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

International Co-operative Trade Networking Seminar

The ICA Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific held a Seminar on International Co-operative Trade Networking at the International Co-operative Training Centre in Beijing, in collaboration with the All China Federation of Supply and Marketing Co-operatives.

The seminar, held from 19-24 March 2001, was the first such initiative by the ICA in this Region, bringing together top level leaders and executives of co-operative organisations under a common forum. The seminar was attended by more than 40 delegates from Australia, China, Canada, India, Indonesia, Japan, Korea, Nepal, Philippines, Singapore, Vietnam and USA.

Chang Xiang-mao, Executive Director of the Board of All China Federation of Supply and Marketing Co-operatives inaugurated the seminar and welcomed the delegates. Mr. Mu Li, ICA Vice President, Mr. Chen Wen-bao,

President of the Training Centre, Mr. Yu Ning, Director of the Training Centre, and Mr. Li Chun-Sheng, Vice President of ACFSMC greeted the delegates.

The presentations were made by ACFSMC, China, Mr. B.M. Vyas of Amul, India, Mr. Fujii (DINO) Haruo, of Co-op Trade Japan (an affiliate of Japanese Consumers Co-operative Union), Mr. Eric Clauss of Co-op Atlantic, Canada, and Mr. Garry Gronan, Executive Officer of Australian Centre for Co-operative Research and Development (ACCORD).

Mr. Robby Tulus, Regional Director, and Mr. B.D. Sharma, Director (SOWECA) of ICA introduced the subject of a **Co-operative Trade Directory** proposed to be established by the ICA ROAP. Mr. Romy Villamin and P. Nair from ICA Regional Office gave further details on the Web Directory.

There were several opportunities for networking for the delegates. An MoU

was also signed between the All China Federation and DEKOPIN, Indonesia during the seminar.

The ICTN has triggered a promising initiative where 4 major Consumer Co-operatives have decided to undertake a joint buying trip to the affiliates of All China Federation of Supply and Marketing Co-operatives. Co-op Atlantic (Canada), CWS (UK), JCCU (Japan) and NTUC Fairprice (Singapore) have agreed to visit the Guangzhou Trade Fair in October 2001, after which they will take a close look at required products made by different factories under the ACFSMC fold, to realize the actual joint buying activity and close the deal if these products meet the specs as presented.

ICA ROAP will be in charge for all the preparatory steps towards the realization of the joint buying activity, and if this should happen it will be the first ever global deal realized.

This global trading event will be a historic milestone for the work of ICA ROAP in relation to its members (ACFSMC & JCCU), and other large Consumer Co-ops from many parts of the world!"



The Seminar participants

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ICA Regional Co-operative Youth Seminar 2001 - for Asia and the Pacific

The International Co-operative Alliance Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific (ICA-ROAP) is organising a Regional Co-operative Youth Seminar 2001, in collaboration with the ICA Consumer Sub-Committee on University / College Co-operatives for Asia and the Pacific. It will be jointly hosted by the National Federation of University Co-operative Associations (NFUCA), Japan Joint Committee of Co-operatives (JJC), and Japanese Consumers' Co-operative Union (JCCU).

The ICA President Mr. Roberto Rodrigues, will inaugurate the Seminar on 25th June 2001.

The Theme of the Seminar is **"Leaders towards Co-operation, Leading New Century"**.

The participants will be youth leaders from all co-operative sectors and national apex co-operative organizations. The Seminar will be held at :

National Olympic Memorial Youth Center (NYC), Tokyo

3-1 Kamizono-cho, Yoyogi
Shibuya-ku, Tokyo 151 0052
Japan.

The Seminar is expected to deal with current issues of Co-operatives and Youth in/out of co-operatives. The meeting will also discuss the vision for the development of youth activities, communities, local industries and all types of co-operatives in the region.

Youth leaders will also discuss action plans and make recommendations to promote youth activities and co-operative development in the region.

The number of participants are expected to be 100-120 persons from 10 to 15 countries in the region.

All member-organizations of ICA ROAP have been requested to nominate youth delegates/observers (between 15 and 29 years of age) from all co-operative sectors to the seminar.

