

ICA-AP NEWSLETTER

News from members, ICA-AP activities,
ICA-EU Partnership update & more!

CONDOLENCE AND SOLIDARITY MESSAGE FOR SRI LANKA

ICA-AP would like to extend its heartfelt condolences to the people of Sri Lanka on the horrific tragedy that occurred on Easter Sunday. Such senseless acts of violence have no place in modern society, and we salute the resilience of the people of Sri Lanka who remain united in the face of divisive forces.

ICA-AP's ACTIVITIES MAPPING

ICA-AP Regional Board meeting

The ICA-AP Regional Board Meeting was held at New World Saigon Hotel in Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam on April 16 in conjunction with the Second ICA-AP Cooperative Registrars' Forum. The Board meeting hosted by the Vietnam Cooperative Alliance (VCA) was attended by 32 participants, including Mr. Bruno Roelants, ICA Director General, 12 Board members, observers and interpreters. The meeting was chaired by Mr. Li Chunsheng, Chairperson of the Regional Board who in his opening remarks thanked the VCA for hosting the meeting and extended a warm welcome to the members and Mr. Bruno Roelants. Mr. Nguyen Ngoc Bao, President of VCA, welcomed the members and ICA Director General on behalf of the Vietnamese cooperative movement.



Members of the ICA-AP Board joined by Mr. Bruno Roelants, ICA Director General (center).

The items discussed at the meeting were: ICA-AP Activities report for the period October 2018 to February 2019; current status of members (at present ICA-AP has 104 members from 33 countries); financial report for January to December 2018; updates from the ICA-EU project, Women and Youth committees; updates on ICA strategy, 2019 Kigali General Assembly and 2020 ICA Congress; venue of 2020 Regional Assembly; and Second ICA-AP Cooperative Registrars' Forum being held from April 17-19, 2019. It was decided that the next Board meeting will be held in Kigali, Rwanda in conjunction with the ICA General Assembly in October 2019. The Regional Director was authorized to fix the date in consultation with the ICA-AP President.

ICA Regional Workshop for Leaders on 'Social Contribution of Consumer Cooperatives in Asia-Pacific'

The ICA regional workshop for leaders on 'Social Contribution of Consumer Cooperatives in Asia-Pacific' was held in Goesan County, Korea from April 8 to 12. The workshop was organized under the aegis of the ICA-AP Consumer Committee and for the first time hosted by iCOOP Korea. 58 cooperators and guests from India, Indonesia, Japan, Korea, Malaysia, Myanmar, The Philippines and Vietnam attended the three-day workshop. The objectives of the workshop were to learn about iCOOP Korea, especially their social contribution policy through the Goesan Natural Dream Park and to establish an international network of Consumer Cooperative leaders.

Ms. Inja Park, Chairperson, iCOOP Korea in her welcome address touched on the cooperative movements' ability to raise the quality of human life and to contribute to better communities and hoped this would continue in the future. She said the workshop would be a place where Asian co-operators would come together and discuss the cooperative movements. This was followed by lectures by Mr. Daehoon Kim (Executive Manager, iCOOP Development Center) who provided an overview of iCOOP Korea, and by Ms. Gwibok Oh (Director, iCOOP Korea) on the activities of iCOOP Korea.



Lecture by iCOOP.

On the second day, delegates visited the factories and the Product Inspection Center in Goesan Natural Dream Park. The "Natural Dream Parks" established by iCOOP Korea are Korea's first eco-

friendly organic food clusters. The grouping of food manufacturing facilities, Product Inspection Center, and logistics center in one geographic location, facilitates procurement and processing of raw materials and in the process prevents adulteration. Based on the concept of balancing people, industry and nature, "Natural dream parks" use local agricultural produce to provide reliable products to members, forges cooperation with local governments, create jobs and gradually revitalizes local communities. Goesan Natural Dream Park is the second cluster by iCOOP Korea with the first one in Gurye county in Jeollanam Province. The delegates also learned about the Animal Hospital Co-op and Funeral Co-op through presentations given by Mr. Kyungseob Jung (CEO, Home of Animals) and Mr. Kyonghwan Kim (Executive Director, Hankyoreh Dure Co-op) respectively.



Participants at the factory.

