

ICA-AP Newsletter

July 2025

News from members, updates on ICA-AP and ICA-EU program activities, and more!

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17th ICA-AP Regional Assembly

Registrations are open!



Registrations for the 17th ICA-AP Regional Assembly are open now. The Assembly and related events will take place from 24 to 28 November 2025 at the Cinnamon Lakeside Hotel in Colombo, Sri Lanka. The week will feature the 12th Asia-Pacific Cooperative Forum, along with a series of thematic seminars and workshops led by ICA-AP committees, and the elections of the new Regional Board. Centered around the theme of the United Nations International Year of Cooperatives 2025 (IYC 2025), “Cooperatives Build a Better World,” the events will also serve as the regional culmination of the IYC celebrations.

We are thankful to our hosts, the National Council of Cooperatives in Sri Lanka (NCCSL), along with the Department of Cooperative Development (DCD), SANASA Federation Limited (SANASA), and Matara District Cooperative Hospital Society Ltd. (MDCHS).

To know more details and register, visit our official website <https://icaap.coop/RA2025/>.

Spotlight on Colombo: Promotions Begin for ICA-AP Regional Assembly 2025



Preparations are in full swing for the 17th ICA-AP Regional Assembly, and the momentum has begun to build online. The official social media campaign is now live across ICA-AP’s channels, giving audiences an exciting preview of what lies ahead this November in Colombo, Sri Lanka.

The promotional rollout has so far introduced the host country, Sri Lanka, along with key partners who are helping bring this important gathering to life. We have also begun

highlighting what participants can expect during the five-day event: from thematic discussions and plenary sessions to field visits that will showcase the vibrancy and diversity of Sri Lanka's cooperative sector.

The campaign carries the hashtags **#ICAAPRA2025** and **#AyuBowwanCoops**, inviting members, partners and friends of the cooperative movement to follow the journey and join the conversation in the lead-up to the event. As always, ICA-AP's digital platforms will serve as the go-to space for updates, glimpses behind the scenes, and key announcements.

Stay connected with us at: [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#), [LinkedIn](#), [X](#), & [Bluesky](#)

Watch video [here](#)

ICA-AP UPDATES

Launch of the IYC 2025 website for Asia-Pacific



As celebrations around the International Year of Cooperatives 2025 gather pace, ICA-Asia and Pacific has launched a dedicated page to showcase the region's engagement with the year. Available at <https://icaap.coop/IYC2025>, the page brings together a wide range of updates, messages, and resources tailored to the Asia and Pacific context.

The regional page outlines how cooperatives across the region are responding to the call of "Cooperatives Build a Better World." From national-level campaigns and sectoral initiatives to member-led stories of impact, the platform offers a growing collection of content that reflects the diversity and strength of the movement.

Alongside these updates, the page hosts a set of key messages, a roadmap for regional action, and a suite of visibility materials designed to support local outreach efforts. As the year progresses, it will continue to evolve—documenting the region's contributions to this global moment for cooperatives.

You can explore the page and follow along [here](#).

Draft Changes to the Statement on the Cooperative Identity Now Open for Feedback



As part of the ongoing consultation on the Statement on the Cooperative Identity, the Cooperative Identity Advisory Group (CIAG) has released proposed draft changes to the Statement.

The Statement, which sets out the definition, values, and principles of cooperatives, was last revised in 1995. The current draft seeks to ensure its continued relevance and responsiveness to today's realities, while safeguarding the core values that define the global cooperative movement.

Discussion Draft 1, along with an accompanying commentary, was shared ahead of the 2024 ICA General Assembly in New Delhi. It generated meaningful discussions and highlighted the importance of thoughtful reflection and inclusive dialogue. In response to the feedback received, Discussion Draft 2 has been released, addressing key concerns raised in New Delhi and accompanied by a new set of guiding questions.

Both the draft and supporting materials are now available on the ICA's Cooperative Identity website. Cooperators and stakeholders are invited to review the draft and provide feedback by October 31, 2025.

More details can be found [here](#).

Reflecting on a Year of Cooperative Action: Highlights from the ICA-AP President's Report



Presentation Flow:

- ICA-AP Activities & Messages
- Participation in Various ICA Meetings
- Other Meetings & Messages



At the ICA-AP Regional Board Meeting held in China this July, Dr. Chandra Pal Singh Yadav, President of ICA-Asia and Pacific, presented a comprehensive overview of the region's activities in 2025: a year marked by collective energy, regional collaboration, and renewed commitment to the cooperative identity.

With the International Year of Cooperatives 2025 as the central theme, Dr. Yadav's report traced key engagements throughout the year. From launching the IYC celebrations for Asia-Pacific and Japan in February, to delivering messages that encouraged proactive participation from all 110 ICA-AP members across 29 countries, the focus remained on recognising cooperatives as vehicles for inclusive and sustainable growth.

The President also highlighted key strategic developments, including the signing of an MoU with Heifer International in Asia to strengthen agricultural cooperatives and build climate-resilient food systems. Meetings with national federations, committee office bearers, and ICA governance bodies underscored the region's active role in shaping global cooperative discourse.

Messages shared on CoopsDay, and other occasions reiterated the importance of solidarity, equity, and local action. From engaging in the Festival of Cooperatives in Manchester to addressing cooperative conferences and dialogues in Nepal, India, and ASEAN, ICA-AP's leadership has remained visible and connected across platforms.

Dr. Yadav's report reflects a region in motion, one that is celebrating its identity, deepening partnerships, and shaping the global cooperative narrative in a landmark year for the movement.

Here's the full presentation.

ICA-AP Youth Members to Join Asia-Pacific Regional Dialogue at IFWY 2025



The International Forum “We, the Youth” (IFWY) – Asia-Pacific Regional Youth Dialogue is set to take place on 13 August 2025 at the Century Park Hotel in Bangkok, Thailand.

A youth-led global initiative, IFWY is co-organized by the United Nations Research Institute for Social Development (UNRISD) and Munhwa Broadcasting Corporation (MBC), with support from the Ministry of Education of the Republic of Korea. The Asia-Pacific Dialogue is being hosted by the Cooperative League of Thailand (CLT).

This regional gathering brings together 50 young changemakers from across the Asia-Pacific, selected from over 300 applicants. Participants represent a diverse set of countries including Afghanistan, Australia, Bhutan, China, Fiji, Iran, Jordan, Kyrgyzstan, Myanmar, Nepal, the Philippines, and Vietnam.

We are proud to share that 12 youth leaders from the ICA-AP Committee on Youth Cooperation (ICYC) have been selected to take part in this important platform. Their presence is a testament to the Committee’s continued efforts to amplify youth voices and promote youth-led cooperative development in the region.

Over the course of the Dialogue, participants will engage in interactive discussions, workshops, and peer-learning exchanges designed to foster collaboration and inspire action toward a more inclusive and sustainable future.

Stay tuned as we follow the journey of these inspiring young leaders from ICA-AP and beyond.

