

ANNUAL REPORT 1997-98 VOL 91 No. 2



REVIEW OF INTERNATIONAL CO-OPERATION

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ANNUAL REPORT 1997-1998



Review of International Co-operation Volume 91 No. 2/1998

Editor: Mary Treacy

CONTENTS

<i>ICA President's Review of 1997-1998</i>	1
<i>Director-General's Report</i>	3
<i>ICA Board</i>	5
 ICA Secretariat Activity Reports	
<i>Membership/Special Projects</i>	11
<i>Statistics</i>	15
<i>Personnel and Structure</i>	17
<i>Communications</i>	18
<i>ICA and the United Nations</i>	24
<i>Development</i>	27
<i>Regional offices</i>	29
 Reports of the Specialised Bodies	
<i>Agriculture</i>	44
<i>Banking</i>	46
<i>Consumer</i>	49
<i>Fisheries</i>	52
<i>Health</i>	55
<i>Housing</i>	57
<i>Insurance</i>	59
<i>Tourism</i>	63
<i>Trade</i>	64
<i>Workers</i>	65
 <i>Communications</i>	 69
<i>HRD</i>	72
<i>Research</i>	74
<i>Women</i>	78
 <i>Interim Report of the Audit and Control Committee</i>	 81

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ICA PRESIDENT'S REVIEW OF 1997-98



Dear Friends,

It will soon be one year since the members of ICA gave me the great honour of being elected as President of our world-wide organisation. Since that time I have done my best to visit member organisations where my presence was requested, to meet with international agencies in order to lobby for co-operative interests, and to work with the Director-General and his staff in Geneva and in the Regional Offices. In 1998 I will be travelling outside my home country of Brazil during half the year.

What have I learnt so far from my travels and visits? The first thing is that co-operatives everywhere are facing unprecedented competition in the war for markets which the new global and liberal economy has created. Of course our sector is not the only one affected by these trends, but there is no doubt that we are all under intense pressure to improve our operations and to find better ways of serving our members.

The second thing I have realised is how poorly we are using our potential collective strength. It seems to me inevitable that, in order to become more competitive, co-operatives must make far greater use of mergers, joint ventures, and strategic alliances, not only with other co-operatives but even with some of our "enemies" of the past. These joint activities must also extend beyond national borders. There is no rule which says that co-operatives must be big in order to be successful. But in our new environment, I fear that co-operatives which do not grow are destined to decrease in size, to lose market share, and perhaps even to disappear. This would be a great tragedy for the members who depend on them.

I also see a danger that, in this fierce market environment, different co-operative sectors could interpret and apply the co-operative principles in different ways. The ICA Statement on the Co-operative Identity is designed to allow some room for flexibility of

application, but we must avoid a situation in which our common co-operative identity is weakened or even lost.

All these factors explain why I have been placing such great emphasis on the theme of Integration. It is no longer just a nice philosophical exercise to speak about co-operation among co-operatives. It has become a market necessity.

One of the main tools to promote the integration that we so badly need is communications. ICA and its members all have a variety of communications vehicles, but I have the impression that they are not sufficient to enable us to exchange the most important kind of information in the fastest possible way.

We have always had difficulties in explaining the co-operative identity to public opinion and to governments. Today the challenge has become even greater, for co-operatives can no longer identify themselves as a "third way" between socialism and capitalism. We are clearly a part of the market economy, but with the objective of serving the interests of our members.

During the last meeting of the ICA global Board, in April in Japan, we spent considerable time discussing these issues. We decided that, when the Board meets again in October in Paris, we should concentrate almost exclusively on the changes which are needed within ICA in view of these great new challenges facing our members. We will look at how our governing bodies operate, the nature of our meetings, the priorities of our work programme, and our relationship with the Specialised Bodies. In short, we will be trying to make Co-operative Integration more concrete and more successful.

It is an exciting time to be involved in co-operative work, whether at the national or international level. I am grateful for the support which I continue to receive from my co-operative colleagues in Brazil, from ICA members, from the Board, and from the ICA staff. I look forward to participating in many more national and sectoral meetings; to joining continental leaders at the four Regional Assemblies which will be held this year in Zambia, France, Korea, and Uruguay; and to meeting co-operators from around the world at our great Congress and General Assembly in Quebec City, Canada, next year.

Roberto Rodrigues

May, 1998

DIRECTOR-GENERAL'S REPORT



This "annual" report in reality covers the 9 months which have elapsed since the General Assembly met in Geneva in September 1997. As the four Regional Assemblies will take place in 1998, the next full report to the membership will be made at the General Assembly to be held in Quebec City, Canada, in August 1999.

As a result of the elections held during the 1997 General Assembly, the ICA Board has quite a new appearance. In addition to a new President, Roberto Rodrigues, 10 of the 20 elected Board members are new. Moreover, as a result of a General Assembly Resolution, the Board has since co-opted two additional members, thus bringing the representation of women to four out of a total of 22.

A number of Rules changes were made at the Geneva General Assembly in recognition of the changes taking place within the ICA membership and structure. In addition to an increase in the size of the Board, the maximum national representation on the General Assembly was increased from 20 to 25. A new category of Associate Member was introduced in view of the growing number of organisations interested in participating in ICA activities. The Vice-Presidents are now regarded as a distinct part of the governing structure in recognition of the important leadership role which they play in the regions. And a number of provisions have been introduced in order to promote closer links between ICA and the Specialised Bodies.

At its planning session in Mexico City in November 1997, the new Board confirmed the existing five core functions of the ICA: defending and promoting the co-operative identity, providing a network for members to work together, communications, development, and representation. The reports which follow indicate the ways in which these priorities are being implemented.

Within Head Office a six-person Senior Management Group has been constituted consisting of the Director-General, Deputy Director-General, Director of Communications,

Director of UN/NGO Relations, Director of Development, and Senior Adviser-Member Services. Twice-yearly meetings are also held between Head Office staff and the five Regional Directors in order to strengthen working relationships.

At the beginning of 1998 the new European regional structure was formally constituted with the appointment of Gabriella Sozanski as Regional Director. This followed an earlier decision by the European Council, ratified by the ICA Board, that the previous European Secretariat should be transformed into a full ICA Regional Office. The finalisation of this new structure, under the active leadership of Lars Hillbom, also owes much to the efforts of former European Chairman Graham Melmoth and former European Secretary Arsenio Invernizzi.

The other ICA regions have also been active during this period, not only in carrying out their respective regional priorities but also in preparing for this year's four Regional Assemblies. In addition to normal statutory business, all Regional Assemblies will address in one way or another the theme which will form the basis for the 1999 ICA Congress preceding the General Assembly-the importance of adding value to membership in co-operatives. As was the case with this year's Research Conference, the Regional Assemblies will remind ICA member organisations of the vital link between member loyalty and co-operative success, and will identify good case studies and issues for further discussion next year in Quebec City.

A new feature being planned at present is the Global Seminar to be held in conjunction with the Asia-Pacific Regional Assembly in Korea in October 1998. Last year's membership survey showed that, although members generally appreciate the new regional structure, many would still like more regular opportunities to meet and learn through global meetings. Also in response to the membership survey, efforts to promote business opportunities for co-operatives are assuming a higher priority than before in the work programmes of both Head Office and the Regional Offices.

As part of its catalytic role, ICA has for many years supported the work of the Specialised Organisations and Committees which bring together ICA members, and others, in specific sectoral and functional areas. As identified clearly by the Board, the challenge for the future will be to continue efforts to strengthen the work of these bodies while at the same time improving the benefits in terms of synergy and stronger co-operative identity which can result from a closer working relationship. The annual consultation meeting between ICA Head Office staff and the Specialised Bodies was held in April, and in October the ICA Board will meet with the chairmen of the Specialised Bodies in order to discuss new areas of mutually-beneficial collaboration.

In a time of great challenge for co-operatives in all countries, the ICA is continuing to support their efforts in its specific areas of strength. We are fortunate to have a capable staff dedicated to that purpose, both in Head Office and in the Regional Offices, and to them I offer my appreciation for their continued efforts.

Bruce Thordarson



PRESIDENT
Roberto Rodrigues

Roberto Rodrigues was born in Brazil in 1942 and became Director of a sugar cane planters co-operative in 1971. In 1985 he was elected President of the Organization of the Brazilian Cooperativas (OCB) for two consecutive mandates (1985 to 1991). He founded and presided over the EXIMCOOP (1990-1993), a co-operative trading company. Elected Vice-President for the Americas in 1992, he was also Chair of the ICA's Agriculture Committee from 1992 to 1995.



VICE-PRESIDENT - (EUROPE)
Lars Hillbom

born 17 February 1946, was elected ICA Vice-President for the European Region in 1995. Board member of several ICA specialised organisations, he is also Chairman for the ICA European Council. Mr. Hillbom has been Head of the Swedish Co-operative Union's International Relations Department since 1987.



VICE-PRESIDENT - (AMERICAS)
Miguel Cardozo, Uruguay

Miguel Cardozo has been a leader of the co-operative movement of Uruguay since 1977. He was a founding member of the Savings and Credit Co-operative CACDU and President of COFAC (Federation of Savings and Credit Co-operatives) from 1984 to 1993. Mr. Cardozo was President of CUDECOOP (Confederation of the Co-operatives of Uruguay) from 1988 to 1996 and Honorary President of CUDECOOP since 1997. Member of the Executive Committee of ICBA and Chairman of the ICBA Regional Committee for the Americas, he is now also the Acting Vice-President of the ICA for the Americas.



VICE-PRESIDENT - (ASIA & PACIFIC)
Yang Deshou

is Vice-President of the Supervisory Committee of the All China Federation of Supply and Marketing Co-operatives where he has worked in various capacities since 1950. He has been a member of the ICA Board since 1986 and served for the last two years as Chairman of the Executive Council of the Asia and Pacific Region.

ICA BOARD

VICE-PRESIDENT - (AFRICA)

Bernard Wolimbwa

was born on February 2 , 1939 in the Mbale District of Uganda. Since his graduation in 1969 has been a teacher, a coffee farmer, co-operative leader and a politician. A Board member of the Uganda Co-operative Bank Ltd and Chair of the Uganda Co-operative Alliance Board (UCA), he is also Chairman of the Regional Council for the ICA Regional Office for East, Central and Southern Africa.



Hon. Senator Rahaiah binti Baهران

holds various positions as Vice-President, Chairperson and Director of Co-operative Organisations in Malaysia. She is a member of the ICA Board, Executive Member of the ICA Global Women's Committee & interim Chairperson of the ICA Regional Women's Committee for Asia & the Pacific. She attended consultations and conferences as a participant and resource person and presented papers on gender integration & development in various countries. She has also participated in the ICA General Assembly since 1992. She is a Member of Parliament, a member of the Senate and of various Councils in Malaysia.



Claude Béland

born in Montréal, Québec, in 1932, he has been President of the Mouvement des caisses Desjardins and a member of the Steering Committee of the International Raiffeisen Union since 1987. He is also a member of the ICA Board and President of the International Co-operative Banking Association since 1995.



Ousseynou Dieng

was born on 16 February 1954 in Saint-Louis (Senegal). Received an MA in Co-operation from Sherbrooke University in Canada and subsequently acquired a solid experience in the management and administration of co-operatives. Mr. Dieng is Director of the National Union of Agricultural Coops in Senegal and Chairman of the Regional Council of ICA Regional Office for West Africa.



ICA BOARD



Valentin F. Ermakov

born in the Rostov Region of Russia in 1929. Mr. Ermakov graduated from the All-Union Institute of Soviet Trade in 1960. He has been President of Centrosoyus of the Russian Federation since 1982. Previously, Mr. Ermakov has held several positions in the consumer co-operative movement including as instructor-auditor, bookkeeper, and chairman of the board for both district and regional consumer co-operative organisations. He has participated in ICA General Assembly and is a member of the ICA European Council since 1995.



Jens Heiser

born 30 September 1938, is Chairman of the Executive Committee of Baugenossenschaft Dennerstrasse-Selbsthilfe eG and Member of the Executive Committee of Gesamtverband der Wohnungswirtschaft (GdW), the Federation of the German Housing Industry. He is also Chairman of the Labour Unions of the Hamburg Housing Industry.



Hiroshi Kohno

is Executive Director, JA Zenchu, Japan. He joined the Central Union of Agricultural Co-operatives in 1990 as Managing Director and is now Administrator of the International, Agricultural and Political Departments. Mr. Kohno began his career with the national federation of agricultural Co-operative Association (JA-ZENCHU) in 1958 after graduating from Kyusuy University in 1958 where he majored in agricultural economy.



Stefania Marccone

was born in Rome in 1959. She is currently Director of International Relations Office for Legacoop in Rome. She joined Legacoop in 1987 as liason officer with the ICA and other international co-operative organisations. From 1983 to 1987, she served as Officer of External Relations at the Italian National Bank, and from 1987 to 1992 she was President of "Women in Co-operative Societies" and was involved in organising congresses and related services. Ms. Marccone graduated from Rome University with a degree in Political Science.

ICA BOARD

CHAIRMAN

David O. Miller

is a Director of the Nationwide Insurance Company. He is on the boards of several other Nationwide affiliates and subsidiaries, including Farmland Insurance Company. A Director of the National Cooperative Business Association and Cooperative Business International, he has been a member the ICA Board since 1993. In 1998 he was elected Chairman of NCBA.



Cyril Moravcik

was born on 19 July 1940. After completing agricultural studies at the University of Brno he started working in Slovak agriculture as an economist and then became President of the agricultural co-operative (1985). Now he is the Vice-President of the Association of the Employers Unions and Associations of Slovak Republic. Since 1993 he has been a member of the Executive Committee of the Agricultural Organisation of the ICA and became a member of the ICA Board in 1997.



Yehudah Paz

was born in Brooklyn, New York, on 27 September 1931, and has lived in Israel since October 1950. For many years Director of the International Institute of the Histadrut, he is also Chairman of the ICA Global Committee on Human Resource Development.



Etienne Pflimlin

was born 16 October 1941. He has served as President of Crédit Mutuel Centre East Europe and of the Banque Fédérative du Crédit Mutuel (BFCM) since 1985 as well as President of Crédit Mutuel since 1987, Vice-President of Groupement National de la Coopération since 1991 and Vice-President of IRU (International Raiffeisen Union) since 1992. He is President of the European Regional Committee of the International Co-operative Banking Association (ICBA) and Vice-President of the European Association of Co-operative Banks.





Ivan Prikryl

was born on 31 January 1949. He graduated from the Law Faculty of Charles University in Prague. From 1979, he was in charge of legal matters of the co-operative housing society of Litomerice. In 1991 he was elected President of the Union of Czech and Moravian Housing Co-operatives. Mr. Prikryl is currently President of the Co-operative Association of the Czech Republic. He is also a member of the Executive Committee of ICA Housing Co-operatives.



B.S. Vishwanathan

was born in India in 1934 and has held a number of high offices in the co-operative movement at State and National levels. He became Vice-President of the Governing Council of the National Co-operative Union of India in 1974 and served as President from 1978 till 1981 and then from 1990 till the present. He is also First Chairman of the National Co-operative Bank of India. Mr. Vishwanathan is currently Vice-Chair of ICBA and CICOPA and also serves on the Board of the International Raiffeisen Union.



Lloyd Wilkinson

is Chief Executive and General Secretary, Co-operative Union Ltd., United Kingdom, a position he has held since being appointed in 1974, previously having served as the Union's Research Officer and Assistant General Secretary. Since 1974 he has been extensively involved with the Alliance on behalf of the UK Movement, having served on the Research Officers Group and the Consumer Committee. From 1983 - 1988 he was an elected member of the Executive Committee (now the Board) of the ICA. He is also an Executive Committee member of the ICCO and a Vice-Chairman of EUROCOOP.