On the third day, group discussion sessions were held on the following topics, (1) Identify the roles and goals of the workshop; (2) Characteristics and implications of iCOOP Korea's social contribution; and (3) What kind of contributions can be made to communities by cooperatives in each country: an exploration of new and practical ideas. Five groups shared their ideas and solutions. Each participating organization presented their learnings from the workshop as well as their action plan. These presentations were followed by a debriefing conducted by Mr. Sukho Kang (CEO, Goesan Natural dream Park). The participants were positive about the program and were confident that sharing their experience with other cooperators in their countries would be extremely beneficial.

Based on their experience at the Goesan Natural Dream Park, the delegates expressed their desire to see it continue annually. Accordingly, ICA-AP Consumer Committee and iCOOP Korea agreed to have a similar workshop next year.

Go Green Campaign 2.0

The ICA-AP Committee on Youth Cooperation (ICYC) organised the second Go Green Campaign to commemorate International Mother Earth Day on April 22. This year, ICYC was joined by ICA Africa Youth Network in its initiative to promote action by youth on SDG 13 (climate change). The theme of the campaign was 'protect your species' by ethical planting, and it ran for three days from April 21 to 23. Over 200 youth from India, Indonesia, Iran, Nepal, the Philippines and Pakistan undertook tree plantation drives in their offices and neighbouring areas. The youth from the Philippines also took up a clean-up drive at the beaches.



At the beach cleaning drive in the Philippines.

NEWS FROM MEMBERS

Cooperatives Union of Kyrgyzstan signs MoU with DGRV, Germany



Chancellor Angela Merkel with President Sooronbay Jeenbekov. (Image credit: kabar.kg)

The Cooperatives Union of Kyrgyzstan (CUK) was part of the official delegation headed by the President of Kyrgyzstan Sooronbay Jeenbekov to Germany. The delegation met with Angela Merkel, Chancellor of Germany, and apprised her of their request for support towards the development of agricultural cooperatives in Kyrgyzstan. In response, Chancellor Merkel said, “I am informed about your request to support cooperatives in the agricultural sector. We can cooperate in this area, provide advice in terms of phytosanitary, food safety, green technologies and quality of agricultural products.” Taking this important conversation forward, the CUK has entered into an MoU with DGRV (German Cooperative and Raiffeisen Confederation) in the fields of agriculture, breeding and seed farming and processing.

Cooperatives find mention in the C20 Japan Policy Pack

The Civil 20 (C20) is one of the seven Engagement Groups of the G20. It is a space through which civil society organizations from different parts of the world contribute in a structured and sustained manner to the G20, thus ensuring that world leaders listen not only to the voices representing the governmental and business sectors, but also to the proposals and demands of civil society as a whole. The C20 Summit recently took place from April 21-23 in Tokyo, Japan.

On April 18, representatives from the C20 met with Mr. Shinzo Abe, Prime Minister of Japan, and handed him the C20 Japan policy pack. Mr. Shinzo Abe is expected to include the policy pack during the discussions to be held at the G20 Summit in Osaka, Japan in June.

The C20 Japan policy pack cautions that the global order needs to take a hard look at the progress made and the gaps that remain in the run up to the achievement of the SDGs in 2030. The G20, also known as the 'flagship forum for sustainable economic development', has been exhorted to undertake 'an active role to accomplish the SDGs'. This also entails adequate financial support to developing countries for the 2030 Agenda. The Tokyo Declaration on Peace, Human Rights and Democratic Governance: Towards Improvement of Civic Space for the SDG 16+ was adopted at the Tokyo Democracy Forum as part of the C20 Summit.

The Policy Pack has a number of policy papers on strategic issues which present the commitment of the G20 countries towards the issue, the challenges posed in dealing with the same, and finally the recommendations on how the G20 countries can overcome the challenges to solve the problems.

Cooperatives have found mention in the C20 policy pack. **Platform cooperatives** are mentioned in the recommendation G of the Tokyo Declaration. The recommendation states that G20 countries should engage with multiple stakeholders to “design transitional policy in this context, which includes re-training workers, upgrading educational curricula, promoting the increased participation of women and girls in STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Art and Mathematics) courses and professions, and supporting new forms of digital ownership (such as **platform cooperatives**, which provide a safe, accountable space for users and workers to provide and use data to collectively share the benefits of digitalisation)'.



Image credit: www.janic.org

In the International Financial Architecture policy paper, the recommendations for Financial Regulation and Financial Inclusion contain a directive for G20 countries to agree on “standards that promote a more diverse banking system in all countries”. This should include "state-owned and development banks at the regional and local levels, as well as **cooperatives**, savings and ethical banks and non-profit institutions." The aim is for the banking system to address "gender barriers and gaps in women's

financial inclusion, and ensure finance to rural economy, small and medium enterprises, non-formal sector and poor and marginalised people at large."

