

## ICA-AP NEWSLETTER

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

# May Newsletter

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## Asia Pacific Cooperative Youth Summit 4.0



The Asia Pacific Cooperative Youth Summit (APCYS 4.0) is being held in Sabah, Malaysia from 27 to 30 July and focuses on “*Cooperation for Sustainable Lifestyles*”. APCYS 4.0 is a platform for youth to come together and hear about inspiring youth-led sustainable practices and ventures, experience hands-on cooperative activities, share cooperative business ideas, and enjoy the spirit of different cultures and youth cooperativism.

An inspiring line-up of speakers with interesting sessions, the COOP Pitch competition, hands-on experiential activities, Go Green Campaign await you in Sabah. Registrations are closing soon. [Register here](#).

## 16th ICA-AP Regional Assembly – Registrations Open!



ICA-AP will hold its 16th Regional Assembly at Crowne Plaza Galleria in Manila, Philippines from 6 to 10 November 2023. The Regional Assembly events are hosted by the Philippines Cooperative Affiliates (PCA) on behalf of the Philippines Cooperative Movement. Under the theme, “*Cooperatives: Our Common Agenda*” the Assembly will comprise of the 11th Asia-Pacific Cooperative Forum, Regional Board Meeting, various events organized by the Regional Sectoral and Thematic Committees, and the statutory meeting of the Regional Assembly. Registrations are now open. [Register Here](#).

## 17th ICA-AP Research Conference – Call for Papers



The 17th ICA Asia-Pacific Research Conference will be held in Manila, Philippines from 4-5 November. It is organized by the ICA-AP Committee on Cooperative Research (CCR) and the Department of Cooperatives and Social Development at the Polytechnic University of the Philippines (PUP) to bring together academics and researchers on cooperatives in the Asia-Pacific region. ICA-AP CCR invites young researchers, and postgraduate and doctoral students to submit their abstracts latest by 30 July. [Read more.](#)

## International Day of Cooperatives 2023



This year, the [International Day of Cooperatives](#) will be celebrated on 1 July under the theme Cooperatives: partners for accelerated sustainable development. United by the slogan Cooperatives for sustainable development, the movement will show how the cooperative way of working, inspired by cooperative values and principles, has the accomplishment of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) as part of its DNA.

The media pack including the logo, promotional poster, and communication toolkit for the #coops4dgs campaign and to engage in the cooperative movement's biggest annual celebration is now available on the [CoopsDay website](#)

You can also share with us how you are celebrating CoopsDay or how your cooperative is contributing to the SDGs at [Shivali.sarna@icaap.coop](mailto:Shivali.sarna@icaap.coop). These will be shared on the CoopsDay map and on our social media channels.

## 2023 ICA General Assembly



The 2023 ICA General Assembly will take place in Brussels, Belgium, on 28 June. It will be a statutory General Assembly convened annually in accordance with Belgian law without an international conference held in conjunction. It is the highest authority of the ICA and the voters are representatives appointed by ICA full member organisations. It is only open to attendees from ICA member organisations. [Read more.](#)

## Global Innovation Cooperative Summit – Montreal 2023



Global Innovation Cooperative Summit 2023 will be held in Montreal from 27 to 29 September. With the theme, *Act Now to lead a circular and digital future the cooperators way*, the Montreal event will focus on taking the lessons from Paris and turning them into action. The Summit founders call upon cooperatives to be circular, in a digital life to carry out together the necessary transformations for the benefit of their members and their communities. [Read more.](#)



## ICA-AP Updates

### 25 years of ICA-AP Women's Committee



The ICA Asia and Pacific Committee on Women is one of ten regional committees. Formed in 1998, in Seoul, South Korea, the Committee promotes gender inclusion and equality in cooperatives in the Asia and Pacific region. 2023 marks Committee's 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary and it will be celebrated on 19<sup>th</sup>-20<sup>th</sup> September 2023 in Tokyo, Japan (hybrid).

