

ICA-AP NEWSLETTER

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

Contents

ICA 33 rd World Cooperative Congress – Registration Open!	2
Cooperatives, Democracy, and Autonomy	3
Far-Reaching Impact of SCI Principles 2 And 4: A brief portrayal of how these principles impacted the Credit Union movement in Indonesia	3
97th Amendment and recent SC judgement: Understanding the implications for the new Ministry of Cooperation	5
Consultation on Autonomy and Independence of Cooperatives in India	9
ICA-AP Updates	13
The ICA-AP Consumer Cooperative 2021 Webinar on “Sustainability”	13
PFD Virtual Consultation on Inclusive Multilateralism	14
Meeting of ASEAN Sectoral Working Group on Agricultural Cooperatives	15
Visit to NongHyup Bank Liaison Office in India	16
ICA President Ariel Guarco Visits India to Attend National Cooperative Conference: <i>Sahkar Se Samruddhi</i>	17
Obituary.....	20
Member Updates	20
National Seminar on Future of Rural Cooperative Banks.....	20
Cooperative Leaders’ National Forum 2021 by NCF, Nepal	21
The New Zealand Cooperative Economy Report.....	22
ICA-EU Updates	23
Coops4dev Closing Event: Celebrating 5 Years ICA-EU Partnership.....	24
Upcoming Events.....	26

Focus – International Day of Democracy in relation with Cooperative Principle 2: Democratic Member Control and Cooperative Principle 4: Autonomy & Independence

ICA 33rd World Cooperative Congress – Registration Open!

The ICA 33rd World Cooperative Congress is being held in Seoul, Republic of Korea from 1 to 3 December 2021. The Congress will be a hybrid event, will take place both in person and virtually for those who are unable to travel.

Registration for the Congress (1-3 December 2021) is now open!

- ❑ Click [here](#) to register!
- ❑ If you are registering for a group, please send an email to 2021congressseoul@ica.coop for the group registration form.
- ❑ Local registrants from South Korea should register [here](#).

For participants attending virtually, all sessions will be broadcast live in Korean time zone (GMT+9). For those who cannot attend during the scheduled times, all the sessions will be recorded and made available online via the Congress online platform for viewing later.

The theme for the Congress is, “**Deepening our Cooperative Identity**” to strengthen the cooperative movement’s role in addressing global challenges and explore avenues to improve lives at the local and global levels. Within this, four themes will explore how cooperatives examine, strengthen, commit to, and live the cooperative identity. [Read more on these themes in future ‘Destination Congress’ newsletters!](#)

The Congress will be an opportunity to look back and validate the cooperative movement’s resilience, leadership, and solidarity during times of crisis. This event will serve as an important forum to:

- Discuss why the cooperative identity, including definition, principles and values, is needed now more than ever
- Show cooperative resilience by sharing experiences and testimonies
- Discuss how cooperatives can significantly contribute to the global economic, social, and environmental reconstruction.

The Congress will consist of pre-events from 28 to 30 November, followed by the conference itself from 1 to 3 December.

For more information, visit <https://icaworldcoopcongress.coop/>.

Cooperatives, Democracy, and Autonomy

Far-Reaching Impact of SCI Principles 2 And 4: A brief portrayal of how these principles impacted the Credit Union movement in Indonesia

By Robby Tulus

The views expressed here are personal.



I applaud the ICA-AP for its genuine efforts to engage members in the region to celebrate and deepen the understanding of the Statement of the Cooperative Identity (SCI). I am privileged to have been called on to share my modest insights into Coop Principle 2 (Democratic Member Control) and Principle 4 (Autonomy and Independence) and to show their relevance in nurturing and sustaining the credit union movement, as well as the incipient multistakeholder cooperatives in Indonesia.

It would be reasonable to assert that the application of these two important principles must not be done in isolation of all other five principles. We, as cooperators, know that coop principles are not carved in stone to become ironclad commandments. They are guideposts that must be applied within the spirit of an empowering framework. A framework to grasp the future sustainability of the cooperative institution itself.

Principles 2 and 4, therefore, provide clear standards that guide us what must and must not be encouraged, but always within the framework and spirit of all other principles as well. The following is a case study based on my own experiences in Indonesia.

The principle of Democratic Member Control was undeniably a very crucial one to guide decisions during my pioneering efforts in initiating the credit union movement in Indonesia in 1970. At that time, the movement still adhered to the second ICA principle of 1966, simply called “Democratic Control”. It embraced the same spirit of the SCI of 1995, as the statement read: “The general body meeting of the members of a cooperative society is the supreme authority in regard to the conduct of the affairs of the society”.

Indonesia was, in theory, a democratic state when it transitioned from the so-called ‘Guided Democracy’ to “Pancasila Democracy” in the late 1960s. The “New Order” government of President Suharto legitimized its capacity to bring sustained improvements in the standard of living of all Indonesians by creating a host of well-intentioned policies. Unfortunately, these policies were mostly enacted from the top down. One such policy was the formation of multi-purpose “Village Unit Cooperatives (VUCs)”, ruled under a Presidential Decree no. 2/1978. The policy decreed that all existing rural cooperatives must integrate themselves into the VUCs. Rural credit unions (CUs), which came into existence in the early 1970s to shield members from the exploitation by unscrupulous moneylenders, were also forced to join the VUCs. As might be expected, CU members and leaders reacted strongly and spontaneously against such imposition. They insisted to abide by the “Democratic Control” principle, as enshrined in Cooperative Law 12/1967. Moreover, such forcible tactics also violated the first principle of “Open and Voluntary Membership”. Notwithstanding, despite

faithful adherence to the ICA principles of 1966 and not in violation of the de facto Coop Law, CUs were not granted any license and legal recognition up until the New Order government came to an end in 1998. It meant 29 years of continuous struggle to keep surviving until formal recognition was finally granted in 1999. The resilience and strength of CUs in upholding the democratic principle spurred the steady growth of the movement, which has currently reached more than 3.25 million members.

In 1995, suppression of free political expression, as well as grassroots organizing, continued in earnest in Indonesia. It was also the year when the SCI was promulgated during ICA's 31st Congress in Manchester. The addition of "Autonomy and Independence" as the Fourth Principle in the SCI was evidently a great blessing for cooperatives worldwide, and certainly so for CUs in Indonesia. It further fortified and solidified the principle of democratic control as the internal stronghold of CUs. Yet in an era where neo-liberal policies of the Indonesian government continued to prevail, Principle 4 has become a crucial guidepost to resist high-handed regulatory processes.

It is a known fact that CUs have always been at the forefront in demonstrating the virtues of the SCI in the cooperative landscape in Indonesia. Fast forward, however, a more recent measure taken by the Indonesian government to establish Ultra Micro Holdings under the Indonesian Peoples' Bank (popularly known as BRI) is tantamount to disrupting the operations of credit unions due to lower interest rates being offered as loans to the SMEs. This is in addition to a subsidized credit fund, popularly known as KUR, and already in operation for many years. Both these loan facilities could potentially derail the smooth operations of CUs if members shift their borrowings away from CUs to the BRI. Another contentious issue pertains to the recently promulgated ruling by the Ministry of Cooperatives and SMEs. This ruling, called "Operational Guideline 33", mandates all members of classified Cooperative Board of Directors and Supervisory Councils to be vetted first before they qualify to serve as Directors and Supervisors. Vetting is to be done by a Team of Adjudicators in provincial and district jurisdictions under the auspices of the Ministry of Cooperatives and SMEs. There is a sudden collective awakening among cooperative leaders who argued that this ruling contravenes the very principle of autonomy and independence, as well as the democratic functioning of a cooperative. Deliberations and debates on this new policy are still ongoing at the time this article is being written.