The policy paper on Labour, Business and Human Rights provides recommendations on policies to support decent employment. One of the recommendation states the "Adoption by G20 members of systems of protection of youth employment in all its organizational forms (employment, self-employment, **cooperative movements** etc.) within the framework of workers' rights and social security as guarantors of inclusion to the G 20 goal of reducing the percentage of young people who are most at risk of being permanently left behind in the labour market by 15% by 2025 in G20 countries.

The entire policy pack can be read by clicking [here](#).

NACCFL and the UN Decade of Family Farming

The 2014 International Year of Family Farming (IYFF) aimed to "raise the profile of family farming and smallholder farming by focusing the world's attention on its significant role in eradicating hunger and poverty, providing food security and nutrition, improving livelihoods, managing natural resources, protecting the environment, and achieving sustainable development, in particular in rural areas." The Nepal Agricultural Cooperative Central Federation (NACCFL) was selected as the Secretariat for the IYFF in Nepal. As the Secretariat, NACCFL's role was to support the formation of crucial committees for the IYFF (National Implementation Committee Nepal, National Directive Committee Nepal and Advisory Committee), and facilitate implementation of the on-ground IYFF strategy in Nepal, amongst others.



Image credit: USAID

In 2017, the General Assembly of the UN adopted the Decade of Family Farming (DFF) 2019-2028 in order to improve the position of family farmers in all five continents. This Declaration of the DFF ensures the continuity of the successful IYFF-2014 process by advancing the implementation of public policies and facilitating the achievement of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. NACCFL will continue to provide administrative and policy support for the successful implementation of the DFF. It recently participated in the VI Global Conference on Family Farming entitled: '*A Decade to improve the lives of Family Farmers.*' The event held between March 25 to 29, in the city of Derio-Bilbao, Basque Country, Spain, brought together representatives from Farmers Organisations, Civil Society organisations, Governments, International Organisations, Research Centres and Cooperatives.

Incidentally, the V Global Conference, *Let's Build the Future: Family Farming*, was held in Derio, Biscay, in 2015 and paved the way to implementing the successful IYFF+10, an initiative that has led to the adoption of the DFF 2019-2028.

MASS-SPECC Celebrates 50th Co-op Leaders' Congress

The MASS-SPECC Cooperative Development Center held its 50th Co-op Leaders' Congress at the SMX Convention Center, Davao City on April 27, 2019. The theme this year was, "Achieving our Vision through Innovation and Shared Services." MASS-SPECC's vision of "All Members Enjoy Better Quality of Life" puts individual members at the center of the co-op enterprise. This translates to well-being of not just some, but all members, and showcases how it's no longer enough to use only financial indicators to measure growth and success.



At the MASS-SPECC Co-op Leaders' Congress.

The day-long event saw presentations from Mr. Jayson Lo, Motivational Speaker, Consultant and Best-selling Author; Mr. Manuel Arboleda, Senior Consultant and Ms. Marie De Leon, Head, VisMin from Rosehall Consultants Management, Inc.; Ms. Jennifer Tantan, Former CEO and Treasurer, Megalink; Mr. Rene Tolentino, Vice President and Head of Marketing, Paramount Life and General Insurance Corp; Ms. Elma R. Oguis, CDA-DEO Regional Director; and Mr. Balasubramanian Iyer, Regional Director, International Cooperative Alliance Asia and Pacific. The presentations summarized by Mr. Romulo Villamin, Director, Institute of Cooperative Studies, MASS-SPECC Cooperative Development Center is given below:

Innovation is defined as doing things better to add VALUE to members in a way which is unique and compelling and meets the needs and circumstances of members. Adding value could take the form of better products & services (effective use of technology), better processes, and improved management systems. Cooperatives are ready for innovation if they have a clear vision and mission statement, make it part of organizational processes, bring it to members (experience real change), have leadership which is supportive and includes members and staff as part of the effort.

Shared services is defined as cooperatives working together and combining resources for greater effect which result in efficiencies (processes, cost savings), focuses on activities that support business goals, and delivers quality services. The critical success factors were - scope of work, service level agreements, governance structure, pricing, human resource provisions, and value proposition.

