: This extract has been taken from EOE brochure available from the Educational Object Economy Web Site.)

How the ICA became involved...

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The International Co-operative Alliance has made the cross-fertilization of resources a priority and endeavors to encourage its members and other co-operative organisations to pool materials and effort in order to build a central resource treasury freely available to the whole international co-operative community and thus help to reinforce co-operation worldwide.

Scientists from the Education and Research Department at Apple Computers met representatives from the ICA through the ICA's Trade and Communication Group which is headed by Byron Henderson, Director of Communications at the Center for Co-operative Studies at Saskatchewan University, Canada.

According to the 5th Principle of the ICA Statement on the Co-operative Identity: "Co-operatives provide education and training for their members, elected representatives, managers, and employees so they can contribute effectively to the development of their co-operatives. They inform the general public - particularly young people and opinion leaders - about the nature and benefits of co-operation."

ICA and Apple Synergy

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The VCCE illustrates the common values held by both the ICA and Apple, and is an example of what can be achieved through the building of an EOE. The VCCE has been implemented to overcome a particular need: co-operative education and research requires a strong co-operative framework within which to thrive. The sharing of co-operative education materials, innovations and experience provides an excellent business model portraying the benefits of building an EOE to overcome this need.

Acting locally, working globally

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Until recently, most of the possibilities for pooling resources occurred first at the local or national level. This is no longer the case with the innovative use of current technologies. The evolution of the Internet provides a new platform for the centralisation of resources and has made it possible for co-operators to break the barriers and work on a global level by acting locally.

The Internet has dramatically changed the course of education: an increasing amount of material is being published on the Internet in all areas of education in order to illustrate and animate textual facts by benefiting from the Internet's innovative technology.

How can you participate?

- 
- Become a member
  - Search for, download, and use the information available on this site
  - Extend the resources by contributing new material
  - Adapt existing material and add it to the "resources" to enable different regions or economic sectors to benefit
  - Translate existing material and add it to the "resources" to promote accessibility to multilingual cultures
  - Inform the community of co-op events about which you know
  - Add your organisations calendar of events to the database

The format of the materials in this site is entirely dependent on the members: web sites with information related to co-op education and research, images illustrating co-operative values, photographs of co-operators and co-operative events, java applications, etc. In this way the Virtual Community for Co-operative

Education will become an ongoing and high-profile success story illustrating that Co-operation Really Works!

Phase One of this project is now available on-line. This part of the project, completed in June 1998, was funded by the following partners: Apple Computers, Saskatchewan University Center for the Study of Co-operatives, Internet Prolink, Trademark and ICA. It contains the setting up of the infrastructure for the VCCE as well as the following sections:

- The Home Page: which includes information about the VCCE, the ICA, the internet and its impact on education, and information on how to participate in the project.
- Resources Page: this will eventually become a list of resources and links to web sites which can be searched by subject, sector, region and medium.
- People: a list of members of the VCCE and other contacts, and
- Events: a list of co-op events around the world and links to calendars of individual co-ops.

Phase Two of this project will concentrate on building up a Forum to search and add resources, members and events as well as adapting the interface for French and Spanish audiences. "Founding members", consisting of individuals, committees or organisations wishing to participate in bringing the Forum to the co-operative world, will be able to oversee the development of the Forum and participate in its customisation, as well as benefit from an individual website within the framework of the ICA website. Set within the VCCE, the FORUM will benefit from the VCCE's services and resources, which include: a pool of co-operative resources for the purpose of education and research, ranging from links to a co-operative study centre's curriculum to an archive of historical photographs of historical co-operators or lists of contacts; information about the members of the VCCE, including address, e-mail, web site, etc.; the opportunity to communicate with a free association of co-operators interested in co-operative education and research; an on-line calendar of all co-operative events, as well as links to individual organisations' on-line calendars; participation in a global community of co-operators.

We need to generate CHF 15,000 and so far CHF 5,000 has been pledged by the ICA, Trademark, as well as an anonymous donation from a Norwegian organisation. All sponsors will be credited on the VCCE web site with a link to their individual site.

A further CHF 1,000 per language is needed to develop interfaces in different languages. Anyone interested in contributing to this development should request the project proposal from Trademark at ICA.