From the beginning of the 1960s, the ICA-AP Regional Office has focused on increasing women's participation in cooperatives. During the 1970s, United Nations Women's Decade (1975-85), initiatives for integrating women and gender concerns in cooperatives were accelerated. In 1990, the Human Resources Development Project of ICA identified the need for gender inclusion and participation in cooperatives as an important objective.

The first Gender Consultation held in Colombo, April-May 1992, was attended by 32 delegates from cooperatives in the region. This was followed by a more strategic Gender Planning Conference in Tokyo in 1993. Several Regional Consultations/Conferences were organized and as a result of continuous efforts and increasing activities in gender inclusion, the idea of a regional women's committee was mooted in 1997. In the same year, the First Conference on the Status of Women in Cooperatives in the Asia and Pacific region was organized in Tagaytay, Philippines on capacity building as well as leadership development of women. The Committee was formally established in 1998 and since its establishment, the activities of the Committee are supported by the Japanese Consumers' Co-operative Union (JCCU).

The activities of the Committee are based on its gender equality strategy, developed in mutual consultation with members to serve their interests and meet the evolving needs of women in cooperatives.

Over the past 25 years, its scope of work has been rich and diverse. Some of the major activities of the committee are:

- 1) Asia Pacific Regional Women's Forums to deliberate on pressing issues concerning women such as the resilience of women's cooperatives, cooperative identity for women, participation of women in cooperatives at leadership levels, and gender integration in the economy.
- 2) Programs for sharing knowledge and good cooperative practices among women.
- 3) Training of trainers on climate change and leadership development of women in cooperatives.
- 4) Advocacy and lobbying at the regional Cooperative Ministers'/ Registrars' conferences to impress upon governments to enact gender-sensitive laws and policies.
- 5) Advocacy for the inclusion of gender-disaggregated data in cooperatives, and
- 6) Information dissemination through newsletters and knowledge products.

Beginning in 2023, the Committee is focusing on four pillars as part of its new gender equality strategy, which are – Economic Empowerment, Social Empowerment, Knowledge, Education and Training, and Solidarity.

Currently, the Committee has 31 members from 21 ICA member organizations in 14 countries. For more information, check out the [Committee Brochure](#).

### Pilot Training of Trainers on Climate Change and Action for Women Cooperators



The ICA-AP Committee on Women organized a pilot training of trainers on climate change and action for women cooperators in Hanoi, Vietnam from 17-19 May 2023. The training was conducted in partnership with the Vietnam Cooperative Alliance (VCA) and the National Confederation of Cooperatives (NATCCO). The training was supported by the Japanese Consumers' Cooperative Union (JCCU).

In 2022, ICA-AP Committee on Women decided to focus on climate change as a priority area to build the capacity of women cooperators in Asia and Pacific. The Committee partnered with NATCCO to develop a customized training manual which is used as an important knowledge tool to conduct the training.

The pilot training was held in Vietnam to test the draft manual and training methodology. The training was attended by 12 women from 12 provinces, representing different Provincial Cooperative Alliances (PCAs) under VCA. The trainees comprised of staff from PCAs whose role is to conduct training at the province level, provide consultancy and advisory services to local cooperatives, and policy-making.

The manual has five main modules, namely 1) Introduction to climate change; 2) Climate change and its consequences on women and cooperatives; 3) Climate change solutions and the role of cooperatives; 4) Measuring the impact of climate action solutions; and 5) Developing an action plan and communication plan for the climate action program.



Ms. Lasalette M. Gumbam, the resource person from NATCCO delivered the training, covering each module of the manual using a combination of theory and practical exercises. The pilot training was joined by the Acting Vice-Director from the International Department at VCA Ms. Tran Thu Hang, ICA-AP Regional Director Mr. Balasubramanian Iyer, ICA-AP staff and Committee Secretary Ms. Simren Singh, and JCCU staff Ms. Takako Tsuchiya.