MASS-SPECC used the occasion to sign a Memorandum of Understanding with Paramount Life and General Insurance Corp and launch the first of its Shared Services the “Yaman sa Kalusugan” Program – affordable health care services for its members, officers, and staff.

The ‘Cooperatives Make A Better World’ [video](#) was shared at the forum with its core message being that a cooperative can achieve its VISION through innovation and shared services:

“... if cooperatives worked together”

“... if people were as important as the bottom line”

“... if we used US more than ME”

“... If we focused on connections”

“... if we focused on our communities”

“... if we focused on creating a movement”

ICA-EU PARTNERSHIP PROGRAM ON COOPERATIVES IN DEVELOPMENT: PEOPLE CENTRED BUSINESSES IN ACTION

In March 2016, the ICA and the European Union signed a Framework Partnership Agreement (Europe Aid/150-053/C/ACT/Multi) to implement a multi-year and multi-country development programme aimed at benefitting and advancing cooperatives worldwide. The Partnership is officially titled "Cooperatives in Development: People Centred Businesses in Action", translated into the social media hashtag #Coops4Dev (cooperatives for development). The Partnership has 8 Result Areas and 33 Activity Streams for delivery by 5 units, one housed in each regional office and one at the coordination level in Brussels. The AP unit has identified three strategic development priorities namely, participation of Cooperatives in Achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), Youth Inclusion in Cooperatives, and Exploring Work and Ownership Structures in Cooperatives. The ICA-AP implements the programme in collaboration with ICA members and in partnership with other stakeholders such as governments, international development agencies, private sector and NGOs in the region. You may read more about the Partnership [here](#).

Second Asia Pacific Cooperative Registrars’ Forum: A Summary Report

ICA Asia and Pacific in partnership with the Vietnam Cooperative Alliance (VCA) and the Institute for Organic Agricultural Economics organized the Second Asia Pacific Cooperative Registrars’ Forum on *Creating Enabling Legal Framework and Policies to Promote Sustainable Development of Cooperatives in the 21st Century*. The Forum was co-funded by the ICA-EU Partnership on Cooperatives in Development (#Coops4Dev). The Forum brought together registrars and regulators concerned with the promotion and development of cooperatives nationally; leaders and managers of cooperatives from the Asia-Pacific region; and other stakeholders to discuss matters pertaining to legislation on cooperatives, as well as policies and regulations that complement existing laws.

The Forum was organized to focus on the 21st Century challenges relating to food security, nature of work and employment, financial inclusion, economic growth, gender equality & equity, climate change, and freedom of association. The rapid economic and social changes as well as crises during the last decade have prompted the need to think beyond ‘business as usual.’ While cooperatives have shown their resilience, there is need to reinvent, remodel and reorganize to stay relevant to members and society at large. In order to do this, there is need for conducive and enabling legal and policy frameworks to increase the ease with which cooperative business is done in Asia-Pacific. While serving as a platform of exchange on strategic issues, the Forum also aimed to build consensus for collaboration among the stakeholders.

The Opening Ceremony was graced by H.E. Mr. Vuong Dinh Hue, Member of the Political Bureau & Vice Prime Minister of Vietnam; Mr. Nguyen Chi Dung, Minister of Planning and Investment; Mr. Le Thanh, Director of the Institute for Organic Agricultural Economics; Mr. Le Minh Hoan, Secretary of the Party Committee, Dong Thap Province; Mr. Nguyen Ngoc Bao, President VCA; Mr. Li Chunsheng, President ICA-AP; and Mr. Bruno Roelants, Director General ICA. The Forum was attended by 319 delegates from 22 countries including Vietnam and included government representatives from Bhutan, Fiji, India, Kyrgyz Republic, Malaysia, Nepal, Singapore, and Vietnam.



The panel at the Opening Ceremony of the Forum.

H.E. Mr. Vuong Dinh Hue in his speech acknowledged the role of cooperatives in implementing Vietnam's national strategy on rural development and sustainability and its contributions to employment generation, poverty reduction, and environment protection. He stressed on the need for cooperatives to adapt and evolve with the times and called on ICA to play a greater role in promoting exchange of information, facilitating the creation of enabling law and policy, and advancing strong economic relations through trade and technology. Mr. Bruno Roelants, in his keynote address touched on the importance being given by ICA to data, research, statistics and legislation as part of its current strategy.