As mentioned earlier, the credit union movement in Indonesia strived and grew quite steadily amidst trials and tribulations since the New Order era and even until now. Three pillars underpinning the CU movement since 1970 were responsible for generating the growth of these CUs. i.e., Self-Help, Solidarity, and Education. It is no surprise that these pillars are much in sync with the Identity Statement of 1995 as they constitute the values of Self-help, and Solidarity, as well as the principle of Cooperative Education.

Be that as it may, CUs continue to face internal and external challenges despite their steady progress. With huge assets and extra liquidity surfacing to date, it could easily trigger fraudulent practices and moral hazards if audit and supervision are not meticulously enforced, and good governance is held in check. The prevailing neoliberal system relies heavily on certain human inclinations such as greed and competition to pursue material impulses. There is a risk that CU leaders, especially new professional recruits, go with the flow of businesses that are engaged in the captivating grip of neoliberal values, and hence become a threat to democracy within their own CUs. It may well cause drift from focusing on members' needs and welfare toward that of seeking mere financial gains. Worst still if membership education is lacking, and members are coaxed to carry the same misguided pursuits of their elected leaders. Thus, CUs could be shaped in different directions under pressures of uncertainty in a

prevailing neoliberal era of globalization. Given all these uncertainties, an additional pillar was added to the Credit Union movement in 2013, namely “Innovation”.

As co-founder and advisor to the CU Movement in Indonesia, I was encouraged to innovate and initiate a new program to build socio-economic cadres from among credit union activists in 2011. As it turned out, the program was also attended by activists from other cooperatives and civil society organizations. The program was intended to build a social and economic system of the future that centers on human beings, with a multistakeholder concept. Following the formation of more than 350 cadres, a national association called “AKSES” was formed in 2013 by these cadres in a democratic fashion. These cadres were further encouraged to incubate embryonic ‘real sector’ cooperatives, other than credit unions, based on the need of communities and by way of a multi-stakeholder concept. The idea was to create a paradigm shift from having just a single class of members into a more heterogeneous one. It thus captured the interests of stakeholders in the community to create horizontal integration of multiple partners with interdependent interests. A number of these multi-stakeholder cooperatives have now been organized and are associated under the flagship of the INKUR Federation (National Federation of People-Based Cooperative Enterprises).

The above case study shows the utmost importance of the principles of Democratic Membership Control as well as Autonomy and Independence. Once members understand that they democratically own, and are in control of, their credit union or cooperative and can maintain their autonomy and independence, they are capable of reaching greater heights amidst ongoing challenges. This being said, disruptions and external pressures will obviously not disappear overnight, and may even escalate during and after the long-drawn-out pandemic. But the spirit of the SCI will continue to shine and will be key to sustain the cooperative movement well into the future.

97th Amendment and recent SC judgement: Understanding the implications for the new Ministry of Cooperation

By T. Nandkumar

Originally published in [The Rural Voice](#). The views expressed here are personal.



A new Ministry of Cooperation was formed on 6 July 2021 with the following objectives: (i) Policy in the field of Cooperation and co-ordination of Cooperation activities in all sectors (the Ministries concerned are responsible for cooperatives in their respective fields); (ii) Realization of vision “from cooperation to prosperity”; (iii) Strengthening of the cooperative movement in the country and deepening its reach up to the grassroots; (iv) Promotion of cooperative-based economic development model; (v) Creation of appropriate policy, legal and institutional framework to help cooperatives realise their potential; (vi) Matters relating to the National Cooperative Organizations and the National Cooperative Development Corporation; (vii) Incorporation, regulation and winding up of cooperative societies with objects not confined to one State, including administration of the Multi-State Cooperative Societies Act, 2002 and the cooperative units functioning under its control; and (viii) Training of the personnel of cooperative departments and cooperative institutions.

Many wondered why a new Ministry was deemed necessary when Cooperation was a division handled by a joint secretary in the erstwhile Department of Agriculture & Cooperation. It was not even a full department. Others thought it had something to do with the implementation of the 97th Amendment of the Constitution. But the Supreme Court upheld (though partially) the view of the Gujarat High court holding Part IX B of the constitution as ultra vires. Incidentally, the judgement came on an appeal by the Union of India against an order passed on public interest litigation (PIL) by an individual. None of the state governments was party to the proceedings.

The 97th Constitution Amendment Act was passed by the Lok Sabha on 27 December 2011 and by the Rajya Sabha the next day. The Presidential assent to the aforesaid Amendment followed on 12 January 2012 and it came into force with effect from February 15 the same year. A division bench of the Gujarat High Court by a judgment dated 22 April 2013 declared that the said Constitutional Amendment inserting IX B was ultra vires for want of the requisite ratification under Article 368(2). This, however, did not impact amendments that have been made in Article 19(1)(c) and in inserting Article 43B.

A look at the provisions

Article 19. Protection of certain rights regarding freedom of speech, etc.— (1) All citizens shall have the right... (c) to form associations or unions or cooperative societies.

Article 43B. Promotion of co-operative societies — The State shall endeavour to promote voluntary formation, autonomous functioning, democratic control and professional management of cooperative societies.

The relevant entries in Schedule VII are as follows. Entry 43 in the Union List (List I) deals with the incorporation, regulation and winding up of trading corporations, including banking, insurance and financial corporations, but not including cooperative societies. Entry 44 deals with the incorporation, regulation and winding up of corporations, whether trading or not, with objects not confined to one State, but not including universities. Entry 32 in the State List (List II) deals with the incorporation, regulation and winding up of corporations, other than those specified in List I, and universities; unincorporated trading, literary, scientific, religious and other societies and associations; cooperative societies.

Cooperative societies", therefore, is a subject enumerated in Entry 32 of the State List of and most State legislatures have accordingly enacted legislations on cooperative societies. Within the framework of these State Acts, the growth of cooperatives on a large scale was envisaged as part of the efforts for securing social and economic justice and equitable distribution of the fruits of development. But, despite the considerable expansion of cooperatives, their performance has not been up to expectations. Considering the need for reforms in the Cooperative Societies Acts of the States, a number of consultations were held with State Cooperative Ministers between 2004 and 2008. A need was expressed by the States for amending the Constitution to keep the cooperatives free from unnecessary outside interferences and to ensure their autonomous organizational set-up and democratic functioning.

Objective of the reform

The objective of the reform was to ensure that cooperative societies function in a democratic, professional, autonomous and economically sound manner. A new article was inserted in the Directive Principles of State Policy for the States to endeavour to promote voluntary formation, autonomous functioning, democratic control and professional management of cooperative societies. Part IX B, inter alia, included (a) provisions for incorporation, regulation and winding up of cooperative societies

based on the principles of democratic member control, member-economic participation and autonomous functioning; (b) specifying the maximum number of directors of a cooperative society to be not exceeding 21 members; (c) providing for a fixed term of five years from the date of election in respect of the elected members of the board and its office bearers; (d) providing for a maximum time limit of six months during which a board of directors of a cooperative society could be kept under supersession or suspension; (e) providing for independent professional audit; (f) providing for right of information to the members of the cooperative societies; (g) empowering the State Governments to obtain periodic reports of activities and accounts of cooperative societies; (h) providing for the reservation of one seat for the Scheduled Castes or the Scheduled Tribes and two seats for women on the board of every cooperative society which has individuals as members from such categories; and (i) providing for offences relating to cooperative societies and penalties in respect of such offences.