ICA-AP Regional Board Meeting in Guangzhou, China



The ICA Asia and Pacific (ICA-AP) Board convened in Guangzhou, China, from 22 to 25 July 2025 for its Regional Board Meeting, hosted by the All-China Federation of Supply and Marketing Cooperatives (ACFSMC). The meeting brought together Board Members and representatives from across the region, with participants attending in person from India, China, Malaysia, Japan, South Korea, Nepal, the Philippines, and Sri Lanka, while colleagues from Australia and Iran joined the proceedings online.

The four-day programme began with arrivals and registration on 22 July, followed by the official Opening Ceremony on 23 July. The ceremony featured addresses by key dignitaries including Dr. Chandra Pal Singh Yadav, President of ICA-AP, Mr. Kang Ho-dong, President of ICAO and NACF, and Mr. Adili Wubuli, President of the Board of Supervisors, ACFSMC. The session concluded with a group photo to mark the occasion.

Members deliberated on a wide range of issues, including the progress of the International Year of Cooperatives 2025, preparations for the ICA-AP Regional Assembly and elections, recent activities and reports, and other key administrative matters. A strategy discussion and formal Board Meeting were held at the Shamian Room, fostering in-depth engagement among members.

Beyond the formal sessions, the programme featured a cooperative visit, a city tour, and a night cruise on the Zhujiang River, providing members with opportunities to explore Guangzhou's cooperative landscape and cultural richness. Meals and receptions at the River Café and Silk Road Grill allowed for informal networking and strengthened regional ties.

The meeting served as a timely platform for dialogue, planning, and collaboration, reinforcing ICA-AP's commitment to cooperative growth and regional solidarity.

Regional Workshop on Sustainable Development of Cooperatives



The opening ceremony of the regional workshop was held on July 23, 2025, at the White Swan Hotel, Guangzhou, China. It was graced by distinguished leaders including Mr. Adili Wubuli, Vice President, ACFSMC; Ms. Guo Yile, Deputy Secretary-General, Guangdong Provincial Government; Mr. Kang Ho-dong, President, ICAO and NACF; and Dr. Chandrapal Singh Yadav, President, ICA-AP.

Ms. Guo Yile highlighted the potential of the Belt and Road Initiative to foster multilateral cooperation. She emphasized opportunities to strengthen agricultural supply chains, boost trade, and promote cross-border collaboration.

Dr. Chandrapal Singh Yadav noted the significance of 2025 as the UN-designated International Year of Cooperatives, celebrated under the theme *“Cooperatives Build a Better World.”* He stressed that cooperatives are vital in tackling global crises, from climate change to inequality, and offer inclusive, democratic, and sustainable solutions. To remain impactful, he urged cooperatives to embrace innovation, gender equity, youth leadership, good governance, and cross-sector collaboration.

Mr. Kang Ho-dong, in his dual role as President of ICAO and NACF, underscored shared challenges such as climate change, food security, and rural depopulation. He called for transformative approaches in agriculture, including smart technologies, improved distribution, and support for young farmers.

Mr. Adili Wubuli in his speech emphasized the vital role of sustainable development in addressing global ecological, resource, and equity challenges. Since the adoption of the UN 2030 Agenda with 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), sustainable development has become central to global policymaking and economic practices. He said the Workshop aims to equip cooperatives to contribute to a more just and inclusive global economy and offered five key recommendations - Innovate governance models to ensure sound, inclusive, and

democratic management; Promote digital transformation using technologies like AI, big data, and cloud computing; Advance cooperative branding for greater recognition and market strength; Strengthen cooperative education and training through shared resources and experience; and Deepen inter-cooperative cooperation, especially through ICA-AP mechanisms like the Trade and Business Committee.

The regional workshop on sustainable development of cooperatives brought together thirty-five cooperative representatives from ten countries, including the Philippines, Sri Lanka, Indonesia, Nepal, Bangladesh, Malaysia, Vietnam, and India. The workshop provided a dynamic platform for participants to engage in substantive discussions and knowledge exchange on strategies to enhance the resilience and sustainability of cooperative enterprises.

The program combined lectures, roundtable discussions, and field visits, allowing participants to reflect on current trends, identify emerging challenges and opportunities, and explore actionable solutions for sustainable cooperative development. Through these sessions, the workshop encouraged reflection on how cooperatives can adapt and thrive in the face of global economic uncertainties, environmental challenges, and technological disruptions.

The initiative aligns with the All-China Federation of Supply and Marketing Cooperatives' (ACFSMC) commitment to promoting cooperatives as people-centred enterprises, grounded in member-focused governance, democratic participation, and sustainability. By bringing together diverse perspectives from across the region, the workshop created a strategic space for member organizations to engage in forward-looking conversations on building stronger, more inclusive, and future-ready cooperatives.

Mr. Ang Hin Kee from the Singapore National Co-operative Federation (SNCF), shared the Singaporean cooperative movement's approach to sustainable development. He emphasized the importance of adopting a growth mindset, where both scale and proximity are seen as strengths. He framed this through the principles of "Big is effective," referring to the impact that scale can bring, and "Small is beautiful," highlighting the importance of agility, personal connection, and community engagement.

Recognizing the transformative potential of cooperatives, the Government of Singapore has partnered with SNCF to launch a ten-year Transformation Plan aimed at strengthening the sector. This comprehensive initiative covers key areas such as talent development and leadership, governance and stewardship, operational excellence and scaling up, and community outreach and social impact.

The Federation of Peoples' Sustainable Development Cooperative (FPSDC) envisions a just, equitable, and sustainable society and advocates for a holistic development approach grounded in the principles of People, Planet, Prosperity, and Peace. Recognizing the persistent challenges faced by grassroots enterprises: such as limited access to finance and markets, high production costs, and insufficient technical assistance, FPSDC has adopted the GRIT strategy. This approach emphasizes the Greater good for all, Resource sustainability, Innovative and quality products and services, and the strategic use of Technology tools to empower cooperative enterprises.

A cornerstone of FPSDC's work is its Farm-to-Fork approach, which blends development and business perspectives. This model encompasses the consolidation of products from member cooperatives, processing raw materials into value-added goods, providing access to finance, supporting marketing and promotion, and ensuring efficient distribution through kiosks, supermarkets, and an online webshop. Additionally, FPSDC offers development support through training and incubation, while addressing consumer needs and market linkages. Complementing this value chain model are key programs such as Y-LEAD (Youth Leading in Enterprise and Agriculture Development), HIVE (Handholding Viable Enterprises), and HORECA (linking cooperatives with hotels, restaurants, and cafés), all of which aim to deepen cooperative

The 832 Platform, launched by ACFSMC in 2020, is a pioneering e-commerce initiative connecting agricultural cooperatives from 832 formerly poverty-stricken counties in China to large-scale institutional buyers and consumers. Operated by China CO-OP E-Commerce Co., Ltd., it has become a key driver of rural revitalization and cooperative sustainability. The platform helps break geographic barriers, eliminate intermediaries, and improve income for cooperatives by offering direct market access. With over 680,000 procurement units and 2 million consumers, the B2B-focused model ensures quality control, traceability, and streamlined logistics through a network of 23 warehouses and 4 central hubs, reducing logistics costs by 20%.

