

JORDAN DECLARATION

11th Asia Pacific Cooperative Ministers' Conference

"Partnerships between Governments and Cooperatives for Resilience, Sustainable Development and Inclusive Growth in Asia Pacific, Middle East and North Africa (MENA) Region"

Crowne Plaza, Dead Sea, Jordan
28-30 April 2024

The Asia Pacific Cooperative Ministers' Conference,

Having been convened at the Dead Sea area of Jordan by the ICA Asia and Pacific, the regional branch office of the International Cooperative Alliance, and the Jordan Cooperative Corporation on 28 and 29 April 2024, and

Extending its participation for the first time to the governments of countries in Middle East and North Africa;

Recognizing, the International Statement on the Cooperative Identity (the Statement) of which the International Cooperative Alliance (ICA) is the global custodian, reflects the centrality of people in the cooperative enterprise form, and through the seventh cooperative principle on 'Concern for Community', the aspect of 'sustainable development of communities through policies approved by members'.

Noting, the Statement confers on the ICA and its member organizations, as well as the wider cooperative movement worldwide, the responsibility of building meaningful partnerships and alliances with all stakeholders, particularly the Governments, in accelerating the attainment of the UN Sustainable Development Goals by 2030.

Considering, cooperatives have been recognized as key partners in delivering social justice, reducing economic and social inequalities and promoting equitable enterprises that build positive peace and inclusive development,

Recalling, the recognition of cooperatives as vehicles for transforming the world, and in advancing Sustainable Development through the UN Agenda 2030, the 2015 Addis Ababa Action Agenda on Financing for Development, as well as the 2022 ILO Resolution on Decent Work and Social and Solidarity Economy and the 2023 UN General Assembly Resolution on the Social and Solidarity Economy, and

Having acknowledged that, cooperatives worldwide comprise 3 million enterprises and 1 billion members, and generate more than 280 million direct and indirect work opportunities, and

Recognizing the significant contributions of cooperatives in the Asia Pacific region to economic growth, job creation, poverty alleviation, social inclusion, and environmental sustainability and acknowledge the unique democratic and people-centered nature of cooperatives, and their ability to empower individuals, communities, and marginalized groups;

Affirming that the Asia-Pacific Cooperative Ministers' Conference established in 1990, as a quadrennial conferencing instrument provides an effective platform for cooperatives and governments to discuss current and emerging issues and set a common agenda towards the establishment of new forms of cooperation between them,

Reaffirming the commitment to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly in relation to ending poverty (SDG 1), promoting gender equality (SDG 5), fostering decent work and economic growth (SDG 8), and combating climate change (SDG 13), and

Appreciating the resilience and adaptability evidenced by cooperatives during times of crises, such as economic downturns, multi-dimensional conflicts, natural disasters, and public health emergencies, by taking all measures required to supporting their members and communities, and

Noting with great concern that the overall progress towards attaining the UN Sustainable Development Goals has not been on track, and

Noting further, the Asia Pacific region is home to more than 50% of young persons, and

Committing to accelerating towards the UN-SDGs with the help of meaningful and result-oriented partnerships between cooperatives, government and other relevant stakeholders, with the aim to achieving resilience and inclusive growth,

Committing further, to advancing and promoting the idea and practice of cooperation, as a virtue for peace-building, and that cooperation has no geographical and political borders;

adopts this twenty ninth day of April of the year two thousand twenty four, the following declaration which may be cited as the ICA-AP Declaration for Partnerships for Sustainable Development.

The Ministers and Heads of Delegations responsible for cooperatives, gathered in Dead Sea, Jordan from April 28 to 29, 2024, for the 11th Asia Pacific Cooperative Ministers' Conference (APCMC), do hereby declare our intention to:

Foster meaningful and strategic dialogue between governmental bodies and cooperatives, as complementary equals, to understand mutual goals, challenges, and opportunities for collaboration, and to create an enabling environment for cooperative development;

Emphasize the critical role of cooperatives, rooted in and owned by communities, in promoting inclusive development and ensuring that no one is left behind in our pursuit of sustainability, and in addressing the needs of marginalized and vulnerable groups;

Recognize the importance of bringing inclusivity and diversity for cooperative development and governance through equal participation and inclusion of women, youth, and indigenous communities, with accountability through regular reporting on participation in decision-making roles;

Review and revise, where necessary, cooperative policies and legal frameworks at the national and international level, to advance strategic objectives to build a better world, such as gender-equality, education, equitable trade and peaceful communities, and further, strengthen partnerships between cooperatives and governments, and facilitate the inclusion of cooperatives into national development plans, recognizing cooperatives as key partners in achieving sustainable and inclusive growth;

Promote partnership and align efforts towards achieving UN SDGs and in so far as possible, address collectively, goals concerning eradicating poverty, meeting gender equality, advancing decent work and productive employment, acting on environmental protection and climate change, by harnessing and maximizing the potential of cooperatives and the wider Social and Solidarity Economy;

Promote actively, the cooperative-difference and the advantages of the cooperative enterprise form, its universal values and principles to ensure its value in addressing global challenges and fostering resilient, sustainable and inclusive communities is recognised more widely;

Accelerate steps for governments and cooperatives to deepen their partnership, while also maintaining cooperative autonomy and independence, in pursuit of inclusive sustainable development through capacity-building, community involvement, sharing of best practices, knowledge-sharing, access to finance, and the promotion of cooperative principles and values;

Promote cooperative culture, particularly through digitalization, digitization, and innovation, especially for communications, education, and training, with the aim to foster the 5th Cooperative Principle on Education, Training and Information, and in the context of the UN International Year of Cooperatives 2025, generate awareness among youth, members of the general public and young opinion leaders on the benefits of cooperation;

Commit to striving towards a safe environment in local and global communities by upholding peace and humanity while ensuring dignity and freedom for all, and call for an immediate ceasefire to stop the barbaric war happening in Gaza, and stand by the cooperative societies in Palestine, especially in Gaza;

Encourage regional and international cooperation among governments, cooperatives, and other stakeholders to share best practices, exchange knowledge, and foster an enabling environment for cooperative resilience and growth across the Asia Pacific region, with a redoubled effort to ensure that the strengthening of the cooperative sector in the Small Island States and land-locked countries is supported; and

Honor the spirit and substance of the rich contributions and cooperation at this conference by holding ourselves accountable to deliver and track progress arising both on an annual level through ICA-AP Board meetings and through reporting at the next Asia Pacific Cooperative Ministers' Conference or any other similar ICA conference organized earlier, while also recognising that the UN International Year of Cooperatives in 2025 provides a special opportunity to make meaningful progress on our shared ambitions.

Thus, in consideration of the foregoing declaration, we call upon all stakeholders, including governments, cooperative organizations, civil society, non-government organizations, and the diverse private sector, to cooperate with the APCMC in this endeavor, and work collaboratively towards a more resilient, sustainable, and inclusive future for the Asia Pacific, Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region.

Adopted in Dead Sea, Jordan, on April 29, 2024

Members of the Drafting Committee

Mr. Michael Pilbrow, Special Adviser, Business Council for Cooperatives and Mutuals, Australia; Dr. (Ms.) Nadia Alkhassawneh, Director of Public Relations, Jordan Cooperative Consortium; Mr. Santosh Kumar, Director of Legislation, International Cooperative Alliance; and Atty. Dulce Bustamante, Chairperson, ICA-AP Committee on Youth Cooperation.