The Registration Fee for the official delegates is US\$ 100 per person, and for the observers, it is US\$ 230 per person.

Training Programme for Managers of Consumers Co-ops

ICA ROAP in collaboration with the Japanese Consumers' Co-operative Union (JCCU) and Miyagi Co-operative (fifth biggest consumer co-operative society Japan), is planning to organise Training Programme for Managers of Consumers Co-operatives for four weeks in Japan.

This programme would be organized once a year from 2001 to 2003.

Each year, three managers of consumer co-operatives from Asia Pacific region will be trained at Miyagi Co-operatives, Japan.

This year, the training programme scheduled to be organized from 6 to 29th September, 2001 in Japan.

The programme hopes to expose the participants to professional management systems and practices based on Co-operative Values adopted by Miyagi Co-operative. Besides, the programme also aims at developing necessary skills in participants to enable them in replicating such systems and practices back home.

The participants will have to bear 75% of their round-trip air-fare to Japan and Miyagi Co-operative and JCCU together will take care of the local boarding and lodging cost during the training programme and also 25% of their air-fare.

Members of the ICA Committee for Consumer Co-operation for Asia and the Pacific have been requested to nominate one or two suitable candidate(s) for selection.

Application Forms should be sent to us until 15 July 2001. Three of the most suitable candidates would be selected for the training. A waiting list would also be prepared for the next two years. The ICA-ROAP will consult with JCCU and Miyagi Co-operative and candidates would be selected by the end of July, 2001.

ICA Regional Consultation on Co-operative Policy and Legislation

ICA Regional Consultation on Co-operative Policy and Legislation in Asia and the Pacific will be held at Esteghlal Grand Hotel International (formerly the Hilton Hotel), Tehran, Iran from 1-5 July, 2001.

While invitations have already been sent to ICA Member organisations in the Region and Officials of Ministries and Departments of Co-operation in the Region, all co-operative leaders and officials, desirous of participating at this event are requested to send in their registrations early.

The Consultation will be preceded by two very significant and important events; "Dialogue of Civilizations" and "National Co-operative Forum" hosted by the Iranian Co-operatives.

The participants are expected to arrive in Tehran on 30th June and can depart on 6th July, 2001.

Please send your registrations to:

ICA Regional Office for Asia-Pacific
E-4, Defence Colony, (3rd floor)
New Delhi-110 024, India
Fax: (91-11) 469-4975
E-mail: icaroad@vsnl.com

teenth ICA-Japan International Training Course includes

The Fifteenth (15th) ICA-Japan International Training Course on 'Strengthening Management of Agricultural Co-operatives in Asia' was held in India, Malaysia and Japan from November 2000 to April 28, 2001.

The programme was implemented by the International Co-operative Alliance [ICA] in collaboration with the Nihon Seichu [Central Union of Agricultural Co-operatives of Japan] and the Institute for the Development of Agricultural Co-operation in Asia-Pacific [IDACA]. The Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries [MFF] of the Government of Japan provided financial assistance to conduct the programme.

The course was held in two phases. Phase I covered Home Country Assignments [November 16, 2000-January 06, 2001]; Programme in India [January 07-February 28, 2001] and Programme held in Malaysia [March 01-8, 2001], while Phase II was programme held in Japan at IDACA [March 08-April 28, 2001].



Inauguration of the 15th course. Dr. Daman Prakash, Project Director welcoming the trainees and participants. Dr. Robby Tulus, Regional Director, Mr. M. Kinoshita, First Secretary, Embassy of Japan, Mr. Karl Fogelstrom, Director-General, ICA, Mr. D.K. Bhatt, Marketing Director, etc. are also in the picture.

Fifteen [15] participants from twelve countries i.e., Bangladesh-01, China-02, India-02, Indonesia-01, Malaysia-01, Myanmar-01, Nepal-01, Pakistan-01, the Philippines-01, Sri Lanka-01, Thailand-01 and Vietnam-02 were selected for this course, of whom five were women.