Branding initiatives like "One County, One Product" have elevated local goods such as Fu Rice and Fu Tea into national brands, significantly boosting household incomes. The platform also supports capacity-building through 1,000+ training sessions and Industrial Demonstration County Projects to standardize and scale rural production. The 832 Platform showcases how digital innovation can transform cooperatives into modern, resilient enterprises. It serves as a powerful model for integrating cooperatives into national development strategies and global markets.

ANGKASA presented Malaysia's experience in leveraging innovation as a strategic pathway for cooperative growth and sustainability. The presentation highlighted the transformative role of innovation in enabling cooperatives to adapt to digital shifts, meet evolving market demands, and contribute meaningfully to national development goals. Malaysia's cooperative sector, with over 16,000 cooperatives serving 7.2 million members and generating significant economic value, is supported by a robust institutional framework, including the Ministry of Entrepreneur and Cooperatives Development, the Malaysia Cooperative Societies Commission (SKM), ANGKASA (apex body), and the Co-operative Institute of Malaysia.

The Cooperative Policy is guided by several strategic frameworks such as DIGIKOP 2030, Malaysian Cooperative Policy 2030 (DKM 2030), PESAN50, and the ASEAN Digital Masterplan 2025, all of which emphasize innovation, digital transformation, and sustainability. Innovation is key to transforming Malaysian cooperatives into modern, resilient, and inclusive enterprises, fully aligned with the Sustainable Development Goals and Malaysia's national vision under the Malaysia MADANI framework.

As part of the study tour in Guangzhou, visits were made to three cooperative-linked enterprises showcasing the diversity and innovation within the region's cooperative ecosystem.

Baoshengyuan Coop Shareholding Company, established in 1924 and affiliated with the Guangzhou Supply and Marketing Cooperative Federation, is a heritage brand specializing in bee products such as royal jelly, propolis, bee pollen, and honey. The company emphasizes health and wellness through its product range derived from Lingnan's floral sources. Guangdong New Supply and Marketing Tianrun Grain and Oil Group Co., Ltd., a state-owned enterprise under the Guangdong Supply and Marketing Cooperative, plays a vital role in food security. With assets exceeding 4.2 billion yuan, the enterprise has earned national recognition as a leading agricultural and high-tech company, contributing to grain and oil development in the region. Guangzhou Antique City, jointly established by the Guangzhou Supply and Marketing Cooperative Federation and the Liwan District Government, is a premier cultural and artistic marketplace located in historic Xiguan. It brings together over 220 antique dealers and serves as a major hub for art trade, collection, and auction, with one of the highest transaction volumes in the sector.

These visits reflected the dynamic and diversified contributions of cooperatives in promoting local heritage, food security, and economic innovation.

Strengthening Cooperative Finance through Peer Learning |

ICA-AP Committee on Credit and Banking leads international learning visit to India under IYC 2025



As part of the International Year of Cooperatives 2025 celebrations, the ICA-AP Committee on Credit and Banking organised a multi-day Cooperative Learning Visit to Indian Credit and Banking Cooperatives from 21st to 24th July 2025. The programme was jointly hosted by the National Federation of State Cooperative Agriculture and Rural Development Banks (NAFCARD) and the International Cooperative Alliance Asia and Pacific (ICA-AP) and brought together a diverse group of cooperative banking leaders from Jordan, Palestine, Sri Lanka, Indonesia, and Nepal.

The learning visit was designed to provide delegates with immersive exposure to India's cooperative finance ecosystem through interactions with national apex bodies, cooperative banks, and sector leaders. The initiative offered a platform to reflect on shared challenges, exchange ideas, and explore practical models for advancing cooperative credit and financial inclusion across the Asia-Pacific region.

Day One: Orientation and National-Level Engagement in New Delhi

The visit commenced at the International Cooperative Alliance Asia and Pacific (ICA-AP) office in New Delhi, where delegates were warmly received by Mr. Kulbhushan Kukreja, Director of Administration and Finance. A welcome message on behalf of Mr. Balu Iyer, Regional Director of ICA-AP, was delivered by Ms. Simren Singh, highlighting the significance of peer learning and cross-country engagement during the International Year of Cooperatives.

The orientation session at ICA-AP offered a broad regional overview, introducing participants to the Alliance's work across policy, research, training, youth engagement, gender equity, and cooperative development in the Asia-Pacific. Delegates also explored the diversity of cooperative models across countries and discussed emerging challenges and opportunities in cooperative finance.

Following this, the delegation visited the National Cooperative Development Corporation (NCDC), a statutory body under the Ministry of Cooperation, Government of India. NCDC officials presented the organisation's strategic role in financing cooperative enterprises across sectors, with a focus on agriculture, marketing, and processing. Delegates engaged in dialogue on structured credit, project financing, creditworthiness evaluation, and state-level coordination mechanisms for cooperative development.

The next stop was the National Cooperative Union of India (NCUI), the apex organisation for cooperative education and training in India. The visit included discussions on institutional capacity-building, member awareness, and leadership development within the cooperative movement. Delegates learned about NCUI's national network of training centres and its efforts to mainstream cooperative values among youth and future leaders.

As part of the NCUI visit, delegates also toured the branch of The Delhi State Cooperative Bank Ltd. located on the premises. This interaction provided a practical look into the functioning of an urban cooperative bank. Delegates observed retail banking operations and interacted with the branch team to understand how cooperative banks are adapting to new-age financial technologies and customer expectations while maintaining their member-centric approach.

The day concluded with a visit to the National Federation of Urban Cooperative Banks and Credit Societies Ltd. (NAFCUB). Here, participants explored the policy landscape for urban cooperative banks in India and engaged in discussions on regulatory reforms, digitisation efforts, and the evolving role of urban cooperatives in promoting financial inclusion in cities and semi-urban areas.

Day Two: Field Exposure to Rural Credit Institutions in Gujarat

On the second day, the delegation travelled to Ahmedabad, Gujarat, to engage with the Gujarat State Cooperative Agriculture and Rural Development Bank (GSCARDB). Sessions focused on understanding the operational frameworks of the Short-Term Cooperative Credit Structure (STCCS) and the Long-Term Cooperative Credit Structure (LTCCS), two foundational pillars of India's rural cooperative finance system.

GSCARDB shared its experience in expanding service delivery beyond traditional agriculture lending, including door-to-door banking, mobile access, and the adoption of digital platforms. The visit highlighted how rural cooperative banks are modernising their operations to better serve farmers and rural communities while remaining competitive against commercial banks. A tree plantation activity was organised at the bank's premises, symbolising the cooperative sector's environmental consciousness. The group also visited the Fish Gallery at Science City Ahmedabad, which highlighted the integration of science education with public engagement, providing a refreshing pause in the learning itinerary.