Churll-Hee Won

was born in 1938 and is currently Chairman and President of the National Agricultural Cooperative Federation (NACF) of South Korea. Previously, he represented the national co-operative movement as Chairman of the National Cooperative Council of Korea (NCCCK), which serves ten national level co-operatives representing 14 million members. Mr. Churll-Hee Won has been Vice President of the International Co-operative Agricultural Organisation (ICAO) since 1995, and is currently its President.

Biographies and photographs had not yet been received from the two most recently coopted Board members, Ms Padanou and Ms Portillo, when this Annual Report went to print.



The preparations for the ICA Congress in Quebec City in 1999 went into a higher gear last year.

MEMBERSHIP/SPECIAL PROJECTS



Mats Ahnlund



Marie-Claude Baan



Arsenio Invernizzi



Won-Sik Noh

Member Services/Special Projects 1997

Member services have always been at the top of the ICA agenda. Most of the activities undertaken by the ICA staff, both at Head Office and in the Regional Offices are services directed to the ICA membership.

To co-ordinate those efforts and to improve services which might have fallen between the existing ICA departments, a separate unit was set up in 1996 with the goal to "Provide good services to both Specialized bodies and National members so the ICA should be able to:

- a. Hold on to existing membership*
- b. Increase Membership"*

This goal was confirmed by the ICA Board in October 1996.

Before detailing the Members Services activities during 1997, we can say that the two goals have been attained; members have, with very few exceptions, paid their dues in 1997 and we recruited 17 new members during the year, thanks mainly to efforts by our regional offices.

The Implementation of the Member Services Strategy during 1997 was based on (i) Discussions within the Board, (ii) A survey of a random sample of ICA members (54 out of 218 with a response rate of 84%!) and (iii) Intense and frequent discussions with ICA members, Specialised Organisations, Regional Offices and ICA staff. Below are some examples of services that have been carried out during 1997.

Direct Member Services

Improve the “conducting” of ICA meetings

Work on the 1999 General Assembly has begun in collaboration with the Canadian hosts, leading to an agreement around responsibilities and costs. It was also agreed to extend the event to a Congress on the theme “Adding Value to Co-operative Membership”.

Provide opportunities for Business contacts in conjunction with our meetings

A separate seminar was held in Geneva on this topic with some 40 people in conjunction with the 1997 General Assembly and in collaboration with the Communication Department.

Provide an annual global opportunity to meet

It was discussed and decided in 1997 that a Global Forum called “Doing co-operative business - Asian Experiences and Global Opportunities” would be held in conjunction with the Regional Assembly for Asia in 1998, to which all ICA members have been invited.

Continuous reevaluation of membership fees

The fee level of most ICA members was last year scrutinized according to the subscription formulae, leading to discussions with 10 ICA members. In 50 % of those cases an agreement on increased fees was reached.

The formulae applied to insurance and banking members were reviewed by the unit in 1997. The Board decided to make no changes. The complicated formula for the housing members of the ICA is still under revision in the spring 1998.

The ICA Head Office Administration and Member Services units are now also working together on the preparation of the applications from new members.

Member services through the Specialised Organisations

The annual consultation with all SBs was held in April 1997.

ICA has also improved its services to SOs, as a part of the overall Members Services Strategy. That includes the provision of full secretariats for IHCO and CICOPA and supporting secretariats for ICBA and ICAO Negotiations during the year have led to ICA's also taking over TICA and INTERCOOP secretariats from the beginning of 1998.

The Head Office initiated a discussion about sectorial influence in the ICA democratic structure to bring about stronger formal ties between ICA and the different sectors.

Develop regional strategies including recruitment of new members

Regional Member Services strategies were developed during 1997 and presented at the beginning of 1998. As a result, a joint Head Office and American Regional office members recruitment tour was made in the USA during 1997 and other tours are planned in both Europe and USA 1998.

Agricultural adviser

Thanks to a secondment from NACF from the Republic of Korea, ICA has had access to Won-Sik Noh as an Agricultural Advisor at the Head Office in Geneva. Mr. Noh has also been a resource in general members services helping with statistics, membership fee follow-up and support at ICA meetings.

Environmental strategy

During 1997 the unit has investigated the interest among ICA membership to form a separate Working Group on environment that also could lead to the founding of a new ICA Specialised Committee on Green Issues and Ethics. The interest from several members has been large and will lead in 1998 to a meeting with the aim to form such a body.

Statistics

ICA has, during 1997, worked with a Special Project: co-operative Statistics in Europe, under the leadership of Arsenio Invernizzi. That work has been sponsored partly by the European Union DG XXIII and involved most ICA European members. The work has been carried out also as a part of the overall ICA Database set-up (see under Communications).

Change in Membership

Further to the Board meetings held in Geneva (September 97), Mexico (November 97) and Tokyo (April 98), the following co-operative organisations became members:

Americas

- Bolivia, Cooperativa de Ahorro y Credito San Luis,
- Bolivia, Cooperativa de Ahorro y Credito San Martin,
- Bolivia, Instituto Cooperativo de Capacitacion,
- Bolivia, Cooperativa Rural de Electrification,
- Brazil, Brazilian Confederation of Housing Co-operatives (CONFHAB),
- Colombia, Cooperativa de Usuarios de Servicios Medicos (USIMEC),
- Haiti, Conseil National des Coopératives,
- Honduras, Fundacion FINACOOOP,
- Mexico, Confederacion Nacional Mexicana de Cooperativas de Ahorro y Prestamo (C.N.M.C.A.P.),
- Paraguay, Confederacion Paraguaya de Cooperativas (CONPACOOOP),
- Puerto Rico, Instituto de Cooperativismo (ICOOP),
- Uruguay, Cooperativa de Ahorro y Credito de Uruguay (CAYCU),
- Uruguay, Cooperativa Nacional de Ahorro y Credito (COFAC),
- USA, Agriculture Cooperative Development International/Volunteers in Overseas Cooperative Assistance (ACDI/VOCA).

Asia and Pacific

- Mongolia, Mongolian Association of Private Herders' Co-operatives,
- Myanmar, Myanmar Union of Co-operative Syndicates.

Europe

- Sweden, Swedish co-operative Housing organisation (SBC).

However, as the full membership status is granted following the first subscription payment, only 12 out of 17 are presently full members. During the reporting period, one international member organisation asked to be withdrawn from ICA membership, one ceased its activities and eleven national members plus 2 international members were expelled following non-payment of membership subscriptions for two or more consecutive years. There are presently 232 national members plus 4 international members in 94 countries.

STATISTICS FOR ICA MEMBER ORGANISATIONS



ICA Membership Statistics				May 1998
	Number of Countries	Organisations	Societies	Individual Members
Americas	18	61	43,945	182,486,437
Africa	12	19	27,214	9,561,443
Asia/Pacific	28	64	480,648	414,383,079
Europe	35	88	197,293	118,473,862
International	not applicable	4	not applicable	not applicable
Total	93	236	749,100	724,904,821

ICA Members by Region and Country

AMERICAS

Org	Country	Societies	Members
Caribbean			
1	Curaçao	26	15,200
1	Dominican Rep.	1	40,500
4	Puerto Rico	502	1,685,245
6	Total	529	1,740,945
Central America			
5	Costa Rica	567	259,890
2	El Salvador	98	48,618
4	Honduras	92	225,000
11	Total	757	533,508
North America			
2	Canada	7,880	14,518,682
3	Mexico	n/a	629,255
5	USA	27,076	156,192,982
10	Total	35,182	169,340,919
South America			
8	Argentina	n/a	866,000
4	Bolivia	n/a	227,920
6	Brazil	4,744	3,741,667
2	Chile	n/a	183,300
4	Colombia	1,936	4,818,250
1	Ecuador	n/a	n/a
3	Paraguay	76	418,928
2	Peru	21	15,000
4	Uruguay	700	600,000
34	Total	7,477	10,871,065
61	TOTAL	43,945	182,486,437

AFRICA

Org	Country	Societies	Members
North Africa			
6	Egypt	6,992	4,275,000
1	Morocco	9,635	675,589
7	Total	16,627	4,950,589
Southern Africa			
1	Botswana	120	46,668
1	Mauritius	n/a	n/a
1	Zambia	2,174	567,342
3	Total	2,294	614,010
West Africa			
2	Benin	122	14,450
1	Burkina Faso	n/a	n/a
1	Cap Verde	50	18,000
1	Côte d'Ivoire	1,163	127,379
1	Senegal	394	500,000
6	Total	1,729	659,829
East Africa			
2	Kenya	3,433	2,700,000
1	Uganda	3,131	637,015
3	Total	6,564	3,337,015
19	TOTAL	27,214	9,561,443

Any inconsistencies between this chart and the reports are due to variations between 1997 and 1998.

ICA Members by Region and Country

ASIA/PACIFIC

Org	Country	Societies	Members
Central Asia			
1	Kazakhstan	n/a	3,700,000
1	Turkmenistan	n/a	n/a
1	Kyrgyzstan	43	207,630
1	Uzbekistan	672	90,942
4	Total	715	3,998,572
East Asia			
1	China	n/a	160,000,000
11	Japan	3,860	42,842,643
6	Korea Rep.of	7,669	17,067,994
2	Mongolia	302	25,057
20	Total	11,831	219,935,694
Middle East			
2	Iran	n/a	n/a
2	Israel	256	32,300
1	Jordan	518	53,419
2	Kuwait	43	207,630
1	Palestine	137	15,300
8	Total	954	908,649
Oceania			
1	Australia	29	508,197
1	Tonga	110	n/a
1	Fiji	532	28,961
3	Total	671	537,158
South Asia			
1	Bangladesh	n/a	n/a
9	India	446,784	182,921,000
1	Nepal	2,252	1,006,369
2	Pakistan	n/a	n/a
3	Sri Lanka	8,557	768,061
16	Total	457,593	184,695,430
South East Asia			
2	Indonesia	n/a	n/a
5	Malaysia	3,159	822,773
1	Myanmar	3,389	88,875
2	Philippines	n/a	n/a
1	Singapore	35	65,596
1	Thailand	3,016	3,930,332
1	Vietnam	n/a	n/a
13	Total	9,599	4,907,576
64	TOTAL	480,648	414,383,079

EUROPE

Org	Country	Societies	Members
Eastern & Central Europe and Commonwealth of Independent Countries (CIS)			
1	Armenia	2,874	558,230
1	Azerbaijan	79	660,000
1	Belarus	147	1,927,100
1	Bosnia-Herzeg.	70	n/a
2	Bulgaria	1,547	470,000
2	Czech Rep.	2,185	1,381,583
1	Estonia	30	53,528
1	Georgia	105	200,000
3	Hungary	1,922	859,000
1	Latvia	98	305,400
1	Lithuania	99	246,300
1	Moldova	149	595,320
4	Poland	n/a	n/a
2	Romania	3,437	5,140,000
4	Russia	3,874	16,578,000
1	Slovak Rep.	1,108	782,966
1	Slovenia	174	220,354
1	Ukraine	1,956	6,172,135
29	Total	19,854	36,149,916
European Union			
1	Austria	108	332,842
4	Belgium	n/a	n/a
3	Denmark	1,446	1,392,244
2	Finland	46	1,066,774
6	France	23,573	17,485,573
4	Germany	9,112	21,640,000
2	Greece	6,800	782,000
3	Italy	39,624	7,624,430
2	Portugal	2,966	2,134,670
5	Spain	23,481	4,336,502
6	Sweden	15,106	4,779,540
5	United Kingdom	42	9,038,018
43	Total	122,304	70,612,593
Other countries			
4	Cyprus	690	515,352
1	Malta	20	3,906
4	Norway	4,259	1,597,668
1	Switzerland	16	1,513,327
6	Turkey	50,150	8,081,100
16	Total	55,135	11,711,353
88	TOTAL	197,293	118,473,862

PERSONNEL



Claes Thorselius



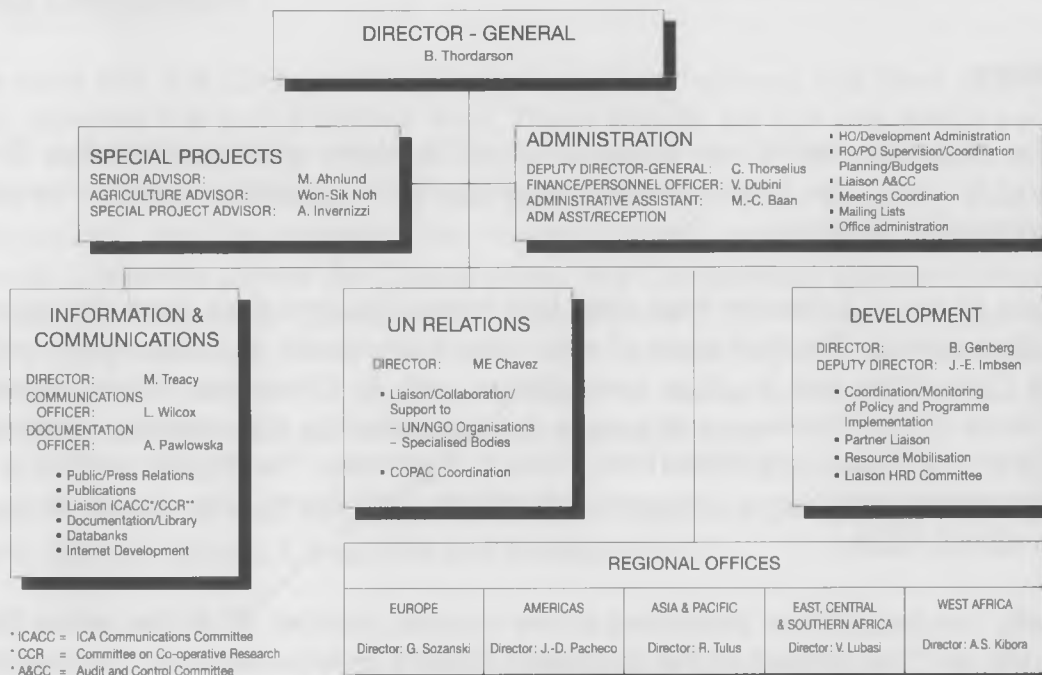
Vivianne Dubini

The structure and the staffing of the Geneva office have basically remained the same as in the previous year. The few changes are related to the regional office for Europe and the reception.

Gabriella Sozanski is now formally designated as the Regional Director for Europe. The European office also enjoys the support of Luc Balourdet, who is kindly seconded to ICA by the French member organisation, Crédit Mutuel.

The position of Receptionist cum Administrative Assistant has been reintroduced into the structure, a position that will be permanently filled as of mid-1998.

1997 ICA STRUCTURE AND FUNCTIONS





Mary Treacy



Alina Pawlowska



Laura Wilcox

Communications Strategy

The Communications Department has commenced the implementation of the four-year communications strategy adopted by the ICA Board in Uganda in April 1997. Within the four-year strategy all components of the Communications programme are designed so that they can interconnect and facilitate multiple use of the same information. For example, publications can be made available on the internet or in multimedia form.

Publications

During the reporting period, six issues of the ICA News were published in English, French and Spanish. The Spanish version is produced in Argentina and the French and English versions in Geneva.