The court decision

In 2013, the Gujarat High Court decreed that Part IX B was ultra vires. An appeal was preferred by the Government of India in the Supreme Court, the hearing of which concluded only recently, and the judgement was pronounced on 20 July 2021. It will be prudent to look at the 'seven cooperative principles' as guidelines by which the cooperatives put their values into practice.

1st Principle: Voluntary and Open Membership: Cooperatives are voluntary organizations open to all persons able to use their services and willing to accept the responsibilities of membership, without gender, social, racial, political or religious discrimination.

2nd Principle: Democratic Member Control: Cooperatives are democratic organizations controlled by their members, who actively participate in setting their policies and making decisions.

3rd Principle: Member Economic Participation: Members contribute equitably to, and democratically control, the capital of their cooperatives. A major part of that capital is usually the common property of the cooperative, unlike private company practices.

4th Principle: Autonomy and Independence: Cooperatives are autonomous, self-help organizations controlled by their members.

5th Principle: Education, Training and Information: Cooperatives provide education and training for their members, elected representatives, managers, and employees so they can contribute effectively to the development of their co-operatives.

6th Principle: Cooperation among Cooperatives: Cooperatives serve their members most effectively and strengthen the cooperative movement by working together through local, national, regional and international structures.

7th Principle: Concern for Community: Cooperatives work for the sustainable development of their communities through policies approved by their members.

The Supreme Court found certain provisions of Part IX B as constitutionally infirm qua cooperative societies operating within a State; it would yet operate qua multi-State cooperative societies and in Union Territories. The Court upheld the judgment of the High Court except to the extent that it strikes down the entirety of Part IX B of the Constitution of India. It declared that Part IX B of the Constitution of India is operative only insofar as it concerns multi-State cooperative societies both within the various States and in the Union Territories of India.

An important point to note here is that the case was decided based on the constitutional principles of 'who has the right to legislate'. Non-adherence to the procedure prescribed under Article 368(2)

seems to have been the major issue on which this case rested. That is to say that there has been no discussion on the merits.

Another point to note here is that 17 states have already amended their cooperative laws in accordance with the provisions of Part IX B.

A major change in the cooperative banking system came about with the Banking Regulation Act amendments in 2020, by which effective control over cooperative banks was shifted to the Reserve Bank of India (RBI). Though the amendment exempts primary agricultural credit societies (PACS), the three-tier structure of state cooperative bank, district cooperative banks and PACs has been disturbed. Kerala created a new Kerala Bank replacing the State Cooperative Bank to tide over some of these issues. It is another matter that the cooperative credit system takes care of less than 10 per cent of the short-term agricultural credit in the country, but states with a strong cooperative structure are concerned.

The Supreme Court has held that forming cooperatives is a fundamental right, and cooperatives remain as part of the directive principles. Part IX B, which contains articles 243 ZH to ZT, shall now apply only to multi-state cooperatives and Union Territories. 243 ZI and ZT were specifically seen to be encroaching on the rights of the state legislatures, and hence the decision.

The new Ministry of Cooperation has its task cut out now. It can (1) go for a constitutional amendment to conform to the Supreme Court judgement, removing all references to the state government; or (2) proceed under Article 368(2) to validate the existing Part IX B; or (3) proceed under Article 368(2) to make cooperation a concurrent subject under List III. The third option may face opposition from a few states. The first option is the easy one. The second option may not be difficult since none of the states had gone against the Constitutional Amendment. If the states are allowed to continue doing what they are doing the following may not happen: limitation on the number of directors, right to information, democratic governance, professional management, and accountability.

What should the new ministry do?

It can take the “control” route of amending the Constitution by shifting the item ‘cooperative societies’ to the Concurrent List and take control.

Alternatively, it can take a developmental view and bring about a socio-economic revolution in rural India by enabling cooperatives to function based on the four core principles enumerated in Article 43B. The success of self-help groups (SHGs) and the livelihood missions should encourage the ministry. Reviving the village-level cooperatives to become large multitasking SHGs and federating them to capture value for its members (a la AMUL) has to be the priority.

This needs a concerted effort to (i) Organise new cooperatives (labourers, farmers, women, artisans etc) and develop business models to capture market value. The old logic of perpetual subsidies will not work. (ii) Support these initially with capital, organizational and managerial assistance; (iii) Professionalize their management, de-bureaucratize the existing ones; and (iv) make all grants and concessional finance conditional to the observance of the four basic principles of voluntary formation, democratic governance, autonomous functioning, and professional management.

The new Ministry of Cooperation can make a difference in the lives of millions of poor in India if it assumes a large developmental role and has a strategic vision.

Consultation on Autonomy and Independence of Cooperatives in India



The Institute of Rural Management Anand (IRMA), India in collaboration with ICA-AP, ICA Domus Trust (IDT), and Andhra Pradesh Mahila Abhivruddhi Society (APMAS) organized a multistakeholder consultation on “Autonomy and Independence of Cooperatives in India” on 3 September 2021. It discussed prospects for the cooperative sector, considering the current political economy. The consultation gave space to share the different views and experiences of the

panellists and brought forth an Anand declaration, containing a brief set of actionable policy recommendations.

The opening remarks were shared by Prof. Umakant Dash, Director, IRMA; Dr. C. Shambu Prasad, Professor, IRMA; Mr. Balasubramanian Iyer, Regional Director, ICA-AP and Mr. C.S. Reddy, CEO, APMAS.

Prof. Dash noted the role of cooperatives in reducing inequality and Dr. Verghese Kurien’s legacy in forwarding the cause of their autonomy and independence. His address was followed by a brief introduction to the theme by the representatives of ICA-AP and APMAS. They not only reminded the participants of the work done by the veterans like Dr. Verghese Kurien and Mr. Rama Reddy in India but also various international declarations and ideas calling for the autonomy of cooperatives.

While the future of the cooperative sector is uncertain in India, with the new developments in the policy sphere, the speakers in the introductory session felt that these changes also present opportunities to bring together diverse perspectives in the sphere of cooperatives.



Mr. Dileep Sanghani, President, National Cooperative Union of India (NCUI), Mr. Rakesh Kapur, Joint Managing Director, Indian Farmers Fertiliser Cooperative Limited (IFFCO) and Mr. Suresh Prabhu, Founder, Cooperative Development Forum delivered the keynote address.

Two recent policy decisions have given new impetus to rethink and rejuvenate the cooperative movement in India. In July 2021, the Government of India constituted an independent Union Ministry of

Cooperation (MoC) to provide a separate administrative, legal and policy framework to strengthen the cooperative movement. Independently, the Supreme Court of India struck down provisions in the 97th Constitutional Amendment Act (CAA) in longstanding litigation that impinged on the role of states and declared that cooperative societies as a subject matter belong "wholly and exclusively to the State legislatures to legislate upon."

Central to both the decisions is the issue of the ‘autonomy and independence’ of cooperatives. The keynote speakers appreciated the role of cooperatives in creating greater opportunities for the marginalized sectors and considered the autonomy of cooperatives essential for their survival. They opined that the role of the government is to provide safety nets, both for the producers and consumers organized in a cooperative mode in case of market failures. Some participants argued that the union ministry of cooperation will be playing a major role in pushing forward the ideals of the 97th amendment. The important role of cooperatives in every sector was mentioned, along with the limitations under present regulatory regimes. The speakers envisioned that the new ministry will be able to mitigate these challenges, along with taking the sector in the right direction and mentioned the need for streamlined regulations.