In her welcome and opening remarks, Ms. Hang noted, “At present, climate change on earth has been happening more and more due to emissions from greenhouse gases leading to more severe climate change and causing extensive destruction. This is a global problem that requires the efforts of each country to respond as well as the close cooperation of the international community. Over the years, Vietnam is one of the countries most affected by climate change and has made many active response efforts. The cooperative sector is no exception in the current climate change process. Climate change becomes the biggest challenge to the living environment today as well as in the future. Gender equality, climate change and disaster risk reduction are closely linked. In Vietnam, women in cooperatives play an important role in climate change response and disaster risk reduction activities. Women not only play an important role in production and business activities, but they can also be a pioneer in reducing greenhouse gas emissions. However, the results of some studies in Vietnam show that: Women's participation still faces many barriers in terms of technology,

capacity, tradition and finance in climate change response; women have more limited access to information and less opportunity to learn and grasp early response measures. Therefore, increasing women's participation and implementing policies is important. It is important to promote and create conditions for them to best promote their role in climate change adaptation through innovative products and business models.

As the oldest member of the Women's Committee since 2002, Ms. Hang also extended her warm wishes for its 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary via a special video message.

In his opening remarks, Mr. Balasubramanian Iyer noted that “Just like COVID-19, climate change is a global issue. When we meet each other, we always ask about the weather. In every country, the weather patterns are changing drastically. More and more people are complaining about extreme weather conditions – either it is too hot or too cold. We are also facing unseasonal weather conditions such as unseasonal rainfall. This severely affects the agriculture sector the most. These difficult challenges that we are now facing are a result of a long process and given that we are now indulging in further consumerism and contributing a lot of waste, etc. such challenges are only going to rise in the future. We need to take small steps from today so that we can see positive results in the long run. The training on climate change and action by the Women’s Committee is a step in that direction”. Mr. Iyer introduced ICA-AP to the participants and encouraged them to take an active part in the training. He also thanked VCA, NATCCO and JCCU for their valuable support and wished everyone a successful three-day training.

In the end, feedback from participants was collected on the modules and methodology. The participants stated that the manual is very comprehensive and useful. They suggested valuable feedback such as focusing on more case studies or country-based examples of different actions that are being taken by cooperatives so that the trainees can learn more about other countries and adopt suitable measures. Their feedback will be incorporated to further improve the manual.

In the closing ceremony, Ms. Hang thanked ICA-AP, NATCCO and JCCU for conducting a useful training program. She noted that the topic of the training is new for VCA and that they and women trainees learnt a lot. She also added that VCA would like to implement the program in their country and would integrate certain topics covered in the training as part of their regular trainings. It was also noted that VCA will make an action plan that will be executed through their Provincial Cooperative Alliances.

Based on the observation during the pilot training and feedback collected, the manual will be revised by the Women’s Committee and NATCCO. The manual is expected to be launched later in November during the statutory meeting of the Women’s Committee.

## Member Updates

### 17th Indian Cooperative Congress

**National Cooperative Union of India**  
**17<sup>th</sup> Indian Cooperative Congress**  
Theme : *"Amrit Kaal - Prosperity Through Cooperation for a Vibrant India"*  
**Chief Guest**  
**Shri Narendra Modi**  
Hon'ble Prime Minister of India  
1-2 July 2023  
Venue  
International Exhibition-cum-Convention Centre  
(IECC), Pragati Maidan, New Delhi  
REGISTER NOW  
<https://ncui17icc.com/>

The National Cooperative Union of India (NCUI) is organising the 17th Indian Cooperative Congress on 1st and 2nd July 2023 in New Delhi, India. It will be inaugurated by the Prime Minister of India, Shri Narendra Modi.

NCUI has organised 16 Indian Cooperative Congresses so far. The last (16th) Congress was organised in the year 2013 and inaugurated by Shri Pranab Mukherjee, Hon'ble President of India.