Four issues of the ICA Review (including this Annual Report) have been issued during the reporting period. The first issue of each year is produced in collaboration with the Research Committee and in close consultation with its Chairman, Roger Spear. The Spanish issue of the Review continues to be published by ICA member organisation INTERCOOP EDITORIA COOPERATIVA LTDA in Argentina. The English edition is available on microfilm from Xerox-University Microfilms, 300 North Zeeb Road, Ann Arbor, Michigan 48106, USA.

Additionally, the department produced a new volume, number 31 in the series Studies and Reports on "The Impact of the European Union's Enlargement on Co-operatives". All publications are available in electronic format on the Co-operative Gopher, a joint

project between the ICA Communications Department and the University of Wisconsin Centre for Co-operatives. The Gopher will soon be converted to a web site available through the Co-operative Information Superhighway on <http://www.coop.org>

Co-op Database Development

The Department set up a Working Group and worked with Gabriella Sozánski, ICA Europe Director, Arsenio Invernizzi, Special Projects Leader, MariaElena Chavez, Director of UN/NGO Relations, and Jan-Eirik Imbsen, Deputy Development Director to develop together with outside consultants a database incorporating both the basic information needs of the ICA staff as well as providing statistics on the movement to ICA members, specialised bodies and other interested parties.

Documentation Officer, Alina Pawlowska, acted as resource person for the special workshop on database and statistics organised by ICA Europe at the ILO offices on 7-8 May 1998.

The ICA Development Department has made a request to the European Union for funding a special project on data collection in Africa.

The second stage in the Database Development will aim to make statistics on co-operatives in static format available on the Internet for the general public as well as provide the database in searchable format on-line as a service free of charge to members of the ICA and other funders of the project. COPAC will provide support to include information on co-operative development projects and make the database available on the internet.

Internet Development

A new apex site, the Co-operative Information Superhighway, has been launched with links to separate ICA or ICA partner sites. These include the ICA site, which can now be found at <http://ica.coop.org> - the site has grown so rapidly it has once again been reorganised to facilitate navigation. The new apex site (<http://www.coop.org>) also has links to coops4kids, the Co-operative Information Centre, which is a joint project with Wisconsin University Center for Cooperatives, the Co-operative Research Register and the Virtual Community for Co-operative Education (VCCE). Provision is also made for links to a CoopTrade site, which is to be set up once funding sources have been identified. Information from the ICA database will also be available from the site in static format from September 1998 and in searchable format in 1999.

The new ICA site is now organised into seven sections as follows: ICA, Members, Regions, Sectors, Issues, Co-op Info and Development.

The new ICA site also contains information in other languages accessible via the home page, or by clicking on the national flags at the top of each language page. Although the English language site is by far the largest section, basic information is provided in French, Spanish, German, Portuguese and Swedish.

Another new development at the ICA is the VCCE site which was launched in June. The VCCE or Virtual Community for Co-operative Education is a free association of co-operative educators, developers, researchers, learners and communicators collaborating for the advancement of co-operative education and research. The VCCE web site provides the infrastructure for co-operators throughout the world to build their own collection of materials and resources which can be used by all. This web site aims to benefit from the Internet's multi-media potential in order to offer innovative educational materials to the international co-operative community. The information available is therefore presented in a variety of formats to suit different needs: web sites, text, images, photographs, videos, sounds, java applets, etc. The VCCE site is a result of ongoing collaboration between the ICA, the University of Saskatchewan and Apple Computers. It has been set up by Hazel Wilcox, a former volunteer and intern who has now set up her own business as an independent web development consultant and has contributed a percentage of her time on pro bona basis to the project.

The Department has also continued to develop the Co-operative Gopher Site in collaboration with the University of Wisconsin Center for Cooperatives in Madison, USA. This site will soon be converted to a web site which will also be accessed via the Co-op Information Superhighway.

Targeted TV Strategy

Two video news releases have been prepared in the reporting period. Japanese Health Co-ops funded the travel costs of the Director of Communications and the crew from World Television to visit co-ops in Saitama (just outside of Tokyo), Nagawa and Kobe. Filming these provided footage for a 7 minute documentary on health co-ops in Japan and a 4 minute Video News Release (VNR) on the role Japanese co-ops played helping a community in crisis after the earthquake in Kobe, thereby helping to save many lives.

The VNRs will be sent out to coincide with the International Day of Co-operatives and will each include a "B" role i.e. additional footage to enable television broadcasters to make their own documentaries. The footage will also feature in the ICA's corporate video which will be produced later in 1999 in time for the Millennium Congress in Quebec.

Research and Documentation

Documentation resources cover the theory, history, social economy, development policy, education and gender issues of the international co-operative movement. The unique feature of the documentation centre is its collection of primary documents from member organisations such as Annual Reports and statistical information. New areas of documentation: social audit and social/health care, emerging sectors.

The documentation centre attracts attention from young researchers who look for inter-sectoral information on the co-operative movement. The historical holdings continue to be frequently visited as the interest in recent history is growing. In the reporting period fifteen people worked in the Archives for periods ranging from one day to one week of consultation.

The centre collaborates with other documentation centres: ROAP in New Delhi, Deusto University in Spain, Moncton University, Canada, HEC in Montreal.

The documentation centre also provides the following services: thematic files, lending of books, sending photocopies of articles, historical research.

The centre is open to member organisations and all other parties or individuals interested in the co-operative movement. A majority of requests for information comes from students and non affiliated organisations.

UN/ICA International Day

The theme of the Co-operative Day message in 1998 is 'Co-operatives and the Globalisation of the Economy'. The message was made available in electronic format in May and mailed in early June.

A press pack commemorating the International Co-operative Day/UN International Day of Co-operatives was prepared in collaboration with the UN Director, MariaElena Chavez, and circulated to ICA members, UN organisations and regional offices, the co-op press, international media, non-governmental organisations and government ministries dealing with co-operation. As in past years, COPAC members contributed material for the pack.

The release of the above-mentioned video news release was planned to coincide with the Co-operative Day and sent to all major TV news agencies, ICA Board members, regional offices, and selected partner organisations.

Services to Members and Specialised Bodies

The Department continued to provide services to ICA members and specialised bodies including the provision of information, publications, photos, the up-date and dissemination of information sheets, the posting of information on members and specialised bodies on the co-operative gopher, and the provision of visiting cards and stationery for specialised bodies.

As part of the Department's service to specialised bodies, web pages have been set up on all specialised organisations and committees.

Member pages are also being produced for ICA member organisations, concentrating initially on Asia and the Pacific and West Africa .

The Department continues to collaborate with the ICA Research Committee and the Society for Co-operative Studies (UK) in the setting up and maintenance of the Co-operative Research Register.

The Director of Communications participates in the Plunkett Foundation Yearbook Editorial Board. The department also participates in the various task forces which have been set up at Head Office, providing input to various ICA activities including the organisation of meetings.

In addition, the Department provides secretarial assistance to the Research Committee and the ICA Communications Committee.

In order to take advantage of the new communications technology currently becoming widely available, the Communications Committee has set up a sub-committee called the Working Group on Network Technology for Trade and Communications. The group is led by Byron Henderson, Communications Director of the University of Saskatchewan Centre for the Study of Co-operatives.

Staffing

The Department has been increased from 2.9 persons in 1996/97 to 3 people in 1997/1998. The Head Office is also assisted on a part-time basis by Purushothaman Nair from the New Delhi Office, who is responsible for preparing documentation for the Co-operative Gopher and for the follow-up of information collection for the ICA database in the Asia/Pacific region.

In order to respond to the increasing workload, the ICA offered two short term internships during the period to Rachel Gorney from Oberlin College USA from July to October 1997 and to Fanja Rasolomanana from Webster University, Geneva from April to June 1998. Care is taken to ensure that interns leave the ICA with additional technical skills to help them in their future careers, as well as an in-depth knowledge of our movement and ideals.

The Communications Department has also been assisted by several volunteers who have worked with the ICA via the internet, most notably by David Griffiths, Director of the Co-operative Federation of Victoria Ltd, who helped with testing of the ICA web site and links. The interns and volunteers and the increased use of the internet, have enabled the Department to respond to the ever-increasing demand for information on the ICA and the movement worldwide.

Future Developments

Providing services to members and disseminating the co-operative message as widely as possible will continue to be the main objectives of the Department.

Database and internet development will continue to be top priorities in the next few years as will be the production and dissemination of video news releases on the co-operative movement.

In order to better serve our members, specialised bodies and the general public, the Communications Department will continue to work with interns and volunteers and to work with like-minded organisations on issues of mutual concern.

A resumé of the four-year strategy, as well as articles on several of the new Communications Projects, are included in the Review of International Co-operation, Volume 3/1997.



MariaElena Chavez-P

ICA and the United Nations (UN)

In 1997, responsibility for UN and NGO relations was upgraded to the position of Director on a half-time basis, given that the Director was also appointed as the Coordinator of the Committee for the Promotion and Advancement of Cooperatives (COPAC) effective 1 April 1997.

Work continued to ensure that information on co-operatives, their contributions and importance to major development issues was transmitted to the UN system. In order to accomplish this, representation and document submissions were made to the UN bodies and UN conferences. Collaboration with UN agencies including the Food Agriculture Organization FAO, International Labour Office ILO, the UN Centre for Human Settlements (Habitat) and the United Nations and its commissions was also continued and strengthened. Increasing contact was taken with the World Trade Organization WTO with regard to the impact of environmental issues on trade, and agriculture and trade.

Follow-up to the UN General Assembly resolution 51/58 (December, 1996) which calls on COPAC in collaboration with the UN Secretary-General to ascertain the feasibility and desirability of elaborating UN Guidelines aimed at creating a supportive environment for the development of co-operatives as well as preparations for the 3rd UN International Day of Co-operatives were also major areas of work in 1997. ICA hosted the COPAC Consultation Meeting on United Nations Guidelines on Government Policy concerning Cooperatives on 16-17 May 1997 and through COPAC provided input to a final draft of Guidelines Aimed at Creating a Supportive Environment for the Development of Cooperatives¹ published at the end of December 1997 and presently in circulation for additional comments from co-operative organizations.

Services continue to be provided to the ICA specialized bodies to assist them in bringing their expertise to UN agencies and making contacts with other non-governmental organizations working in their sectors. Some examples of assistance provided include: providing assistance to ICA Housing in the follow-up to the UN Conference on Human Settlements (Habitat II) by representing or facilitating representation at NGO consultation meetings and at meetings of the UN Commission for Human Settlements. Participating in an ICA Housing Working Group on Habitat follow-up; assisting the International Co-operative Agricultural Organization (ICAO) in follow-up to the World Food Summit especially with regard to the organization of the ICAO Seminar on Agricultural Inputs held in September, 1997, and facilitating contacts and collaboration with the agri-business sector through its membership in International Agri-Food Network whose aim is to foster collaboration and understanding among international agri-food sector organizations and to take joint action on items of common interest. Assistance has also been provided to the International Co-operative Consumer Organization (ICCO) to facilitate the participation of ICCO members in the meetings and work of the FAO/WHO Codex Alimentarius in such issues as food safety, and standards for novel foods (genetically enhanced) and organic production.

Information has been provided on an ad hoc basis to other specialized bodies including CICOPA on matters concerning the United Nations Industrial organization UNIDO, ICMIF on insurance matters within the UN Conference on Trade and Development UNCTAD, IHCO on areas of potential collaboration with World Health Organization WHO and ILO, IFCO on the FAO Committee on Fisheries.

In the capacity as Gender Focal Point, a report was prepared on women's participation and decision-making in co-operatives based on replies to the ICA President's questionnaire and complemented with information from the Women's Committee. The report was presented to the Board and circulated to the Women's Committee for information. A series of proposals for action was included based on information collected from the Director's participation in the meetings on women's issues including the UN Commission on the Status of Women (which monitors follow-up of the Beijing Platform for Action) and the ILO Tripartite Meeting on Breaking Through the Glass Ceiling: Women in Management. The Director also regularly participates in the meetings NGO Sub-Committee on the Status of Women in Geneva which provides information on UN and gender equality and lobbies the United Nations and its agencies.

3rd United Nations International Day of Co-operatives, 5 July 1997

The UN Section assisted the Communications Department in the preparation of a press pack for the International Day on the theme of Food Security. Assistance was provided selecting and collecting items from members and ICA partners, and identifying high impact recipients for the press pack including UN agencies and information centres, development agencies, and the media. The Director also assisted in the distribution of the video news release issued on the occasion of the international day.

The Director also co-ordinated input from ICA to the COPAC organized co-operative exhibit held at the United Nations in Geneva from 30 June to 11 July 1997. Liaison with both the United Nations in New York and Geneva was assured by the Director regarding preparations for the Day including the issuing of the UN Secretary-General's message.

United Nations

Consultations continued with the UN Secretariat members dealing with co-operatives in respect to improving collaboration of ICA with the UN especially with regard to follow-up to UN resolution 51/58 and follow-up to the major UN conferences including the World Summit on Social Development.

Other areas of work

The Director of UN/NGO relations also works closely with the Communications Department in areas such as Internet development, the ICA Data Bank and general public relations work.

The Director is also responsible for administering the computer network at head office. At the end of 1997, head office successfully migrated from a Novel to Windows NT server and upgraded computers to allow use of windows-based programmes. Individual e-mail addresses and Internet access were also attributed to all staff members to facilitate communication with the regional offices and member organizations.

Other contacts

ICA continued to collaborate with the International Federation of Agricultural Producers on areas of mutual interest. Participation in the work of the Conference of NGOs in Consultative Status (CONGO) and the Fédération des Institutions Internationales Etablies à Genève (FIIG) has also been ensured by the UN Section.

¹ Full information on the Guidelines including the full text and report of the Consultation Meeting can be found on the Internet at: <http://www.copacgva.org/guidelines.htm>.



Bjorn Genberg



Jan-Eirik Imbsen

Head Office

An important event in the last quarter of 1997 was the meeting of the ICA Development Trust Advisory Board in Marburg in December. The main item on the agenda was a discussion on the draft policy paper for the Development Programme which the members thought should be more focused. The latest version, approved in principle by the ICA Board, emphasises four key priorities; Co-operative Identity and Image, Business Development, Value-based Professional Management and Leadership, and Government Policy and Legislation. HRD and gender are cross cutting themes, the former being an essential support function in each core area. Increased emphasis will be placed on the income generating aspects of ICA's development activities. Resource mobilisation is consequently an issue that merits special attention. ICA will also vigorously pursue alliances with new partners. These concerns will be reflected in both the policy and regional strategies.

The next meeting of the Advisory Board will take place in conjunction with the European Regional Assembly. There will also then be an opportunity for the Advisory Board to meet the Trust Board.

In December, ICA was the only non-British organisation invited to a meeting in London organised by the British DfID (The Department for International Development) to discuss a strategy for DfID's assistance to the co-operative sector. The Plunkett Foundation, which also participated in the meeting, is actively following this up. DfID's Nairobi office has expressed interest in participating in an ICA ROECSA study on rural finance.

Whilst in England, ICA also had a constructive meeting at the Plunkett Foundation during which a number of areas where the two organisations could work together were identified. The ICA will follow up and look forward to a mutually beneficial collaboration with its British colleagues.

The ICA has continued discussions with ICA's European region with a view to assisting in assessing members' needs. This activity will now probably take place towards the end of the year.

Head Office continues to participate in regular planning and review meetings at the regional offices. During the period under review such meetings were attended at ROECSA, ROAP and ROAM. In the East, Central and Southern African region, HO has also contributed to the formulation of terms of reference (TORs) for regional studies on issues like rural finance and support to agricultural co-operatives. Head Office has furthermore participated in a strategy formulation workshop at ICA ROAP, as well as assisted in the preparations for a joint ROAP/HO mission to study the co-operative situation in Central Asia.

