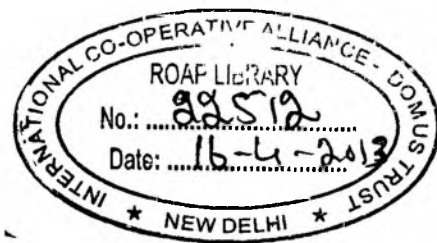


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# Asia Pacific Coop News

(For Private Circulation only)

ISSN: 0971-7013

Vol.6 No. 1, Jan-Apr 1999

A NEWS BULLETIN OF THE ICA REGIONAL OFFICE FOR ASIA & THE PACIFIC

## ICA President inaugurates the Jawaharlal Nehru Co-op Complex – calls for inter-sectoral alliances

Roberto Rodrigues, ICA President, inaugurated the newly built co-operative complex of the National Co-operative Union of India in New Delhi on 19 April 1999.

The complex has been built adjacent to the existing premises of the National Co-operative Union of India in New Delhi.

The new complex which is a 5 storeyed structure has an auditorium which can seat up to 650 delegates and has most modern audio-visual equipments. It has been aptly named at the first Prime Minister of India, late Pandit Jawahar Lal Nehru, who was very supportive to Dr. Moritz Bonow in setting up of the Asia-Pacific Regional Office of the ICA. Mr. Nehru had always been an ardent advocate and supporter of the co-operative movement and he even declared "I want to convulse India with co-operation".

The President also inaugurated a National Seminar on 'Women and Youth' at the same venue, in the afternoon.

Several dignitaries were present including the Minister of State for Agriculture, Mr. Som Pal Shastri, Minister for Commerce Mr. R.K. Hegde, Minister of State for Environment Mr. Suresh Prabhu, former Minister for Agriculture Mr. Chaturanan Mishra, Mr. Shivaji Rao Patil, President of the National Federation of Co-operative Sugar Factories, Dr. S.S. Sisodia, President of the National Federation of Urban



ICA President lighting the lamp in the presence of dignitaries

Co-operative Banks and Credit Societies and several other distinguished co-operators. Robby Tulus, Regional Director of ICA for Asia and the Pacific was the Guest of Honour and also spoke on the occasion.

Speaking at the function the Mr. Rodrigues mentioned that strategic alliances between the various sectors of co-operatives and even between co-operatives and private sector are essential, to become effective partners of productive chains.

He mentioned that while specialization and sectorization are a natural trend, integration among the various sectors and segments are

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very important so that the co-operative movement does not lose its strength. He also mentioned that the relations between the co-operatives and the state has to be one of partners, without the co-operative movement losing its control over decision making and democracy.

Earlier during his inaugural address, Mr. B.S. Vishwanathan, President, NCUI, highlighted the major pending issues for the co-operative sector before the Union Government, especially the amendment to the multi-state co-operative act, license to the Co-operative Bank of India, strengthening credit co-operative banks and a rehabilitation package for sick co-operatives.

In his presidential address, Shri Sompal Shastri, Minister of State for Agriculture stated that the co-operatives have to face the evils emanating from the working of liberalised market forces.

In the current market conditions, the producer gets hardly 25% return of his produce while as much as 75% has been cornered by the middlemen. It is therefore imperative that the co-operatives play their true roles, in the face of privatisation and liberalisation, of harmonising both the producers' and consumers' interests. He said in future there will be very less or no domination or interference from the government in co-operative affairs and as such the co-operatives will have to become more business-oriented and viable.

At the function several past presidents, secretaries, etc. of National Co-operative Union of India was felicitated, including Mr. B.D. Sharma, former Chief Executive of NCUI, who is now working as a Director at the ICA Regional Office.

Prior to the inauguration ceremony, a comprehensive documentary film on the Indian co-operative movement was also shown to the audience.

## ICA President inaugurates the National Conference on Women Youth

A National Conference on Women and Youth has been organised in New Delhi on 19-20 April, 1999. More than 200 women and youth from all over India participated in the event. The Conference on Women was a sequel to ICA's request to its member organisations in the Region to hold national level women's conference to increase participation of women in decision making in co-operatives. This was the largest ever such conferences organised in the Region.

Inaugurating the Conference, Roberto Rodrigues, President, ICA mentioned that the ICA attach great importance to Gender Integration and the Role of Women in Leadership. He said that he is very pleased to report that the ICA Board now has four women members, as against only one woman two years ago. He said he was happy to learn that as early as 1987, the Indian co-operatives have organised a national convention on the involvement of women in co-operatives.

He also said that he was much happy to read that in the State Co-operative Societies Acts of Rajasthan and Tamil Nadu, there is a provision for 30% reservation for women in the management of all types of co-operatives.

He said it is very necessary to break the 'glass ceiling syndrome' as men usually find ways to keep their domination in place. He said the co-operatives should follow the important guidepost of the ICA Co-operative Identity Statement, where the first principle is 'Voluntary and Open Membership, without gender,

social, racial, political or religious discrimination', combined with the seventh Principle, 'Concern for Community'.

He congratulated Ms. Anita Manchanda from the National Co-operative Union of India who has worked very hard to make the Conference a success, working closely with Madam Rahaiah Baهران, who is the Chairperson of ICA Regional Women's Committee and also a member of the ICA Board. He also appreciated the efforts and motivation



given by Mr. Vishwanathan, President of NCUI, in furthering the cause of increased participation of women in co-operative affairs.

Several speakers including the Minister of State for Environment, Mr. Suresh Prabhu exhorted the co-operators to recognise women and youth, who are more than half the strength of any co-operative movement and there can not be any progress without associating this large percentage of co-operators in the affairs of co-operatives.

# ICA to have a new Vision : ICA President

**R**oberto Rodrigues, the ICA President, was in Delhi during 19-20 April '99 for the inauguration of the new Co-operative Complex (the Jawahar Lal Nehru Co-operative Complex) of the National Co-operative Union of India. During this short period, he found some time to talk to your editor, when he gave his views on various issues relevant to the co-operative movement in view of the ever-changing economic scenario in the world. We reproduce the interview here.

Q. Mr. President, do you think that the ICA is on the right track, in tackling the growing insecurities faced by the co-operative movement globally, in face of multi and trans-national competition from the private sector corporations, the rapidly worsening financial situation, especially in the Asia-Pacific Region? And what are the results of your leadership initiative to have an organisational review of the board and membership?

A. No. We have just discussed about the changes in the organisation of ICA in the Stockholm meeting. We will not change the rules or



*Mr. Roberto Rodrigues holding a plaque presented to him at the inauguration of the Jawaharlal Nehru National Co-operative Complex.*

the mission, but we will have to change our 'Vision', because of the recession in the markets, because of the competition in the market in the light of the globalization of economy. Globalisation of economy is not making people happy and co-operatives have a big responsibility to help its members and ICA must change its operations to closely serve the

members in this respect. We expect that we will be able to finalise our changed 'Vision' statement at the next Congress in Quebec city in August '99 and change our way of working.

As for the Asia-Pacific Region, this is the largest Region of the ICA and most important need is for education and training. I know this Regional Office has been very effective in promoting education and training, especially to women and youth, who are half the members. So I feel this Regional Office is working in the right direction and with the active participation of women and youth in co-operative affairs, the co-operative movement in this Region will survive and flourish.

Q. From the various surveys and consortia in the Region, we in the Region, have been able to get some solace from the fact that co-operatives still stand a chance and that the co-operative form of business has more survival factors than any other form of enterprises. What are your views on this?



*Dr. Gopal Saxena of IFFCO greets ICA President. Mr. Surendra Kumar Jakhar, President, IFFCO, Mr. Robby Tulus, ICA Regional Director, and Mr. V. Kumar, Marketing Director, IFFCO looks on.*

A. I agree. Co-operatives will survive better as realised after the Co-operative Think Tank Consortium organised in Manila, Philippines last year, which concluded that the co-operatives has less impact from the financial crisis. At least in the banking sector, it has been seen that co-operative banks have fared much better, may be because the co-operative banking sector does not go for much speculation and the co-operative banks registered a much better result than the other banks.

Yes, in a globalized economy, small enterprise can grow. But there is some problem. In a globalized economy, the ultimate thing is the market share. So in such a scenario, the enterprise also has to grow. If you do not grow and the neighbours grow, then it is business lost for you or you are dying.

In the co-operative sector this is a very big limitation as the co-operatives have a limited operational area and then, they again, are limited by the number of their members. Then how can you grow? The only way is to merge and amalgamate. By mergers, you reduce the cost of operations. There will be one President, and only one CEO instead of several Presidents and CEOs. Thus, the only way for the co-operatives to grow in the global scenario is to merge.

Q. Governments have all along been involved with co-operative development in most part of the world and particularly in the Asia-Pacific and African region. While the involvement of government has negative aspects, there is also a positive side to this phenomenon, inasmuch as co-operatives, which are very small business enterprises, get the support in the form of much needed funding and other legislative support

from the government. Several Ministers' Conferences were held in the Asia-Pacific and African Regions to improve government-movement relations. What are your views on this approach?

A. Yes. The co-operatives can be ideal partners with honest and democratic governments. What is an ideal government? One which promises justice, employment to every one, social services, reduce inequalities, provide good infrastructure, proper distribution of the national resources, environmental protection, food security. All these are issues tackled by good governments and these are the same ethos on which co-operatives operate and so the co-operatives can be ideal partners with honest and democratic governments.

Furthermore, co-operatives are the economic arms of society. The governments can help the society through co-operatives in providing ideal services to the society. So the government and co-operatives should work together at all times. This means the government should not treat the co-operatives as some kind of family members or emplo-

yees but work as partners, providing equal status and autonomy. The co-operatives cannot afford to alienate themselves from the governments but work as equal partners in the development of the community, economy and progress.

Q. Some time ago, when the Kenyan co-operative movement has been targeted by bombing, you had issued a call to support the beleaguered Kenyan movement. What has been the response from the global co-operative movement to this?

A. It has been a fantastic example of co-operative solidarity. The fund which ICA set up in Geneva has attracted more than 140,000 Swiss francs in contributions - mostly from ICA members, but also from individual co-operators. Co-operatives in the United States and Canada have also made their own contributions. And our members have lobbied their governments - especially in Britain and the United States - in order to encourage them to make large scale contributions towards the rebuilding of the financial co-operatives in Kenya.



*The ICA President being interviewed by the Editor.*



ICA President with a group of Indian co-operators at the welcome dinner organised in his honour by IFFCO, India.