The main objective of the training course was to help improve the capacities and capabilities of managers as management leaders in agricultural co-operatives. It was expected that the trained managers, by using project-oriented approaches, help the basic members at the grassroots level to enhance and sustain their farm income. It was also expected that agricultural co-operatives introduce and accelerate the agro-processing activities to add value to the primary products of their members.

Part I of the Training Course held in India was preceded by the Home Country Assignments [HCAs]. The participants followed comprehensive field study visits from January 07 to February 28, 2001, in Malaysia, which was organised in close collaboration with the ICA Member-Organisations in Malaysia. The National Co-operative Organisation of Malaysia-ANGKASA, National Land Finance Co-operative Society Limited [NLFCSL], and the Co-operative College of Malaysia.



Participants visiting the Oilseed Producers Co-operative in Mehsana, Gujarat during the first phase of the programme

The Course was inaugurated by Mr D.K. Bhatt Marketing Director of the Indian Farmers' Fertiliser Co-operative Limited [IFFCO] at the Marketing Division Committee Room of IFFCO.

The Inaugural Session was presided over by Mr Karl-Johann Fogeslstrom, Director-General of the International Co-operative Alliance. Mr Robby Tulus, ICA Regional Director for Asia and the Pacific, Mr Mitsuaki Kinoshita, First Secretary in the Japanese Embassy in India, Mr Jan-Erik Imbsen, Head of Development Division of the ICA, Mr. Bhagwati Prasad, Chief Executive of National Co-operative Union of India [NCUI] also addressed the participants.

The entire training programme was directed by Dr Daman Prakash, Senior Consultant at the ICA Regional Office, ably assisted by its Programme Adviser, Mr Prem Kumar.

The programme held in Japan was held under the direction of Mr Yoshitada Nakaoka, Managing

Director of the IDACA.

As a part of their studies, the participants had produced 15 development project proposals during their Home Country Assignments [HCAs] in accordance with the guidelines developed and provided by the ICA. The concepts of these proposals were developed by them in consultation with their parent organisations. While at IRMA, the participants were imparted training in skills of developing and evaluating project proposals.

The second part of the programme held at IDACA included extensive classroom work and study visits to agricultural co-operatives in and around Tokyo, Nagasaki, Oita, Fukuoka and Gunma prefectures in Japan.

The focus of studies was on the historical development of the Japanese Agricultural Co-operative Movement, innovations, management practices, diversification and business promotion. The participants got acquainted with a variety of

national level co-operative federations and other institutions in Tokyo, and held discussions with leaders, members, managers and staff of agricultural co-operatives in Japan.

A continuous process of evaluation and appraisal has been followed throughout the term of the Training Course, e.g., at the end of each component, through evaluation forms and group discussions. An exclusive and comprehensive End-of-the-Course Evaluation was conducted at the conclusion of the Training Course. Certificates of Participation were awarded to the participants at a concluding session held at the IDACA in Tokyo before their departure for their home countries.

As up to the end of the 15th Training Course a total of 225 managers of agricultural co-operatives from 14 countries of Asia had attended the training programmes. A total of 222 project proposals on topical subjects were prepared by them.

State Level Conference on Women Co-operatives

A State level Conference-cum-Seminar of Women Co-operatives in Assam was organised by Assam State Co-operative Union in collaboration with the National Co-operative Union of India, on 7th March at Guwahati, Assam. The open session of the Conference, largely attended by the representatives of women co-operatives, was inaugurated by the Chief Minister of Assam, Mr. Prafulla Kumar Mahanta.

Mr. Nurul Hussain, Minister for Co-operatives, was the Guest of Honour. He suggested that the women co-operatives should take up poultry, duckery, piggery, fishery, handloom, handicrafts, fruit processing etc.

Mr. Biraj Kumar Sarma, Minister for Municipal Administration was also present. Mr. N.M. Hussain, Director of Handloom and Textiles, suggested that the women co-operatives should be reactivated. Sri Pradi Goswami,



The seminar in progress

President of Assam State Co-operative Union presided the meeting while Mr. K.K. Sarmah, Chief Executive Office of Assam State Co-operative Union explained the objectives of the Conference and welcomed the delegates.

The seminar was a success inasmuch as the women participants were able to get a feel of the ground situation and plan for the future.