Day Three: Learning from the Amul Model in Anand

The final day of the programme took delegates to Anand, home of Amul, India's iconic dairy cooperative. The visit included a guided tour of the Amul dairy plant and chocolate factory, showcasing how a cooperative enterprise can scale industrial production, ensure quality, and maintain member ownership.

Discussions at Amul focused on its federated structure, democratic decision-making, and role in creating sustainable rural livelihoods. Delegates also explored Amul's innovative use of the Banking Correspondent model, through which dairy cooperatives help extend essential banking services to remote areas. This model highlighted the potential of integrating financial inclusion within cooperative supply chains and service networks .

Reflections and Way Forward

The Cooperative Learning Visit offered rich insights into how Indian cooperatives are institutionalising innovation, expanding financial access, and building resilient, member-owned financial systems. The diversity of models, from apex institutions in New Delhi to grassroots operations in Gujarat, offered a comprehensive view of the strengths and challenges of cooperative finance in practice.

As a flagship activity of the ICA-AP Committee on Credit and Banking under the International Year of Cooperatives 2025, the visit underscored the value of peer learning and cross-border collaboration. The Committee extends its sincere thanks to NAFCARD, ICA-AP, and all partner institutions for their support and hospitality. The experiences and networks built through this initiative are expected to inform future reforms, pilot programmes, and collaborative research across the region.

Women Cooperators Lead Climate Action Dialogue in Indonesia



The ICA-Asia and Pacific Women's Committee successfully conducted its second Training of Trainers (ToT) on Climate Change and Action for Women Cooperators from 7 to 10 July 2025 in Pontianak, West Kalimantan, Indonesia. Organised in collaboration with the INKUR Federation and the National Confederation of Cooperatives (NATCCO), Philippines, the training focused on building women's leadership capacity in addressing the impacts of climate change through cooperative action.

Indonesia, as the host country, offered a compelling context for the training. With its forests significantly affected by deforestation linked to palm oil production, and communities facing rising temperatures, erratic rainfall, flash floods, and other climate-related disruptions, the urgency for action was evident. The opening ceremony featured remarks from Mr. Mikael, Chairman of INKUR Federation, Mr. Balasubramanian Iyer, Regional Director of ICA-AP, and Ms. Chitose Arai, Chairperson of the Women's Committee, who joined the proceedings via an online message.

The sessions were led by two experienced trainers from NATCCO—Ms. Daisybelle Cabal, former Chief Operating Officer, and Ms. Lasalette Gumban, Head of the Advocacy Unit—and supported by Committee Secretary Ms. Simren Singh. Over the course of four days, the training explored the linkages between climate change and cooperative responsibility, promoted environmental sustainability, and helped women leaders develop practical action plans for their cooperatives and communities.

Twenty-five women representing primary cooperatives and credit unions participated in the training. While many shared that they had experienced the visible effects of climate change in their communities, they also acknowledged gaps in understanding its scientific causes. The sessions helped deepen their knowledge on greenhouse gas emissions, global warming, and mitigation strategies, while also drawing attention to grassroots efforts already underway, such as tree plantation drives and cleanliness initiatives. Participants expressed a strong desire to build their capacities further and to act as peer educators in their local networks.

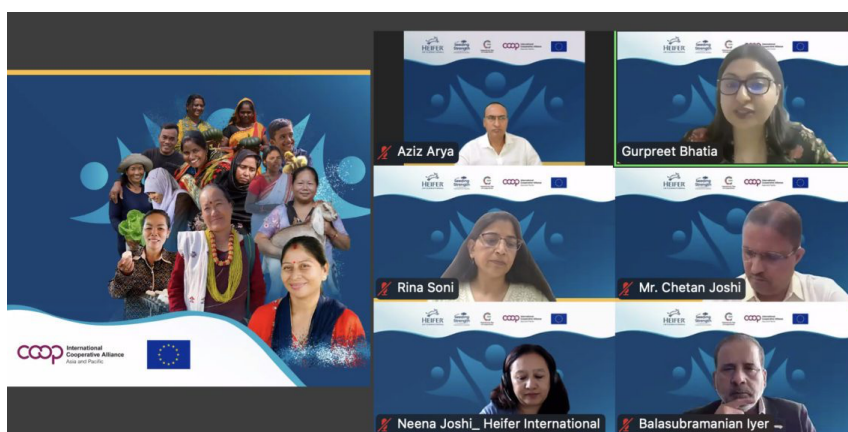
A special session featured two alumni from the first training held in Bhutan in October 2024—Ms. Sonam Yuden and Ms. Tshering Deki from the Department of Agricultural Marketing and Cooperatives (DAMC), Bhutan. They shared their post-training experiences, including awareness-raising sessions and the creation of a compost pit at the National Post Harvest Center using government support. Ms. Tshering also expressed her intention to organise community training programmes in the future.

In a cross-country learning exchange, the MSU–IIT National Multi-Purpose Cooperative (MSU-IIT NMPC) from the Philippines presented the green practices embedded in their operations. Among these, their initiative to integrate a “6th C of Credit” focusing on climate change stood out. MSU-IIT NMPC is also a recipient of the Gold Green Co-op Award from NATCCO, underlining their leadership in cooperative sustainability.

The training concluded on a hopeful and action-oriented note. Participants committed to developing localised climate action plans for their cooperatives, and certificates of participation were awarded. The closing ceremony featured remarks from Ms. Priti Patel, Vice-Chairperson of the Women’s Committee, delivered virtually, and a vote of thanks by Ms. Angela Januarti, member of the Women’s Committee in Indonesia.

The initiative once again reaffirmed the growing commitment of women cooperators to champion environmental sustainability, grounded in knowledge-sharing, peer learning, and cooperative values.

'Seeding Strength' Campaign Launches to Spotlight Farmer Cooperatives in Asia



To mark the UN-designated International Year of Cooperatives 2025 and the International Day of Cooperatives (CoopsDay), ICA-Asia and Pacific and Heifer International Asia jointly launched the regional awareness campaign, ‘Seeding Strength: Empowering Farmer Cooperatives in Asia’, through a virtual event held on 9 July 2025. The webinar, titled “Building a Better World: How Farmer Cooperatives Drive Equity, Access, and Sustainability,” brought together regional leaders, cooperative champions, and international organisations to reflect on the transformative power of agricultural cooperatives.

In her keynote address, Ms. Neena Joshi, Senior Vice President of Heifer International Asia, stressed the urgent need to reimagine food systems by placing smallholder farmers at the centre. She noted that cooperatives not only amplify farmers' voices but also enhance their access to markets and decision-making spaces. ICA-AP Regional Director, Mr. Balu Iyer, underscored the importance of cooperatives as people-centred enterprises rooted in solidarity and mutual responsibility. In an era marked by climate volatility, growing inequality, and diminishing development aid, cooperatives, he said, offer a sustainable and inclusive model for transformation.