Considering the enormous development needs of many of ICA's member organisations in developing countries, and the resources available to alleviate those needs, it is clear that the ICA must improve its capacity for resource mobilisation. Recent discussions in conjunction with the formulation of a new development policy, as well as conclusions of the review of ROECSA, have confirmed this and consequently highlighted resource mobilisation as the priority area of the development programme. A resource mobilisation task force has now been set up at head office to drive this process forward. The task force will assist ICA development in its resource mobilisation efforts and will meet whenever called for to provide advice. The existence of this task force is a recognition of the urgent need for a systematic and sustained approach to resource mobilisation. Financing has been secured, and a Terms of Reference drafted for a study on resource mobilisation that will provide an inventory of potential sources of funds with regard to their policies and strategies, requirements on project proposals, and, if possible, planning and budgeting cycles and decision making procedures.

An important and related function of HO is the contact with partners. There are regular contacts and joint activities with ILO's CoopBranch (in particular the COOPNET and COOPREFORM programmes), with whom it has also been instrumental in expanding regional collaboration. A position audit on co-operative management is in the pipeline in collaboration with the ILO COOPNET programme at head office level, and it has also continued its collaboration with the SCC and the ILO on the writing up of a leadership development programme for Africa.

Discussions with Habitat in Nairobi have resulted in a proposed partnership arrangement which will enable the ICA to draw on their technical resources when it comes to the development of housing co-operatives. A Memorandum of Understanding was signed early in the year. ICA Development staff also accompanied the ICA President on his visit to the FAO in March where a number of meetings were held with key departments and personnel. A Memorandum of Understanding between the ICA and the FAO has been drafted and will hopefully be ready for signing by mid-year. The ICA would also like to initiate discussions with UNDP for the same purpose. All regional offices will be able to make use of these partnership agreements.

REGIONAL OFFICES



Juan Diego Pacheco

1. Regional Office for the Americas (ROAM)

Mission

1997 was the first year of ICA Americas' updated Regional Development Plan. This document identified ICA ROAM's mission as follows: "To promote the repositioning of the co-operative model within the new economic, political, social and commercial environment while supporting its members in the promotion and defense of the co-operative identity, the promotion of business and human resource development". The achievements were positive in terms of increased membership, and consolidation of specialized regional committees for business and human resource development. This has also enhanced ICA Americas' position at the continental level.

Members

15 new members joined the ICA Americas last year. This was an increase in the regional membership of 24%, giving ICA a total of 61 members from North, Central and South America and the Caribbean.

Sectoral Approach

To support and supplement the sectoral approach, the regional office and its activities are now supporting regional specialized organizations for banking, health, consumer, agriculture and insurance. By the end of 1997, committees for housing, tourism and CICOPA were also being activated. All the committees are geared to developing inter-cooperative business relations and to increasing the competitiveness of its members in

their respective markets. The presidents of the specialized committees have been integrated in the Regional Consultative Meeting, which assures a better coordination of the activities of the region.

Doing Business Guides have been produced within the framework of the sectoral approach. Guides for the health, consumer and agriculture sectors have been published, and guides for the financial and housing sectors are under preparation.

Activities

In the area of human resource development, ICA's gender programme in the Andean Pact countries made significant progress. Important activities included the creation of national groups to support the work, and the training of staff in member organizations. Likewise, the work of the ICA Women Continental Committee was consolidated with representatives from different organizations in the region.

Other HRD activities were the creation of a network made up by universities and cooperative training centres, and the creation of a regional youth committee. Both the business networks and the networks in the HRD area have support staff in the ICA Regional office, and they are interconnected through intranet platforms for the exclusive use of members.

In November 1997, the Regional Conference on Cooperatives Facing Unemployment was held in Mexico. It was attended by over 900 cooperatives leaders, managers and members who were given the chance of sharing experiences and defining joint strategies.

The Regional Office has vigorously promoted the declaration of co-operative identity, through electronic means, posters and publications. This activity is strongly supported by the members at the national level.

Partners

ROAM's work has been made possible thanks to the contribution of member organisations and different organizations such as: Swedish Cooperative Centre, Desjardins International Development, Canadian Cooperative Association, ILO COOPNET Programme, UNDP, Interamerican Institute for Agricultural Cooperation IICA, G77 from United Nations, Associazione Nazionale Cooperative di Consumatori (ANCC), CWS.

Within the Americas, the work of the International Co-operative Alliance is more and more recognized because of its positive impact on co-operative development in the region.

REGIONAL OFFICES



Robby Tulus

2. Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific (ROAP)

The Asia Economic Meltdown

The financial crisis in Asia which started in mid 1997, and which developed into a full-blown economic crisis towards end of the year, is still with us. This crisis has robbed the Asia region of its stabilizing forces that the region had come to take for granted. Nowadays there are mounting bankruptcies, growing unemployment, and rising inflation in countries hardest hit by the meltdown such as Korea and Indonesia. South-East Asia is at the centre of the regional economic crisis, which could spill elsewhere if not immediately remedied. Even if currencies and stock-markets do stabilize soon, millions of poor people impacted by the meltdown will face grave difficulties. The crises in Asian nations are all characterized by the combination of initially overvalued currencies, significant external debt and weak banking systems. The situation will no doubt create new challenges, but also opportunities for co-operatives in this region.

Savings capacities of members will most likely be curtailed owing to shrinking income levels resulting from the devaluation, and loan repayments may likewise be slower due to higher consumption costs. Productivity may also suffer due to imported raw materials still being used in agricultural and industrial sectors. On the other hand, co-operatives can offer hope for those communities affected by the economic slump because successful people-based co-operatives have imprinted good discipline in the creation and conduct of systems of governance and regulatory functions. It amounts to a sound and transparent manifestation of "the ICIS (ICA Coop Identity Statement) in practice", benefiting not just co-operative institutions, but ultimately their most important asset, i.e. individual members at the grassroots level.

ICA ROAP Objectives

The Planning session of ICA ROAP in November 1997 was largely shaped on the basis of the analysis of the ongoing economic crisis in Asia. However, activities earlier in the year were based on the objectives set in November 1996.

ICA ROAP Activities

Below are some of the activities carried out during the period under review.

The Fourth Asia Pacific Conference of Co-operatives Minister in Chiangmai, Thailand. This Ministerial Conference was hosted by the Government of Thailand and the Co-operative League of Thailand, and financially supported by the Canadian Co-operative Association and the Développement International Desjardins. The theme was "Co-operatives in a changing socio-economic environment". Prior to the Conference, an exhaustive critical study was carried out on "Co-operative Legislation and Competitive Strength", profiling five selected countries. This critical study was followed by two successive symposia and a well-attended Regional Consultation in Myanmar. These activities have sharpened the policy development strategy of ICA ROAP, namely the adoption of a sound policy on co-operative competitiveness which contributes to sustaining good business practices within the co-operative system in Asia and the Pacific region. This policy was clearly spelled out in the resolution of the Fourth Asia Pacific Conference of Co-operative Ministers.

In an attempt to create the right platform for attaining all the objectives set in 1996, the ICA ROAP organised a Special Workshop on the ICA Co-operative Identity Statement in August 1997. It was aimed at reaching a common interpretation and understanding of the ICIS among ICA members in the Region. The workshop also examined the relevance of the ICIS in the context of the changing socio-economic environment in the Region, and formulated guidelines to increase the co-operatives competitiveness without losing their identity. The results offered a rich input to the ICA ROAP long-term strategic planning exercise which followed right thereafter. 50 delegates from 12 countries in the Region and co-operative specialists attended the workshop. Special presentations on the ICIS theme were presented by Prof. Dr. Ian MacPherson from Canada, Dr. Peter Davis from U.K. and Mr. Gary Cronan from Australia.

Another important event in 1997 was the establishment of the Asia and Pacific Health Co-operative Organisation (APHCO). Dr. Kato has been elected Chairperson of APHCO.

The 12th ICA-Japan Training Course on Strengthening Management of Agricultural Co-operatives in Asia was successfully organised by ICA with funding support from the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries (MAFF) of the Government of Japan. The Course also received active support from JA-Zenchu/CUAC and IDACA, as well as participation from other ICA member organisations in the Asia-Pacific region. It started in New Delhi on 20 October 1997, inaugurated by the Ambassador of Japan. Fifteen par-

participants (including five women) from ten countries - Bangladesh, China, India, Indonesia, Malaysia, Myanmar, Pakistan, the Philippines, Sri Lanka and Vietnam - will travel with the course, to India, the Philippines and Japan.

A joint ICA ROAP & AWCF Regional Conference was held in Tagaytay, Philippines, in May 1997, to focus on "Women in Leadership and Decision Making in Co-operatives", attended by authoritative speakers on the subject from UNIFEM, ICA, and Asian women co-operative leaders. 107 participants attended the Conference.

A 7th Training Course for Rural Women Leaders of Agricultural Co-operatives in Asia, conducted by the ICA ROAP, in close collaboration with the Institute for the Development of Agricultural Co-operation in Asia (IDACA) was held in Tokyo, Japan, from 4 November to 3 December 1997. Six women leaders, two each from India, Pakistan and Sri Lanka, have been selected to participate.

Another activity in collaboration with the JA-Zenchu/IDACA, as well as the AARRO, was the 2nd Asian Top Leaders Conference of Women Farm Leaders of Agricultural Co-operatives in Asia in Tokyo from 4 to 10 November 1997 which emphasised the need for providing opportunities for the further development of rural farm leaders, especially among women.

Collaboration with ILO included the conduct of Women Leadership Training Workshop in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, in December 1997, and the decision to jointly produce a Training manual on "Women in Decision Making in Co-operatives".

ICA OPERATIONS

A restructuring of the ICA ROAP operations was carried out to improve efficiency, effectiveness and teamwork in the office, and thereby to enhance the quality of services to members. A new operational structure was established and the number of ICA ROAP personnel was trimmed from 20 to 13 persons. Closer co-ordination and more interaction with ICA Head Office in Geneva have evolved as a result.

Membership Development

Efforts are being made to explore new members in Australia and New Zealand where ICA lost contact with agricultural co-operatives following the closure of the Australian Association of Co-operatives in 1993. More focus will also be given to strengthen, and, where possible, add new members in the transitional economies such as Mongolia, Myanmar, and Central Asian countries. The ICA ROAP Plan also points to the need for urgent reforms of government-dependent member organizations in this region because self-reliance is considered the best contingency to alleviate the impact of the financial crisis.

Future Plans

The ICA ROAP identified the region's Key Result Areas for the year 2002. These are as follows:

*Policy Development and Legislation
Promotion and protection of ICIS
Leadership and professional management
International Co-operative Trade Network
Agriculture and Consumer Development*

The above will be achieved by focusing on important cross-cutting mechanisms such as gender integration and human resource development, and the involvement of youth.



Group work in progress at the Regional Conference on Women in Decision Making in Cooperatives, Tagaytay City, Philippines, May, 1997

REGIONAL OFFICES



Ada Souleymane Kibora



Sendra Ratsimandresy-Touré



Eugénie Zongo

3. Regional Office for West Africa (ROWA)

General Situation

At the political level, the situation in West Africa is relatively stable apart from Sierra Leone and Niger. Electoral processes are ongoing with more or less protests or acceptance according to countries. The weight and predominance of the political parties in power in most countries, are reminiscent of - or cause to fear a return to - one party systems.

Populations in general, and in particular the rural populations, believe less and less in the virtues of politics and in electoral processes. Hence the low turnouts at elections and the emergence of new types of organisations within the civil society.

There is a growing awareness of the importance of reviewing co-operative strategies and legislations, which is translated through co-operative reform programmes. Such programmes are on-going in Benin, Burkina Faso, Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana, Mali and Niger.

One recurrent question is whether co-operative legislation should be based only on the Rochdale type or if the law must be adapted to field realities and take into account organisations having co-operative objectives and principles, but not necessarily registered as co-operatives. These new forms of organisations, which are numerous in West Africa and particularly in the Sahelian countries, are often supported by donors and NGOs which use them as vehicles to implement their own programmes. They are predominant in the sectors of cotton production and commercialisation. The new models of organisation supported by donors and NGOs are often found to be more "attractive"

than co-operatives. This has led to some individual members of conventional co-operatives leaving their societies to join the new structures.

At the economic level, it is unanimously accepted that West Africa is gradually entering a period of economic recovery and growth. However, some existing problems, such as unemployment and impoverishment, are getting worse. Sahelian countries are this year experiencing shortages in food production which may result in widespread famine. In such a context, agricultural co-operatives are affected at several levels. One problem is that they do not benefit enough from the economic revival because of internal structural constraints and markets imperfections. Members demand more and more social services (cereal supplies, health care, schools, etc.) at the risk of putting their co-operative in a situation of financial imbalance. Besides, West African Francophone countries are actively preparing for an economic and monetary integration with (inter alia) customs barriers being gradually suppressed.

Co-operatives in general, and agricultural ones in particular, have not yet taken this emerging situation into account in their reflections, strategies and planning. If nothing is done in terms of information, training and creation of new commercial networks, the consequences may be serious.

Activities

The year 1997 has been marked by the move of the Regional Office from Abidjan (Côte d'Ivoire) to Ouagadougou (Burkina Faso). This move brought about staff changes as well as temporary disruptions in the implementation of the programme activities.

Between January and December 1997, the main activities focused on the creation of a favourable environment for co-operatives, the fight against poverty through primary co-operatives, the development of human resources, and the development of strategies.

CO-OPERATIVE POLICIES AND LEGISLATIONS

Upon request of Burkina Faso authorities, ROWA provided technical and financial support for the analysis and definition of a new co-operative policy and legislation in Burkina Faso. The analysis and definition processes involved co-operators, NGOs and consultants. The draft policy paper and the legal document are now being reviewed by the government and parliament.

POVERTY CONTROL

This programme is being carried out in The Gambia and Senegal and is conducted by primary co-operatives and women groups. The main activities of this programme are as follows: training, saving and credit and income generating activities (handicraft, small-scale animal rearing, petty trade, etc.). This programme aims at integrating the gender approach into co-operatives and at fighting against poverty through the generation and diversification of women's income and through their acquisition of knowledge (literacy) and know-how (technical training).

DEVELOPMENT OF HUMAN RESOURCES

ROWA has been experimenting a new approach within three member organisations, the co-operative unions of Djiboua, SCAGBO and UCAO, which have set up training and sensitization units for the members. ROWA supports activities carried out by these units which have been entrusted with the responsibilities of:

- promoting good relationships among individual members;
- strengthening members' loyalty to their co-operatives;
- facilitating in-house training sessions which address endogenous needs and the constraints of their socio-economic environment;
- improving the brand image of unions vis-à-vis members and the environment.

The programme will cover thirty primary co-operatives and will run for three years (1997- 1999).

Besides this experimental programme, ROWA has provided support for the training of:

- sixteen (16) staff members of INC (Cabo Verde) and DOPAG (Côte d'Ivoire) in the areas of financial analysis and co-operative audit;
- fifty (50) Board members of five (5) rice co-operatives in Côte-d'Ivoire.

DEVELOPMENT OF STRATEGIES FOR COMMERCIAL EXCHANGES

ROWA organised in November and December 1997 a regional study in five member organisations in Benin, Burkina, Cap Vert and Côte d'Ivoire. The goal of this study was to collect and analyse data with the view to developing a mechanism and a strategy for inter-co-operative and commercial exchanges. This has become an imperative as a result of the on-going process of the suppression of customs barriers. A regional workshop will be organised within the next six months with the view to validating the study. ROWA is an initiator and catalyst in this process.