**– Ms. Renu Saikia
Publicity Officer,
Assam State Co-op Union**

Office Bearers of ICA Regional Women's Committee meets

A meeting of the office bearers of the ICA Regional Women's Committee meeting was held on 14th March in Singapore.

Ms. Rahaiah Baharen Chairperson, Ms. Preema Shanti Sooriyarachchi, Vice Chair, Ms. Akiko Yamauchi, representing Ms. Hatsuko Omori, Vice-Chair, Ms. Teresita de Leon, ILO Co-op Net/Coopreform Observer, Mr. Robby Tulus, ICA-ROAP Regional Director and Mr. Juku Ozawa ICA-ROAP, Secretary of the Committee, attended the meeting.

The meeting examined the activities of the Women's Committee during 2001 and 2002.

The Committee decided to conduct a survey of the situation of women's participation in decision-making positions in member organizations. This survey will study the role and the number of women in the elected board of directors of apex organizations, district organizations and primary co-operative societies during 2000.

The survey will also compare the current situation of women's participation with that prevailed during 1992, when gender activities were re-introduced at the ICA Regional Office. Member organizations will be requested to submit

a paper based on the survey to the Secretariat at least by 15 June, 2001.

The Committee was happy that National Women's Forums were held in 7 countries of the Region, viz. India, Sri Lanka, Nepal, Malaysia, Singapore, Vietnam, and Japan.

The Committee decided to persuade other member organisations and countries to hold such national forums. The committee may also support such organisation by providing technical inputs and external facilitators.

The Secretary reported that there are contact persons from 11 countries. The meeting decided to request all ICA Regional members to nominate contact persons on gender issues.

Ms. Teresita de Leon reported on the Leadership Development Manual for women, jointly developed by ILO and ICA-ROAP. The meeting decided to hold a validation workshop for the Manual during August 2001, in Bangkok.

Ms. Rahaiah Baharen, Chairperson summarized the role of the ICA Regional Women's Committee in promoting and understanding gender issues in Asia-Pacific region.

CLT has a New Management team

The Co-operative League of Thailand has elected a new Board of Directors on April 1, 2001.

The Board consists of 15 members - a Chairperson, 3 Vice-Chairpersons and 11 members.

The board will serve for a period of 4 years.

The details of the new board members and representatives to the ICA Specialised bodies are as follows:

Mr. Chalerm Pinsakul - Chair (*ICA General Assembly*)

Mr. Pipat Koonnirong, 1st Vice Chair (*ICA Consumer Committee*)

Mr. Sangiam Kaeolangka, 2nd Vice Chair (*ICA ROAP Regional Assembly*).

Mr. Wirat Ima Ua Yuth, 3rd Vice Chair (*ICA Agricultural Committee*)

Mr. Chareon Chandara Issara, Board Member (*ICA Fisheries Committee (ICFO)*)

Mr. Khamjad Beawbangkerd, Board Member (*ICA Housing Committee & ICA Communication Committee*)

The Executive Director will serve as the Secretary to the Board.

Mr. Wit Pratuckchai is the Acting Executive Director.

– Juku Ozawa



ICA General Assembly and Related Meetings

The next General Assembly of International Co-operative Alliance will be held during October 2001 at the COEX Convention Hall in Seoul, Korea.

The ICA Board will meet on 12-13 October, 2001.

The Specialised Bodies of ICA will meet on 14-15 October, 2001.

The General Assembly will be held 16-17 October, 2001.

For further information on the General Assembly, please contact Mr. Karl J. Fogelstrom, Director General, at <fogelstrom@coop.org>, or Mr. Mats Ahlund, Senior Adviser-Member Services at <members@coop.org>.

A joint meeting of the ICA Committee on Consumer Co-operation for Asia and the Pacific and the ICA Consumer Sub-Committee on University/College Co-operatives will also be held at Seoul, Korea in conjunction with the ICA General Assembly, during October 13-14, 2001.

NCDC provides Record Financing

The National Co-operative Development Corporation - NCDC – released finances for co-operative development of a record INR 647 crores (almost US\$ 141 million) during 2000-2001. This was against a target of Rs. 500 crores. This is 40% more than the preceding year.