Mr. Aziz Arya, Regional Policy and Programme Officer at the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), echoed these sentiments and linked cooperative development to the UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. He emphasised the need for greater investment in and policy support for agri-cooperatives, particularly those led by smallholders, women, and youth.

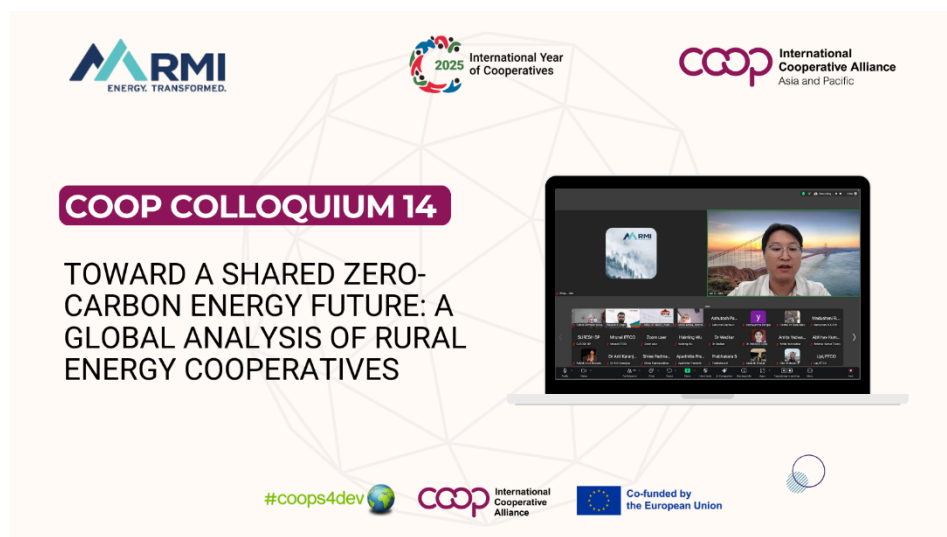
The expert panel discussion featured insights from grassroots leaders and practitioners across the region. Ms. Rith Chantha, Chairwoman of the Southeast Upland Agricultural Cooperative (SEUAC) in Cambodia, shared how women-led cooperatives are promoting resilience through greenhouse farming, solar-powered water systems, and climate education. She reminded the audience that "all women have the ability to lead, if only given the chance." Ms. Altantuya Tseden-Ish from the National Association of Mongolian Agricultural Cooperatives, and former Chairperson of the Asian Farmers' Association for Sustainable Rural Development (AFA), spoke about the challenges of pastoral cooperatives in Mongolia, calling for global recognition of farmers not just as beneficiaries, but as solution providers in the climate fight.

From Bangladesh, Ms. Nooron Nahar of Heifer International illustrated how women-led cooperatives are helping members overcome dependency on middlemen, embrace climate-smart agriculture, and become recognised community leaders. Representing India, Mr. Chetan Joshi, Managing Director of Bharatiya Beej Sahakari Samiti Limited (BBSSL), highlighted the success of India's farmer-owned seed cooperative in improving access, enhancing profit-sharing, and fostering youth participation in agriculture. "Cooperatives," he said, "combine business, purpose, and ownership."

The event served as a powerful reminder of the critical role that farmer cooperatives play in shaping sustainable, equitable, and resilient food systems. Through this campaign, ICA-AP and Heifer International aim to amplify stories of impact, strengthen regional collaboration, and reinforce the message that collective action by farmers is essential to building a better world.

The 'Seeding Strength' campaign will continue through 2025 as part of the celebrations for the International Year of Cooperatives.

Coop Colloquium 14: Exploring Rural Cooperatives and the Clean Energy Transition



The 14th edition of the Coop Colloquium, convened on 18 July 2025, brought together academics, practitioners, cooperative leaders, and youth representatives from across the Asia-Pacific region and beyond to explore how rural energy cooperatives can lead the way in building a zero-carbon, people-centred energy future. Organized by the ICA Asia-Pacific Committee on Cooperative Research (CCR) in collaboration with RMI (Rocky Mountain Institute), the session centred around a recent global study titled “Toward a Shared Zero-Carbon Energy Future: A Global Analysis of Rural Energy Cooperatives.”

This landmark study by RMI, presented by Ms. Yihan Hao and Dr. Jun Li, makes a compelling case for rural energy cooperatives as inclusive and effective models for expanding energy access, alleviating poverty, and promoting environmental sustainability, particularly in developing countries. According to the report, despite a 45% global reduction in energy poverty since 2010, approximately 760 million people still lack access to electricity, and 2.4 billion people rely on polluting fuels for cooking. The vast majority live in rural areas of the Global South, where energy access remains both a development and equity challenge.

The colloquium began with a introduction to the session’s theme and speakers, followed by opening remarks from Prof. Yashavantha Dongre, who emphasized the relevance of cooperative models in achieving just energy transitions. Drawing from the study, Ms. Yihan explained how rural energy cooperatives differ from top-down energy solutions by embedding community ownership, local decision-making, and equitable benefit-sharing into their governance structures. She highlighted that cooperatives are especially well-suited to managing decentralized renewable energy systems such as solar, wind, and biomass—often in contexts where centralized infrastructure is lacking or insufficient.

Case studies from Germany, the Netherlands, Denmark, and Japan illustrated how policy incentives, such as feed-in tariffs (FITs), tax exemptions, and guaranteed grid access, have helped these countries build thriving ecosystems of energy cooperatives. For instance, Germany now hosts over 950 energy cooperatives with more than 220,000 members, contributing significantly to the country's renewable energy generation. Similarly, in Denmark, energy cooperatives own over 23% of the country's wind power capacity, while the Netherlands has over 700 citizen-led energy cooperatives.

In contrast, many countries in Asia and Africa are still in the early stages of exploring cooperative-led energy models. Jun Li shared that in Bangladesh, 85% of townships rely on energy cooperatives, while Bolivia is home to the world's largest rural electric cooperative. However, in countries like China and India, while there is growing interest in distributed renewable energy, cooperative models remain relatively underdeveloped. The study emphasized that this gap presents both a challenge and an opportunity—especially for rural revitalization efforts in the Asia-Pacific.

The discussion highlighted that rural energy cooperatives can operate across the energy value chain, including generation, distribution, supply, and ancillary services like heating and energy efficiency consulting. They also offer diverse revenue streams—ranging from the sale of energy and green certificates to government subsidies and community bonds—making them financially adaptable to different contexts. In China, recent regulatory reforms have begun to allow village collectives and cooperatives to own and operate energy assets beyond agriculture, signaling a shift toward more participatory and locally anchored models.