Membership

There are eight member co-operative organisations in the region. These include five agricultural co-operatives, one health co-operative, one savings and loan co-operative and one multi-purpose co-operative. Many potential members are unable to join the ICA because of their inability to pay the annual contributions and to face the costs of their participation in ICA statutory meetings at the international level.



Traditional welcome by President of Women's Group of Taulili.



Vincent Lubasi

4. Regional Office for East, Central and Southern Africa (ROECSA)

Regional Situation

The political, economic and social reforms in the countries of the region reached a maturity phase by 1997. The impact of structural adjustment and other reforms became more pronounced than in previous years. The social conditions invariably worsened partly as a short-term consequence of the reforms but also because of high population growth rates, low levels of technology and the adverse effects of the El Nino phenomenon.

The majority of secondary and national level co-operative organizations whose survival in the new environment was always under threat, finally succumbed and folded. The primary societies on the other hand used 1997 to better reposition themselves. The savings and credit co-operatives continued to be the fastest growing sub-sector. The year saw renewed interest in co-operative housing.

Relations between co-operatives and the state improved further. The trend was away from control and patronage towards partnership. All countries had their co-operative laws and policies under review and two of them passed new co-operative Acts as well as Co-operative Policies.

Representation, Policy Dialogue and Member Relations

ICA has twelve members in the region. No new members joined during 1997, but contact was maintained with Rwanda, Mozambique, Namibia and South Africa. Expansion

in membership was hampered by the weak economic situation of potential members in some cases and poor structure and organization in others. Two organisations ceased to be members during the year as they could not meet the obligations of membership.

The Regional Director attended Annual General meetings of four member organizations. The AGMs were useful in strengthening ties between the Regional Office and the leadership of the member organizations. In addition, contacts and negotiations were held with governments and partners on such issues as resource mobilization, policy, legislation, and future plans. The result of these activities was a determination on the part of the Regional Office to strengthen relations with member organizations, sharpen its focus and to enhance relevance the relevance of its activities.

Technical Services

A workshop was held from 7 to 9 October 1997 in Dodoma to clarify, analyze and share experiences of the co-operative movement in Tanzania under structural adjustment. At the end of the workshop, co-operative managers and leaders understood the new environment better, including the threats and opportunities that it offers. They also agreed on future strategies.

A number of studies were carried out and their results published. A draft manual on Structural Adjustment Programmes and Co-operatives in Zambia was prepared. It is hoped that lessons can be drawn from the Zambian experience and that it can be useful for co-operatives and development partners elsewhere.

A study and report on the direct marketing of coffee in the Kilimanjaro Region of Tanzania was finalized. The report analyses the realities of coffee marketing and suggests alternative marketing and production strategies so as to increase returns to the farmer.

A pilot study covering Zambia and Malawi was started with the aim of proposing a strategy to enhance the participation of the youth in co-operatives. The report will be a key input in the proposed Youth Project for the region.

Work was started on the preparation of a Project Proposal on Gender. A related activity was the preparation of Guidelines for Gender Impact Analysis to help co-operatives assess the impact of their ongoing and planned activities from a Gender Perspective.

The Regional Office collaborated in its work with a number of national, regional and international agencies. There was very close collaboration with the ILO COOPNET/COOPREFORM Programmes on HRD activities and Co-operative restructuring initiatives. The Office continued to supervise projects for the Royal Norwegian Society for Development (NRD/NORCOOP) in Tanzania. The Regional Office initiative in South Africa was fully paid for and supported by the Canadian Co-operative Association. Visions in Action (VIA), an American NGO, provided a volunteer. The Swedish Co-operative Centre through ICAHO remains the main development partner of the Office.

Workshops, seminars and conferences were organized within the framework of HRD as well as sectional services. An ICA Housing seminar was held alongside the ICA Board Meeting in Kampala, Uganda. The Co-operative Development Policy course was held at the Co-operative College, Moshi, and brought together thirteen paying participants from seven countries. The Regional HRD Committee met.

Internal Management and Democratic Processes

The statutory meetings held during the year were the Regional Executive Committee and the Regional Council. Two technical meetings were held as well. The Regional Co-operative Development Coordinating Committee was held to monitor implementation of Ministerial Conference decisions. Two Planning and Consultation Meetings discussed and agreed on future Regional Office work plans and Budgets.

The Insurance Project based in Gaborone Botswana, stopped operations as at 31 December, 1997, following a change in ICMIF development strategy.



Gabriella Sozanski



Luc Balourdet

5. Regional Office for Europe (ROEP)

Work continued along the four priorities set for ICA Europe, which are Strengthening of Co-operatives in Eastern and Central Europe; Code of Practice, Governing Methods and Management Control Systems; Sustainable Human Development; and Co-operative Image in Europe: improving information and communication. There were, however, three determinant factors that influenced most of the activities in 1997:

- 1. The rapidly changing environment in Europe due to the enlargement process of the European Union.*

The future accession of Central and Eastern European countries to the EU will profoundly affect co-operative enterprises, and as a consequence they will need increased assistance from ICA to adapt to the new conditions. This was the topic of several conferences during the year.

The 120 co-operative leaders attending the seminar of ICA Europe, organised in Prague on 3-4 November, discussed the impact of the European Union's enlargement on co-operatives. Representatives of the European Parliament and the European Commission addressed the meeting.

Two sectoral conferences handled the same question, one organised by the Czech consumer co-operatives on integration and another by the Polish co-operative federation of agricultural co-operatives.

The issue of the reform and enlargement of the European Union is expected to be the most discussed topic of the coming years.

2. *The launching of the Project “Statistics and Information on European Co-operatives” which obtained a grant from the European Commission.*

Responses to the questionnaires sent out to co-operative organisations in all European countries have been received. A mid-term progress report was well received by DG XXIII. The electronic processing of the data collected has started.

3. *The preparation for the Regional Assembly for Europe to be organised in Paris, 15-16 October 1998.*

The French host organisations set up an organising committee. Election of a new European Council will take place at the Assembly and a one-day session will be devoted to discuss the future of co-operation, and threats and opportunities for co-operative societies.

Activities

Rules of procedures were proposed for ICA Europe’s involvement in East-West project activities. These will be brought in line with the global ICA development policy.

The information received from member organisations on their on-going project activities and development needs were evaluated. 75% responded and indicated management training, financial services, marketing and legislation as main areas where assistance was most needed.

A European breakdown of responses to the ICA questionnaire on Gender participation gave us an indication of the poor representation of women in governing bodies. As a follow-up, actions were proposed to improve gender equality with special attention to women’s representation at the next election. References in the new Rules to gender balance were also discussed.

An intermediary report of the ICA European project “Turning the pyramid upside down” was well received by TACIS. As part of the programme a study visit to three countries of consumer co-operative leaders of the Russian beneficiary organisations took place.

Statutory and representative functions

The European Council met twice during 1997, on 21 March in Rome and on 13 September in Geneva.

ICA Europe attended and submitted reports to the ICA Regional Directors’ meetings in Chiangmai and Geneva as well as to the ICA Board meetings in Uganda and Mexico.

Based on the European pilot project on statistics, ICA Europe participated in a workshop arranged for all the Regional Offices to discuss the Global ICA Database programme.

Other meetings attended were the International Workshop on "The co-operative movement within the context of Euro-Mediterranean Partnership", Bari, Italy; Seminar on the "Co-operatives at the threshold of the 3rd millennium in Romania" organised by UCECOM; 50th Jubilee Meeting of the UN Economic Commission for Europe in Geneva; CEA-COGECA Congress of European Farmers, Lausanne, September; congresses and national conferences in the UK, Latvia, Hungary, Poland, Czech Republic. Visits to members included Moldova, Slovak Republic and Spain.

Membership

Five new organisations were admitted as members to ICA during 1997. However, due to financial difficulties, five organisations had to leave ICA, leaving the number of member organisations in the region unchanged: 93 organisations from 36 countries and two international organisations.

Concerns were expressed about losing members. The need for more analysis and preventive measures was emphasised.

Sectoral collaboration included the participation of ICA Europe at the annual meeting of CCACE Presidents and General Secretaries, bilateral consultation meetings with Euro Coop, CECOP and COGECA, as well as participation at the Euro Coop/ICACC seminar "Biotechnology and sustainable consumption".

CECOP became officially the European Committee of CICOPA as approved by the General Assembly in Geneva.

The Regional Office for Europe was officially established, and from 1 November 1997 Luc Balourdet was seconded by Crédit Mutuel to assist the Office for a period of six months.

REPORT OF THE INTERNATIONAL CO-OPERATIVE AGRICULTURAL ORGANISATION



Churll-Hee Won



Shil-Kwan Lee



Won-Sik Noh

Executive Committee

Chairman: *Churll-Hee Won (Korea) (from 28 May 1998)*

Vice-Chairmen: *Dejandir Dalpasquale (Brazil); Jan FencI (Czech Republic);
Mohamed Idris (Egypt)*

Secretary: *Shil-Kwan Lee (Korea)*

Associate Secretary: *Won-Sik Noh (Korea)*

Meetings

The Executive Committee and the General Assembly of the Organization met in Geneva, Switzerland on 17 September, 1997.

The focus of the General Assembly was a review of the preparations for a Seminar on agricultural inputs which was to be held on the 17-18 September, 1997. The objective of the Seminar was to examine the challenges and opportunities facing Cooperatives in fostering inter-co-operation in the area of agricultural inputs. The Chairman reported that there were more than fifty registrants for the Seminar and that all invited speakers (who included representatives of the major agricultural input industries, consumer groups, co-operative marketers and international organizations) had agreed to participate.

The Executive Committee meeting was dominated by administrative issues. It was led off by a Financial Report by the Secretary. This was followed by a substantive discussion on ICAO membership policy. The President tabled a paper prepared by the ICA secretariat which noted that there were a number of ICAO members which had not paid membership dues for several years.

The President suggested that he would contact all of the organizations identified by the secretariat indicating that the decision to delete them from membership would be on the agenda of the next meeting of the ICAO Executive Committee. If he did not hear a positive response from them by that time it would be assumed that they did not wish to continue their membership in the ICAO.

The 1998 General Assembly of the ICAO was held in Manila, the Philippines on 28 May. Mr. Churl-Hee Won, the President of the National Agricultural Co-operative Federation(NACF) in Korea, was elected as the new President following Mr. Mario Dumais who had resigned as the President of ICAO in March 1998. Mr. Won nominated Mr. Shil-Kwan Lee, General Manager of the International Co-operation Office of the NACF for the Secretary and Mr. Won-Sik Noh, Agricultural Co-operative Advisor of the ICA Head Office for the Associate Secretary of the Organization.



ICAO General Assembly participants at the Philippine International Convention Centre in Manila.

INTERNATIONAL CO-OPERATIVE BANKING ASSOCIATION (ICBA)



Claude Béland



Ghislain Paradis

Executive Committee

President: *Claude Béland (Québec, Canada)*

Secretary: *Ghislain Paradis (Québec, Canada)*

Vice-Presidents & *E. Pflimlin, France (Europe), E.K. Mureithi, Kenya (East, Central and South Africa), M. Cardozo, Uruguay (Latin America), E.H. Boohene, Ghana (West Africa), J.A. Niño, Panama (The Americas), B.S. Vishwanathan, India (Asia and the Pacific), M. El Haloui, Morocco (North Africa and Middle East)*

Members: *M.K. Pedelty (U.K.), J.-C. Detilleux (France), E. Laskiewicz (Poland), T.O. Olupitan (Nigeria), C. Snyder (USA)*

Associate: *C. Baker (WOCCU, USA)*

The International Co-operative Banking Association was set up by national co-operative banks and financial organizations:

- *To exchange information;*
- *To promote co-operation among co-operative banks;*

- To promote the development of new co-operative banks through advice and assistance;
- To research and study subjects of common interest, i.e. capital formation, co-operative values as applied to banking, etc.

Membership is open to all banks and central thrift and credit organizations through one of the eight Regional Committees or by direct membership of the Central Executive Committee. 90 members from 43 countries.

The ICBA Central Executive Committee maintains close contact with the World Council of Credit Unions (USA), the European Association of Co-operative Banks (Brussels) and the International Raiffeisen Union (Bonn). The ICBA is a true global and democratically-elected specialized organization of the ICA, representing the views of co-operative financial institutions all over the world.

Meetings and issues

A Central Executive Committee meeting of the ICBA along with a Plenary Session and a Seminar took place on 16 and 17 September 1997, in Geneva, Switzerland. More than 80 participants attended the Seminar, on the theme "International standards regarding capital: A threat or an opportunity for financial co-operatives?". On that occasion a presentation was made by an official from the Standard & Poor's (USA) rating agency. Representatives from Europe, the Americas, Latin America, Africa and India were invited to share their views on this topic. The presentations made on that occasion appear in the ninth edition of the ICBA Journal (available by contacting the ICBA secretariat).

At the ICBA Seminar of September 1997, a special tribute was paid to former ICBA President, Mr. Terry Thomas, for his contribution to the co-operative world.

ICBA has launched a study on the profile of financial co-operative institutions worldwide. This survey is carried out by the Ecole des Hautes Etudes Commerciales, Centre de Gestion des Coopératives, Montréal, Canada. It is tabled to be published in mid 1998.

Other events

Over the past 12 months, Mr. Béland, as President of the ICBA, and Mr. Paradis, as Secretary, attended various international conferences.

In November 1997, Mr. Béland was invited to make a presentation on the occasion of the ICA Regional Conference - Americas 1997, in Mexico City, entitled "The Mouvement des caisses Desjardins and Employment: Directing our Efforts where it counts".

In December 1997, in Santa Fe de Bogotá, the ICBA Secretary, Mr. Ghislain Paradis, attended a Seminar of the Columbia Banking Superintendence, Co-operative

Confederation (Superintendencia Bancaria Confederación - CONFECOOP) where he made a presentation entitled "The Co-operative bank: An Engaged and Powerful Actor in Development" (El movimiento cooperativo bancario: Un actor comprometido y poderoso para el desarrollo).

Coming events: A Central Executive Committee meeting of the ICBA along with a Plenary Session and a Seminar are scheduled for 18 and 19 October in Paris, France. The theme of the Seminar will be: "The Co-operative Capital Market".



Giuseppe Fabretti

Executive Committee

Chairman: *Giuseppe Fabretti (Italy)*

Vice-Chairman: *Hisashi Tanaka (Japan)*

Secretary: *Antonella Cosciotti (Italy)*

Members: *Silvester Adamca (Slovak Republic); Sigurd Bak (Germany); Petr Brozek (Czech Republic); Anne Buch Jorgensen (Denmark); Lars HILLBOM, (Sweden); Patrice Jolivet (France); Lloyd Wilkinson (United Kingdom); Zoltán Zs. Szoke (Hungary)*

Meetings

The following meetings were held in 1997:

- *Executive Committee: 13 May (Brussels)*
- *Executive Committee: 14 September (Geneva)*
- *Plenary Session: 14 September (Geneva)*
- *Conference on Biotechnologies and Sustainable Consumption: 21 October (Brussels)*

Activities

CO-OPERATION POLICY IN DEVELOPING COUNTRIES

The ICCO, in co-operation with the ICA and the Swedish Co-operative Centre, has drawn up a project for the development and strengthening of consumer co-operatives already existing in Latin America. It is a four-year project promoted by ICA, ANCC, SCC and ICCO in the following countries: Mexico, Guatemala, Honduras, El Salvador, Costa Rica, Dominican Republic, Brazil and Argentina. At present, the first evaluation phase of the project has been implemented.