Q. What are the results of your leadership initiative to have an organisational review of the board and membership?

A. The ICA Board completed its work on the Organisational Review at its recent meeting in Stockholm in April, and the recommendations will be sent to the members of the General Assembly at the end of June, in preparation for the meeting in Quebec City. If I can summarise the results of this extensive consultation process, which involved all the regions and sectors of ICA, I would say that people do not want to change the basic ICA structure, which is based on a combination of global, regional, and sectoral activities, but they would like all parts of this structure to work in a more co-ordinated, efficient way. This means, for example, a much closer working relationship between ICA and the sectoral organisations. At the beginning of the review, some people were suggesting that ICA should reduce emphasis it places on promoting co-ops and instead should work harder on helping co-operatives improve their business performance - but the results of the consultation

have shown that promotion and defence of the co-operative identity remains the first and most important task of ICA in the minds of its members. We need to strengthen our capacity to do this, both at the Head Office and in the Regional Offices.

Q. We know your views on the communication revolution and the role it plays in developing business globally. With your knowledge of the global co-operative movement, do you

think that the co-operatives have been using it satisfactorily?

A. Like most enterprises, co-operatives have only scratched the surface regarding the potential of Information Technology. But they are moving quickly. When our Board met in Stockholm in April, we were informed that the consumer co-operatives in Sweden have set up a new programme for selling via the Internet, and they estimate that within a few years around five per cent of their total business will be done electronically.

In Geneva, we are discussing, in collaboration with the World Trade Organisation, the possibility of setting up a data bank that would allow co-operatives to exchange information about their import and export interests, and might also allow ICA to become involved in selling certification rights for these transactions.

More generally, the Internet allows co-operatives to improve their internal communications capacity, which is a tremendous benefit for organisations which are by their very nature decentralised and independent.



Mr. Roberto Rodrigues unveils the plaque of the Jawaharlal Nehru Co-operative Complex.

## ICA President visits Regional Co-operative Information Resource Centre



Mr. Roberto Rodrigues with the Staff in front of **Bonow House**, the headquarters of ICA Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific.

**R**oberto Rodrigues, ICA President, visited the Regional Office and its Co-operative Information and Resource Centre on 19th April, 1999.

He expressed his happiness in visiting India and mentioned that it is a coincidence that it was exactly 10 years ago in 1989 in New Delhi that his organisation was accepted as a

member of the ICA and he is visiting New Delhi again as the President of ICA.

The president was happy that with such a small staff, the Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific is serving almost two-third of the ICA's individual membership globally. He commended the work done by the Regional Office.

He was happy to see the comprehensive collection of co-operative literature and after referring to some of the most valuable documents in the library, suggested that these publications need to be micro-filmed, while maintaining the publications as such.

He felt that the library needs modern facilities and good accommodation. He appreciated the collection of literature in the library which will be a invaluable resource to co-op researchers worldwide. □

## Indian co-operators felicitate ICA President

**R**oberto Rodrigues, ICA President was felicitated at a welcome dinner organised by ICA Member organisations in India comprising of Indian Farmers' Fertilizer Co-operative Ltd. (IFFCO), Krishak Bharati Co-operative Ltd. (KRIBHCO), National Agricultural Co-operative Marketing Federation (NAFED) & National Co-operative Union of India on 18th April 1999.

Co-operative leaders from several national level co-operative federations in India were present at the occasion.

The ICA President said that he was happy to be in India, exactly after 10 years. The last time, he visited India was in 1989 at the time of ICA Central Committee meeting, during which time his organisation was admitted as a member of the ICA.

He said he hopes to visit again on a leisurely way and study the functioning of co-operatives from different sectors in different parts of India.

The dinner was organised at the India Habitat Centre. The ICA President was presented a plaque on the occasion.



Mr. Surendra Kumar Jakhar, President, IFFCO, presents a memento to Mr. Roberto Rodrigues.

## ICA Regional Director participates in an OECD-sponsored workshop

The Regional Director of ICA, Mr. Robby Tulus, attended an OECD Workshop on 'Financial Systems for Sustainable Resource Mobilisation in less Advanced Developing Countries', organised by the DAC/OECD together with the World Bank, held at the OECD Headquarters in Paris on March 11 and 12, 1999.

He presented a paper entitled 'South-south co-operation for co-operatives development', with reference to Financial Sector development.

The purpose of the Workshop was for bilateral and multilateral donors to share experiences and lessons learned from their activities in financial sector strengthening in order to promote and disseminate good practices including, in particular, in the area of co-ordination of efforts.

With a focus on the less advanced developing countries, the workshop will not duplicate efforts towards financial sector reform in crisis countries. But it provides a timely occasion for reviewing approaches and applying lessons learned to the financial sector in the less advanced countries.

The paper presented by the ICA Regional Director focused on Resource Mobilisation in the co-operative sector that comes primarily from members, so that equity is built over time and that accountability structures are also set in place to withstand misappropriation and sudden hostile take-overs.

Stress was also given on the dominant role still played by governments in co-operative development in less advanced developing countries, and how ICA

intends to bring more autonomy and independence towards strengthening member-driven activities, and positive dialogue with governments. There was unfortunately not enough time to elaborate in more detail on the South-South links and new initiatives.

The Workshop was attended by seventy-five delegates, mostly from Bilateral donors and Multilateral Agencies, and only a select number from non-government Organisations.

The World Bank, IMF, and all Regional Development Banks were represented, including some Finance Ministers and Central Bank Governors.

The tone of the Workshop was overwhelmingly inclined towards MICRO FINANCE, and it was an eye opener for the ICA to note how little is known about the work done by Co-operatives in this field, and for some attendees Co-operative is still an unfamiliar entity, or perceived as a government-dominated structure.

The Workshop, therefore, provided an excellent opportunity to promote the work ICA and its members are doing in the Financial Sector development, and also how sound financial systems can be designed and created through member-based organisations in less developing countries in the South.

Network opportunities was also captured by the Regional Director of ICA ROAP to seek possible synergies with organisations such as Women World Banking, the International Finance Corporation (of the World Bank), and to renew ties with known associates such as CIDA, ADB, and BMZ.

## ICA holds Regional Youth Seminar in Philippines

The ICA Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific held the second Regional Campus/Youth Co-operative Seminar for Asia and the Pacific at Quezon City, Philippines from April 15-18, 1999. The main theme of the Seminar was 'Future Leaders Leading Now'.

The seminar was jointly organised by the ICA Consumer Committee on University/College Co-operatives for Asia and the Pacific, the National Federation of University Co-operative Associations in Japan (NFUCA), National Confederation of Co-operatives, Philippines, Metro Manila Federation of Consumers' Co-operatives (MMAFECCO), and the Co-operative Education and Development Center, Inc., Philippines.

More than 150 delegates and observers from Indonesia, Japan, Philippines, Singapore, Thailand and Canada participated at the seminar.

Keynote addresses were delivered by Prof. Solita Monsod of the University of the Philippines' School of Economics (Socio-Economic Realities and the Role of Youth and Co-ops) and Mr. Tatsuya Nakajima, Student Chairperson of the Kansai Regional Association of NFUCA, Japan (Youth and the Co-operatives of the Future).

There were group discussions in small groups to discuss questions deriving from the keynote addresses. Six country presentations were made.

On the second day of the seminar, Mr. Kisabaro Okayasu, Vice President of NFUCA, Ms. Teresita de Leon, NATCCO General Manager, Mr. Toshifumi Kuriki, Int'l Relations Manager of NFUCA, Ms. Cindy Murray of CCA and Mr. Romulo Villamin, Director- SEA of ICA gave lectures to the delegates.





## ICA holds Sub-Regional Workshop on Co-operative Policy Reforms



His Excellency, Mr. G.P. Koirala, Prime Minister of Nepal, speaking at the Sub-Regional Workshop on in Kathmandu. Mr. Robby Tulus, Regional Director is also on the dias.

The ICA Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific held a Sub-Regional Workshop on Co-operative Policy Reforms in Kathmandu, Nepal from 13-16 January, 1999.

The workshop was a precursor of the Regional Consultation scheduled to be convened in Singapore during July, 1999, to prepare for the 5th Asia-Pacific Co-operatives Ministers' Conference which will be held in October, 1999 in Beijing, China.

The workshop was inaugurated by His Excellency Rt. Hon'ble Girija Prasad Koirala, Prime Minister of Nepal, who emphasized that globalization and liberalization as concepts have dominated the world trade and industry. He said that Co-operatives, as business enterprises should be able to operate in tune with these concepts and work like other players in the business to attain the development goals and serve its members' economic well-being.

The workshop deliberated on

'Enhancing Co-operation between Government and Co-operative Movement in the Spirit of Partnership', 'Co-operative Governance vis-a-vis professional management within co-operatives', 'Capital Formation Strategies for Co-operatives' and 'Co-operatives and the Social Sector'.

A special paper on 'Rediscovery of Co-operatives in Development Policy' was presented by Dr. Hans H.

Munkner and another by Mr. Kiran Pyakuryal 'Co-operatives and Social Safety Net' were also presented. Robby Tulus, ICA's Asia-Pacific Regional Director suggested strategies for the reform.

The workshop was participated by representatives from co-operatives and governments in Bangladesh, India, Iran, Israel, Nepal and Sri Lanka participated at the workshop.

The workshop recommended that traditional approach of the Government to treat co-operatives at par with public sector enterprises needs to be replaced by a more forward looking attitude that respects autonomy and freedom of enterprise of co-operatives to serve their members effectively and efficiently and to formulate clear public policy defining their perception in regard to co-operative development in the context of market economy and values enunciated in the ICA Co-operative Identity Statement.

The workshop also felt that in order to build up competitiveness and to strengthen their identity, co-operatives must reform their governance and management systems and implement policies by eliciting greater involvement of members in economic participation and decision making process.



The delegates of the workshop pose for a photograph with the Prime Minister.

## Workshop identifies important co-operative legislation issues

Two new principles included in the Co-operative Identity Statement – *autonomy & independence* and *concern for community* – are not reflected in most co-op laws in Asia and the Pacific. At the same time, there is a need to set norms and standards by which to assess the “co-operative basis” of an enterprise. There is also a need to examine the development and regulatory roles that government now plays in relation to co-operatives.

These were among the important issues identified during the Sub-Regional Workshop on the Advancement of Legislative & Co-operative Policy Reforms, held in Bangkok, Thailand from 23 to 26 February 1999.

The workshop, which was participated in by 43 government and co-operative movement representatives from 9 Asian countries and international organisations, also discussed the need for affirmative action to increase women’s participation in leadership and decision-making in co-operatives.