A key theme that emerged was the importance of organizational capacity. As Dr. Sidsel Grimstad noted, while the technology for decentralized energy systems is advancing rapidly, many rural cooperatives lack the institutional and managerial strength to implement and sustain complex energy systems. This calls for long-term investment in capacity-building, youth engagement, and cooperative education. The RMI report also underlined the role of digital innovation, such as smart grids, peer-to-peer energy trading, and blockchain platforms, in enabling cooperatives to participate in modern energy markets.

During the open forum, participants discussed policy enablers and barriers in their own contexts. Questions were raised about the scalability of cooperatives in grid-dense countries, the role of state actors, and the potential for hybrid cooperative models that bring together public, private, and community stakeholders. Balu Iyer, ICA-AP Regional Director, encouraged participants to identify areas for further research and pilot initiatives, particularly in collaboration with agricultural cooperatives, youth groups, and technology partners.

The colloquium concluded with a strong sense of purpose and momentum. It reaffirmed the view that cooperatives are not only viable actors in the energy transition, but they are also essential. They democratize energy access, retain value within communities, reduce reliance on fossil fuels, and build the kind of social cohesion that centralized systems often overlook.

In a world increasingly shaped by climate disruptions and energy inequities, rural energy cooperatives offer a proven, adaptable, and inclusive pathway toward a more sustainable and

just future. The Coop Colloquium continues to serve as a valuable space for sharing knowledge, connecting across borders, and advancing the cooperative movement's role in building that future.

ICA-EU Updates

ICA-AP as Drivers of the Blue-Green Economy in the Pacific: A Regional Dialogue on Economic Empowerment and Food Security



The International Cooperative Alliance Asia and Pacific (ICA-AP), in collaboration with the Department of Cooperative Business (DCB), is set to organise a three-day regional dialogue on “Cooperatives as Drivers of the Blue-Green Economy in the Pacific: A Regional Dialogue on Economic Empowerment and Food Security”. The event will take place from 23 to 25 September 2025 in Nadi, Fiji, and forms part of the International Year of Cooperatives (IYC) 2025 celebrations in the Pacific and Oceania sub-region.

This timely initiative will explore how cooperatives can lead the way in sustainable management of ocean and land resources, while improving food security and generating inclusive economic opportunities for women, youth, and indigenous communities across the Pacific Island countries.

Supported by the ICA-EU Financial Framework Partnership Agreement (FFPA II), the regional dialogue reflects a shared commitment to strengthening cooperative ecosystems worldwide. It will focus on deepening understanding of the cooperative model in advancing the blue-green economy, fostering inclusive leadership, and shaping enabling environments and policy frameworks for sustainable development.

The programme is designed to facilitate collaborative learning and action. Day one will set the stage through interactive sessions on the role of cooperatives in the blue-green economy. Day two will centre on vision-building, sectoral solutions, and the development of a roadmap for regional cooperation, including discussions on establishing a Pacific Island Cooperative



Network (PICON). The final day will offer field visits to local cooperatives, providing participants with a first-hand look at community-driven solutions in action.

The dialogue is expected to draw participation from government officials, civil society organisations, international partners, and cooperative leaders, with strong representation from women and youth. By

fostering dialogue, sharing knowledge, and building regional networks, this initiative aims to create a cohesive and empowered cooperative movement in the Pacific, aligned with the goals of IYC 2025.

[Legacoop: Brewing Cooperation and Sustainability Across Borders](#)

With roots stretching back to 1886, Legacoop is Italy's oldest cooperative association, uniting over 10,000 cooperatives and more than 7 million members under a shared vision of collective growth and solidarity. Over the years, Legacoop has built a dynamic presence across key economic sectors, including agriculture, consumer goods, social services, and culture, becoming a cornerstone of Italy's cooperative economy. But its mission extends well beyond national borders. Through its international development arm, Haliéus, Legacoop has become a strong advocate for cooperation as a tool for inclusive, sustainable development in the Global South.

Legacoop's evolution is as much about values as it is about scale. While the organisation has grown to represent billions in cooperative value, its core focus remains on building a cooperative identity that empowers individuals and communities. It offers services to create and grow businesses, while also acting as a representative and supervisory body that helps member cooperatives stay true to democratic governance and solidarity-based principles. Its international efforts, led by Haliéus, reflect the same ethos, bringing the cooperative model to diverse communities facing economic and ecological challenges.

Legacoop's current international engagements are wide range. In the Mediterranean, the FISH MED NET project is supporting artisanal fisheries in countries like Lebanon, Tunisia, and Palestine. In Vietnam, the YouCool project is helping young cooperative members adapt to digital transformation. But it is in the highlands of southern Lao PDR that Legacoop's cooperative model is taking particularly meaningful root.

In the Dak Cheung District of Sekong Province, where coffee is both a cultural anchor and an economic lifeline, Legacoop is implementing SuperWeCoffee, a project that aims to green the coffee value chain while promoting gender equality and cooperative ownership. This remote district is home to the Talieng ethnic minority, many of whom work as smallholder coffee farmers in one of the country's most underserved regions. The project directly targets 400 farmers across 15 villages, 70 percent of whom are women. Despite their central role in coffee

production, these women have traditionally had limited access to infrastructure, training, or leadership opportunities.

The challenges facing coffee producers in Dak Cheung are deeply structural: limited drying and storage infrastructure, outdated processing techniques, and a lack of collective organisation have kept the region's coffee from reaching its potential. Moreover, poor market linkages and low incentives for quality have discouraged long-term investment. SuperWeCoffee is responding with a comprehensive model that combines technical training with cooperative development. By strengthening awareness of cooperative principles and providing equipment and capacity building, the project is enabling producers not just to improve quality, but to take ownership of the value chain.

Importantly, this initiative is aligned with the broader development goals set out in the SWITCH Asia Programme. It contributes to SDG 12 by introducing low input, organic production practices and improving traceability, and to SDG 5 by actively fostering women's leadership in producer groups and cooperative boards. The results are already visible: permanent drying facilities and washing stations are now being operated with greater efficiency, and 30 percent of women producers have stepped into managerial roles within their groups. Thanks to training organised with ICA AP, 4Form, and the ILO, awareness of cooperative identity and governance has deepened significantly across the 15 villages. With the recent approval of Lao PDR's Cooperative Law, the groundwork has been laid for the establishment of the district's first ever coffee cooperative, a powerful example of how international cooperation can support local agency.