BIOTECHNOLOGIES AND SUSTAINABLE CONSUMPTION

The ICCO, in co-operation with Euroco-op and with a EC funding, has organised a Conference on Biotechnologies and Sustainable Consumption, which was held on 21 October 1997 in Brussels. The main objectives of this Conference are: to develop closer links between consumer co-operatives in the various countries and external bodies; to evaluate present and future trends in consumption and distribution; to indicate the ways to really meet members' and customers' needs; to identify the elements and the co-operative values that can determine the success of consumer co-operation in the 21st Century.

1998 Activity Plan

- Continuation of the project aimed at strengthening consumer co-operatives in Latin America.
- Identification of opportunities for the establishment of trading relations between the co-operatives in developing countries (Asia - Latin America) and consumer co-operatives in Europe and Japan.
- Carrying out a co-operative training and education project, as the answer and implementation of the 5th Principle of the ICA Co-operative Identity Declaration; this project should include and, wherever useful and possible, harmonise the various experiences carried out up to now in the different countries, in different conditions and with sometime unhomogenous results.
- Common meetings with other ICA co-operative sectors and with Euroco-op in order to discuss subjects and issues of mutual interest (consumer protection, environmental policy, fair trade, development of the co-operative concept, etc.).
- Seminar on Fair Trade in collaboration with Interco-op to be held on 13 October in Paris.
- Drawing up a project regarding the "Electronic Shopping": informing member organisations of issues and problems; proposing actions to be taken (lobbying of politicians, legislation); devolving a Code of Conduct together with partners (to be

adopted by members organisations, to be used as a demand towards suppliers and in other business contexts); following the further development of the EU Action Plan, informing the member organisations about it.

1998 Meetings

- *Executive Committee: 2 April (Rome)*
- *Seminar on Fair Trade: 13 October (Paris)*
- *Executive Committee: 14 October (Paris)*
- *Plenary Session: 14 October (Paris)*



Shoji Uemura



Masaaki Sato

Executive Committee

Chairman: *Shoji Uemura (Japan)*

Vice-Chairmen: *Jong Sik Park (Republic of Korea); Antal Csoma (Hungary);
Tewary Madan Mohan (India); Maurice Benoish (France)*

Secretary: *Masaaki Sato (Japan)*

Honorary Chairmen: *Jirozaemon Saito (Japan); Pierre Lacoure (France)*

Auditors: *Wibisono Wiyono (Indonesia); M.C. Merril Perera (Sri Lanka)*

Members: *Tuan Hj Shajabudin Shafie (Malaysia); Sawat Saengbangla
(Thailand); Benedikt Sveinsson (Iceland)*

Membership

The International Co-operative Fisheries Organization has 27 members from the following 23 countries: Japan, Republic of Korea, Philippines, Malaysia, Thailand, Indonesia, Bangladesh, India, Sri Lanka, Pakistan, Vietnam, Fiji, Ghana, Nigeria, Tanzania, France, Iceland, Hungary, Italy, Greece, Canada, Colombia, Chile.

Activities during 1997

The Executive Committee met in September in Geneva in conjunction with the ICA General Assembly. The plenary meeting of ICFO was held in Geneva in September also in conjunction with the ICA General Assembly. ICFO held a Workshop in the Philippines and a Seminar in Thailand as follows:

ICA/CUP/BFAR Workshop on Community-Based Fisheries Management through Co-operatives, 29-31 October 1997 at Novotel Puerto Azul, Ternate, Cavite, Philippines. The workshop was organized in collaboration with the Co-operative Union of the Philippines (CUP) and the Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources of the government of the Philippines (BFAR). It was attended by 62 persons: 40 participants, eight resource speakers, six guests and eight members of the workshop management co-ordination team.

The workshop adopted several resolutions which included the following:

- To request the president of the Republic of the Philippines and Congress to retain the 15 Km municipal coastal fishing zone as provided in the Local Government Code in the proposed Fishery Code;*
- To urge the league of municipalities and cities to adopt a programme of granting exclusive fishery rights to co-operatives in coastal fishing areas in order to conserve and protect fishery resources from illegal fishing and rapid degradation;*
- To request the Secretary of Department of Interior and Local Government to enjoin Local Government Units to observe the constitutional mandate of promoting and supporting co-operatives as instruments for social justice and economic development as enunciated under the Republic Act 6938;*
- To request the PFDA (Philippine Fisheries Development Authority) to give priority to fishery co-operatives in the awarding of usufruct or lease agreements for the use of PFDA fishing ports, processing and fish landing facilities;*
- To request the CDA (Co-operative Development Authority) and concerned agencies to conduct an inventory of - and support to - co-operatives with fishery functions with programmes for institutional development.*

FAO/ICA/CLT/DOF/CPD/CAD National Seminar on the Role of Fishery Co-operatives in Promoting Sustainable Fishery Development in Thailand, 5-7 November, 1997 at the CLT Training Centre, Bangkok, Thailand.

The seminar was organized in collaboration with FAO's regional office in Bangkok, The Co-operative League of Thailand (CLT), and Department of Fisheries (DOF), The Co-operative Promotion Department (CPD) etc. of the government of Thailand etc. It was attended by 103 participants, from CLT, DOF, CPD, the Co-operative Audit Department (CAD), the Southeast Asian Fisheries Development Centre (SEAFDEC), the Fish Marketing Organization (FMO), the Bank of Agriculture and Agricultural Co-operatives (BAAC), from universities and from the media.

The seminar concluded as follows:

- In order to promote sustainable fishery development especially along the coastal zones of Thailand, the legal framework for the fishing right of coastal fishing villages should be established, with full coordination with the village administrative units of the provincial governments. The establishment of the fishers' groups was considered as the basic fishers' organizations at which they could develop into the fully functional co-operatives as membership increased and business management became effective.*
- However, as the fishers' groups and fishery co-operatives are supervised by different governmental agencies at present, it is essential to foster closer coordination among the public agencies concerned, as well as with financial institutions through a Common National Policy and a Comprehensive Plan of Action for Fishery Co-operative Development in Thailand.*

Further, the seminar recommended several points for further consideration by the agencies concerned, such as, for example, that the DOF should review the existing fishery laws and regulations to effect the establishment of the coastal fishing rights to be managed by coastal communities and/or fishery co-operatives.

Other activities during 1997 included publishing of Activity News No. 1 and membership increase campaign.

Meetings and Projects Underway: The executive committee and plenary meetings are being arranged with National Federation of Fisheries Co-operatives (NFFC) of the Republic of Korea. These meetings will be held on Monday 26 October 1998, at NFFC in Seoul. It will be combined with the meeting of the ICA Committee for Fisheries for Asia and the Pacific which is also scheduled to be held in Seoul in October in conjunction with the ICA Regional Assembly for Asia and the Pacific. In addition, on 27 October, a joint Asia and the Pacific Regional Workshop of Agriculture, Consumers and Fisheries Committees on business development will be held in Seoul. The so called "ODA Seminar" on fisheries co-operatives for HRD development under the Japanese government assisted programme will be held in Sao Paulo, Brazil, the details of which will be worked out by the end of June, 1998. Other activities such as issuing of ICFO's bulletin will be undertaken as in previous years.

Future Goals

ICFO plans to increase its membership to at least 40, from the present 27, within the coming 5 years. It also wants to further expand its activities in collaboration with UN agencies such as FAO etc.

INTERNATIONAL HEALTH CO-OPERATIVE ORGANISATION (IHCO)



Shoji Kato



Mats Ahnlund

Executive Committee

Chairman: Shoji Kato (Japan)

Vice-Chairmen: Edmundo Castilho (Brazil); Francisco Carreño (Spain)

Secretary: Mats Ahnlund (ICA)

Members: Per-Olf Jönson (Sweden); Ismael Roldán (Colombia); Vacancy from Asia and the Pacific region

The Chairman, two Vice-Chairmen and three Board members are elected from each of the following regions. Asia and the Pacific, the Americas and Europe. They also represent user-owned, producer-owned and integrated co-operatives.

Meetings

The 2nd IHCO General Meeting was held in Geneva in September 1997. The GM managed to play an active role to solve some problems we had since the Founding Meeting. IHCO consists of ten member organizations and some other organizations are expected to join us.

IHCO Regional Meetings have already been formed in those three Regions. They actively promote international and domestic exchange with other organizations and organizational development.

For example, the Asia and Pacific region provides support to some organizations in Nepal and Mongolia to transform into co-operatives. However, we could make little contact with the African region. Setting up IHCO Africa as soon as possible is one of our future goals and we must contact the ICA Regional Office in Africa and encourage health co-operatives in their region to forward the idea.

The revision of Rules and Subscription Formula was discussed at the fifth IHCO Board meeting in Malaga in April 1998, and furthermore regional structure was one of main topics for the meeting. As a result, we decided to organize a working group for "how the regional structure should be". The group will prepare a report which clarifies principles of Regional Meetings, at the same time, make IHCO membership more open and find out the way to avoid unreasonable organizational administration. If the report is approved by the Board, it will submit it to the next GM. There are four members in the group: Jönson and Roldon from the Board, Mats Ahnlund, Secretary, and Robby Tulus, Regional Director of ICA ROAP.

IHCO issues a newsletter twice a year and has decided on an original logotype. A newsletter is sent to members of IHCO, to Regional Meetings and to the related organizations of ICA. We are also co-financing a video news release (VNR) about health co-operatives, produced by World Television, UK, under the direction of the ICA Communications Department. This is a follow-up to the first video which was about agricultural co-ops in Africa.

IHCO has worked to establish a close relationship with ICA, other NGOs and particularly WHO since its establishment. This policy is officially approved by the Board. We were invited by WHO to attend the 4th International Conference on Health Promotion in Jakarta in July 1997 and IHCO appealed to the participants. We hope that IHCO will become an important partner of WHO in the international health promotion activity. We also have a joint programme with WHO's Aging unit for the International Year of the Elderly, 1999. This programme was offered to the Health Co-operative Association of JCCU, however, we believe the partner should be IHCO itself. We also had several meetings with the ILO's Department of co-operative development.

IHCO was formed in November 1996 and has become well organized in such a short period. This is because of the serious anxiety caused by the fact that social security has failed at the global level and commercialisation has entered into the health and welfare field. Co-operatives, as non-profit organizations, must be the most effective and ethical organizations to solve these problems. However, IHCO needs to be strengthened by increasing the number of members. Meanwhile activities should be devoted to the co-operative identity.

INTERNATIONAL CO-OPERATIVE HOUSING



Rolf Trodin



Jens Heiser



Ivar O. Hansen

Executive Committee

Chairman: Rolf Trodin (Sweden)

Vice-Chairman: Jens Heiser (Germany)

Secretary: Ivar O Hansen (Norway)

Members: Murat Karayalcin (Turkey); Alexandra Wilson (Canada); Herbert Ludl (Austria); Lois Coelho (Portugal); Mohamed Tantawi (Egypt); Ivan Prikryl (Czech Rep.); Michael E. Doyle (USA); Bohdan Saar (Poland); Vladimir Sekanina (Slovak Rep.); Jonson M. Musau (Kenya); Jorge Salas Sanhueza (Chile)

Membership

ICA Housing has 50 members from 37 countries. On our mailing list are also organisations that are only connected to a region of Housing. We have about 40 associated regional "members", mostly in Latin America.

We have established four regions with the same geographic structure as the ICA regions.

Activities in 1997

We have had two board meetings, in June in Vienna and in Geneva in September. Our

plenary meetings were held in Geneva in September. The Chairman, the Vice-Chairman and the Secretary met three times to prepare the meetings and seminars.

In connection with our board meetings we always have seminars. The theme of these seminars has since Habitat II in Istanbul 1996 been the follow up work of that conference. We have also had separate seminars around this subject.

Over two days in April in Kampala, Uganda, 110 participants from Uganda, Kenya, Zimbabwe, Sudan and South Africa discussed how to implement the themes of Habitat II into their organisations and countries.

In November, in Mexico, 95 delegates from 12 countries had a two-day meeting to discuss legal framework, financing system, saving programmes, self constructing, education and training etc.

Meetings and projects underway

In April 1998 we had our board meeting and seminar in Cairo.

In October 1998 we will have our board meeting, plenary meeting and a seminar in Paris in connection with the Regional Assembly of ICA Europe. The theme of the seminar will this time be "added value of membership". We will also have a discussion about the new economic structure in the world and its influence on the possibilities to build housing co-operatives for people with small and moderate incomes .

In 1999 we plan to have a board meeting in Portugal in April and a board meeting, plenary meeting and a seminar in Quebec in August.

Material

During 1997 we have made a package with our most important documents in an envelope with our own design. Among the documents are our position paper "Housing Co-operatives and the Co-operative Identity", our constitution and rules, statements, address lists etc.

In our General Assembly in Paris we will present a booklet called "organised self help to solve housing problems". The booklet will be presented by professor Münkner, who has written it for us.

There is also going to be a paper from our working group on the subject of getting resources from international organisations such as AEU and IF and international and national aid organisations for co-operative housing for low income people in developing countries.

ICA Housing has decided to edit and print a publication presenting our various member organisations and the different ways they are working.

INTERNATIONAL CO-OPERATIVE AND MUTUAL INSURANCE FEDERATION (ICMIF)



Dimon R. McFerson



Hans Dahlberg

Executive Committee

Chairman: *Dimon R. McFerson (USA)*

Vice-Chairmen: *Siegfried Sellitsch (Austria); Koichiro Koeda (Japan)*

Members: *Alfredo Gonzales Moledo (Argentina); Terry Squire (Canada); Jurgen Forterer (Germany); Enea Mazzoli (Italy); Lakshmanan Meyyappan (Malaysia); Tan Kin Lian (Singapore); Tore Andersson (Sweden); David Hollas (UK)*

Ex Officio; Hans Dahlberg, Chief Executive, ICMIF; Dennis Deters, chairman, AAC/MIS; vacant, chairman, AFRA

A global reach for local strength

ICMIF is also known as:

- *Fédération Internationale des Coopératives et Mutuelles d'Assurance*
- *Kokusai Kyodokumiai Hoken Rengo*
- *Internationaler Verband Genossenschaftlicher und Wechselseitiger Versicherungen*
- *Federación Internacional de Cooperativas y Mutuales de Seguros*

Mission statement

ICMIF's origins go back to 1922, when it was established as the Insurance Committee of the ICA. It became a separate but affiliated organization in 1972 and was renamed and restructured as ICMIF in 1993. Its mission statement is:

"To enhance and accelerate the development of a distinct, unified, strong and influential co-operative and mutual insurance sector of the global financial services industry.

"We promote international collaboration and help strengthen co-operative and mutual insurers in different countries and regions on the basis of shared principles.

"We help our members identify with, remain committed to and contribute significantly to the co-operative movement and democratic mutuality nationally, regionally, and globally."

Its work falls into five general categories: membership and regional associations; reinsurance; development; intelligence; communications.

Membership and regional associations

Membership has increased steadily over the years and now includes more than 250 co-operative and mutual insurers represented by 104 organizations in 62 countries. In the past year, Groupama (France) which had resigned at the end of 1996 rejoined the Federation.

The work of the Federation is assisted by three regional associations covering Europe, the Americas and Asia. These associations, with their local knowledge and skills, are able to help provide focused services relevant to the members in their regions. A regional association has been formed in Africa but will remain inactive until our members there are free from the struggle for survival.

Reinsurance

ICMIF's reinsurance services aim to promote co-operation and understanding of reinsurance matters, to encourage reinsurance exchanges, to advise members on their reinsurance requirements and to obtain suitable cover with secure reinsurers.