The 17th Congress, under the theme, "Amrit Kaal-Prosperity through Cooperation for a Vibrant India" will review the progress of the cooperative sector and come up with effective policy guidelines in the wake of the emergent problems before the sector. It is likely to be attended by more than 2,000 delegates from across the country and abroad. The Congress is expected to

- 1) Create awareness about the focus and new initiatives taken by the Ministry of Cooperation for the promotion and development of the cooperative movement in the country
- 2) Discuss, deliberate and chalk out strategies to address the challenges impacting cooperative businesses and to plan the way forward for realizing the vision of "Sahakar Se Samridhi".
- 3) Create a roadmap for strengthening the cooperatives to be a sustainable and competitive business model to contribute to realizations of "PM's Five Pran (5 vows) of Amrit Kaal".

More details about the event are available [here](#).



Iran to Host its First International Cooperative Congress



The Iran Chamber of Cooperatives (ICC) is organising the first International Cooperative Congress in September 2023 in Tehran. The theme of the Congress will be “Production Growth and Sustainable Economy with Cooperative Development.” ICC is also organizing the first cooperative research conference and is inviting articles from interested researchers in the following areas:

#### **Cooperatives and sustainable development**

- 1-1- The role of cooperatives in environmental protection
- 1-2- The role of cooperatives in reducing poverty and empowering communities
- 1-3- The role of cooperatives in increasing food security and sustainable agricultural development
- 1-4- The role of cooperatives in job creation in local communities

#### **2- Cooperatives and development of women's development**

- 2-1- The cooperatives’ potential in women's economic participation
- 2-2- Introducing national and international best practice of women's cooperatives

#### **3- Cooperatives and social justice**

- 3-1- Cooperatives and social entrepreneurship
- 3-2- Cooperatives and economic participation of low income communities
- 3-3- The role of cooperatives in supplying and accessing low income communities to commodities

#### **4- New financial tools in the cooperatives**

- 4-1- The role of cooperatives in microfinancing
- 4-2- The role of cooperatives in financial and credit market development
- 4-3- Introduction of entrepreneurial financing methods in the cooperatives

#### **5- Cooperatives and development of knowledge-based activities (platform)**

- 5-1- Introducing national and international best practices of knowledge-based (platform) cooperatives

5-2- Increasing market penetration of knowledge-based (platform) cooperatives

## **6- Cooperatives and productivity**

6-1- Cooperatives' potential in clustering economic activities and decreasing production costs

6-2- Cooperatives' potential in the value chain of goods and services

6-3- Skill training in the international principles of cooperatives

6-4- The role of cooperatives in improving business environment

## **7- Cooperatives and governmental optimization**

7-1- Cooperatives' potential in conferring government authorities

7-2- cooperatives' potential in performing public-private partnership (PPP) projects.

Interested participants can submit their abstracts latest by 27 June 2023 at [irancon2023@iccoop.ir](mailto:irancon2023@iccoop.ir). The deadline to submit full articles/ papers is 15 July 2023.

Best articles will be published in the Scientific and Research Quarterly of Cooperative and Agriculture and will be awarded valuable cash prizes.

## NATCCO joins FinTech Alliance



The NATCCO Network has joined FinTech Alliance.ph, the Philippines' leading and largest digital trade organization comprised of start-ups and unicorns collectively generating over 90% of digital-initiated transactions volume in the country.

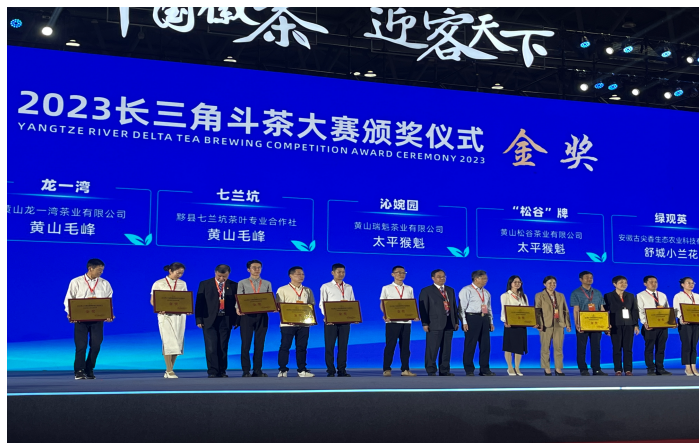
According to its website, the alliance “nurtures the collective strengths of its members to contribute to the country’s economic and social development.” Through continuous engagement of the various stakeholders, “FinTech Alliance is building and expanding a sustainable digital finance ecosystem. Ultimately, it must redound to the benefit of every Filipino, especially those at the bottom of the pyramid.”

