

Dear Members,

As we end a year and look forward to a new one, we take this opportunity to reflect on the events and achievements that have defined the work of the ICA Asia-Pacific office. 2023 has been marked by dynamic regional events, recognition of outstanding work, advances in governance and membership, cross-committee events and activities, and renewed projects and partnerships.

The [16th Regional Assembly](#), along with the [11th Cooperative Forum](#) and related events held in Manila in November showcased the human-centric model of cooperatives. The theme, "Cooperatives: Our Common Agenda," resonated throughout the events, emphasizing the shared commitment to building a better world through collaboration and cooperation. The [fourth edition of the Asia-Pacific Cooperative Youth Summit \(APCYS\)](#) in Sabah, Malaysia centered around "Cooperation for Sustainable Lifestyles," and served as a catalyst for youth engagement, offering a space to explore inspiring sustainable practices, partake in cooperative activities, and celebrate the diverse spirit of youth cooperativism.



16th Regional Assembly



APCYS 4.0

The [first ICA Asia Pacific Cooperative Excellence Awards](#) celebrated the Uralungal Labour Contract Co-operative Society (ULCCS) Ltd., as an Enterprising Cooperative. A 99-year-old workers' cooperative and a renowned diversified primary cooperative with an emphasis on infrastructure development, ULCCS stands as a global model for the labor cooperative movement. The Inspirational Leader Award was conferred upon Datuk Seri Dr. Abdul Fattah Abdullah, President of the Malaysian National Cooperative Movement (ANGKASA), acknowledging his 25-year advocacy for cooperative development and youth progress in Malaysia. His commitment to community engagement and representation in key councils underscored his efforts to lead the cooperative movement's contribution to sustainable poverty eradication. The [Dr. Mauritz Bonow Young Researcher Awards](#) recognized the contributions of Dr. Jiyun Jeon and Ms. Kristine Atendido, emphasizing the importance of academic research in advancing cooperative ideals. The 2023 COOP Pitch winners—Muda Mudi Coop (Indonesia), Likas Vocational College (Malaysia), and Lamac Multi-Purpose Cooperative (Philippines)—showcased innovative approaches, affirming the cooperative movement's commitment to sustainable alternatives and environmental responsibility.



Board Meeting in Malaysia



Board Meeting in the Philippines

The regional board convened thrice during the year in Kathmandu, Nepal; Genting Highlands, Malaysia; and Manila, Philippines. The discussions revolved around issues related to membership, subscription, activities, and budget. Notably, 38% of ICA-AP Regional Board members are women, embodying diversity that brings new perspectives and enriches discussions, aligning with cooperative values of equality and cooperation. Adding to our cooperative family, were new members – the Nepal Federation of Savings and Credit Cooperative Unions Ltd. (NEFSCUN) from Nepal, ESAF Swasraya Multi-State Agro Co-operative Society Ltd (ESMACO) from India, and One Cooperative Bank and ACDI Multipurpose Cooperative from the Philippines. The total membership now stands at 109 members representing 28 countries.

Throughout the year, the cooperative community in the region celebrated significant global events such as International Women’s Day, International Youth Day, and the International Day of Cooperatives. These celebrations highlighted the role of cooperatives as partners for sustainable development and emphasized the importance of digital inclusion, youth engagement and gender equality. The [25th anniversary](#) of the ICA Asia and Pacific Committee on Women was marked with an event in Tokyo, Japan, reflecting on its substantial impact in promoting gender inclusion and equality.



25th Anniversary Celebration of ICA-AP Committee on Women



Pilot ToT on Climate Change and Action

Projects and training initiatives, both online and physical, continued to strengthen cooperative management and development. The ICA MAFF's training course, focusing on "Strengthening Management and Development of Agricultural Cooperatives and Farmers’ Organizations in Asia and Pacific," addressed the needs of women, youth, leaders, and the strengthening of value chains. The Women Committee instituted a [Training of Trainers program](#) on “Climate Change and Action in Cooperatives”, launched a training manual in partnership with the National Federation of Cooperatives (NATCCO, Philippines) and conducted a pilot with 12 trainees in Vietnam. The office actively participated in projects promoting sustainable coffee value chains and contributed to the proposal development for the EU project - People-centred businesses for sustainable, democratic, and inclusive development. In the policy arena, the focus was on emphasizing the importance of fair and decent work in the emerging gig economy. The cooperative voice was advocated within the B20 Task Force on financial inclusion and value chain, emphasizing cooperatives' people-centered model.

Webinars and seminars organized across committees addressed topical issues, fostering cross-sector collaboration and knowledge exchange. The Malaysia Business Office organized the "[Women in Cooperatives: Embrace Equity](#)" seminar, deliberating socio-economic, cultural, and governance barriers against women’s progress in cooperatives. The Youth Committee focused on "[Financial Literacy for Youth in Cooperatives](#)," empowering youth in budgeting, investing, accounting, and financial reporting. The Consumer Committee organized an [in-person workshop for leaders](#) with iCOOP in Korea, and the Trade and Business Committee, ASEAN Cooperative Organization (ACO), and ANGKASA organized a [C2C conference](#) to address global challenges related to Sustainable Development Goals 13 and 17. The 17th ICA Asia-Pacific Research Committee organized its Research Conference in Manila under the theme "Cooperatives Advancing Social Responsibility for the 2030 Agenda."



Trade and Business C-2-C Conference



Workshop for Consumer Coop Leaders

Effective communication was upheld through the release of the 2022 Annual Activities Report, COOP Dialogues and monthly newsletters. These publications showcased the cooperative contributions to sustainable development, the platforms used to engage with members, avenues to broaden reach, and new partnerships to expand the scope of our work. The regional office forged collaborations with a myriad of partners, including the India Foundation, ASEAN Foundation, Institute of Rural Management, Anand, Platform Cooperatives Consortium, It for Change and many more. These partnerships strengthened our cooperative network, fostering collaborative efforts towards shared goals. We are grateful for the support received from ANGKASA (Malaysia), Japanese Consumer Cooperative Union (JCCU, Japan), All China Federation of Supply and Marketing Cooperatives (ACFSMC, China), Krishak Bharti Cooperative Ltd. (KRIBHCO, India) and other members in the region.

This year has been a testament to the enduring strength of the cooperative movement in the Asia-Pacific region. The collaborative spirit, innovative projects, and commitment to sustainable development have not only defined our past year but have set a promising course for the future. The diverse array of accomplishments serves as a testament to the resilience and transformative power inherent in cooperative collaboration. As we turn the page to a new year, guided by our principles and shared values, the cooperative community stands poised to continue its transformative role in building a more sustainable, inclusive, and cooperative world.

We look forward to your continued support in 2024!



Dr. Chandrapal Singh Yadav
President



Balasubramanian Iyer
Regional Director