The event featured presentations on the mid-term results from the #coops4dev funded regional research exercises on legal framework analyses from South Asia, South East Asia, East Asia and the Pacific, and the findings from the thematic studies on Exploring Work and Ownership in Cooperatives in Asia Pacific (by CICOPA) and the Study on Autonomy and Independence of Cooperatives in India (by ALC India). The three technical sessions and one Panel Discussion showcased the wide range of work being carried out to promote inclusive cooperative societies, build sustainable food systems, and increase employment and entrepreneurship through cooperatives.

The Forum was well received by the Registrars in attendance. Ms. Tshering Wangmo, Chief Marketing Officer, DAMC, Ministry of Agriculture and Forests, Bhutan said "Since DAMC is in the process of revising the Cooperative Act of Bhutan, this Forum has been very informative and useful. DAMC will optimise on the information learnt and the interaction made, and align our Act with International standards and norms." Ms. Meriam binti Mat Nor, Deputy Executive Chairman, Malaysia Cooperative Societies Commission, Malaysia, said that "the forum was a precious experience and a great platform for information-sharing with the experts and counterparts from within the Asia Pacific region. It has provided different viewpoints into how other countries tackled issues in their co-operative

movement.” Mr. Ramesh Chand, Acting Director and Registrar of Cooperative Business, Ministry of Industry, Trade and Tourism, Fiji described his experience at the Forum as ‘overwhelming’. He said that “through the Forum I was able to meet many cooperative stalwarts and learn from them, learn that the legal framework should be accommodating to promote the interest of the cooperative movement, understand the need for statistical data, amongst other topics.” Ms. Dzhakshylykova Aizhan, Head of Legal Department, Ministry of Agriculture, Food Industry & Melioration, Kyrgyzstan said that she had an “excellent experience of understanding legislations, measures taken by the States to support cooperatives, and the varieties of cooperatives that exist in different countries.”

The Forum ‘resolved’ to support and take forward the ILO project on cooperative statistics; enhance the work of cooperatives towards the SDGs; and strive to create progressive and enabling laws and policies that would facilitate growth of cooperatives while safeguarding the autonomous and independent character of cooperatives. The full text of the resolution can be found [here](#) with guidelines to submit comments and reservations.

Around the World. Coop reaches Asia!

The ‘aroundtheworld.coop’ project, undertaken by the ICA-EU Partnership and the Association, aroundtheworld.coop, is to collect and document stories of cooperatives from around the world that have contributed to reducing poverty and promoting sustainable development by using creative and innovative methods. The project’s aim is to raise the visibility of the cooperative model in improving people’s wellbeing, enhance awareness on the role of collective action developed by cooperatives, and share knowledge on methodologies for participatory action research. To do so, the Association will travel around the world for a year visiting cooperatives and creating short films, case studies and blogs about cooperatives.

The Project began its journey in Southern Italy where it captured the Altri Orizzonti – Jerry Essan Masslo’ Cooperative that has been providing livelihood and contributing to racial harmony in the disturbed region of Castel Volturno. The team then moved to the African subcontinent and covered cooperatives in Morocco (Cooperative Toudarte - a women’s cooperative producing and selling argan oil) and Rwanda (Coprорiz-Ntende- a rice producing cooperative).

The Asia leg of the journey started in Nepal where they interviewed and recorded the work undertaken by the Bhabishya Nirman Cooperative that works extensively with young people and women. The second country they visited was Malaysia where they were introduced to the dynamic space of school cooperatives through the MRSМ Kepala Batas Cooperative. The Around the World. Coop team got an opportunity to showcase its videos at an event organised by ANGKASA in Kuala Lumpur on April 29. The event was attended by close to 700 guests and graced with the presence of the Italian Ambassador to Malaysia, His Excellency Cristiano Maggipinto, the Ambassador of Kingdom of Morocco to Malaysia, His Excellency Mohamed Reda Benkhaldoun and ICA-AP Regional Director, Mr. Balasubramanian Iyer. The videos produced till now by the Project can be viewed by clicking [here](#).



Excited participants at the film screening in ANGKASA.

UPCOMING EVENTS

July 2019

- International Day of Cooperatives, July 6
- Global Youth Forum- Cooperative Entrepreneurship, Colombo, Sri Lanka, July 22-26 (subject to change)

August 2019

- Workshop on Enhancing Gender Equality in Co-operative Businesses, New Delhi, India, August 20-22

October 2019

- ICA Global General Assembly, Kigali, Rwanda, October 14-17

December 2019

- ICA-AP Cooperative Research Conference, Newcastle, Australia, December 12-14