Engr. Sylvia O. Paraguya, CEO, NATCCO Network joined other new members in taking their oath at the General Membership Meeting on May 29.

NATCCO’s KAYA Payment Platform enables coop members, without taking away money from their cooperative, to transact on four channels: 1) KAYA ATM, 2) KAYA Mobile App, 3) over-

the-counter; and 4) Point-of-Sale (KAYA POS). It also offers its premier financial software, eKoopBanker and eKoopBanker Plus. The software performs reliable transactions and ensures data safety and availability to authorized users. The NATCCO Network is spearheading the inclusion of savings and credit cooperatives in the digital finance ecosystem. Read the full news [here](#).

## 16<sup>th</sup> Anhui International Tea Industry Expo



**Winners in the best tea category being recognized during the opening ceremony**

The 16<sup>th</sup> Anhui International Tea Industry Expo was held in Hefei from 5 to 8 May 2023. The provincial arm of the All China Federation of Supply and Marketing Cooperatives (ACFSMC) played a key role in organizing the expo. The tea expo held under the theme "Anhui Tea Embraces the World" attracted over 700 businesses as well as 2,300 buyers and distributors. The exhibition held on an area of 40,000 m<sup>2</sup>, was divided into areas that included an exhibition of famous tea products, a tea culture experience area, and an area of tea technology innovation and integration.

Huangshan city is a key tea-production area in China, and Huangshan Mountain in the city is known worldwide for its imposing scenery and massive boulders. The moist clouds that ring Huangshan Mountain form a natural layer of shelter, blocking the sunlight and allowing the tea leaves cultivated there to produce more nitrogen content that gives them their distinctive aroma. The celebrated Huangshan Maofeng, Taiping Houkui and Qimen Black Tea produced in Huangshan have won worldwide popularity and been added to the Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity by UNESCO.

Tea production and processing is an essential business for agricultural cooperatives not only in China but also in major tea-producing countries such as India, Kenya, Sri Lanka and China, where tea has long been a defining feature of the culture. The development of the tea industry in these countries can largely contribute to the growth of farmers' income, help to improve their lives and lift them out of poverty.

ACFSMC sees strengthening cooperation among cooperatives (C2C) in the tea business as aligned with one of the fundamental principles of the ICA. C2C answers the need for sustainable development by facilitating the sharing of market information and best practices,

as well as understanding new technologies. Deeper connections among the cooperatives will allow them to rise up to evolving challenges and work together for a future of common prosperity. ACFSMC invited affiliates of the National Cooperative Council of Sri Lanka (NCCSL) and the Vietnam Cooperative Alliance (VCA) to the expo.



**Delegates from cooperatives from China, Sri Lanka, and Vietnam**

Mr. Balasubramanian Iyer, Regional Director, ICA-AP speaking at the Opening Ceremony said, “Smallholder tea farmers, like any other agricultural producers, face a variety of challenges, including selling tea at the best prices, having poor infrastructure, obtaining affordable inputs (fertilizers and seedlings), lacking technical knowledge and resources to improve the quality of their produce. Collective action through cooperatives can help farmers benefit by helping them access markets and finance, improve existing and build new infrastructure, help in efficiency – downstream and upstream, enhance the farming practices and management of natural resources, provide information and knowledge, and bring voice into the policy processes.”