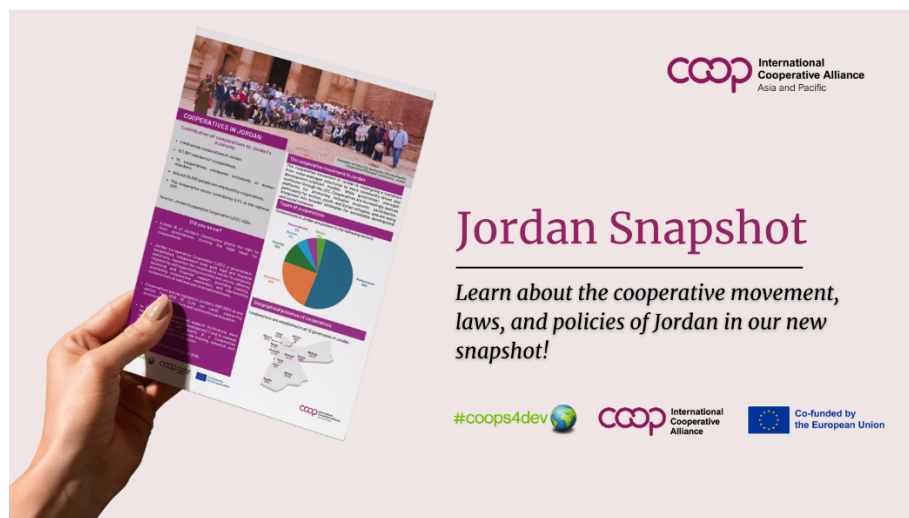


Legacoop's global advocacy is further strengthened by the Development Data Platform developed in partnership with Haliéus. The platform helps map and measure cooperative contributions to the Sustainable Development Goals, serving as an evidence base for dialogue with policymakers and international institutions. It supports Legacoop's ambition to position cooperatives as essential actors in development policy and programming.

In the coming years, Legacoop intends to expand its efforts by building stronger ties with financial institutions, government agencies, and civil society actors. The goal is to ensure that cooperatives are not just recognised as viable enterprises, but as essential tools for achieving fair and sustainable development in emerging economies.

From the coffee fields of Dak Cheung to the fish markets of the Mediterranean, Legacoop continues to demonstrate that the cooperative model, when placed in the hands of local communities, can transform livelihoods, build resilience, and empower people to shape their own futures.

New Snapshot – Jordan



As part of the second phase of the ICA–EU Partnership on Cooperatives in Development (#Coops4Dev 🌍), a newly updated Country Snapshot of Jordan’s Cooperative Sector has been released.

Jordan is home to 1,449 active cooperatives, representing more than 127,000 members, including 74 women-only cooperatives, a testament to growing women’s engagement in leadership roles. Cooperatives employ approximately 25,000 people, underscoring their role in local development, job creation, and fostering social cohesion.

The snapshot outlines significant legal reforms introduced in 2025, aligning Jordan’s cooperative legislation with ILO Recommendation 193 and the ICA Statement on the Cooperative Identity. These updates strengthen cooperative autonomy, enhance governance, and foster alignment with global cooperative standards. Complementing these legal changes, two new institutions: The Cooperative Development Fund, and The Cooperative Development Institute, have been established to support finance, research, training, and capacity-building initiatives across the sector.

To bring the report to life, the snapshot features case studies of innovative cooperatives such as the Iraq al-Amir Women’s Cooperative, the Dana and Qadisiyah Local Community Cooperative, the Nabataean Capital Cooperative Association, and the Amman Filmmakers Cooperative. These stories illustrate how cooperatives in Jordan contribute not only to sustainable development and inclusion, but also to cultural preservation and youth innovation.

This snapshot reaffirms the pivotal role that cooperatives play in building a resilient and inclusive social economy. It serves as an essential resource for cooperative stakeholders, development partners, policymakers, and those looking to learn from Jordan’s journey toward cooperative excellence.

Explore the full snapshot [here](#)

Member Updates

Two New Members Join the ICA-AP Family



We are pleased to welcome two new Associate Members to the International Cooperative Alliance Asia and Pacific (ICA-AP), each bringing with them a strong commitment to cooperative values and a deep-rooted desire to contribute to the regional and global cooperative movement.

From the Philippines, the Institute of Cooperatives and Bio-enterprise Development (ICOPED) at the University of the Philippines Los Baños (UPLB) joins us as an Associate Member. ICOPED is a leading academic unit under UPLB's College of Economics and Management, with a long-standing dedication to strengthening cooperatives and social enterprises through academic instruction, research, and community engagement.

With over four decades of experience, ICOPED has played a critical role in professionalising cooperative leadership, advancing cooperative studies, and advocating policy support for the sector. In joining ICA-AP, ICOPED hopes to deepen its international collaborations, build meaningful linkages, and enhance its capacity to deliver impactful cooperative education and development initiatives. The membership also marks a step forward in amplifying the voice of the academic cooperative community from the Philippines on a global platform.

From India, we welcome the Saath Janvikas Multi-Purpose Seva Sahkari Mandali Ltd., a grassroots cooperative dedicated to improving the economic and social well-being of self-employed and economically vulnerable individuals. Supported by the development organisation Saath, the cooperative operates across multiple sectors: providing training, financial assistance, access to essential goods and services, and support in health, education, housing, and employment.

With a membership of 30,000 and an expansive vision for inclusive development, Saath Janvikas brings a vibrant energy to the ICA-AP network. Through this membership, the cooperative looks forward to learning from global experiences, building capacity, and fostering collaboration across borders to better serve its members and strengthen the cooperative ecosystem in India.

Together, these new members reflect the rich diversity and shared purpose that define our alliance. With their addition, the ICA-AP network now stands 118 members strong across 29 countries.

NFUCA's student Exchange programme with KFUC



The annual Japan-Korea Student Exchange Seminar was successfully held from June 29 to July 2, 2025, in Seoul, South Korea. Organized through the collaboration of the National Federation of University Co-operative Associations (NFUCA) of Japan and the Korea Federation of University Cooperatives (KFUC), this year's seminar brought together over 20 participants, including students and staff from both countries.

The seminar aimed to deepen mutual understanding of cooperative movements and to foster meaningful dialogue between youth from Japan and Korea. It provided a platform for students to learn not only about co-operatives in each country but also about each other's cultures, perspectives, and values.

The four-day program featured a rich variety of activities, including co-op visits, university cooperative introduction sessions, group discussions, and cultural exchanges. One major highlight was the inclusion of multiple university co-ops in the itinerary, offering participants a chance to observe diverse practices within the Korean cooperative movement firsthand.

Among the visits were four university co-ops: Korea National Open University, Soongsil University, Kyung Hee University, and Incheon National University, where students explored each co-op's unique features, store operations, and services.

In addition to university visits, the delegation visited Dure Consumers' Coop, a community-based cooperative known for its commitment to sustainable living. There, students took part in a hands-on Korean cooking experience: making bibimbap, tteokbokki, and kimchi pancakes, before continuing with cultural activities such as a Seoul city tour, where students were divided into small groups and given the freedom to choose their own destinations and carry out self-designed missions, fostering creativity, teamwork, and cross-cultural communication that further deepened the exchange.

For transportation in some parts of the program, the group travelled together using the Coop Bus, a symbolic reminder of the cooperative spirit that connected each part of the journey.

This year's event was notable for the high level of student initiative, particularly in planning and moderating parts of the program. Both Japanese and Korean students led their own presentations and facilitated discussions, fostering confidence and leadership.