Panel Discussion 1 – Speakers: Mr. Meenesh Shah, Chairman, NDDDB; Dr. Thomas Isaac, Economist, Kerala; Mr. Jaya Prakash Narayan, Founder President, Lok Satta; Mr. T. Nanda Kumar, Former Secretary, Department of Agriculture, and ex-Chairman IRMA and NDDDB; Mr. Rama Reddy, President, Cooperative Development Foundation; Mr. Ravinder Rao, National Federation of State Cooperative Banks limited (NAFSCOB); and Sh. Mangaljeet Rai, Chairman, National Dairy Cooperative of India (NCDFI)

Facilitator – Dr. C. Shambu Prasad



The 97th CAA in 2012, conferred a fundamental right on the formation of cooperatives. In 2013, the Gujarat High Court decreed that Part IX B, which impinged on the rights of states, was ultra vires. The Supreme Court, based on an appeal by the government, recently upheld (though partially) the view of the Gujarat High court holding Part IX B of the Constitution as ultra vires. Incidentally, the judgement came on an appeal by the Union of India against an order passed on public interest litigation (PIL) by an individual. None of the state governments was party to the proceedings. It is now to be seen whether state governments decide they would like to retain or not the amendments made in their cooperative Acts under the 97th CAA and the role the MoC would play in bringing them to make changes in the Acts.



One of the speakers was largely enthusiastic about the new developments in the cooperative policies, as it might help to reduce regulatory ambiguities and believed that it would lead to greater operational independence. Some speakers were staunchly opposed to the idea of framing a national level cooperative policy. They argued that the framework can undermine the capacity of successful cooperatives in Gujarat and Maharashtra to operate and might be used for securing the vested interests of certain actors.

Their discussion brought out important aspects of how the cooperative sector in India has been part of the governmental vision of development in India, which made the question of autonomy integral

to the sector from its inception. While it meant autonomy of state governments to frame the cooperative policies in the respective states for some, for others it meant autonomy of citizens. And in that regard, all speakers agreed that the financial independence of the cooperatives is essential for breaking out of state interference. However, in the absence of member capital, it is difficult to avoid government grants, which translates to their interference.

While some considered it unfortunate that the 97th Amendment act had been struck down on procedural grounds, others believed it should have been struck down on grounds of violating fundamental rights, along with the procedural inconsistencies.

Speakers described how other regulatory regimes like the Banking regulations act can also pose a threat to the autonomy of cooperatives, and therefore they expected the MoC to encourage the cooperative spirit in handling the diverse range of cooperatives and their specific needs. The panel also highlighted the regional diversity and the importance of added efforts to promote cooperatives in resource-poor regions like the North-East where the cooperative sector is not so well developed.

Panel Discussion 2 – Speakers: Mr. Santanu Mohanty, Independent Consultant; Ms. Mirai Chatterjee, Chairperson, SEWA Coop Federation; Mr. C.S. Reddy, and Mr. V. Vivekanandan, Director, FishMARC, Vrutti

Chair: Mr. Balu Iyer

The discussion underscored that the experiences from the field can help understand the context within which they operate, i.e., how can the policy change to mitigate the challenges faced by the cooperative sector.



The experience of a pilot project from Odisha explained how it is essential for the government to proactively promote cooperative institutions like PACS at the grassroots along with SHGs through collaboration with the Ministry of Panchayati Raj, Rural Development, etc. This was seen as crucial for the cooperative movement to take off and capture the imagination of the population, especially the youth who do not participate in these institutions. It

was also noted that a sense of cooperatives can be inculcated through the education system from a very early age, a practice that exists in various countries.

The experience of other civil society organizations also established the importance of cooperatives in reducing the vulnerabilities of marginalized communities, especially in the light of the rise of a gig economy and the COVID-19 lockdown. The cooperative societies based on the principles of mutual trust have been able to undertake the welfare functions much better providing security to their members. They have been able to provide insurance and other social security functions. The organizations have promoted cooperative micro and small enterprises and created a support system for them. Whether they are based on SHGs or worker's unions, the examples here have been of women-led institutions, which tries to acknowledge the conspicuous absence of women in traditional cooperatives across the country. However, they pointed out related policies like the central sector

scheme for promotion of FPOs, although having the integral spirit of cooperation, are used to undermine cooperatives.

While the liberal cooperative organizations play a crucial role in creating innovative models like staggered retirement of board members and are very independent, it was pointed out that they end up playing a very limited role in mobilizing communities around policies. One of the speakers reflected that this is because the primary stakeholders of cooperatives, that is the members, lack a sense of ownership. Apart from this the panel also asserted that data and evidence on cooperatives are difficult to retrieve and therefore inhibits the ability to provide actionable policy recommendations.

The panellists discussed how the welfare functions of cooperatives allow bureaucrats and politicians to take over cooperatives. Voluntary membership is compromised because cooperatives go out of their way to register members under cooperatives, while the commercial aspect of cooperatives is ignored. The example of fish cooperatives in South India brings out this aspect. In the same vein, one can see how the over-reliance of civil society actors on government can ultimately lead to them implementing the schemes of the government, using the cooperative institutions they promote as a tool for implementation.

Anand Declaration – Facilitators: Dr. C. Shambu Prasad, Mr. C. S. Reddy, and Mr. Mohit Dave, Program Manager, ICA-AP

The multi-stakeholder consultation with cooperators, practitioners, academicians, and experts in the sector examined the legal and constitutional implications of these decisions and explored how future initiatives on cooperatives can embed the autonomy of the cooperative sector and make it vibrant. The consultation reflected on what ails the cooperative sector today and made a few policy recommendations for enabling the much needed ‘ease of doing business’ that could inform and engage the new MoC. In this regard, a declaration is under preparation and will be released soon.



Dr. Tushaar Shah, Professor Emeritus, IRMA, in his closing remarks, argued that while autonomy and independence are essential for cooperatives, they may not be sufficient for a thriving cooperative sector. He opined, if the cooperative sector might be able to pull more resources and weight behind them, they will be in a better position to gain autonomy, as the case of Amul has depicted. While it is important to bring out a statement like the Anand

Declaration on the autonomy of cooperatives, it will be important to look at the more complex issues of cooperative development like scale and member centrality.

Other participants felt that such scale and vertical growth can extinguish solidarity among members, which is why lateral growth, like in the SEWA model can be adopted. Participants also pointed out that a partnership between state and civil society would be required rather than separating the two. A convergence of interests should be there rather than trumping the state through a large-scale cooperative institution.

The consultation was successful in bringing together academicians and development practitioners from across India to deliberate upon the autonomy of cooperative enterprises, legal frameworks for an enabling environment, and the way forward for policymakers.

ICA-AP Updates

The ICA-AP Consumer Cooperative 2021 Webinar on “Sustainability”



The ICA Committee on Consumer Cooperation for Asia and the Pacific (ICA-AP Consumer Committee) organized the Webinar on “Sustainability” in collaboration with the Japanese Consumers’ Co-operative Union (JCCU) on 16 September 2021. It was participated by 120 cooperators from 17 countries in the Asia-Pacific region.

This is the third webinar organized by the Committee in 2021, following the webinars on “Contribution to local communities” in June and the New Generation Stores “C&S Co-op Supermart” in the Philippines in August.

The webinar aimed to deepen the understanding of the businesses and activities of consumer coops (or coops in the retail sectors) to improve sustainability, boost inter-cooperative cooperation around the world, and discuss cooperative identity in the run-up to the 33rd World Cooperative Congress in Seoul.