During their visit to China for the 16<sup>th</sup> Anhui International Tea Industry Expo, Mr. Iyer and the cooperators also visited some local cooperatives in Feixi County. These were Jinniu Silkworm Farmers’ Professional Cooperative and Anhui Baiyun Chunhao Tea Cooperative.

Feixi County Supply and Marketing Cooperative Association was founded in 1950. It has 8 grassroots central communities, 4 affiliated enterprises, 14 village-level communities and 2 industry associations (agricultural resources and renewable resources). There are 1,100 farmer professional cooperatives in the county which have collective ownership. These cooperatives are involved in a range of business activities from e-commerce to retail and wholesale (hardware, household, textiles, fertilizer), and waste recovery. In 2022, the county supply and marketing cooperative was approved by the national general agency ‘county circulation service network strong county cultivation unit,’ and awarded as part of the provincial and city comprehensive performance appraisal.

### **Jinniu Silkworm Farmers’ Professional Cooperative**





**A differently abled person employed by the cooperative overseeing the silkworm center**

Feixi County Golden Ox Silkworm Farmers Professional Cooperative was established in 2008. It has 358 members who are involved in silkworm production, harvesting and processing, product sales, and providing technical services. The cooperative's new and old mulberry garden covers an area of 6,300 mu, with annual cultivation of more than 7,000 silkworms and an output of 16 million yuan. It provides employment to more than 100 people and a majority are differently abled. In 2020, the cooperative built a 1016 mu silkworm science and technology demonstration park, 36 silkworm greenhouses, and 15 greenrooms. It has introduced and promoted 3 new leaf mulberry products and registered two brands, 'Xiaojingzhuang' and 'Golden Cow Silkworm.' In 2013, it won the National Demonstration Farmers Professional Cooperative.

According to Mr. Zhao Qihua, President of the cooperative, the cooperative has helped to bring members out of poverty, provided employment to all sections of society, improved processes to improve efficiency, addressed environmental concerns, and created a brand for itself.



**Delegation from Sri Lanka and ICA-AP with members of the cooperative and ACFMSC network**



### **Anhui Baiyun Chunhao Tea Cooperative**

The Anhui Baiyun Chunhao Tea Company (ABCTC) is known for producing and promoting Baiyun Chunhao tea, which is a type of high-quality green tea. It was established in November 2010 in Tangchi Town, Lujiang County which is known for its hot spring and tea. ABCTC covers an area of around 53,000 square meters and its asset exceeds 56 million yuan. Its business includes tea planting, processing, marketing and culture (tea tourism). ABCTC has been certified with ISO 9001, ISO 14001, and ISO 22000 among others and is listed as Anhui Agricultural Standardization and Demonstration Zone. It was rated as top 100 Enterprises in China's Tea Industry in terms of comprehensive strength by China Tea Industry Circulation Association in 2013.

ABCTC has adopted a model of "company + cooperatives + planting area + tea farmers + Internet" and has taken a development path of large-scale planting, standardized production, brand sales and contract services. The farmers receive support, training, and resources to enhance their tea cultivation techniques and ensure consistent production standards. It provides job opportunities for 400 people, helps local people to increase production and income and injects new vigour into rural revitalization and the local economy.

ABCTC also plays a role in organizing marketing activities, facilitating the tea trade, and promoting Chunhao tea both domestically and internationally. "Baiyun Chunhao" has won the titles of "Anhui Famous Trademark" and "Top Ten Famous Brands of Chinese Hui Tea." Baiyun Chunhao Tea has also been rated as "Anhui Famous Brand Products" and "Anhui Top Ten Famous Tea." It has won numerous awards which include the "Gold Award" at the 3rd China (Anhui) International Tea Industry Expo; the title of "Tea King" at the 6th China (Anhui) International Tea Industry Expo; "First Prize" at China Tea Cup Competition in 2015; "Gold Award Product" honor in the World Green Tea Appraisal; and the "Gold Award" of the China Characteristic Tourism Commodity Competition in 2020.