The workshop is part of the ongoing process ICA ROAP is undertaking in preparation for the 5th Asia-Pacific Co-operative Ministers’ Conference to be held in Beijing, China from 11 - 16 October 1999.

The issues discussed during the workshop will be included in the consultations the participants will be conducting in their respective countries.

Other issues identified were: “one general law Vs sectoral laws governing co-operatives,” the issues of “deofficialization” and “politicization of co-operatives,” double taxation, co-op access to outside capital, minimum number of members to organize different types of co-ops, and membership of co-ops in secondary and apex organizations.

The sub-regional workshop was officially opened by Thailand’s Minister of Agriculture, Mr. Pangpol Adireksarn.

Countries represented were: Fiji, Indonesia, Malaysia, Mongolia, Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, Vietnam and China.

## ICA to open Business Office in Singapore

Considering the business interests of ICA’s member organisations in Asia-Pacific and other regions, the idea of opening a business office in Singapore was first expressed during the visit of ICA President Roberto Rodrigues and Director General of ICA, Bruce Thordarson to Singapore in April, 1998. Since then, the Regional Director has taken necessary followed-up action on this.

The office will be officially opened on 10 July '99 by H.E. Abdullah Tarmugi, Minister for Community Development, Government of Singapore, in conjunction with the Regional Consultation Meeting to be held from 6-10 July, '99. The ICA President will preside over the opening of operations. The office will have a soft opening in June, 1999.

Several other meetings will also be proposed to be held during this period, which include a meeting of the ICA Regional HRD & Research Committee, meeting of the ICA Regional Agricultural Committee, a seminar on ICA Regional Banking and also a meeting of the office-bearers of ICA Regional Women’s Committee.

The ICA Regional Office hopes to serve its member organisations in the region from this office on inter-co-operative trade and matters relating to trade and business. The ICA ROAP also hopes to organise a trade exhibition in Singapore in the year 2002 to serve the interests of ICA members globally.

The office was made possible on account of the tremendous support and generous contribution provided by the Singapore National Co-operative Federation.

The address of the office is:

SLF Building, 4th floor  
510, Thompson Road  
Singapore 298-135

Tel. : (65)358-2322 } effective  
Fax : (65)358-2292 } July '99.



The Sub-regional Workshop in progress. Minister of Agriculture, Mr. Pangpol Adireksarn, seen in the middle.

## ICA to hold Symposium on Co-operative Legislation in Economies in Transition

The ICA Regional office for Asia and the Pacific will be hosting a symposium on 'Co-operative Legislation in Economies in Transition' from 25-28 May 1998 in Hanoi, Vietnam, in collaboration with the Vietnam Co-operative Alliance at Fortuna Hotel, Ba Dinh District, Hanoi.

It is expected that several delegates from co-operative movements in the developing and transition economies in the region and international organisations like UNESCAP, ILO, CCA, DID, as well as

resource persons from ASEAN countries will participate in this important symposium, which is organised as a precursor to the ICA Regional Consultation to be held in Singapore from 6-10 July, 1999.

For further information, contact:

ROMULO VILLAMIN  
Director, SEA, ICA ROAP  
Fax No : 91-11-683-5568  
E-mail : icaroap@vsnl.com  
villamin@mozcom.com

## Seminar on positioning of Co-operative Financial Intermediation in post-crisis capital markets and financial sector in the region

The ICA Regional office will host a seminar on "positioning of Co-operative Financial Intermediation in post-crisis capital markets and financial sector in the region" from 12-15 July, 1999, under the sponsorship of DID and Rabo Bank.

The venue is the Hotel Grand Plaza Park Royal, Singapore.

The objectives of the seminar are:

- i) to critically examine and review the status, role and positioning of co-operative credit and banking institutions in the liberalized and globalized financial sector,
- ii) to recommend measures for strengthening competitiveness of co-operative banking institutions.

Experts and Resource persons from Asian Development Bank, Developpement International Desjardins, Canada, Rabo Bank Foundation, Netherland, NABARD, India, Norinchukin Bank, Japan, SANASA, Sri Lanka and APRACA have been invited to participate in the seminar and the discussions.

The Seminar will be on a self-financing basis. We have been able to

get special rates from the Grand Plaza Park Royal Hotel for delegates.

Representatives from co-operative financial intermediation sector, comprising with co-operative credit and banking institutions and credit units, who wish to participate, may contact:

1. Mr. Kelvin Quah  
Singapore National Co-operative Federation  
510, Thomson Road  
#12-02 SLF Building  
Singapore 298-135  
Fax: (65)2599-577  
E-mail: kelvinq@icnome.com.sg
2. Mr. B.D. Sharma  
Diretor, SOWECA  
International Co-op Alliance  
Regional Office for Asia  
and the Pacific  
43 Friends Colony (East)  
New Delhi 110 065  
India.  
Fax : (91)11-683-5568  
(91)11-684-7354  
E-mail : icaroap@vsnl.com

## Regional Consultation on co-op legislation & policy reforms

The ICA ROAP will be holding a Regional Consultation in Singapore from 6-9 July, 1999, to be attended by representatives of member organisations in Asia and the Pacific and their governments.

The consultation is part of the continuing initiative in co-operative legislation and policy reform that the ICA ROAP has been conducting, aimed at fostering an enabling environment for co-operatives in the region.

It is preceded by three sub-regional workshops, which identified and analysed legislation and policy issues that are relevant to the broad constituency of co-operatives.

The issues identified in the sub-regional workshops revolve around the following subjects: the appropriate roles of state and co-operatives, the consistency of co-op laws with ICA Co-operative Identity Statement (ICIS), capitalisation of co-operatives.

The regional consultation will define these issues in the context of objective conditions obtaining in the region and recommendations will then be formulated for review and adoption by the Fifth Co-op Ministers' Conference in Beijing, China from 11-16 October, 1999.

The 3 sub-regional workshops were held in Kathmandu, Nepal, 13-16 January, in Bangkok, Thailand, 23-26 February, and in Hanoi, Vietnam, 25-28 May, 1999.

*ICA member organisations in the Region are requested to provide news and information relating to their respective co-operative organisations, movements and countries. Please provide photographs, wherever possible.*

**-Editor**

## Thirteenth ICA/Japan Training Course on Strengthening Management of Agricultural Co-ops concluded

The Thirteenth ICA-Japan International Training Course on 'Strengthening Management of Agricultural Co-operative in Asia' was held in India, Nepal and Japan from November 16, 1998 to April 24, 1999.

The course was inaugurated by Dr. Verendra Kumar, Marketing Director of Indian Farmers' Fertilizer Co-operative Ltd. (IFFCO) at their Fertiliser Marketing and Development Institute in Gurgaon near Delhi and the session was presided over by Mr. Robby Tulus, ICA Regional Director of Asia and the Pacific.

Mr. J. Taniuchi, First Secretary of the Japanese Embassy in India and Mr. Tokizo Tagaki and Mr. Hiroshi Terunuma of IDACA attended the session. The entire programme was successfully coordinated by Dr. Daman Prakash, Project Director.

The programme was conducted by the International Cooperative Alliance - Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific in collaboration with JA-Zenchu (Central Union of Agricultural Co-operatives of Japan) and the Institute for the Development of



Dr. Daman Prakash, Project Director addresses the participants of the course at IDACA, Japan.

Agricultural Co-operation in Asia (IDACA). The course was financially supported by the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries (MAFF) of the Government of Japan. A total of 15 participants nominated by ICA member organisations from eleven countries, Bangladesh, China, India, Malaysia, Myanmar, Nepal, Pakistan, the Philippines, Sri Lanka, Thailand and Vietnam. Of the 15

participants, two were women.

The first phase of the course consisted the Home country assignments from November 16, 1998 to January 13, 1999, and programmes in India with the support and collaboration of ICA member organisation in India during January 14 to March 05, 1999. This part of the course was held with technical collaboration of Institute of Rural Management (IRMA) and cooperative organisations in the State of Gujarat, India.

The next leg of the programme was a study visit to Nepal, in collaboration with the National Co-operative Federation of Nepal. The second phase of the programme was held at IDACA, Tokyo with study visits in and around Tokyo and in Kochi and Gunma prefectures in Japan. The course concluded on 24th April.

An exclusive and comprehensive end-of-the course evaluation was conducted at the conclusion and certificates of participation were awarded to the participants.



Mr. Yoshitada Nakaoka, Managing Director of IDACA gives a word of advice to the participants of the 13th ICA/Japan Training Course.

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## News on Co-operative People

### Y.P. Nishad gets IFFCO Sahakarita Bandhu award

Shri Yugeshwar Prasad Nishad, former President of the National Federation of Fishermen's Co-operatives Ltd. (FISHCOPFED) has been conferred with 'Sahakarita Bandhu Award' by Indian Farmers' Fertiliser Co-operative Ltd. (IFFCO) for the year 1997-98.

A veteran co-operator from Bihar, Shri Nishad has devoted more than five decades in the services of the weaker sections of the fishermen's

community by organising co-operatives at the grassroots level. He was also instrumental in the establishment of the Federation.

He has held many coveted positions in various premium co-operative institutions and has also been awarded both at national and international level for his contributions to the development of fishery co-operative sector.

### P.K. Mishra elected Chairperson of NEDAC

Shri P.K. Mishra, Managing Director, National Co-operative Development Corporation of India, New Delhi, has been elected Chairperson of the Regional Network for Development of Agricultural Co-operatives in Asia and the Pacific (NEDAC) during February 1999 at their Executive Committee meeting in Bangkok.

NEDAC, an FAO sponsored network among the member countries of Asia-Pacific Region was established in 1991, and is based at the Regional Office of FAO for Asia and the Pacific Region at Bangkok. The NEDAC has representatives from Bangladesh, China, Fiji, India, Indonesia, Japan,



Korea, Malaysia, Nepal, Philippines, Sri Lanka and Thailand. Mishra is also holding additional charge as Managing Director of National Agricultural Co-operative Marketing Federation (NAFED) in India.

### B.D. Sharma felicitated by National Co-operative Union of India

Shri B.D. Sharma, Director, South, West and Central Asia in the ICA Regional Office was felicitated by the National Co-operative National Co-operative Union of India, for his remarkable contribution to his work for the development of Indian co-operatives, particularly as its Chief Executive, prior to his retirement last year. He has served the Co-operative Movement for over 34 years. Mr. Sharma was very much involved in

the planning and execution of the construction of the new Jawahar Lal Nehru Co-operative Complex, which was inaugurated by Mr. Roberto Rodrigues, ICA President.