Mr. Haruyoshi AMANO, Chair, ICA-AP Consumer Committee & Manager, International Department, JCCU, delivered the opening remarks, followed by a video message from Mr. Balasubramanian Iyer, Regional Director, ICA-AP.

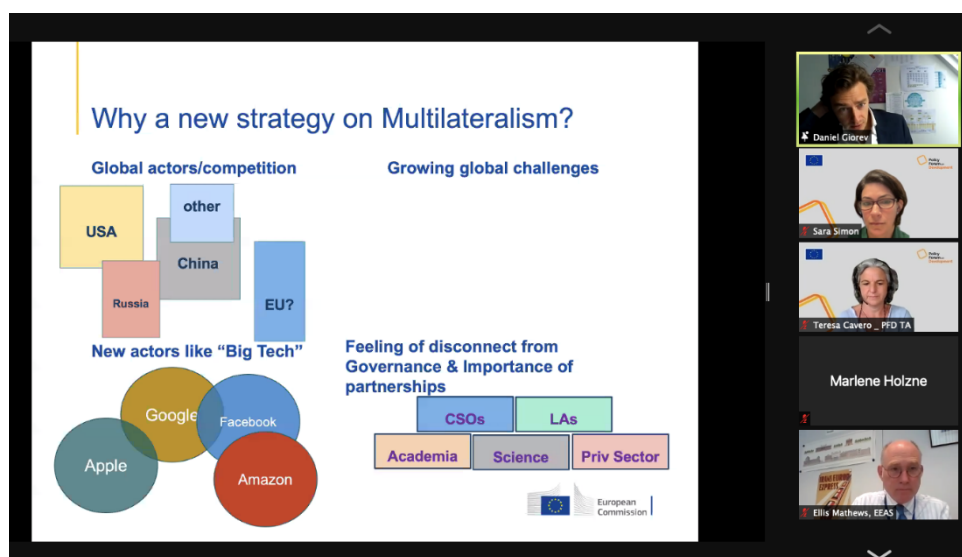
The panel of speakers presented reports of their coops and sustainability activities. Mr. Yasuhiro Onizawa, Manager, Environment Promotion Department, Consumer Cooperative Kobe (Coop Kobe), Japan shared about CO-OP Kobe and its environmental activities such as its Environmental Challenge Goals, Food Recycling in its Eco Farm, Solar Sharing Initiative by generating solar energy and its new store using the 100% renewable energy.

Dr. Mohd. Azlan Yahya, Vice-President, ANGKASA, Malaysia & Vice-Chairperson, ICA-AP Consumer Committee explained the cooperative movement and consumer cooperatives in Malaysia. He shared ANGKASA's three sustainable intervention programs – BA100 Program, 100 Champion Product Development and its Cooperatives' Products Resource Centre (CPRC).

Ms. Novita Puspasari, a scholar-activist of Cooperative and SMEs & Researcher at Kopkun Institute, Indonesia explained about the consumer coops in Indonesia, how Kopkun Coop is managing its stores under the Covid-19 crisis and the kind of support Kopkun Institute provides to Kopkun Coop and its members such as education programs and innovations.

The presentations were followed by a brief Q&A session and all participants engaged in discussions around sustainability.

PFD Virtual Consultation on Inclusive Multilateralism



The European External Action Service (EEAS) and the Directorate-General for International Partnerships of the European Commission (DG INTPA) in collaboration with the Policy Forum on Development, organised a consultation on inclusive multilateralism on 13 September 2021.

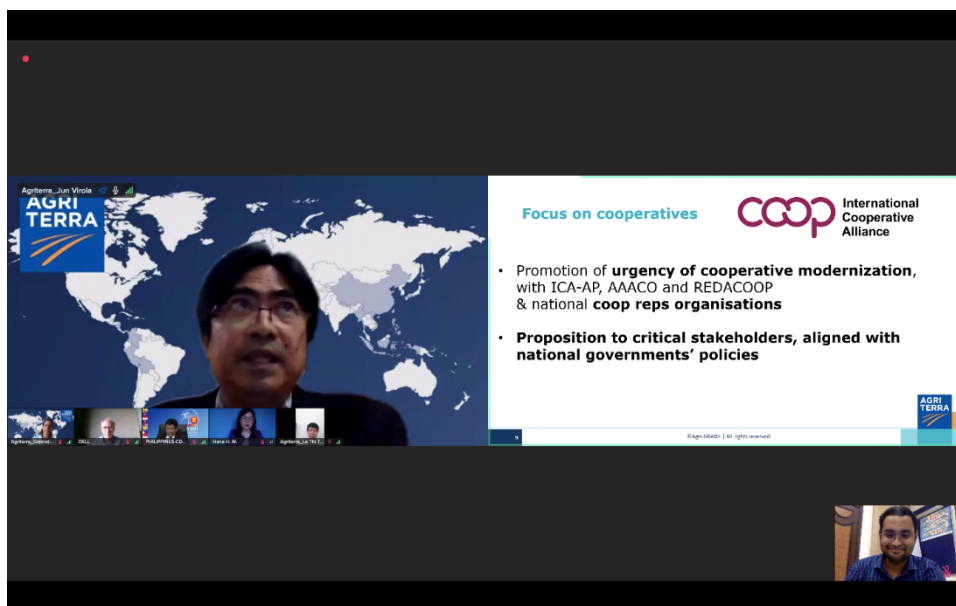
In February 2021, a joint communication on strengthening the EU's contribution to rules-based multilateralism was issued. The communication calls for a truly inclusive multilateralism, where "the voices of civil society, the private sector, social partners and others count." The consultation on 13 September helped outline its practical implications and responded to a strong interest by civil society and local authorities to be associated with the future work about the roll-out of the Communication. After a presentation by the European Commission and the EEAS, the floor was opened for discussions.

Mr. Mohit Dave, Program Manager, ICA-AP participated in the multilateral processes and shared the lessons learned. He noted that ICA-AP is working closely with various structures under SAARC and ASEAN to give broader recognition to cooperatives in their policies. A dedicated roadmap for the promotion of cooperatives is a key priority area for more inclusive multilateralism. Further from formulation and adoption, the said cooperative promotion policy's implementation should be periodically reviewed and revised through a multi-stakeholder approach. Jordan in the past year (2020) has made positive steps in this direction.

He highlighted the need to tap into the synergetic capacity of the cooperative movement for more inclusive multilateralism and to create new knowledge around emerging products, services and markets—in particular, around new technology that can be adopted to address social and economic needs in a changing environment. ICA members who are international and national cooperative organisations from all sectors of the economy, namely agriculture, banking, consumer, fisheries, health, housing, insurance, and industry & services are one of the key stakeholders.

The ICA-AP in recent past has worked closely with various stakeholders such as the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UNDESA), Ministry of Trade, Industry and Tourism of the Government of Fiji, SAARC Agriculture Centre (SAC), Asian Farmers' Association for Sustainable Rural Development (AFA), Food and Agriculture Organization Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific (FAO-RAP), ICA Domus Trust (IDT), Andhra Pradesh Mahila Abhivruddhi Society (APMAS) etc. All these dialogues were successful in bringing together academics, development practitioners and other multilateral institutions from across the Asia-Pacific region to promote and advocate for people-centred, self-sustaining cooperative enterprises, guided by the principles of economic, social and environmentally sustainable development. Invoking the 6th cooperative principle of Cooperation among Cooperatives, ICA-AP encourages members to forge a joint front by engaging in multilateral settings to serve their members more effectively and strengthen the cooperative movement.