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Co-op People

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Maricio Garcia, co-operative leader CUDECOOP in Uruguay, died in March 1998 at the age of forty.

The following nominations were announced by Claude Beland, President of the Mouvement des Caisses Desjardins: Renald Boucher became President and Chief Operating Officer of the Confederation des Caisses Populaires et d' economie Desjardins du Quebec, replacing John Harbour; Michel Therien became President and Chief Executive Officer of the Desjardins-Laurentian Financial Corporation succeeding Humberto Santos who had suddenly at the end of 1997.

Jean-Claude Detilleux, President of the Credit Cooperatif (France), took over the presidency of the Groupement National de la Cooperation from Jacques Moreau who had been responsible for the post since 1984. Mr. Moreau has been made Honorary President.

David Dickman, senior executive of the Co-operative Bank in the UK is to be the next Chief Executive of the United Kingdom Co-operative Council. Mr. Dickman will take over the post - on part-time secondment from the bank - from Peter Walker, the present UKCC chief executive, in August. Mr. Walker, has held the post also on secondment from the bank since the launch of UKCC in 1991.

Mario Dumais has resigned as Chairman of the International Co-operative Agricultural Organisation following his departure from Cooperative Federee de Quebec. The ICAO will elect a successor at its meeting in Manila on 28 May.

Ivar Hansen of Norway was elected chairman of the ICA's Audit and Control Committee at the Committee's meeting in Geneva on 15 May. Mr. Hansen, who represents NBBL, the national housing co-operative organisation in Norway, has been a member of the Audit and Control Committee since 1988.

Dr. Ivan Prikryl completed his one-year term as President of the Co-operative Association of the Czech Republic and was succeeded by Petr Brozek, President of the Union of Czech and Moravian Consumer Co-operatives since 1993. Mr. Brozek is also a member of the Executive Committee of the International Consumer Co-operative Organisation (ICCO). Dr. Prikryl continues with his responsibilities as Vice-President of the Co-operative Association of the Czech Republic and President of the Union of Czech and Moravian Housing Co-operatives, ICA Board Member and ICA Housing Executive Member.

Gabriella Sozanski has been appointed Regional Director for Europe following the official opening on 1st January 1998 of ROEP, the ICA Regional Office for Europe.

According to the US Cooperative Development Foundation (CDF) News Release, the following are the four outstanding leaders to receive the 1998 co-operative sector's highest honour, induction onto the Co-operative Hall of Fame: Henry Holloway, R.C. "Dick" Robertson, The Honourable Charles Stenholm, Dick Vilstrup.

Yong Sang Yoo, Vice-President of the Korean Federation of Community Credit Co-operatives (KFCC), was elected Chairman and President of KFCC in February. He succeeds Joon Hyang Yoo who served for three years as Chairman and President of KFCC.

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ICA Calendar  
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28 May 1998  
ICAO General Assembly  
Manila, Philippines

8-9 June 1998  
INTERCOOP Working Group on Food Laboratory  
Stockholm, Sweden

4 July 1998  
International Day of Co-operatives  
Worldwide Event

20-21 August 1998  
Regional Assembly for Africa  
Lusaka, Zambia

12-13 October 1998  
Research Committee Conference  
Paris, France

13 October 1998  
CICOPA Executive Committee  
Paris, France

13 October 1998  
INTERCOOP/ICCO  
Seminar on Fair Trade  
Paris, France

13 October 1998  
ICA Housing  
Paris, France

14 October 1998  
ICACC Executive  
Paris, France

14 October 1998  
Global Women's Committee  
Paris, France

14-15 October 1998  
ICA European Council  
Paris, France

14-15 October 1998  
Regional Directors' Meeting  
Paris, France

15-16 October 1998  
Regional Assembly for Europe  
Paris, France

16 October 1998  
ICA Development Trust Advisory Board  
Paris, France

17 October 1998  
ICA Board Meeting  
Paris, France

18 October 1998  
ICA Board/SB Chairs  
Paris, France

18-19 October 1998  
ICBA Execo & Plenary  
Paris, France

28-29 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 November 1998  
Regional Assembly for the Americas  
Montevideo, Uruguay

30 Aug.-1 Sept. 1999  
ICA General Assembly & Congress  
Quebec City, Canada