The international reinsurance market is becoming increasingly competitive and the exchange of reinsurance business among members can help them to meet competition and develop business relations with co-operative partners. During the year, the number of treaties exchanged increased, compared to the previous year.

ICMIF is also active in networking and training members using the latest and most professional techniques. For example, it has produced two computerized business simula-

tions, the latest based on a start-up company which requires participants to make key decisions relevant not only to reinsurance but also to the development of an insurance company.

We are also introducing value-added projects, which will result in products that can be utilized by members. The development of computer-based models for evaluating alternative proportional treaty structures and a model for the assessment of excess-of-loss quotations is now in the pipeline.

Development

ICMIF's development work is aimed at helping companies to help themselves using technical advice and financial help. The approach is to provide them with the right kind of assistance in the right place at the right time.

Development is taking place against the background of less regulated, more open markets and a situation in a number of developed markets where insurers are looking to increase their international business. Both are tending to increase competition.

To keep pace, members need capital for growth and professional technical assistance. ICMIF is considering a mutual capital fund for established members and an international reserve fund for developing members.

A proposal for a joint venture emerged in 1997 from an ICMIF-sponsored co-operative insurance unification project in the Philippines. ICMIF has now prepared a business plan for the joint venture, for which four co-operative and trade union organizations in the country are raising start-up capital.

A potentially significant new initiative is taking place in Brazil. The apex co-operative body, the Organization of Co-operatives of Brazil (OCB) - the home organization of the ICA President, Roberto Rodrigues - has started working with ICMIF to pursue the setting up of an insurance enterprise whose main purpose initially will be to provide a package of insurance and financial services to over half a million farmer-members of agricultural co-operatives. An unusual aspect of this initiative is that two local private insurers are helping.

With the help of Zenrosai (Japan), two ICMIF consultants are working with the trade union movement in Ghana to evaluate prospects for setting up a co-operative insurance programme. Their year-long assignment began in February 1998.

CIS Kenya, which has required regular intensive management care following a historic rescue package put together by ICMIF in 1995, is showing signs of progress. There has been good press coverage of its activities.

Shared intelligence

The service provided by the intelligence unit has developed still further with increasing emphasis on joint projects, especially those with a business-to-business relevance.

The Member Directory has again been updated and continues to provide an accurate overview of the membership. Collaborative research and the analysis of market data have also been undertaken extensively. The Insurance Intelligence Network (IIN) - a group of experienced experts from members, set up in 1996 - reviews and comments upon activities and projects at key stages in their development. Already completed are a well-received report on direct response distribution, a report on bancassurance and a study on healthcare insurance. A new study on pensions and long term savings is currently being undertaken.

Part of ICMIF's "shared" intelligence function is to set up networking opportunities to enable members to improve expertise in a focused and professional manner. A marketing and distributing channels network, for example, is looking into field selling forces and best practices of agency systems. Another network, the ICMIF investment network, is considering subjects, which include trends in world financial markets and asset liability management. The Internet is a major topic for senior strategists meeting in 1998.

Many other projects are in the pipeline as ICMIF builds up a stockpile of intellectual capital - a renewable resource that can be used by members as a driving force for the development of co-operative insurance around the world.

Communications

Information exchange, through specialist networking and the two-yearly conference, for example, is fundamental to communication among ICMIF members. Meanwhile, the media employed for ongoing communications continue to be developed and messages refreshed. ICMIF has been connected to e-mail via the Internet since 1996 ([Http://w.w.w.icmif.org](http://w.w.w.icmif.org)) and will shortly have its own site. ICMIF Network, its global newsletter, is now being written, printed and distributed in-house. Rapport, the newsletter for ICMIF's European regional association, ACME, sums up ICMIF's forward-looking approach to communications: it is the first ICMIF publication to be distributed by e-mail. Reaction to this innovation has been extremely favourable.

INTERNATIONAL CO-OPERATIVE AND
ASSOCIATIVE TOURISM ORGANISATION (TICA)



Maurizio Davolio



Mats Ahnlund

Executive Committee

Chairman: Maurizio Davolio (Italy)

Secretaries: Mats Ahnlund (for ICA internal reports and administration)
Urbain Claeys (for external relations, BITS: Belgium)

At present TICA is undergoing a phase of restructuring. A membership drive has started which is giving promising results. All management functions have been suspended except the Chairmanship. TICA operates in close co-operation with the Bureau International du Tourisme Social in consideration of their common interests and values; a number of co-operative organisations in fact are members of BITS.

TICA intends to operate in the following areas:

- *Definition of its co-operative identity based on joint work, its democratic structure, the fact that it is a non-profit organisation and its principles of mutuality;*
- *Search for opportunities for business relations amongst its members and with members of BITS;*
- *Participation in international projects for the development of tourism through the services of the most expert professionals from its associated organisations;*
- *Development of a tourism based on respect for the environment and local populations which aims to aid the least prosperous classes.*

In the next few months TICA will be present at the BITS Congress which should take place in Lisbon from 15 to 18 September and during which a workshop will be held. The Chairman will take part in some regional ICA meetings with the aim of making new contacts, thus contributing to the re-launch and strengthening of TICA.



Activities

During 1997, the following activities were carried out:

THE EHI SEMINAR ON RETAIL TRADE

The Seminar was held with the EuroHandelsinstitut e.V. in Cologne in the shape of a training course for our Hungarian, Slovakian and other members. It was focused on an update in retailing.

WORKING GROUPS.

Two of the INTERCOOP working groups get secretarial support from the ICA. The Food Laboratories Group had a meeting in England and the Working Group on Green Issues and Ethics is now involved in the seminar on fair trade, to be held 1998.

THE CAUCASUS PROJECT

One new activity decided by the INTERCOOP Members Meeting last September was to support the transition of consumer co-ops in the Caucasus region. The joint organisation of the consumer co-ops in Georgia, Armenia and Azerbidjan, Consuminter, based in Moscow, has agreed to help with the preparations.

We have also got ICA as a partner. The intention is to use the experience of our Hungarian and Slovakian members, which both have passed the most important steps of transition from planned to market economy.

Collaboration with ICCO

Several discussions were held in 1997 with the Chairman of ICCO, the International Consumer Co-operative Organisation, resulting in an agreement to collaborate around activities in 1998. The ultimate target is to take even further steps in this collaboration.

Secretariat

The INTERCOOP Members' Meeting on 17 September 1997 decided to close the Secretariat in Copenhagen and approved that the ICA Secretariat takes over some of the duties. Ole Dueholm resigned as secretary and was replaced by Mats Ahnlund.

**INTERNATIONAL ORGANISATION OF INDUSTRIAL,
ARTISANAL AND SERVICE PRODUCERS'
CO-OPERATIVES (CICOPA)**



Marián Rybár



Arsenio Invernizzi

Executive Committee

Chairman: *Marián Rybár (Slovakia)*

Secretary: *Arsenio Invernizzi (ICA)*

Vice-Chairmen: *B.S.Vishvanathan (India); Mohamed Sebaiy (Egypt), F.Scalvini (Italy)*

Members: *Michel Gauthier (France); Yuzo Nagato (Japan); Dumitru Danga (Romania); Agus Sudono (Indonesia); Mrs.Prasad (India); Vivian Woodell (UK), Alvarino (Uruguay), Ada Souleymane Kibora (West Africa); Vincent Lubasi (East, Central and Southern Africa), Daman Prakash (India)*

Membership

CICOPA has 72 member organisations from 52 countries (Europe: 15, Africa: 15, America: 13, Asia: 9).

Publications

CICOPA Newsletter, twice a year.

Statutory Meetings

Every two years a Plenary meeting is held (usually to coincide with the ICA Board meeting) with two Executive meetings taking place each year, the last of which was in Geneva in September 1997. The CICOPA General Assembly approved new rules including provisions for the creation of regional sub-committees and development organisations. CICOPA-France-Development became the first CICOPA development organisation.

Regional Organisations

On 18 September 1997, the Extraordinary General Assembly of CECOP/ CICOPA-Europe was held and ratified the creation of a CICOPA European subcommittee.

At the ICA Regional Conference in Mexico City in November 1997, a preparatory committee consisting of five people representing producer co-operative organisations from the Americas was established in order to prepare the Constituent General Assembly of CICOPA-Américas in Uruguay in November 1998. Similar steps are being implemented for the Asia and Pacific region.

CICOPA DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMMES

CICOPA implements its development programmes through the following consultants: Ruben Villa, Bruno Roelants, Pierre Guiard-Schmid, Sergiy Smolyansky.

SOUTH CONE OF LATIN AMERICA (Argentina, Paraguay and Uruguay)

Programme title: Advisory service for co-operative enterprises

Objective: Reinforce and develop the production and service co-operative movement, and strengthen commercial links. The programme has been completed in Paraguay and Uruguay and continues in Argentina.

Main results achieved:

- *Services in management control, commercialization, and marketing;*
- *The establishment of first commercial links between Argentina co-ops and co-ops from Spain and France;*
- *The constitution of a risk capital fund for small and medium enterprises (SME) and co-ops with the support of the Argentine Provincial Institute for Co-operative Action assessed by the Group ESFIN-IDES France;*
- *The initiation of a study to develop a programme of Integral Assistance to co-ops in conjunction with Corporación Coop. Mondragon, financed by the World Bank.*

CENTRAL AMERICA

During 1997, the project "Strengthening Co-operative Management" was discussed with ACSUR (Las Segovias y La Unión de Cooperativas Madrileñas). This project pro-

vides technical assistance in the area of management and also a 24-month training programme on subjects such as co-operative legislation, marketing, financial administration and human resources, etc.

The programme is offered in two countries: Costa Rica and El Salvador. It was launched in December 1997. In El Salvador, the programme is conducted by the Agrarian Reform for the Production, Processing and Exportation of Coffee and in Costa Rica by the National Council of Co-operatives and the Consortium of Industrial Co-operatives of Palm Oil. The beneficiaries of the programme are about twenty co-operatives in each country which deal with agricultural or the industrial production of handicrafts.

CHINA

This programme started in January 1996 and the present three-year phase ends in January 1999. The programme is implemented through XIMENG, a consultancy co-operative.

Main features of the programme at this stage:

- *a focus on the conversion of public enterprises into worker co-operatives. Requests for help in conversion cases in Shanghai have multiplied with whole groups of enterprises applying for assistance;*
- *international economic co-operation.*

Ximeng's international contacts over the last few months have focused on Canada and the US. Talks are underway to extend the programme throughout the country, especially in the North East, Central China, South-Western China and in the region bordering Shanghai. This should be accomplished through the establishment of local branches of Ximeng Consulting. Ximeng is presently trying to promote housing co-operatives in Shanghai, with the workforce of the enterprises being converted into worker's co-operatives as a base.

INDIA

The India project started in 1993 with the present three-year phase running between the beginning of 1997 and the end of 1999. This programme is divided into two sub-programmes.

North Central India

The main focus is on the establishment and consolidation of a co-operative consortium and the commercialisation of products. The main thrust has been in the shoe sector. In November 1997, a federation of silk co-operatives was established with as many as 50 primary co-operatives registered. An important Japanese bilateral programme for upgrading the technology used in silk production is now under negotiation (Madhya Pradesh).

Southern India

The co-operative sector in this region has made considerable improvements, especially in the field of commercialisation and self-financing ratio.

EUROPE

Under the guidance and with the direct participation of the Institute of Social Co-operation ICOSI - France, the Central Union of Worker's Productive Co-operatives and the University of National and World Economy pursue a range of actions related to the foundation of an International Educational Centre for the training of co-operative personnel.

Activities planned into future

CICOPA is studying the feasibility of extending the development programmes in China, India and other Asian countries and a proposal for Brazil is also being studied. Preparations have begun on the establishment of a the subcommittee for Asia and the Pacific. The organization of the fifth CICOPA Conference was discussed during the EC meeting on 5 May 1998 in Bucharest.

ICA COMMUNICATIONS COMMITTEE (ICACC)



Poul Dines



Iain Williamson



Mary Treacy

Executive Committee

Chairman: *Poul Dines (Denmark)*

Vice-Chairman: *Iain Williamson (UK)*

Secretary: *Mary Treacy (ICA)*

Members: *Kamal Hamdy Aboul Kheir (Egypt); Si Wan Kim (Korea); Tony Luscombe (UK); Zahid Qureshi (ICMIF); Denis Tzarevcan (France).*

Membership

The Committee is a small active group with 17 members from 15 organisations in 9 countries. There are a further 19 individuals in membership of the ICACC Subcommittee on Network Technology for Trade and Communications. The Committee's Rules have recently been changed to allow individuals who work for organisations and universities promoting co-operatives but not in membership of ICA to join. A mail vote was organised to choose the new Executive and members decided to re-elect the standing executive with no changes except for the addition of Mr. Si Wan Kim, from the National Agricultural Co-operative Federation (NACF) in Korea.

Meetings

Since the last reporting period, the ICACC has held Executive Meetings in Geneva on 14 September 1997 and 30 March 1998. ICA President, Roberto Rodrigues, whom

the Board has appointed as their liaison person with the ICACC, attended the latter. He emphasised that efforts should be doubled to increase communication and improve the image of the ICA. He also encouraged providing members with business opportunities through the Internet.

A meeting of the new Working Group on Network Technology for Trade and Communications was held in September 1997. A Joint Seminar with the HRD Committee on overcoming geographical barriers through electronic networking and distance learning was also held in September in conjunction with the ICA General Assembly.

Activities

The project concerning the Journalist Workshop in Africa was cancelled owing to budgetary reasons. There are, however, plans to hold a Communications Seminar on Lobbying and COPAC Open Forum in conjunction with the Regional Assembly in Uruguay in December 1998.

Report on Working Group on Network Technology for Trade and Communications

This committee has been set up to receive information on developments in the area of trade and communication networks, advise in the creation of these networks, inform the co-operative community of advances and support the integration of such networks into co-operatives.

Inaugural Meeting

The Working Group (WG) met in Geneva on the 18th of September in conjunction with the ICA General Assembly. Nine members of the WG met as well as Dr. Jim Spohrer of Apple Computer who attended the meeting as a guest. Dr. Spohrer had earlier made a presentation to the Joint Seminar on Overcoming Geographical Barriers through Electronic Networking and Distance Learning, organised by the ICA Global Human Resource Development and the Communications Committees with the support from the ILO COOPNET Project.

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Those attending were: Byron Henderson, Chair, Centre for the Study of Co-ops, Univ. of Saskatchewan; Mats Ahnlund, Maria Elena Chavez, Bjorn Genberg, Alina Pawlowska and Mary Treacy, ICA; Jim Spohrer, Apple Computer, Learning Communities Group; Anne Reynolds, Center for Co-ops, Univ. of Wisconsin; Michel Doray, Confederation des caisses Desjardins; Malcolm Corbett, Poptel Internet; Paul Hazen, NCBA.

For the short-term the WG members took on the following tasks.

- *How to build a "community in a kit" from Apple*
- *E-Commerce models*
- *Commerce component of the ICA*
- *EDI - E-Commerce*
- *Trade bulletin*
- *Member websites*
- *Co-op Economy*
- *Data collection*

Desirable activities in the next year

Over the next year it would be desirable for the WG to act as a core resource for the creation of demonstration or pilot projects in technology training, eCommerce, information technology transfer within a co-operative organization, and a co-operative technology centre. The assistance of co-operative organizations will be essential

For further information on the Working Group, please contact Byron Henderson, email: hendersb@duke.usask.ca, or Mary Treacy, email: treacy@mail.coop.org.