Meeting of ASEAN Sectoral Working Group on Agricultural Cooperatives



The 22nd Meeting of the ASEAN Sectoral Working Group on Agricultural Cooperatives (ASWGAC) was held in a hybrid mode on 15 – 16 September 2021 by the Cooperative Development Authority (CDA) in the Philippines. The Meeting was attended by delegations from the ASEAN member states and the ASEAN Secretariat. There was also representation from the Agriterra, ACEDAC Secretariat and the ASEAN Farmers' Organizations Support Programme (AFOSP) – represented by ASEAN Foundation and Asian Farmers' Association (AFA). Mr. Mohit Dave represented the ICA-AP office.

The ASEAN member states discussed the Strategic Plan of Actions for 2021 - 2025 and presented the country papers for the policy & development of agricultural cooperatives. Mr. Dave along with Ms. Gabriela Versteeg, Manager Agri-Advice, Agriterra and Mr. Jun Virola, Business Advisor, Agriterra Philippines made a presentation about Agri-GRADE, an initiative for the modernization of cooperative

sector and discussed potential areas of cooperation to support agriculture cooperative development in ASEAN.

After the presentation, CDA Agricultural Cooperatives Cluster Head - Assistant Secretary Virgilio Lazaga shared his remarks that it is important to strengthen the alliances between government agencies, agricultural cooperatives, and the private sector in the ASEAN Region. He thanked Agriterra and ICA-AP for sharing the Agri-GRADE proposal.

The meeting ended with CDA Undersecretary Joseph Encabo's remarks for the entire delegation and a commitment to a stronger ASEAN integration for the cooperative movement.

Visit to NongHyup Bank Liaison Office in India



On 17 September, the ICA-AP staff in New Delhi office paid a courtesy visit to South Korea's NongHyup Bank at its India representative office. NH Bank is owned by the National Agricultural Cooperative Federation (NACF), South Korea, a member of the ICA.

NH Bank opened a liaison office in 2016 to strengthen the competitiveness of agriculture and contribute to the economic development of farmers even in India, a country with a long historical relationship and is preparing to open a licensed bank branch. The India representative office was the bank's fourth overseas office after New York, Beijing, and Hanoi. NH Bank hopes to build an Asian financing belt by opening an office in New Delhi, which can serve as a platform for its entry into Southwest Asia.

Mr. Sung-chang Hong, Managing Director of the office welcomed the staff and said that the bank aims to eventually convert the representative office into a branch to provide broader financial services. NH Bank is keen to initiate activities to transfer Korean knowledge on agricultural finance and enhance the common benefits of the two countries. Although it is at the level of a liaison office, as part of the management activities of NH Bank, which focuses on social contribution, it has a keen interest to support the local community.

Since its foundation in 1961 in Korea, NH Bank has been striving to strengthen the competitiveness of agriculture, improve the quality of life for farmers, and balance the national economy. NH Bank has been selected as the No. 1 social contribution bank in Korea for 7 consecutive years since 2011 and

has provided free management consulting for agri-food companies and farmers, public finance fund support, and public benefits fund financial services to support rural communities and the underprivileged. It has been faithfully playing a role in social finance.

ICA President Ariel Guarco Visits India to Attend National Cooperative Conference: *Sahkar Se Samruddhi*



A National Cooperative Conference was organised by the Indian cooperative movement under the leadership of NCUI and IFFCO to welcome the Union Minister of Home Affairs & Minister of Cooperation, Shri Amit Shah on 25 September 2021.

Mr. Amit Shah attended the National Cooperative Conference in New Delhi as the Chief Guest. The President of the International Cooperative Alliance, Mr. Ariel Guarco was also one of the Chief Guests on this occasion. The Union Minister of State for Cooperation, Mr. B. L. Verma; Secretary, Ministry of Cooperation and Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare; and ICA members including IFFCO, NCUI, National Agricultural Cooperative Marketing Federation (NAFED), Krishak Bharati Cooperative Ltd. (KRIBHCO) and others were also present.

The event was attended by more than 2,100 members of the Indian cooperative movement and reached around 60 million people through the online medium.

Mr. Shah expressed his views on '*Sahakar se Samruddhi*' (Prosperity through Cooperation) mission of the Government of India. He said the cooperative sector will also give full thrust to fulfil the goal of a US \$5 trillion Indian economy. In his address, Mr. Shah remembered and acknowledged those luminaries who supported the cooperative movement like Madhavrao Godbole, Baikunthbhai Mehta, Tribhuvandas Patel, Vitthalrao Vikhe Patil, Yashwantrao Chavan, Dhananjayrao Gadgil, and Laxmanrao Inamdar.



Calling upon successful cooperatives, the Ministry of Cooperation (MoC) will strengthen cooperative institutions, bring transparency, modernize and computerize them and create competitive cooperatives. Mr. Shah said that today, there are about 91% villages in the country, where some cooperative organization works, which is not the case anywhere else in the world. There are more than 8,55,000 registered cooperative societies, more than 17 national level cooperative unions, 33 state-level cooperative banks, and 363 district level cooperative banks. In a way, there is one PACS for every ten villages which is a great achievement and farmer welfare can be achieved through these PACS.

In 2021-22, the 75th year of India's independence, a new cooperative policy will be put in place. The Ministry will strengthen the PACS as 65,000 PACS is a small number for six lakh villages and a target will be set to have PACS in every second village within the next 5 years. To increase this number from 65,000 to 3 lakhs, the MoC will prepare a proper legal roadmap and arrangements will be made for skill development. The role of credit societies will be further strengthened so that even the smallest person can get credit. Mr. Shah noted that the MoC will ensure priority lending by working with all the ministries to enhance the role of cooperatives in all priority sector lending. Transparency has to be brought in training, skill development, recruitment, and elections to take the cooperatives forward or else we will be outdated. He said that the MoC is moving forward to set up a Common Service Center and creating a database.



Mr. Guarco expressed his happiness on the establishment of the new Ministry of Cooperation for the first time since the independence of India. He said that he was hopeful to know that the new Ministry has in its hands the opportunity to strengthen the cooperative model together with the Indian cooperative movement and thus contribute to the prosperity of India. He noted that this will consolidate the rich trajectory of the Indian Cooperative movement in the face of the G20 Presidency that India will assume in 2022.

Mr. Shah assured Mr. Guarco that India's cooperative sector can become a platform for sharing good practices across the world.

The live stream of the Conference can be watched [here](#).

President Guarco also visited the Taj Mahal during his trip to India and said that he was surprised to see his big posters on the way!

He utilised this opportunity to visit the ICA-AP regional office in New Delhi and meet the staff, officials at the MoC, and the ICA members in India. During interaction with the staff, he touched upon experiences from his life and pressed upon the need to stay connected with one's roots to be a true cooperator! He shared his views on the people as the centre of cooperative model, youth inclusion and gender equality in cooperatives.



President Guarco met Mr. Abhay Kumar, Joint Secretary, MoC and Dr. K.K. Tripathy, Officer on Special Duty, MoC and offered support from ICA and ICA-AP. A meeting of all ICA members in India with President Guarco was organised at the NCUI headquarters. It gave an opportunity to each member organisation to introduce and showcase their work to the President both in-person and online. Mr. Guarco was happy to see the enthusiasm of the Indian cooperative movement and expressed his satisfaction over the formal recognition of Indian cooperatives with the creation of a new Ministry.

The day ended with an exchange of ideas and synergies for the growth and development of Indian cooperatives.

Obituary



We are saddened by the demise of our former colleague Mr. P. Nair who passed away on 4 September 2021.