He was the founder Managing Director of the Co-operative Bank of India and a director in several national level co-operative federations, in India, apart from specialised committees of the International Co-operative Alliance.

### Dr. R.C. Dwivedi gets Saharita Ratna Award

Veteran co-operator Dr. R.C. Dwivedi has been awarded Saharita Ratna Award - best Co-operator Award - for 1997-98 instituted by the Indian Farmers' Fertiliser Co-operative Ltd. (IFFCO).

Born in 1928, Dr. Dwivedi, after getting his Ph.D. in Economics, joined the Uttar Pradesh Education Service as an Assistant Professor of Economics. He has served the co-operative movement in India in several capacities - Principal of Co-operative Training College, Hyderabad, Joint Director, and later the Chief Executive of the National Co-operative Union of India - for over 5 decades.

Even after retirement, his services have been utilised by the Minister of Agriculture in a previous government as Officer-on-Special Duties, especially on matters relating to co-operatives.

He was also associated with the ICA in assisting and attending past Co-operative Ministers' Conferences in the Region. He is widely travelled and attended several ICA conferences and seminars in the Asia-Pacific Region and elsewhere.

He has written 28 books and over 100 papers on co-operation.

Mr. Sharma was presented a plaque and citation by the Minister of Commerce, Mr. R.K. Hegde on a glittering function on 19th April, 1999.

*Edited by P. Nair, Communication Officer, ICA ROAP and printed in India at Document Press, HS-14, Kailash Colony Market, New Delhi - 110048.*



# Asia Pacific Coop News

(For Private Circulation only)

ISSN : 0971-7013

Vol. 6, No. 2, May-Sept. 1999

A NEWS BULLETIN OF THE ICA REGIONAL OFFICE FOR ASIA & THE PACIFIC

## ICA Millennium Congress



*Roberto Rodrigues, Claude Beland and others singing at the farewell evening*

The 32nd Congress of the ICA was held in the beautiful city of Québec, Canada, August 30 to September 1, 1999.

In the first ever ICA Congress held in the Americas Region, more than 1400 delegates from around the world participated at the various events.

This Congress was hosted by the Mouvement Desjardins, Conseil Canadien de la Co-opération and the Canadian Co-operative Association.

The delegates were treated to a spectacular welcome cocktails at Château Frontenac, an 18th century architectural marvel, on the banks of St. Laurence river.

The official opening of the Congress was preceded by an awe-inspiring show, the 'Land of Many Faces'.

This year the agenda of the Congress was different from the previous ones. The global theme of the Congress as "Adding Value to Membership: A Co-operative Challenge for the New Millennium". The business sessions of the Congress were divided into three Forums on the following subjects: New Financial Services in a Global Environment, New Challenges for Producers and Consumers in the Food Sector, and New Co-operative Services in the Face of Deregulation and Privatisation. Several keynote speakers presented papers and case studies. This gave the delegates an

opportunity to study and discuss on issues of interest and importance to them.

This new approach to the Congress was appreciated by the delegates. Several sectoral organisations of the ICA also held their meetings at Québec.

On September 1, the host organisations gave a spectacular farewell dinner, with colourful cultural shows, making the Millennium Congress an event to remember.

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# General Assembly endorses ICA Organisational Review

The General Assembly on September 1, 1999 endorsed the results of the Organisational Review completed by the ICA Board, which consist of general conclusions, a vision statement and an action plan to the year 2005.

ICA President, Roberto Rodrigues, in his report to the membership, highlighted on the lessons of the first two years of his presidency.

Bruce Thordarson, Director General explained on the process of the organisational review, which started with a board decision in April last year to have a fresh look at the ICA's structure and operations in view of the new environment in which the co-operatives are operating. On the basis of replies received to the questionnaire received from the ICA Board members, Edgar Parnell prepared a discussion paper. This paper was discussed by the ICA Board in



*ICA Board members pose for a photograph in Lévis, Québec during the Board Meeting on 27 August, 1999. Seen on the right (in grey suit) is Mr. Mu Li (China), the new Vice-President for Asia and the Pacific.*

Paris during October last year and a revised paper prepared by Edgar Parnell was presented to the ICA Congress. On the basis of these dis-

cussions, the ICA Board established a 'vision' statement and action plan. The ten point vision statement appears elsewhere in this issue.



*Mr. Robby Tulus, ICA Regional Director for Asia and the Pacific (middle) seen with Mr. K. Yamada, Secretary, Japan Joint Council and Liaison Officer of JA-Zenchu and Mr. Ouseynou Dieng (Senegal), the new Vice-President for Africa.*

## New Member of ICA in Asia-Pacific

At the ICA Board meeting in Québec August 27, Co-op Blue Square, Israel has been admitted to the membership of ICA. Mr. M. Weisbrod is the Chief Executive Officer.

## Welcome to the Land of Morning Calm

The next ICA General Assembly will be held in Seoul, Korea.

The ICA Member organisations in Korea are busy preparing for the next ICA General Assembly in 2001.

## Message from the President of the International Co-operative Alliance To the Heads of Governments of the Member States of the United Nations

Geneva, September 19, 1999

Your Excellency:

I write as the elected President of the International Co-operative Alliance (ICA), the international association which represents national co-operative business organisations in some 100 countries around the world, with more than 700 million individual members. ICA is one of the oldest international non-governmental organisations, founded in 1895, and was one of the first NGOs to be granted top consultative status by the United Nations in 1946.

At our recent Congress in Québec City, Canada, some 1,000 co-operative leaders from all continents discussed not only our regular business issues but also the concerns which we all have as citizens of our individual countries and as citizens of the world. We know that globalisation is an inevitable trend in today's market economy, that many of its results are positive, and that co-operatives are playing their full role in the various economic sectors in which they operate.

But we also know that there is another side to globalisation. If one of its results is concentration and the growth of economic giants around the world, the other result is 'exclusion'. Its worst consequences are unemployment. But this is not the only one. Without any hope to improve his or her salary or quality of life, a person cannot go to the cinema, or the football match, cannot go out with friends for a good time, cannot buy the CD or magazine, and cannot send their children to a good school. This kind of exclusion deepens the social abyss. It leads to bigger and bigger problems, whether they be crime, drug trafficking, terrorism, or guerrilla warfare. Above all, 'exclusion' is a great enemy of democracy.

Our Co-operative Congress in Québec City took place just after the release of this year's Human Development Report of the United Nations Development Programme. Again this year, the report confirmed that the gap between rich and poor is growing, not only between countries but also within countries. As the report said,

**"We need a new approach to governance, one that preserves the advantages offered by global markets and competition while allowing for human, community and environmental resources that will ensure globalisation works for people and not just for profits."**

I would like to suggest, for the consideration of your government, that the co-operative form of enterprise - businesses owned by local people who use their services - is one of the answers to the problems of exclusion facing all countries around the world, both developed and developing.

As businesses rooted in local communities, co-operatives can never relocate to countries where wages are lower or environmental restrictions are less demanding. Around the world today we see examples of new forms of co-operative enterprises - health, transport, social service, elderly care, employment, privatised government services, and others - creating thousands of new jobs. At the same time, the strong co-operative enterprises in financial services, agriculture, consumer retailing, and housing continue to be major employers in almost all countries.

For this reason, I believe that co-operatives are natural allies of good governments. We believe in the same objectives - employment, food security, environmental protection, community development, fair prices, and non-exploitation of people.

In this connection, may I draw your attention to the recent report of the UN Secretary-General to the General Assembly (A/54/57) on the importance of good public policy and legislation for the development of the co-operative movement. The report notes that the characteristics of co-operatives should be recognised by public authorities and that they should be assured real equality with other forms of enterprise.

May I respectfully request that your government, through its Ministry of Foreign Affairs, support this report of the UN Secretary-General when it is presented to the General Assembly later this year, and that your government support the important role which co-operative enterprises play in economic and social development of your country.

As we enter the new millennium, exclusion is a potential danger to all countries. Co-operatives, economic organisations with a social concern, can help to reduce the negative effects of globalisation through their efforts to serve their members and their communities.

I thank you for your government's consideration.

Yours sincerely,

**Roberto Rodrigues**  
ICA President



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## A new Vision Statement for ICA

ICA's Mission Statement says that, "The International Co-operative Alliance is an independent, non-governmental association which unites, represents and serves co-operatives worldwide." From this starting point, and on the basis of the feedback received from the Organisational Review, it is possible to establish a description of what ICA can realistically be expected to accomplish.

For this purpose a **Vision Statement** has been prepared of what ICA should be like by the year 2005. It is not an idle dream, but rather an indication of what is both desirable and feasible given the current and projected environment. It represents the goal towards which all components of the "ICA family" should be striving.

By the year 2005, ICA should be an organisation which, in collaboration with its members:

- i) Promotes the co-operative values and identity, and helps to defend co-operatives when they are under attack, by influencing public policy and by demonstrating the co-operative difference in the market through an effective communications policy;
- ii) Supports and facilitates the development of co-operatives as efficient businesses in all countries, giving particular attention to the needs of co-operatives in developing countries and countries in transition, and to the development of co-operatives in new areas of economic and social activity;
- iii) Assists and supports the sectoral organisations within the ICA in their efforts to provide useful business and other services to their members, and promotes mutually-beneficial collaboration between sectors while respecting the principle of subsidiarity;
- iv) Maintains effective Regional Offices, working closely with and assisted by Head Office, which are the focal points for supporting and providing tailor-made services to ICA members in the regions;
- v) Is led by the Board, which determines global policy and provides strategic guidance for the entire ICA family of organisations;
- vi) Represents in its membership all major co-operative movements and sectors which conform to the ICA's Co-operative Identity Statement;
- vii) Is a "learning organisation" which facilitates and supports the development and exchange of information about best co-operative practices, innovative activities, and new forms of co-operative development;
- viii) Is a centre of information and expertise for and about co-operatives around the world;
- ix) Plays a leading role within civil society by influencing major global issues and international agencies in areas of importance to the ICA's members; and
- x) Has adequate resources to achieve its goals.

## NCDC donates Rs.2.7 million to Army Welfare Fund

The National Co-operative Development Corporation of India and its employees have donated Rs.2.7 million to the National Defence Fund, for the brave soldiers who lost their lives in the Kargil battle.

Mr. P.K. Mishra, Managing Director of NCDC and Mr. Som Pal, Minister of State for Agriculture and Chair of NCDC presented the cheque to the Prime Minister of India, Mr. Atal Behari Vajpayee.

## New software for Co-operative Banks

The Institute of Co-operative Management, Thiruvananthapuram, Kerala developed a software PACSOFT 1999.