**School children having hands-on experience plucking tea leaves**

The cooperative organizes visits for school children from the province to the tea garden, where they receive education about tea cultivation and the cooperative. Additionally, they have the opportunity to participate in tea leaf plucking and witness the processing of tea leaves at the center.

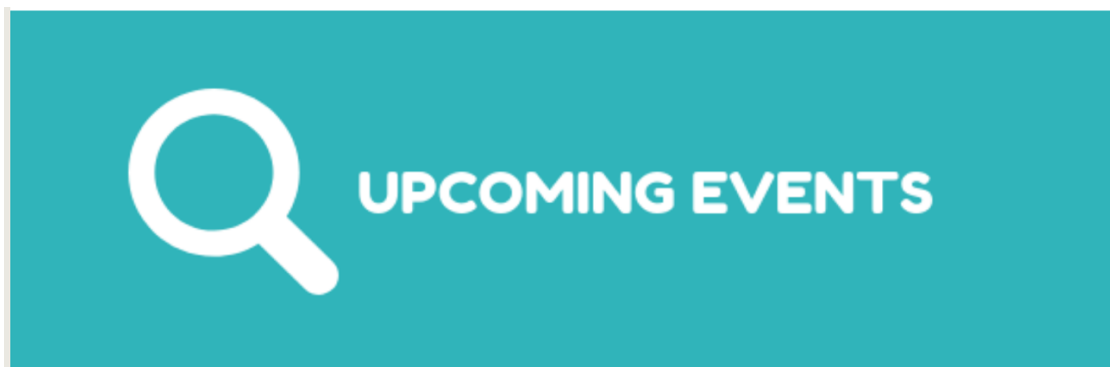
## Policy and Legal Watch

### Supreme Court Of India Exempts Credit Coops from Income Tax



The Supreme Court of India ruled that Cooperative Credit Societies, under Section 80P (2) of the Income Tax Act, will not be termed as banks and will continue to be eligible for exemption from income tax.

Co-operators across the country have welcomed the judgment of the Supreme Court giving a big relief to credit coops. While some call it a historic Judgment, others say the judgement will unleash fresh energy into the working of credit coops, counting more than 99,000 in the country. Reacting to the judgement, NCUI Chairman Dileepbhai Sanghani said, “It’s a historic judgment. The credit coops are working for the benefit of their members and it will help them grow well. Long pending issue gets resolved.” Read the full news [here](#).



- 6th Coop Colloquium on ‘Mutual Value Measurement Framework’ by ICA-AP Committee on Cooperative Research – 21 June 2023. [Register here](#).
- ICA General Assembly, Brussels, Belgium – 28 June 2023
- International Day of Cooperatives – 1 July 2023

- ❑ Asia Pacific Cooperative Youth Summit (APCYS) 4.0 in Sabah, Malaysia – 27 to 30 July 2023. [Register here](#).
- ❑ ICA-AP Training Program for Managers of Consumer Coops, Japan (only for members of ICA-AP Consumer Committee) – 19 to 30 July 2023
- ❑ ICA-AP Regional Board Meeting in Malaysia – 21 August 2023
- ❑ ICA-AP Committee on Women 25th-anniversary celebration in Tokyo, Japan (Hybrid; Only for committee members) – 19-20 September 2023
- ❑ ICA-AP Trade & Business Committee/ ASEAN Co-operative organization/ ANGKASA Cooperative to Cooperative Trade and Business Conference on Cooperative Partnerships for Sustainable Development and Climate Action: A Collaborative Approach to Addressing Global Challenges – 22 and 23 August 2023
- ❑ ICA Regional Workshop for Leaders of Consumer Cooperatives in Asia-Pacific in South Korea (only for members of ICA-AP Consumer Committee) – 16 to 20 October 2023
- ❑ 17th ICA Asia-Pacific Research Conference in Manila, Philippines – 4 and 5 November 2023
- ❑ 16th ICA-AP Regional Assembly in Manilla, Philippines – 6 to 10 November 2023