Mr. Nair had joined ICA-AP in 1987 as the Communications Officer. He also served as the Secretary to various ICA-AP committees like Human Resources Development, Women, Consumer, University/ Campus Coops, Research, etc. during his tenure until 2007. He was instrumental in organising research conferences and workshops as part of his committee activities.

Our heartfelt condolences to the family and friends of Mr. P. Nair.

Member Updates

National Seminar on Future of Rural Cooperative Banks



The National Federation of State Cooperative Banks (NAFSCOB) organized the National Seminar on “Future of Rural Cooperative Banks” in the Short Term Cooperative Credit Structure (STCCS) in Hotel Courtyard by Marriott, Mumbai International Airport, Mumbai, India on 23 September 2021. The National seminar aimed to facilitate a wide range of consultations on the most crucial issues like

- i. Banking Regulation (Amendment) Act 2020: Issues related to Statutory Provisions applicable to State Cooperative Banks (SCBs) and District Central Cooperative Banks (DCCBs)
- ii. Ministry of Cooperation: Vision and Mission, Objectives & Functions: Where do RCBs stand?
- iii. Delaying: Amalgamation/Merger of DCCBs in SCBs- A 3-decade long directive!
- iv. Constitutional (97th Amendment) Act 2011 Vs Supreme Court Verdict 2021
- v. Policy, Monetary, Regulatory and Supervisory Measures to address issues emerging out of the spread of COVID-19-Impact Assessment
- vi. Issues related to Governance and management in SCBs & DCCBs
- vii. Adoption of Technology

The seminar was attended by Dr. Chandra Pal Singh Yadav, Chairman, KRIBHCO; Mr. Dileep Sanghani, President, NCU; Dr. Chintala Govinda Rajulu, Chairman, National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (NABARD); Dr. Bijender Singh, Ex. MLA & Chairman, NAFED; Dr. Sunil Kumar Singh, MLC & Chairman, Bihar State Cooperative Marketing Union Ltd. (BISCOMAUN); Mr. G. H. Amin, Chairman, Cooperative Bank of India (COBI); Mr. Konduru Ravinder Rao, Chairman, NAFSCOB; Mr. Bhima Subrahmanyam, Managing Director, NAFSCOB; and Dr. Sundeep Kumar Nayak, IAS, Managing Director, National Cooperative Development Corporation (NCDC).

Dr. Rajulu delivered the keynote address and the participants discussed the need

- i. For detailed consultations on the applicability of statutory provisions to SCBs/ DCCBs under the BR Act 2020.
- ii. To make representation to the new Ministry of Cooperation regarding issues related to Rural Cooperative Banks.
- iii. To consider the seriousness/impact of delayering on three-tier Short Term Cooperative Credit Structure (STCCS) and accordingly act further. The participants were against delayering and amalgamation.
- iv. To encourage the adoption of technology to help SCBs/DCCBs/PACS to serve small/marginal farmers to serve better and compete with Commercial Banks and Private Banks.
- v. For revision in National Cooperative Policy – 2002.

The seminar also provided an opportunity to understand the impact of the amendments in the banking-related activities on cooperative principles, identity ethics, values and highlighted the need to assess these and justify the salient features in national policy. The discussions further revolved around the to expedite the amendments in MSCS Act 2002 to impress upon the incorporation of the identified eight areas of the amendment, protect and support the 100-year-old cooperative movement in India, focus on training of cooperative personnel and computerization, and adoption of good governance and best practices for possible replication.

The participants noted that the cooperatives should be developed as a one-stop shop for farmers and should cover the last man in the system for rural credit disbursement.

Cooperative Leaders' National Forum 2021 by NCF, Nepal



To revitalize the cooperative leaders in Nepal, the National Cooperative Federation of Nepal (NCF) conducted a three-day virtual Cooperative Leaders' National Forum 2021 from September 27-29 with the theme "Empowering Leaders for Enlightened Futures".

The forum aimed to explore the latest trends, developments and challenges in cooperative organizations in the new normal, increase leadership knowledge and assess innovative strategies for the development of self and different level cooperatives, learn and implement the hidden possessions of a good leader, identify future directions and strategies to enhance cooperation and leadership across diverse stakeholders, and share experiences and showcase practices in cooperative governance.

It was attended by more than 175 prospective leaders from across the country. The forum also provided an opportunity to share the exclusive experience of leaders through the presentation of papers by national and international resource persons which included

- i. Cooperative's growth on Visionary Leadership by Mr. Balu Iyer, Regional Director, ICA-AP
- ii. Transformational Leadership: A key to success by Mr. Indra Gurung, Master Consciousness Coach, Visionary International Pvt. Ltd.
- iii. Cooperatives: Current Trends Issues and Challenges by Ms. Chitra Kumari Thamsuhang Subba, General Manager, NCF, Nepal
- iv. Traditional Versus High-Performance Leadership by Mr. Mahesh Dahal, Former Ambassador, Embassy of Australia
- v. Cooperative Legislation in Federal Structure by Mr. Man Bahadur Aryal, Joint Secretary, Ministry of Law, Justice, and Parliamentary Affairs
- vi. Cooperative Governance: Heart of members' Satisfaction by Mr. Rameshwor Khanal, Former Secretary, Ministry of Finance

The forum focused on the aspects of great leadership, its importance and ways to be a great leader. It was recommended to adopt the change process in cooperative evolution, demonstrate soft skills, implicit knowledge and positive attitude in the workplace, rule out leadership development crisis, analyze current cooperative trends, choose common interests, develop member and community-centric governance and focus on youth and women.

The New Zealand Cooperative Economy Report



Cooperative businesses in New Zealand are thriving and coping well with the impact of Covid, says Ms. Roz Henry, CEO, Cooperative Business NZ on the launch of the [New Zealand Cooperative Economy Report](#).

The report provides insight into New Zealand's position as one of the most cooperative economies in the world with a high proportion of member-owned businesses, including household names such as Fonterra, Farmlands, Mitre 10, Zespri, Foodstuffs and Southern Cross Health Society.

The report, completed by PwC, shows New Zealand's top 30 cooperatives contributing 13% of New Zealand's GDP by revenue, earning nearly \$42 billion revenue in 2020. It reveals that NZ cooperatives have a staggering 1.5 million members, with the top 30 enabling job opportunities to a significant portion of the workforce with 41,000 employees.

Around 72% of NZ cooperatives are in the agri-food sector and have achieved increased revenues of around 10% since 2015. "These agri-food cooperatives have been performing well with strong growth in revenue and assets, indicating a resistance and strong response to the economic impacts of Covid-19," Ms Henry said. Cooperatives in the insurance, banking and finance sector have also performed strongly with revenue growth of over 40% since 2015.

Ms. Henry notes that 'the past 18 months have shone the light even brighter on how essential these businesses are in keeping New Zealand moving forward. The vast spread of sectors outlined in this report shows how versatile the model is. Not only that, it brings to the forefront that some of New Zealand's most enduring businesses are cooperatives. They are multi-generational, sustainable and community-focussed ensuring profits, and their businesses' positive social and environmental impacts continue to be circled back into New Zealanders' lives.'

The researchers have highlighted the key challenges facing the cooperative sector including raising capital, labour shortages, and reducing emissions to comply with the Climate Change Response Act 2002. Further, the report recognises the opportunity for future businesses to be established using the cooperative model and highlights the role of Cooperative Business NZ in implementing this with various partners.

The full report can be read [here](#).