The on-line banking software developed in Visual Basic and SQL server will modernise the operations of co-operative banks in the State and elsewhere.

## Juku Ozawa visits Sahakari Bhandar

Juku Ozawa, Director (Special Programmes) at the ICA Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific, visited Sahakari Bhandar and Apna Bazar in Mumbai, July this year to study about the consumer co-operatives in western India.

He has also visited several other stores affiliated to Sahakari Bhandar, like Maratha store, Suparibaug store, Nana chowk store and also Raigad Bazar at Alibaug.

He also inaugurated the computerisation of Sahakari Bhandar.

## ICA Committee on HRD and Research for Asia and the Pacific meets in Singapore

ICA Committee on HRD and Research for Asia and the Pacific met at the Grand Plaza Park Royal Hotel in Singapore on 11th July, 1999.

The meeting, chaired by Royal Professor Ungku A. Aziz, reviewed the MATCOM materials on training and suggested that the ICA should get this material updated for training activities in the region.

The meeting also sought to strengthen the network among co-operative colleges and 'co-operative-minded' universities.

## CCA organises Partners' Education Outreach Programme and Youth Forum

The Canadian Co-operative Association organised a Partners' Education Outreach Programme and Youth Forum in Guelph, Ontario, Canada during 23-24 August, 1999.

About 40 participants from Asia, Africa and the Americas participated at this Forum.

Of special interest was the Youth Forum, where 12 young delegates got together and shared their ideas on co-operative enterprise and development. The Youth Forum culminated in a wrap up meeting at Québec and presented a paper to the ICA Congress there.

The participants to the Partners Education Outreach Programme and Youth Forum were able to attend the various business sessions of the ICA Congress, enriching their knowledge and networking with a wide variety of delegates from countries all over

A total of 28 participants attended this meeting.

Immediately on the conclusion of this meeting, a meeting of Asian Co-operative Research Forum was held at the same venue, which was attended by 12 participants.

The meeting decided to form a core group of co-operative researchers, chaired by Akira Kurimoto of Japan, and organise a Co-operative Research Conference in the year 2000, in conjunction with the ICA Regional Assembly in Singapore.

the world. The participants were also taken to different parts of Canada on study visits.

## Regional Consultation on Co-op Legislation

ICA Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific held a Regional Consultation on Co-operative Legislation and Policy Reforms in Singapore - July 6-9, 1999.

Eighty-seven participants from 18 countries and 8 international organisations participated at the Consultation and endorsed 'Recommendations' for discussion at the Fifth Co-operative Ministers' Conference to be held in Beijing, China, October 12-16, 1999.

Prior to this Consultation a symposium on Co-operative Legislation in Economies in Transition was held in Hanoi, May 25-28, 1999.

These activities and two sub-regional workshops held in Kathmandu and Bangkok during January and February, 1999 respectively were precursors to the Fifth Ministers' Conference.



*A youth delegate with the ICA President, Roberto Rodrigues*

## Conference on Women in Agricultural Co-ops in Asia & Africa

The Fourth International Conference on 'Women in Agricultural Co-operatives in Asia and Africa' was held in Tokyo during August 24-29, 1999. The conference was organised jointly by the ICA ROAP, JA-Zenchu, IDACA and the Afro-Asian Rural Reconstruction Organisations.

32 delegates from 16 countries and 3 international organisations attended the conference.

Some of the problems faced by rural women vis-à-vis their participation in co-operative activities identified by the conference were: widespread illiteracy among women in rural areas; multiple role of women and lack of time; inadequate nutrition, sanitation and safe drinking water; limited access to credit; stiff competition and marketing problems; lack of training and education opportunities; low representation of women in national co-operative bodies and in the process of decision-making; customs, traditions and superstitions; and lack of access to technology. The



*Conference delegates during their study visits in Iwate prefecture.*

conference suggested the following possible solutions:

- i) strengthening existing institutions;
- ii) encouraging role of NGOs in the field of women development;
- iii) transparency and accountability in the operation of co-operatives,
- iv) easy accessibility to financial resources;
- v) development of self-help groups and pre-co-operatives;
- vi) better health-care for women.

women's associations and farmers' groups;

## Rural Women Leadership Development in Agricultural Co-ops

The 9th Training Course on Rural Women Leadership Development in Agricultural Co-operatives was organised by the ICA, JA-Zenchu and

the IDACA during August 23-September 11, 1999.

Six participants sponsored by ICA member organisations from

Myanmar, the Philippines and Thailand attended the course.

With the completion of this course, 54 persons have been trained in women leadership from eleven countries of the ICA Asian region.

Participants of the course also had the opportunity of attending the 4th International Conference on Women in Agricultural Co-operatives in Asia and Africa'.

Besides classroom studies, the participants also visited Japanese primary agricultural co-operatives in Iwate prefecture and in and around Tokyo and observed the organisational structure and activities of Women's Associations.



*Participants of the 9th Training Course attending a teaching session*

# Co-operative Financial Intermediation in Asia and the Pacific

Asia-Pacific Seminar on Positioning of Co-operative Financial Intermediation in Post-Crisis Capital Markets and Financial Sector was convened by the ICA Regional Co-operative Banking Association during July 12-15, 1999 in Singapore.

The main objectives of the seminar were to critically examine and review the status, role and positioning of co-operative credit and banking institutions in the liberalised and globalised financial sector and to recommend measures for strengthening competitiveness of financial co-operatives.

More than 60 participants from 11 countries of the Asia-Pacific Region and international organisations like Asian Development Bank, Development International Desjardins (DiD) of Canada, Rabo Bank Foundation of Netherlands, Asian Confederation of Credit Unions (ACCU) and National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (NABARD) of India, participated in the seminar.

The Rabo Bank Foundation and DiD provided financial support for the seminar.

The seminar focused on the following subjects to formulate suitable recommendations to strengthen co-operative financial intermediation in the region:

- i) co-operativising micro-credit;
- ii) strategies for recapitalisation of co-operative credit and banking institutions;
- iii) Effective supervisory mechanism for co-operative, credit and the banking sector;
- iv) information technology and management information system;
- v) human resource management and development.

A survey report on co-operative



*Participants of the Seminar pose for a photograph*

credit and banking sector in selected countries of the region was presented, to undertake an objective analysis of trends in the sector during the post-crisis period.

Papers were presented at the seminar by Robby Tulus, Regional Director of ICA, Ghislain Paradis, Secretary General, ICBA and Director General, DiD, Pierre Giguere, Regional Director for Asia of DiD, Frank Bakx, Programme Officer of Rabo Bank, Nimal Fernando, Senior Programme Officer of ADB, Dr. Y.C. Nanda, Managing Director, NABARD, P. A. Kiriwandeniya, Chairman, SANASA, Shenoy, Managing Director, Shamrao Vithal Co-op Bank, India and D. Krishna, Chief Executive, NAFCUB, India.

At the end of the seminar, the participating institutions formulated their action plans to implement the recommendations.

Mr. B.D. Sharma, Director, (SOWECA) at the ICA Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific coordinated the seminar.

## **K. K. Ravindran, new Executive Director of NCARDBF, India**

The Board of Management of the National Co-operative Agriculture and Rural Development Banks' Federation appointed K.K. Ravindran as Executive Director of the Federation.

Mr. Ravindran has been functioning as the Special Officer of the Federation till now. We wish all success to Mr. Ravindran in his new capacity.

## **Fishcopfed moves into its own house**

The National Federation of Fisheries' Co-operative (Fishcopfed), India will move in October this year, into its new office at 7, Sarita Vihar Institutional Area, New Delhi 110 044, India.

## ICA Regional Agricultural Committee Meeting in Singapore



Mr. P. K. Mishra, Managing Director, NCDC (left), Dr. V. Kumar, Chairperson of the Committee (middle) and Hon. Deepak Baskota, Vice-Chairperson (right) attending the meeting

The 32nd Meeting of the ICA Committee on Agriculture for Asia and the Pacific was held at Grand Plaza Park Royal Hotel in Singapore on 11th July 1999. Twenty participants from eleven countries and one international organisation (FAO-NEDAC) attended the meeting. ICA President, Roberto Rodrigues also

addressed the participants. In his address, Roberto Rodrigues said that sustainability of agriculture depends on income of farmers (access to markets, subsidy, WTO negotiations). Security of food is the crux of the problem. Protectionist policies of Europe for agriculture is not reduced, because of social issues and

## Fifth Kerala Co-operative Congress

Inaugurating the Fifth Kerala Co-operative Congress at Thiruvananthapuram on 6th April, 1999, Hon'ble Krishan Kanth, Vice President of India mentioned "...the co-operatives should be able to resist the adverse effects of economic liberalisation and globalisation. The poor and weaker sections of the society would be in danger of getting further marginalised, unless they were equipped to take advantage of opportunities offered by new developments. New developmental activities should target at poor people and weaker sections..."

Hon'ble Sukhdev Singh Kang,

Governor of Kerala, said that the decentralisation programme should be extended to co-operative institutions as well.

The key note address was delivered by Mr. E.K. Nayanar, Chief Minister of Kerala. Mr. S. Sarma, and Mr. E. Chandrasekharan Nair, both Ministers in Kerala were also present. V. Sivankutty, Mayor, B. Vijayakumar, MLA, B.S. Vishwanathan, President, NCUI, and chairpersons of all national and state level co-operative federations were also present.

— C. Radhakrishnan

Addl. Registrar of Co-ops, Kerala,  
India

this adversely affects developing countries that do not have subsidy.

Another issue is competition among farmers world-wide. The real issue is farming against starvation. The co-operatives should show this real issue to the world.

ICA Agriculture Committee and NEDAC agreed to undertake a joint collaborative action plan to strengthen agricultural co-operatives to enable them meet emerging challenges for the benefit of farming community.

After discussions the meeting approved the "ICA Agriculture Committee-NEDAC Joint Statement on Food Security and Sustainable Agricultural and Rural Development through Co-operatives".

□

### A Chronicle on Co-operation

The National Co-operative Union of India has produced a documentary film on the history of the Co-operative Movement in India titled 'A Chronicle on Co-operation'.

Directed by the well known Indian film maker and actor, Shri Girish Karnad, the film, in two parts, deals with the history of the Indian Co-operative Movement and its vibrancy.

The film is priced at Rs. 2000/- (overseas US\$ 100/-) and can be had from Mr. Mohan Mishra, Director (PR), National Co-operative Union of India, 3, Siri Institutional Area, New Delhi - 110 016 (Tel. +11-686-1988; Fax : +11-696-5350).