Yehudah Paz



Jan-Eirik Imbsen

Executive Committee

Chairperson: Yehudah Paz (Israel)

Vice-Chairpersons: Ungku A. Aziz (Malaysia); Gabriele Ullrich (ILO); Fakhry Shousha (Egypt); Taketoshi Nojiri (Japan)

Secretary: Jan-Eirik Imbsen (ICA)

Members: B.D. Sharma (India); Vitaliy Teplov (Russia); Saled Syafradji (Indonesia); Esther Gicheru (Kenya); Luis Arturo Muñoz (Colombia)

We are pleased with our increasing contacts with committees like Communications and Research, but we have so far not had any substantive discussions with any of the committees representing business sectors. We hope that it will be possible to open a dialogue with some of them also.

A meeting of the Executive Committee was held in conjunction with last year's General Assembly in Geneva. We also organised a workshop on Electronic Networking and Distance Education in collaboration with the Communications Committee and the ILO Coopnet programme.

As a follow up to the seminar, exciting work is now being done by our communications department on a new web site that could be of great interest to the HRD Committee. The Virtual Community for Co-operative Education (VCCE) will be a free association of co-operative educators, developers, researchers, learners and communicators collabo-

rating for the advancement of co-operative education and research. The VCCE website, which is being developed at head office by Hazel Wilcox, an independent consultant, in collaboration with Apple Computers, will contain materials relevant to co-operative education and research. Provided funding can be identified, there will be a specific platform within the VCCE allowing for the HRD Committee to communicate and network.

This year's events include:

A workshop on Development/Training - Adding Value has been planned as part of the Research Conference in Cork in May. Royal Professor Aziz represented the Committee and chaired the workshop.

A global seminar on Value-based Professional Management in Co-operatives will be held in Puna, India, in September. The NCUI (India), which has kindly offered to cover all local costs in connection with the seminar, and ICA ROAP are joint organisers with the HRD Committee. This theme is also in line with ICA's development priorities as expressed in the new draft Policy for Co-operative Development.

The next statutory meeting will take place in Seoul in October in conjunction with the Asia/Pacific Regional Assembly.

RESEARCH COMMITTEE



Roger Spear



Alina Pawlowska

Executive Committee

Chairman: Roger Spear (UK)

Vice-Chairs: Akira Kurimoto (Japan); Lou Hammond-Ketilson (Canada);
Yohanan Stryjan (Sweden)

Secretary: Alina Pawlowska (ICA)

This has been a busy year for the research committee with lively activities globally through our international conference, and within the regions good plans for a considerable level of activity during this and subsequent years. All members of our international team have been actively supporting one activity or another. Although we organise activities largely through electronic communication, we do generally meet at our conferences or other international meetings. We also enjoy the support of Mary Treacy (Director of Communications) and we thank her, as well as others in Geneva, who assist us from time to time.

Recent Activities

This year's major activity was our international research conference in Cork, Ireland, 13-17 May 1998. This followed hard on the heels of last year's conference "The co-operative advantage in a civil economy" in October 1997 at Bertinoro just outside Bologna, Italy. This was organised with the assistance of Bologna University, Dept. Economics of Co-operatives and Nonprofit Organisations, and the Italian Institute for

Co-operative Studies - L.Luzzatti. We were made extremely welcome by our Italian hosts, who use the Bertinoro Centre, a converted castle, for training and a masters course in not-for-profit and co-operative studies. Well over 70 participants (from 20 different countries), plus a lively group of Italian postgraduates, met to listen and debate about 40 papers, on top of a hill. Debates continued well into the night, with the main complaint being that we had so many good papers that we had to have parallel sessions which meant missing hearing all the papers - an embarrassment of riches!

The RIC Special Issue on research was published in March 1998 - it includes some of the best papers from our Bertinoro conference. In many ways it was a pity to leave out other papers, but these are extremely worthy of a wider readership and I hope you find them worthwhile and stimulating.

Our participant database continues to expand. Research Committee participation is individual and institutional and we now have over 130 researchers and 50 research institutions from 30 countries listed. Although Europeans are the larger group, we are seeing increasing interest from other regions, particularly Japan, Canada, and USA. One important factor in this is our continually improving capability for communication and networking, through the ICA web pages, e-mail communications, and our conference and publishing activities. This year about three quarters of participants were communicated with by e-mail and fax, obviating the need for conventional mailings.

Research Conference 1998 - Values and Adding Value in a Global Context

This was organised with the assistance of the Centre for Co-operative Studies, University of Cork, and held on 13-17 May 1998 in Cork, Ireland. Our theme raises a challenge - as we near the end of the current millenium, it is becoming increasingly clear that competition is becoming more and more intense, and with deregulation and the changing role of governments, the financial pressures on many co-ops has become extreme, and yet there are numerous examples where co-ops seem to have reinvented themselves - developing value based practices and adding economic value. Researchers can play a constructive role analysing such developments both theoretically and practically, and help create a robust dynamic independent co-operative movement in the years to come. This year for the first time we also invited papers for a special workshop on Training and Development in a development context, in conjunction with the HRD Committee of the ICA. The Irish are renowned for their charm and friendliness, and our hosts were no exception - the University Campus is very pleasant, and the O'Rahilly building where we met was excellent for our conference. On the second day of the conference we broke with tradition and made a visit to a dairy co-op and a credit union, finishing in a pub where we enjoyed Irish dance and music. Memories of that day will stay with most of us for many years - debates on the future of dairy co-operation, a priest's enthralling description of the community roots of collective action, and groups of young children dancing the evening away in a time-honoured fashion.

During the two days of conference papers 50 participants from 20 countries (Argentina, Russia, USA, Australia, Palestine, Israel to name a few) enjoyed about 30 papers - many of which were very good, provoking a high level of debate. The training and development workshop also proved worthwhile with a presentation on internet futures generating almost unstoppable discussion! We thank our Irish hosts for all their hard work in making this a great conference!

Meetings and Projects Underway

We are currently planning a meeting in Paris on 12-13 October 1998 on Women, Entrepreneurship and Coops. The ICA Women's Committee will assist us in this project, and we hope it will be of interest not just for researchers but for people engaged in developing projects for and with women to improve their position in co-ops all over the world. This is another in our series of specialist workshop/conferences and it could prove a particularly exciting and popular event. Lou Hammond-Ketilson will be playing a major role in the project, building on her already well known work in the area.

Next year in August we will be joining the rest of the ICA with our meeting in Quebec. If our meeting in Manchester (1995) is a good indicator, this will be a popular meeting with up to 200 participants. We hope it will be a great opportunity for Anglophone and Francophone participants to exchange ideas on their current research. In the same year (1999) we may be able to organise a specialist European workshop/conference on social co-ops and the welfare state.

Good progress has been made with the International Research Register, and this now has over 70 entries and could become a most useful source of easily accessed information on research work.

Other examples of our collaborative work are the conference later this year with the Women's Committee and others, and an International Register of Researchers which the UK Society of Co-operative Studies initiated, and we have developed jointly. We are currently launching it, and it is now available on the Internet, and can be searched, but development work is continuing, thanks to Mary Treacy and Hazel Wilcox.

Resources

We continue to ensure that the Research Committee plays a vital role in informing discussions about key issues of governance, management and membership with the aim of adding value. But current resources do not match these high aspirations or level of activities indicated above. The Research Committee has a minimal budget (CHF 5000 p.a.) and it relies on the goodwill and voluntary labour of many people. Without the financial and 'in kind' support of members, the Research Committee would not be able to continue its current level of activities.

In order to succeed we still need to strengthen our resource base. We regularly consider internal and external sponsorship of projects (internal - co-operatives/federations,

external - research foundations, EC, etc.), and membership charges, however in each case we will have to increase our level of activity in order to offer something in return. We also would stress that we have a good case for a larger budget from the ICA, given the level of activities already undertaken and underway.

Our achievements this year and our future plans have been well regarded and supported internationally. We continue to strengthen our base for promoting global research activities and their visibility. And more and more people join us in believing that in an increasingly knowledge-based economy and society, good quality research will become absolutely essential to a dynamic co-operative movement.

ICA GLOBAL WOMEN'S COMMITTEE



*Katarina Apelqvist**



MariaElena Chavez-P

Executive Committee

Chairwoman: *Katarina Apelqvist (Sweden)*

Vice-Chairwoman: *Bernadette Wanyonyi (Kenya)*

Secretary: *MariaElena Chavez-P (ICA)*

Members: *Natsuko Yuasa (Japan); Irene Drazewska (Poland);
Chieftainess Chiyaba (Zambia); Galina Kisseleva (Russia)*

Activities

The Global Women's Committee participated in and organized a number of activities during 1997 under the leadership of the Chairwoman, Katarina Apelqvist aimed at advancing the status of women in the co-operative movement.

The Chair of the Committee ensured that dialogue on gender issues continue within ICA and member fora. The Chair engaged in extensive discussions with members of the ICA Board and Secretariat regarding the proposed ICA Rule changes to ensure that the Rules promote gender equality and balance with ICA decision-making fora. She also provided assistance to the regional offices in the creation of regional women's committees - the Americas Continental Women's Committee and the Asia/Pacific Regional Committee to be officially instituted in 1998.

Other activities of the Committee include participation and organization of meetings:

The Chairwoman, Rahaiah Baهران, and Raija Itkonen (members of the Committee) participated as speakers in the Regional Conference on Women in Decision-making in Co-operative jointly organized by the Asian Women in Co-operative Development Forum AWCF and the ICA Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific in Tagatay City (Philippines) from 7-9 May 1997. The Chairwoman presented a report to the conference on the Global Situation of Women's Participation in Leadership and Decision-Making and noted that although the number of women in leadership positions was still very low, progress had been made in recent years. She stressed the need for co-operatives to carefully analyze their policies to ensure that women have equal access to decision-making positions and that gender policies be adopted.

The first Executive Meeting of 1997 was held in St. Petersburg (Russia) at the invitation of Centrosoyuz of Russia from 5-6 June 1997. It preceded the jointly organized Women's Conference (see below). Items discussed included activities since the last Plenary in Costa Rica - meeting representation, the questionnaire on gender sent out by the ICA President (follow-up to the ICA Resolution on Gender), proposed changes to the ICA Rules and implications to gender balance in ICA (report on consultations with ICA President and Director-General), and preparations for future meetings. The meeting was followed by a study visit to consumer co-operatives in the St. Petersburg region to meet with women co-operators and exchange views and experiences.

The Women's Conference held on 7 June 1997 in St. Petersburg addressed the theme "Co-operatives in a Market Economy: Women's Contributions and Perspective". Over 100 women participated in the conference. The Global Women's Committee invited a keynote speaker from Sweden, Anne-Marie Satre, and presentations were made by the Chair of the Committee, Katarina Apelqvist as well as by ICA Board and Global Women's Committee member Raija Itkonen. The conference noted concern that transition to a market economy could create increasing inequalities between rich and poor and women and men if it were to be based strictly on economic premises. Social issues needed to be addressed and new and more flexible ways of working needed to be adopted if women were to have an increasing role to play in shaping the transition. The conference contributed to increasing women co-operator's dialogue on the future.

The second Executive Committee was held on 11 September 1997 in Geneva (Switzerland) and focused on the upcoming elections in the Committee (members and Chair), the concern over the proposed ICA rule changes and their effects on women's representation in decision-making positions within the ICA and the Women's Conference.

The annual Plenary Meeting was held in Geneva on 12 September 1997 with over 50 participants from nearly 40 ICA member organizations. The Chair reported on activities since the last Plenary. Discussion centred on the upcoming ICA General Assembly and the proposals from the Global Women's Committee to the ICA Board and General Assembly regarding the proposed ICA Rule changes and agreed to the following:

- *"The ICA Global Women's Committee finds the amendments to the ICA Rules regarding the co-option of women to the ICA Board unacceptable and calls on the members of the ICA General Assembly not to support the proposed changes..."*
- *"The ICA Global Women's Committee finds the proposed addition to the Standing Orders regarding the composition of the Election Committee unacceptable and calls the members of the ICA General Assembly not to support the proposed addition."*

It further agreed to propose a new text regarding the Election Committee:

- *"The Election Committee is composed of eight (8) persons including the Vice-Presidents and is gender balanced"*.

Members also expressed concern over the lack of gender balance in the specialized bodies of the ICA.

The Committee also elected a new Committee based on nominations sent from ICA member organizations. The Committee is now made up of 52 members from 29 countries. In addition, a new Executive Committee and Chair was elected:

Chairwoman: *Britten Lagerkvist Tranströmer (Sweden)*

Vice-Chairs: *Galina Kisseleva, Centrosojuz (Russia)*
Nargis Rashid, Sindh Government Employees Co-operative (Pakistan)

Members: *Rahaiah Baheran, National Co-operative Organization of Malaysia*
Vanda Guiliano, Legacoop (Italy)
Maria Negoita, CENTROCOOP (Romania)
Ana Isabel Solano, Americas Continental Women's Committee
Hanna Wroblewska, National Co-operative Council (Poland)

Activities for 1998 include focus on how to increase women's participation in the specialized bodies, participation in the ICA Research Committee's International Conference which will focus on women, possible joint management activities with the ILO CoopNet, and the organization of meetings of the Committee.

The new Executive met briefly following the Plenary.

** Photo of new Chairwoman, Britten Lagerkvist Tranströmer is not available.*

INTERIM REPORT OF THE AUDIT & CONTROL COMMITTEE FOR THE YEAR 1997



Ivar Hansen



Pál Bartus



Wilhelm Kaltenborn



Gun-Britt Martensson



Shigenori Takemoto



Claes Thorselius

The Audit & Control Committee is issuing the following interim report for the year 1997. This will form part of the complete report for the period 1997-1998, which will be delivered to the General Assembly in 1999.

The Committee had the following composition until the General Assembly in Geneva, September 1997: Dr. Markus Schelker of Coop Switzerland (Chairman), Dr. Pal Bartus of Co-op Hungary, Mr. Ivar Hansen of NBBL, Norway, Mr. Wilhelm Kaltenborn of VdK Germany and Mr. Jacques Moreau of GNC France. At the election in the General Assembly, Dr. Bartus, Mr. Hansen and Mr. Kaltenborn were re-elected. Dr. Schelker and Mr. Moreau did not stand for re-election and those two seats were filled by Ms Gun-Britt Martensson of HSB Sweden and Mr. Shigenori Takemoto of JCCU Japan. The new Committee unanimously elected Mr. Hansen as its Chairman. Mr. Claes Thorselius, the ICA Deputy Director-General, is the permanent Secretary to the Committee.

The Committee has held two meetings during the past twelve months. The first one, in conjunction with the Geneva General Assembly, focused on a general review of the financial and organisational situation and a look at the forthcoming budget and audit work. The second meeting, in May 1998, was devoted to the 1997 Financial Statements and the Report of the Auditors. This meeting was held together with the representatives from the auditors, ATAG Ernst & Young S.A.

Through these meetings we have formed the opinion that:

- 1. The structure and organisation of work has functioned well and been most cost efficient.*
- 2. The routines and control mechanisms are appropriate and well functioning.*
- 3. The external auditors have issued a good and clean opinion in the Report of the Auditors and Financial Statements for 1997.*
- 4. The 1997 surplus was CHF 16,832.*
- 5. Our proposal to the 1999 general Assembly will be that:*
 - The 1997 Accounts are approved as presented and*
 - The surplus is transferred to the General Reserves.*

The said Report of the Auditors and Financial Statements for 1997 is available on demand from the ICA Head Office, Geneva.

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