The collaborative efforts in preparation and execution showcased the strong partnership between the co-operative associations of both countries. Feedback collected at the end of

the program indicated that many students were inspired to remain involved in co-operative and international exchange activities.

The 2025 seminar was hosted by KFUC, which extended warm hospitality and ensured smooth coordination. The next seminar is expected to be held in Japan in 2026, continuing this important tradition of cross-cultural learning and youth cooperation.

How members celebrated CoopsDay 2025



As part of the UN-declared International Year of Cooperatives 2025, cooperatives across Asia and the Pacific came together on 5th July to celebrate the 103rd International Day of Cooperatives (CoopsDay). Under the global theme “Driving Inclusive and Sustainable Solutions for a Better World”, members across the region used this occasion to reflect on the cooperative identity, showcase local impact, and reaffirm their commitment to people-centred development.

In India, the National Cooperative Union of India (NCUI) hosted a flagship event in New Delhi, which also coincided with the Foundation Day of the Ministry of Cooperation. The celebration was attended by Shri Ravinder Singh (Indraj), Hon’ble Minister of Social Justice and Cooperative, Government of NCT of Delhi. Cooperatives across the country, including KRIBHCO, NAFED, and NYCS, marked the day with creative campaigns and social media visuals centred on farmer empowerment, collective growth, food security, and global unity through cooperation.

A key highlight of India's celebrations was the inauguration of the Tribhuvan Sahkari University (TSU) in Anand, Gujarat by the Union Minister for Home and Cooperation. TSU is India's first national cooperative university, envisioned as a cornerstone of the government's 'Sahakar se Samridhi' (Prosperity through Cooperation) approach to cooperative development through education. Named after Tribhuvandas Kishibhai Patel, the founding chairman of Amul and a pioneer of India's cooperative movement, the university pays tribute to a legacy that began in Gujarat in 1946 in partnership with Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel.

In Nepal, the celebrations were particularly meaningful. The Nepal Agricultural Cooperative Central Federation (NACCF) was honoured for its work in rural empowerment and women's leadership, with a special address by Minister Balaram Adhikari. Alongside NACCF, the National Cooperative Federation (NCF) and the Ministry of Land Management, Cooperatives and Poverty Alleviation jointly recognised outstanding cooperatives and contributors from across the country. The National Cooperative Bank Limited (NCBL) released a creative aligned with the year's theme, celebrating the role of consumer cooperatives in shaping a better future.

In Jordan, the Jordan Cooperative Corporation (JCC) marked the day with a message from the Minister of Agriculture and Chairman of the Foundation, His Excellency Eng. Khaled Hanifat, and General Manager Atoufa. Their reflections emphasised the role of cooperatives in sustainable development and community empowerment.

In Palestine, the Cooperative Work Agency shared a message reinforcing the importance of collective effort and cooperation in achieving inclusive development and social equity—an especially resonant call in the current context.

From the Philippines, NATCCO led a livestreamed celebration that included a national broadcast appearance by CEO Sylvia Okinlay-Paraguya, who spoke about the role of cooperatives in enabling sustainability, innovation, and community empowerment. Member organisations such as FPSDC, MASS-SPECC, and 1CISP took to social media to share creative content and messages that underlined the cooperative commitment to grassroots development, social protection, and climate action.

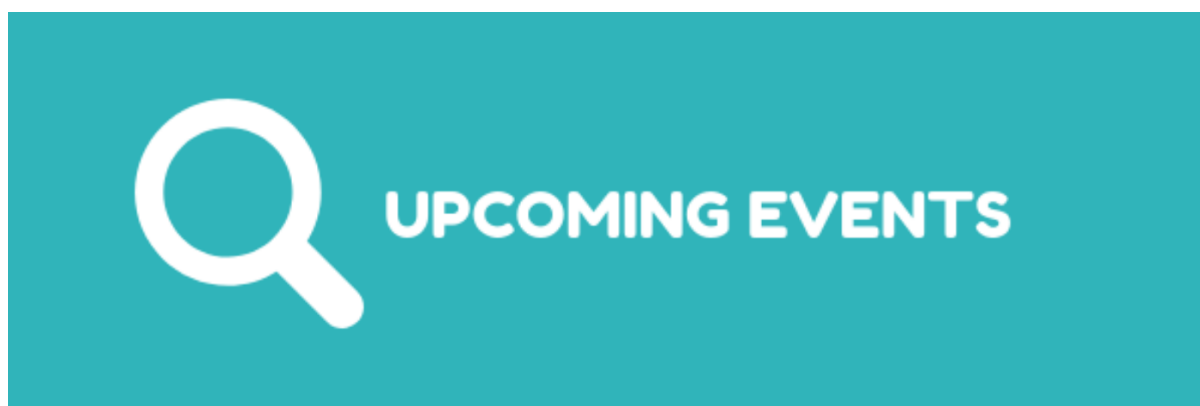
In Singapore, the Singapore National Cooperative Federation (SNCF) marked the occasion with a lively social media campaign featuring cooperators describing their cooperatives in one word. "Empathy," chosen by a healthcare cooperative, stood out as a powerful expression of cooperative values in action.

Sri Lanka saw wide participation, with messages from the Sanasa Federation, the National Institute of Cooperative Development, and the National Cooperative Council of Sri Lanka. Their posts reflected multilingual outreach and shared pride in the country's extensive cooperative network, which now includes over 15,000 cooperatives and eight million members. These organisations embraced the 2025 theme with reflections on inclusion, resilience, and national unity.

In Japan, the Japanese Consumers' Cooperative Union (JCCU) released a powerful message calling for cooperative leadership that is rooted in empathy and action. Their message framed

CoopsDay not just as a celebration, but as a collective pledge to support inclusive finance, youth engagement, climate adaptation, and SDG alignment.

Across the board, this year's CoopsDay served not only as a celebration of the cooperative identity but also as a moment of mobilisation. From policy reflections and ministerial recognitions to grassroots stories and public campaigns, members across the Asia-Pacific region embraced the spirit of 2025 by lifting local voices, strengthening cooperative visibility, and sharing the transformative power of cooperation.



- Coop Colloquium 15: Cooperation Across Borders: Insights from Successful International Cooperation Projects - 19 August 2025
- Cooperatives as Drivers of the Blue-Green Economy in the Pacific: A Regional Dialogue on Economic Empowerment and Food Security, in Nadi, Fiji – 23 to 25 September 2025
- Expo and Cooperative Forum on Trade and Development in Shanghai, China – 5 to 10 November 2025
- Asia-Pacific Research Conference in Sri Lanka – 23 to 25 November 2025
- ICA-AP Regional Board Meeting in Sri Lanka – 24 November 2025
- 12th Asia Pacific Cooperative Forum in Sri Lanka – 26 November 2025
- 17th ICA-AP Regional Assembly and Board Elections in Sri Lanka – 27 November 2025



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