*Edited by P. Nair, Communication Officer at the ICA Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific and printed in India at Document Press, HS-14, Kailash Colony Market, New Delhi-110048.*



# Asia Pacific Coop News

(For Private Circulation only)

ISSN: 0971-7013

Special Issue : October 1999

A NEWS BULLETIN OF THE ICA REGIONAL OFFICE FOR ASIA & THE PACIFIC

## Fifth Asia-Pacific Co-operative Ministers' Conference, Beijing, China

The 5th Asia-Pacific Co-operative Ministers' Conference was convened by ICA ROAP – October 11-16, 1999 in Beijing, China.

The Conference was hosted by the Government of People's Republic of China and the All China Federation of Supply and Marketing Co-operatives. 163 participants, including 15 Co-operative Ministers and high ranking government officials and 139 co-operative leaders from 24 countries and 22 participants from eight international organisations (ACCU, AARRO, CCA, CICOPA, DID, FAO, ILO, ICA) participated in the Conference.

The Conference was inaugurated by His Excellency Wen Jiabao, Vice Prime Minister of the People's Republic of China. In his inaugural address, Hon'ble Wen Jiabao mentioned that it is of great benefit and importance that such a Conference is taking place in Beijing. It is also significant that celebrations marking the 50th anniversary of the founding of the People's Republic of China took place during this period. He said that the Chinese government has always attached great importance to the co-operative movement. He felt confident that this Conference will help furthering the government-co-operative relations and also pave the way for promotion of exchanges and co-operation among countries in the Asia-Pacific region.

Roberto Rodrigues, ICA President, thanked the Government of the People's Republic of China and the All



*Co-operative ministers and leaders with H.E. the Prime Minister of the People's Republic of China.*

China Federation of Supply and Marketing Co-operatives for hosting the conference. Commending the development of co-operative movements in Asia and the Pacific Region, he identified positive support of the State to co-operatives as one of the crucial factors in this growth process. He however felt that with the fast changes taking place in global economy due to structural adjustments and opening up of national economies, the role of the State in co-operative movement needs to be reoriented to create an enabling environment, facilitating a pragmatic fusion of Co-operative Identity and business efficiency.

Mr. Bai Lichen, President of the All China Federation of Supply and Marketing Co-operatives said as stressed

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in the ICA Co-operative Identity Statement (ICIS), people set up co-operatives out of their common needs and desires in economic, social and cultural spheres, with self-reliance, responsibility, democracy, equality, justice and unity. Though the co-operative movement in China has a history of 80 years, it was after the founding of the People's Republic of China fifty years ago that the co-operative movement started having rapid development, playing important roles in the social and economic life of the people of China. He felt that the ICA is doing a commendable job in holding these conferences and hoped that it will promote understanding and co-operation among co-operatives and governments in this region.

Mr. Mu Li, ICA Vice-President for Asia and the Pacific and Vice-President of the Board of Directors of All China Federation of Supply and Marketing Co-operatives, in his speech said that it is of great significance to define the theme of this conference as 'Enhancing Sustainable Development of Co-operatives in the 21st Century'. He hoped that the Conference will help the co-operative movement to accomplish new achievements in the twenty-first century, promoting peace, prosperity and stability in the region, with the constructive support of the governments.

During the Conference, Ministers, Heads of delegations, Chairmen of apex organisations, ICA President, Director-General and Regional Director called on the Prime Minister of People's Republic of China and exchanged the views on co-operative development.

The Conference was the culmination of the long efforts by the ICA Regional Office, which conducted issue-based workshops in Kathmandu, Nepal (January 99), Bangkok, Thailand (February 1999), Hanoi, Vietnam (May 99) and a Regional Consultation in Singapore during July, 1999.

Based on the recommendations of the Regional Consultation, the 5th Co-operative Ministers' Conference deliberated and formulated specific

recommendations on the following issues: (i) Autonomy and independence; (ii) Recognition; (iii) Fair playing field; (iv) Legal existence; (v) Self-regulation; (vi) Capitalization; and (vii) Official Development Assistance.

Besides, the Conference also made specific recommendation on Networking as an important element in maximizing effectivity of development assistance.

Deliberations of the Conference culminated into a Joint Declaration highlighting a new approach to co-operative development focusing on the need for creation and sustaining an enabling policy and legal environment and the need for establishment of new forms of co-operation between the governments and co-operatives.

The recommendations of the Conference centered around this approach to co-operative development. Through the Ministerial Conference ICA ROAP has facilitated an active dialogue between co-operatives and the governments.

In order to ensure effective implementation of recommendations and Joint Declaration, the Conference constituted a Steering Committee at the ICA ROAP level. The Steering Committee will monitor the progress of implementation and report to the next Ministers' Conference.

Besides, participating countries formulated Action Plans to implement the recommendations.

At the closing ceremony, Bruce Thordarson, Director General of ICA, congratulated the ICA Regional Office and Robby Tulus, its Regional Director for the efforts put in organis-

ing the Conference and thanked the host organisation and all the ministers and other delegates who actively participated in the conference.

Robby Tulus, Regional Director, also thanked the host organisation and its staff for the excellent arrangements they have made for the conference. Many of the delegates had the opportunity of a Special Audience with H.E. the Prime Minister of the People's Republic of China.

The Government of China treated the delegates to a big banquet dinner at the Great Hall of People, while the All China Federation of Supply and Marketing Co-operatives gave a banquet dinner accompanied by a spell-binding acrobatic show at the Friendship Palace, the venue of the Conference.

The Mayor of Beijing gave a farewell dinner to the delegates at the famous Beijing Roast Duck Restaurant.

The delegates were also taken out for a sight-seeing tour to the Great Wall of China and they had the opportunity to visit a co-operative supermarket, affiliated to the All China Federation of Supply and Marketing Co-operatives.

It was felt by all the delegates participated that the Conference was a great success.

*The joint declaration will be available in booklet form soon.*  
*It is also available on the ICA website at:*  
<http://www.ica.coop.org/declaration/html>

## **ACCU Forum on Core Business: Credit Union Focus in the next Millennium**

The Association of Asian Confederation of Credit Unions (ACCU, held an open Forum in Bali, Indonesia during 17-19 September, 1999 on the theme 'Core Business: Credit Union Focus in the next Millennium'.

Over 100 delegates participated at this exclusive forum and discussed

strategies for credit unions in the next millennium.

Mr. Robby Tulus, ICA Regional Director for Asia and the Pacific, participated at the Forum and made a presentation on the topic of 'Marketing the Credit Union in the 21st Century'.





# 第五届亚太地区政府合作社部议 1999 5<sup>th</sup> Asia-Pacific Cooperative Minis' Con





## Malaysian Co-operative College organises national seminar on 'Doing Co-op Business'

The Co-operative College of Malaysia organised a 2-day Seminar – 2-3 August, 1999 at the college premises in Petaling Jaya, Malaysia. The theme of the seminar was 'Doing Co-operative Business – Malaysian Experiences and Global Opportunities'. More than 200 co-operative leaders from all over the country participated the seminar.

Robby Tulus, Regional Director of ICA made a presentation 'Co-operatives Doing Business Around the Globe :

A challenge or Opportunity?', which was highly appreciated by the participants.

The paper reviewed the current social and economic environment in Asia and discusses about the lessons that can be drawn from it, in order for co-operatives to do business in a more sustainable manner. He exhorted the co-operatives to focus on a clear strategy of creating good products and delivering effective services to members.

## "Added Value through Women's Participation: The enhancement of Co-op Opportunities and Performance"

Robby Tulus, ICA Regional Director for Asia and the Pacific participated at a Global Conference organised by the ICA Global Women's Committee in Quebec City on 29 August, 1999, and presented a paper titled 'Some experiences in Goal-oriented Training and Education'.

In his paper he explained the cultural and historical context, specially the Asia situation and despite constraints by the historical and cultural contexts, how businesses owned, managed or operated by women have 'added-value' and contributed to the economies of the region. He also explained, how the ICA in Asia-Pacific, with the unfailing support of the Japanese Consumers Co-operative Union and the ANGKASA-Malaysia, were able to work towards gender-mainstreaming in co-operatives in the region. The Regional Office and the Gender Programme Coordinator were able to organise Regional Women's Committee and hold the first ever Regional Women's Forum last year.

The ICA Regional Office also collaborated with the ILO Coopnet Project on gender related activities and are working to develop a manual on Co-operative Leadership Training for Women. The gender-mainstreaming activities will be an ongoing effort. ICA ROAP will look for workable mechanisms to sustain the involvement of women as leaders and decision makers in co-ops.

## Tourism Seminar postponed to April 2000

We wish to announce the change of dates for the above seminar from 15-19 November 1999 to 12-14 April 2000. While there was interest on the seminar, there was not enough numbers to justify it. We have realized that there may be other co-op organizations involved in co-op

tourism that we failed to invite to the seminar. For these reasons, we have decided to move the dates of the seminar. We will be sending you new information later in the year.

In the meantime, we will appreciate it if you could give us some feedback that will help us redesign the seminar.

## ICA organises Consumer Committee, University Sub-Committee and Consumer Forum in Bali

The ICA Committee on Consumer Co-operation for Asia and the Pacific, ICA Sub-Committee on University Co-operatives and ICA Consumer Forum will be organised in Bali, Indonesia, from November 29 to December 1, 1999.

The meetings will be hosted by Dewan Koperasi Indonesia (DEKOPIN) and will take place at

Hotel Natour Kuta Beach, Bali, Indonesia.

It is expected that various important issues will be discussed at these meetings and a tentative work plan for the year 2000 will be adopted.

Reports on the youth seminar held in Manila, Philippines and on the World Youth Seminar will also be presented.

## ICA to collaborate with ADB on development

Bruce Thordarson, Director General and Robby Tulus, Asia-Pacific Regional Director of ICA met the President and officials of the Asian Development Bank in Manila early October, 1999 and discussed potential co-operative development activities in collaboration with ADB.

They explained to the Asian Development Bank on the activities of the ICA globally and in the Region and explored the possibilities of making co-operatives viable models for micro-finance and poverty alleviation strategies being pursued by the Bank.

### **The New ICA Flag**

*The ICA has approved, in principle, the use of this new co-operative flag during the board meeting at Québec, which is white in colour with 7 birds flying out of the rainbow. The flag is made in pure silk and can be ordered from the ICA Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific.*

## **NCUI celebrates 46th All India Co-operative Week**

The National Co-operative Union of India is scheduled to celebrate the 46th All India Co-operative Week, 14 to 20 November, 1999.