ICA-EU Updates

Thematic Research: Cooperation for the Transition to a Green Economy

'Cooperation for the transition to a green economy', #coops4dev's latest global research report, co-produced by all ICA global and regional offices in the framework of the ICA-EU Partnership highlights how the cooperative is a model of choice to tackle climate change.

A new thematic research publication was released on 23 September and provides an innovative overview on how cooperatives are acting to protect the environment, as well as mitigate and adapt to the impacts of climate change and environmental degradation.

With a specific focus on how Principle 7 on Concern for Community is put into action, the report covers 8 case studies from all ICA regions and showcases a variety of environmental actions from cooperative enterprises. Examples include the access and management of natural habitats and resources through cooperative approaches, innovative responses to minimise environmental impacts, and programmes and good practices from ICA members. It features cooperatives of varying sizes and areas of activity, specifically in the energy, forestry, housing, transport, and finance sectors. From Asia and Pacific region, case studies on cooperatives from Australia and Thailand have been developed whose work is aligned with UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) vis-a-vis the environment.

The report demonstrates that cooperatives contribute to sustainable practices in a variety of ways. For instance, by organising the provision of ecologically sound services such as renewable energy, or through cooperative education and training on the environment. Overall, the cooperative enterprise model can be a viable alternative to business as usual and is set to become an enterprise model of choice in tackling climate change and environmental degradation.

The publication also focuses on cooperative contributions to the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), including SDG 13 on climate action and SDG 7 on clean and renewable energy. It suggests there is a clear need for meaningful action and places a clear emphasis on the necessity of systemic economic and social change to rise to the climate challenge. This perspective is amplified against a new backdrop of insecurity and urgency since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, alongside the recent assessments of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC).

The report was endorsed by key stakeholders, including high-level representatives from the cooperative movement, civil society, and research bodies of the United Nations. Ilcheong Yi, Senior Research Coordinator of the United Nations Research Institute for Social Development (UNRISD) stated:

"Illustrating how the cooperative movement as a model of ecological equilibrium incorporates the values of cooperation, solidarity, self-management and democracy in planet-centred development approaches, this research contributes to developing holistic policies and institutions to achieve economic, social, and environmental objectives. I recommend it as a must-read for those searching for a realistic means of sustainable development in 2021 and beyond".

The report can be read at the [coops4dev website](https://coops4dev.org/).

Coops4dev Closing Event: Celebrating 5 Years ICA-EU Partnership



On 30 September, #coops4dev celebrated the end of the Partnership with the European Union on international cooperative development. During five and a half years, #coops4dev has contributed to cement the role of the cooperative model as a key international development actor. Over these years, the joint work done by ICA global and regional offices under the ICA-EU Partnership, a solid network of partners and stakeholders from the cooperative movement and the international development field working at global and local levels has been created.

Together with our partners, we have developed many impactful and innovative activities with sound effects on several areas such as research, legislation, policy and partnerships, capacity building and education, and communication and visibility.

To learn more about the #coops4dev activities, read the [storybook](#).



The [closing event](#) gathered the #coops4dev's team including staff members from all ICA regions, who looked back on this journey and presented the main activities developed during the Partnership. They also discussed the future prospects.

The event presented a conversation on the importance of multi-stakeholder partnerships and the impact of the #coops4dev's work on the cooperative movement and its contribution to economic, social, and environmental sustainability and justice, with one eye on the future.

The event was structured into two parts

- An **opening session** focusing on the importance of collaboration and partnerships. The panel of speakers included Mr. Ariel Guarco, President, International Cooperative Alliance; Ms. Marlene Holzner, Head of Unit G2 at the European Commission's Directorate-General International Partnerships (INTPA), European Commission; and the members of the Strategy Unit and Regional Directors of ICA Global and Regional Offices – Mr. Bruno Roelants, Director-General, ICA; Ms. Agnes Mathis, Cooperatives Europe; Mr. Balu Iyer, ICA Asia-Pacific; Mr. Danilo Salerno, Cooperatives of the Americas; and Dr. Chiyoge Buchekabiri Sifa, ICA Africa.

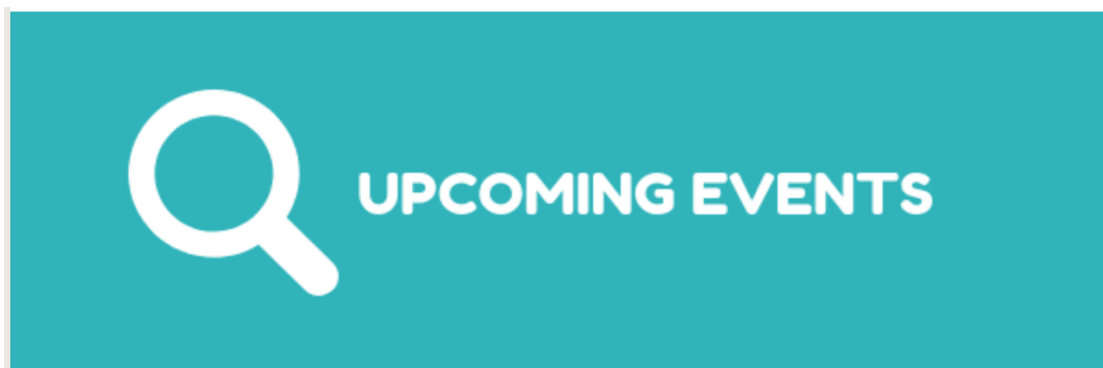
- Three **parallel sessions** on:

- **Research** - In the past six years, ICA and its regional offices undertook several research activities to strengthen the cooperative movement and contribute to a growing body of

knowledge in the field of cooperative development. While four global research reports were completed on legal frameworks for cooperatives, mapping key figures for cooperatives, youth in cooperatives and the recently launched cooperatives and green economy, each ICA region also undertook thematic research studies at the regional level. The session focused on starting a dialogue on how to put this vast knowledge to practice and build upon the established foundations.

- **Capacity building** – The session showcased various efforts and innovations of ICA and its regional offices to build the capacities of the staff, members, and cooperators. The ICA-AP regional office presented its pioneering youth-led initiatives - Coopathon and APCYS and inter-regional capacity building and collaboration between regions through various workshops. Other innovative initiatives like Global Cooperative Entrepreneurs' program, Edu4all, Coopedia, CoopsTV, Project Development Network were also discussed. The audience showed interest in the proliferation of the Cooperative hackathon model worldwide
- **Policy dialogue and partnerships** - The session brought the audience through the journey of #coops4dev policy and programming team exploring why and how it supported the cooperative movement as a key development actor. It focussed on the advocacy & programming work with Partnerships (SDG17) as a cross-cutting theme. A just and decent world of work, addressing inequalities, and sustainable & inclusive value chains were the three focus areas of the presentations which had an actor-based approach. During the session, with the support of concrete examples, the role that the cooperative movement can play as a key actor for Policy Dialogue & Partnerships was highlighted.

The event session recording will be made available on the [closing event website](#).



- Global Workshop on Cooperatives in Educational Institutions by ICA-AP Committee on Cooperatives in Educational Institutions (Online) – 28 November 2021
- 11th Asia-Pacific Regional Women's Forum by ICA-AP Committee on Women (Hybrid) – 29 November 2021 (TBC)
- ICA-AP Regional Committees and Board Meeting, Seoul, Korea – 29 November 2021
- ICA-AP Regional Assembly and Board Elections, Seoul, Korea – 30 November 2021
- ICA 33rd World Cooperative Congress, Seoul, Korea – 1 to 3 December 2021