The theme of the Co-op Week is "Co-operatives for Empowerment of People". It is expected that over 300 delegates from all over India will participate at the celebrations.

## **Canadian Co-ops going strong**

The top 50 co-operatives in Canada continued to thrive in 1998 and showed an increase of more than eight per cent compared to 1997.

According to the new figures, membership for the top 50 co-operatives rose by 13 per cent in 1998.

While the employment rate in Canada increased by 2.8 per cent between 1997 and 1998, the top 50 Canadian co-operatives hired five per cent more workers in 1998, employing nearly 39,000 people.

The *Coopérative fédérée de Québec* was the largest employer again last year with more than 7,400 employees.

The Saskatchewan Wheat Pool remains the largest amongst the top 50 co-operatives, with more than \$4.3 billion in sales.

## **Romy Villamin to present a paper to League of Governors**

Romy Villamin, Director (South East Asia) of the ICA Regional Office, will give a presentation to the National Conference on Local Governance and Co-op Development at Subic Bay, the Philippines, during November 4-8, 1999, on the ICA's perceptions on developmental aspects, especially co-operative development, in the changed economic situation in the Region.

## **ICA Regional Executive Council meets in Beijing**

The meeting of the ICA Regional Executive Council was chaired by B.S. Vishwanathan. 13 members, 6 representatives from partner organisations, the President, Director General and Deputy Director General of ICA and 4 observers attended the meeting.

Welcoming the members, B.S. Vishwanathan thanked Yang Deshou, former Vice-President of Global ICA Board and first Chairman of ICA ROAP Executive Council and Standing Committee and welcomed his successor, Mu Li.

Representatives from partner organisations presented brief reports.

The meeting decided that in view of broadening of the Standing Committee of the Regional Assembly, which will serve as a coordinating body for the region, the Executive Council would no longer be in existence.

## **Indian Society for Studies in Co- operation institutes awards**

The Indian Society for Studies in Co-operation has announced two awards of Rs.1000/- each for research in the field of co-operation.

The governing council of the society invites submission of research work in the form of either books, monographs, papers published or manuscript completed during the year 1994-95, 1995-96, 1996-97 and 1997-98.

The research work should reach:

**Mr. M.V. Madane**  
Chairman,  
**Indian Society for Studies in  
Co-operation**

C/o. Vaikunth Mehta National  
Institute of Co-op Management,  
University Road,  
Pune 411 007, India

on or before **31st December, 1999.**

## **University Co-op Seminar in Vietnam**

A seminar was the second to be conducted by ICA ROAP and NFUCA in Vietnam to promote university cooperatives in the country, and as part of the program plan of the Sub-Committee on University Cooperatives. The seminar was a general orientation on university cooperatives to enable teachers and students to appreciate the idea of university cooperatives, how they operate, and how they can organize one in the school system.

The seminar was attended by several teachers and students coming from a technical institute, a university and a college in Danang City. Also in attendance were representatives from the Education Ministry, the city government, and the local affiliate of the Vietnam Cooperative Alliance. VCA officials from Hanoi also attended the seminar.

Inputs for the seminar were given by R. Villamin, ICA ROAP, Mr. Okayasu of NFUCA and Chairperson of the Sub-Committee on University Cooperatives, and Mr. Akio Numazawa, Managing Director of the Ritsumeiki University Coop in Japan. The seminar was held on July 27-28, 1999 at the Danang University.

## **Office Bearers of RWC meet in Kuala Lumpur to chalk out strategy**

Robby Tulus, Regional Director, Juku Ozawa, Director - Special Programmes, Romulo Villamin, Director - SEA, Ms. Hajah Rahaiah Baharen, Chairperson, Ms. Hatsuko Omori and Ms. Rameshwari Ramachandra, both Vice Chairpersons of the ICA Regional Women's Committee met in Kuala Lumpur, 27 October, 1999 to chalk out strategies for the year 2000.

The ICA Regional Office and the Regional Women's Committee plan to hold the second Regional Women's Forum during June 2000 in Singapore.

# A New Business Office for ICA



The Singapore National Co-operative Federation (SNCF) has extended whole-hearted support to the Business Office.

A Memorandum of Understanding was signed between ICA and SNCF on 5th July 99, Bruce Thordarson, Director-General signing on behalf of the ICA and Mr. Tan Kin Lian, Chairman, on behalf of SNCF.

The address of the Business Office is:

**ICA Business Office**

#04-01A SLF Building  
510 Thomson Road  
Singapore 298135

Tel. +(65)358-2322

Fax.+(65)358-2292

E-mail: [icasing@icaroap.org.sg](mailto:icasing@icaroap.org.sg)



The ICA Business Office established by the Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific at Singapore during June, 1999, hope to hold a Co-operative Product Exhibition at Singapore in the year 2001.

Apart from promoting and facilitating inter-co-operative trade, the Business Office will also assist ICA member co-operatives and their affiliates in finding markets for their products and help in sourcing material from other co-operative movements in other regions of the world, thus trying to cut-down the middlemen. This kind of endeavour will help both producer co-operatives and consumers in all parts of the world to get quality goods at reasonable prices and thereby increase the viability of co-operatives in a market-oriented competitive business environment in the new millennium.

The ICA Business Office was established to fulfil the aspiration of ICA ROAP members to have a central location where co-operatives can promote business networking and do business itself. Hence it will be able to assist member co-operative movements in undertaking business activities such as technology transfers, specialised training and, above all, set up a co-operative trade

database and a Regional web site, where the member co-operatives and others will be able to get information readily and at the click of a mouse.

The ICA ROAP hope to set up the web site in early 2000 and the site will be uplinked from Singapore.

Robby Tulus, ICA Regional Director emphasizes that this Business Office is exclusively meant for promoting co-operative business, trade-related activities and also special programs, and that the ICA's Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific will remain at its present location in New Delhi.



*Dignitaries at the Opening Ceremony*



# Asia Pacific Coop News

(For Private Circulation only)

ISSN : 0971-7013

Vol. 6, No. 3, Oct-Dec. 1999

A NEWS BULLETIN OF THE ICA REGIONAL OFFICE FOR ASIA & THE PACIFIC

## ICA Consumer Committee and Consumer Forum held in Bali, Indonesia

The 32nd meeting of the ICA Committee on Consumer Co-operation for Asia and the Pacific was held in Bali, Indonesia, 30th November 1999.

The Committee agreed to conduct an overall study of a member co-ops in the Region during 2000, by visiting a number of consumer co-operatives by the members of the Committee. There was also a proposal to establish a training project for studying the market trends and products. The project will conduct a survey using questionnaires.

The proposal came from the Japanese member and cited the example of Co-op Sapporo, where the severity of the

management situation was felt by JCCU.

During the Consumer Committee meeting a Co-operative Consumer Forum was organised, where serious discussions about the consumer co-operative operations in the Region were discussed.

The theme of the Forum was "What is the value of consumer co-ops in Asia". The aim of the forum was to understand the activities and present conditions of consumer co-operatives in member countries.

Mr. Mats Ahnlund, Senior Advisor of Membership Services at the ICA Head Office in Geneva reported on 'Ethical

Value of Co-ops' when the market competition intensifies.

Mr. Romulo Villamin spoke about the value of co-operatives in relation to local communities. The participants also spoke about member participation, community impact, employee's education, joint buying, at the national level, etc.

The Consumer Forum was a success and participants felt that similar forum should be held in the future too.

## ICA Regional Executive Council

At the meeting of the ICA Regional Executive Council, on 11th October, 1999, in Beijing, it has been decided to abolish the ICA Regional Executive Council.

This is in view of the broadening of the Standing Committee of the Regional Assembly, which will serve as a coordinating body for the Region.

## ICA Consumer Sub-Committee on University/College Co-ops meets in Bali, Indonesia

The 5th Meeting of the ICA Consumer Sub-Committee on University/College Co-operatives for Asia and the Pacific was held at the Udayana university in Bali, Indonesia, 29th November 1999.

About 30 students participated with the observer from Indonesia every place. Students even travelled more than 26 hours by bus to participate at the meeting.

The major theme discussed at the Forum was the setting up of a Youth Project for setting up university co-operatives in every country of the region.

It was reported at the meeting that 3 campus co-ops were established in Singapore and Vietnam. It was also reported that co-operative joint activities were introduced in Indonesia.

The 3rd Asia Pacific youth forum will be held during June, 2001 in Japan.

The 2nd Youth forum had decided on the Logo of the Youth Forum, wherein a male youth stands in front and a woman youth, partly hidden at the back. The meeting decided to bring out possible designs from member participants and bring out a brochure for the Co-op Youth Forum.

**Participate at the ICA Regional Co-operative Forum and related Events in Singapore - June 2000.**

**For details, contact ICA ROAP at**

**Fax: (91-11)683-5568**

**E-mail: [icaroap@vsnl.com](mailto:icaroap@vsnl.com)**

**SEE POSTER ON THE REVERSE SIDE OF THIS NEWSLETTER**

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# Co-operatives in Are We C

First ICA Asia-Pacific  
27-28, June 2





## APHCO holds its Board meeting and Regional Seminar on Co-op Healthcare

The board meeting of Asia Pacific Health Co-operative Organisation (APHCO) was held at Armada Hotel, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia on 8 October, 1999. The meeting was chaired by Dr. Shoji Kato, Chairperson of APHCO.

The board meeting decided that the present board members will continue for a further period, expect that Dr. Ogino of JCCU will be replaced by Dr. Yasuyuki Takahashi.

The meeting was followed by a Regional Seminar on 'Co-operative Healthcare in the new Millennium', on 9th October, 1999, held at the same venue, wherein a total of 80 delegates from 7 countries participated.

Dr. Kato, in his keynote address, emphasized the need to promote solidarity and co-operation among health co-operatives to enhance the quality of health and social care services in communities and to exchange experiences

and learn from each other. He also felt that APHCO should collaborate with NGOs and the WHO and promote co-operation with governments and private enterprises in a realistic way.

The need to expand the membership of APHCO was felt by all the members.

In the regional seminar 5 reports on Co-operative healthcare at primary level in Korea, Role of health co-operatives in Nepal, Care of the aged in Japan, Networking among co-operatives in India, and Health financing/insurance and co-operative healthcare in Malaysia were presented. The seminar was attended by a number of delegates from Malaysia.

Mr. Juku Ozawa, Director (Special Programmes) of ICA served as the Secretary to the APHCO.

The next meeting of the board of APHCO is scheduled to take place in Kerala, India, 27-28 March, 2000.

## Third University Co-op established in Vietnam

During a seminar on 6-7 December, 1999, 3rd University Co-operative has been established at the university of Thai Nguyen city, located in the north of Vietnamese capital Hanoi.

The university co-operatives established earlier were at Hanoi and Ho Chi Minh City. Even children from the minority races of Vietnam north mountainous areas are studying at Thai Nguyen University.

Juku Ozawa, Director (Special Programmes) of ICA-ROAP reported on the situation of the university co-ops in Asia and Mr. Okayasu from National

Federation of University Co-operative Associations in Japan spoke on the role, history, business contents etc. of the university co-ops in Japan.

The seminar was attended by more than 40 delegates.

This co-operative is the 3rd university co-op established in Vietnam.

During the summing up there was a presentation by the National Economic University Co-operative of Hanoi. The activity has been sponsored and supported by the Vietnam Co-operative Association.

## Regional Women's Committee office-bearers meet

The office-bearers of ICA Regional Women's Committee met in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia during October, 1999.

The participants were Ms. Rahaiah Baheran, Chairperson, Ms. Hatsuko Omori, Ms. Rameshwari Ramachandra, Vice Chairpersons, Mr. Robby Tulus, Regional Director, ICA ROAP, Mr. Romulo Villamin, Director - South East

Asia, ICA ROAP, Ms. Akiko Yamauchi, JCCU, Mr. Abdul Halim Haji Mahmud, ANGKASA, Mr. Shigehisa Juku Ozawa, Director-Special Programs, ICA-ROAP. The meeting discussed about future activities of the Regional Women's Committee and on the agenda for the 2nd ICA Regional Women's Forum in June, 2000 in Singapore.

## Fourteenth ICA/Japan Management Training Course begins

The Fourteenth ICA/Japan Course on 'Strengthening Management of Agricultural Co-operative' started on 12 November, 1999.

The official opening of the course will be held on 4th January, 2000. The course will be held at the Institute of Agricultural Management Development, IFFCO, India at Gurugram. Before arriving in Delhi, the participants completed their home assignments and prepared projects which will be appraised later.

## Co-op Leaders meet with local government officials

Co-operative leaders from various parts of the Philippines are expected to come together recently to meet with provincial governors, official representatives of Provincial Development Authority and Provincial Co-op Development Office to map out a common agenda for the year. Local governments in the Philippines are active in co-operative development and the conference aimed to reach a common understanding between government and the co-operative sector.

The National Conference on Co-operative Governance and Co-operative Development was held 8-10 November at the Subic International Hotel. It was organised by the Philippine Co-operative Center. The conference brought together around 300 participants from government and co-operative sectors. Mr. Romulo Villamin, Director for East Asia of the ICA Regional Office presented a paper on 'Co-operative Development and the Changing of the State'.

### First Asia-Pacific Co-operative Forum Register Early to Save

If you register before 1 October 2000 for the Asia-Pacific Co-operative Forum and related events in Singapore during June 2000, you will save by reduced registration

## B. D. Sharma visits Iranian Co-operatives

B. D. Sharma, Director for South, West and Central Asia, at the ICA Regional office for Asia and the Pacific, visited the co-operatives in the Islamic Republic of Iran during December, 1999.

During his visit, Mr. Sharma has found that the Iranian co-operatives are highly diversified and has much to offer in co-operative trade. The Iranian co-operatives process food products and exports to various countries.

The Iranian co-operatives are keen to get their HRD personnel trained at other regional institutions for providing a better co-operative training to their personnel and members. They have requested the ICA to provide such opportunities for training in Malaysia, India, Japan, etc. on self-financing basis.

The Iranian constitution specifically mentions co-operatives as important component of national economy. The

government is willing to provide all out help to co-operatives and requested ICA if it could help them in conducting an analytical study on present position of Iranian co-operatives.

The Iranian co-operatives and the Ministry of Co-operatives are keen to support financially co-operative development efforts in central and west Asia. They have also requested ICA to set up a sub-regional project office in Tehran for this purpose.

Iran has also set up a Co-operative Bank and requests for technical support from co-operative banking institutions. Mr. Sharma promised to coordinate these efforts from the ICA Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific.

On the whole, it looks that the co-operatives in the region have a better future with the Iranian support.

## Singapore National Co-operative Federation holds Seventh Triennial General Assembly

The Seventh Triennial General Assembly of Singapore National Co-operative Federation was held on 27 November, 1999 at The Grand Hyatt Hotel. A new Board of Trustees and Executive Council were elected by delegates of the affiliates at the Assembly.

The six members of the Board of Trustees are: Mr. Goh Chee Wee (Chairperson), Mrs. Yu-Foo Yee Shoon (Deputy Chairperson), Mr. Anthony Pragasam (Member), Mr. Victor Pang (Member), Mr. Anthony Samy (Member), and Mr. Pal Tan (Member).

The ten members of the Executive Council are: Mr. Tan Kin Lian (Chairperson), Mr. S. Maganaruban (First Deputy Chairperson), Mr. Chan Tee Seng (Second Deputy Chairperson), Mr. K.T. Samuel (Member), Mr. Thomas Thomas (Member), Professor Poo Gee Swee (Member), Mr. Ismail Mohd. Yusof (Member), Mr. Nithiah Nandan (Member), Mr. Seah Kian Peng (Member), and Ms. Nichole Tan (Member). Mr. Goh Chee Wee and Mr. Tan Kin Lian were re-elected as Chairpersons of Board of

Trustees and Executive Council respectively.

Ms. Yu-Foo Yee Shoon, the Acting Chairperson of the Board of Trustees and also the Senior Parliamentary Secretary of the Ministry of Community Development addressed and chaired the Assembly.

Ms. Yu-Foo Yee Shoon, at her opening address of the Assembly emphasized: "It is my sincere hope that the new Board of Trustees and Executive Council will provide the leadership and the drive for the various tasks ahead and deliver tangible results for the co-operative movement, building on its reputation as a responsible and effective partner in Singapore and on the international stage."

Mr. Tan Kin Lian, Chairperson of SNCF, in his statement during the Assembly said: "We aim to make co-operatives play a more meaningful role - a role which will meet the changing needs of our people in the twenty first century. New programmes with more activities involving members must be drawn up from time to time to reflect the thinking

## Minister sees Enlarged Role for NCDC

Hon. Nitish Kumar, Union Minister for Agriculture, Government of India, hoped that the co-operatives will continue to play a vital role in the overall economic development of the country in future, especially in handling commodities like milk, fish, fruit and vegetables, agricultural inputs, etc.

Mr. Nitish Kumar was speaking at the 49th General Council Meeting of National Co-operative Development Corporation of India in New Delhi, on Dec. 9, 1999.

The Minister assured that the amendment to the NCDC Act pending for quite some time, will be passed soon, to enable NCDC to finance industrial co-operatives, cottage and village industries and other services.

The amendment to the Act will also facilitate the Corporation to provide funds to co-ops without insisting on government guarantees.



of our leaders and the ever-growing membership of the movement. People are expected to be generally more informed and better educated and they can therefore be demanding. Co-ops must be more competent and competitive to survive and remain relevant.

He spoke about the regional events being held in Singapore during June 2000, i.e. the First Asia-Pacific Co-operative Forum, the 2nd Regional Women's Forum, the Co-operative Research Forum and the 4th ICA Regional Assembly for Asia and the Pacific.

He also mentioned about the forthcoming meeting of Chief Executive Officers of Co-operatives and the ICA/ICFTU/APRO Regional Workshop on Employment Generation, Poverty Alleviation and Human Resource Development.

The Singapore National Co-operative Federation has 67 co-operative affiliates and a total membership of 1.3 million, are associated with the ICA Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific on all these events.

- *Leow Peng Kui, Chief Executive*

# the 21st Century: Changing?

Co-operative Forum  
2000 : Singapore





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## Fostering Agricultural Co-operatives - JA-Zenchu Field study mission in Laos

With a view to encourage formation of agricultural co-ops and to streamline agricultural production by providing a service institution at the grassroots level, the JA-Zenchu (Central Union of Agricultural Co-operatives of Japan) has fielded a survey mission to Laos PDR. The study mission is assigned the task to identify the pitfalls and highpoints as to the establishment of primary level multi-purpose agricultural co-operatives and to recommend fostering of such institutions.

The study mission consists of four technical consultants and two national counterparts. The survey will be carried out in collaboration with the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry of Laos and is spread over a period of two years.

The first phase of the survey was carried out during November 15-26, 1999 under the leadership of Mr. Midori Matsuihoro, Senior Advisor at the JA-



(I to r) Dr. Daman Prakash, Dr. Kawai, Mr. Yamauchi, Mr. Midori Matsuihoro and Mr. Pheydy of MAF

Zenchu. Other team members were Mr. Hideo Yamauchi and Dr. Akinobu Kawai of Japan, and Dr. Daman Prakash, Senior Consultant at the ICA Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific. Two sen-

ior level national counterparts have been assigned to the survey team by the MAF/Laos. The second phase of the survey will be done during February, 2000.

## Institutional Development among Rural Women through Agri-coops - Study visits In Thailand



Ms. Shaheen Ijaz with Ms. Kanchana Makchai, Manager of the Shikiu Agricultural Co-op at the display of handloom products of the women's group.

Mrs. Shaheen Ijaz, Assistant Director in charge of Agriculture and Co-operatives in the Pat Feeder Comand Area Development Project in Pakistan was chosen to undertake a 10-day study visit programme in Thailand during November 4-14, 1999.

The study visit was organised by the ICA Regional Office for Asia and the

Pacific in collaboration with the Co-operative League of Thailand, during which Mrs. Ijaz visited Pimai and Shikiu Agricultural Co-op and met seniors leaders of Thai Agricultural Co-op Movement.

She participated in the 4th Int'l Conference on Rural Women in Agricultural Co-ops during August 1999 in Tokyo.

## Robby Tulus attends CIDA International Co-operation Days 1999

Robby Tulus, ICA Regional Director for Asia and the Pacific attended the International Co-operation Days 1999 organised by the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) in Ottawa, Canada on November 16-17, 1999.

He presented a paper on 'Toward Local Ownership' at a panel Discussion on "Microfinance: The Impact of Alliances" on 16 November, 1999.

Canadian International Development Agency provides support to co-operative development efforts throughout the world.

The paper presented by him appears in the current issue of Co-op Dialogue.

*Edited by P. Nair, Communication Officer at the ICA Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific, New Delhi, and printed in India at Document Press, HS-14, Kailash Colony Market, New Delhi 110 048. Tel: 643-2836.*