Mr. Nitish Kumar, Minister for Agriculture and Railways, Government of India, who presided over the 52nd General Council Meeting of NCDC congratulated the NCDC on this achievement and hoped that the organisation will reach newer heights of excellence in the years to come.

The Minister stated that development of marketing infrastructure and techniques of preservation, storage and transportation would reduce post-harvest losses and ensure a better return to growers. Setting up of agro-processing units in the producing areas would also create off-farm employment in the villages. Collaboration between producer co-operatives and corporate sector will also be encouraged to promote agro-processing industry.

Referring to the challenge of competitiveness particularly in the context of WTO agreement on agriculture, the Minister elaborated that co-operatives can play a catalytic role in agricultural diversification and modernisation practices to increase productivity. With their inherent transaction cost advantages, co-operatives are the ideal institutions for cashing in on the moment. However, co-operatives must upgrade technology systems leading to operational efficiency, increased productivity and cost effective.

NCDC has also requested the Ministry of Finance to allow it to avail of the facility of Rural Infrastructural Development Fund (RIDF), which will enable NCDC to lower its rate of interest for infrastructural projects. At



Mr. Nitish Kumar, Union Minister for Agriculture and Railways at the 52nd meeting of the Council. Mr. Shripad Y. Naik and Mr. P.K. Mishra are also seen in the picture.

present the facility is available to NABARD (National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development, and through them to the provincial governments.

The General Council approved NCDC's activities for the year 2001-2002, involving a financial outlay of Rs. 600 crores to finance the rural co-operative sector in India. NCDC's support will ensure greater autonomy and operational freedom to co-operatives. NCDC will lay stress on modernisation and upgradation of existing processing facilities and on weaker sections programmes like fishery, poultry, sericulture, hand-looms, etc., enhancing the role of co-operatives in distribution of agricultural inputs and marketing infrastructure.

The Minister also called upon co-operatives to take advantage of the new Textile Policy and the proposed Integrated Apparel Parks and the Technology Mission.

The meeting was also attended by Mr. Shripad Y. Naik, Union Minister of State for Agriculture. He mentioned that financial strengthening and discipline have to be the key areas in NCDC's enlarged role in future.

Mr. J.N.L. Srivastava, Secretary Agriculture and Co-operation called upon NCDC to focus on working towards efficiency upgradation and successful development of co-operatives, besides its financing role. While freedom to function resulting from the move for converting NCDC into an equity-based organisation will vastly improve NCDC's ability to operate, its funding would have to be guided by strict appraisal criteria which must involve a careful assessment of risks.

Mr. P.K. Mishra, Managing Director welcomed the members of the Council. He announced that the Corporation expects to make a pre-tax profit of around Rs. 80 crores during the financial year.

Mr. Mishra emphasized on the need for new generation co-operatives which should be a business enterprise with a social content and not vice-versa. They must rest on the core fundamentals of co-operation, namely user members, self-reliance, democratic governance, common economic bond and professionalism.

- Ms. Archana Sood, Editor,
Dy. Director (PR), NCDC

ICA Committee on HRD and Research meets in Malaysia

The 13th meeting of the ICA Committee on Human Resource Development and Research for Asia and the Pacific was held at ANGKASA, Malaysia, on 1st March, 2001. Eleven members from various countries (India, Indonesia, Iran, Japan, Malaysia and Sri Lanka), attended the meeting. The meeting reviewed the activities the Committee members are undertaking in the area of human resource development involving co-operatives in their respective countries.

In the morning of 1st March, the participants visited Selangor Science School Co-operatives, the University of Malaya Bookstore and ANGKASA.

The meeting was presided over by Royal Professor Ungku A. Aziz, Chairperson of the Committee.

The Singapore National Co-operative Federation (SNCF) was admitted as a member of the HRD Committee.



The meeting in progress. Royal Professor Ungku A. Aziz, Madam Rahaiah Baharen and Mr. Romy Villamin at the dias

In conjunction with this meeting, the HRD Committee organised a Seminar on Distance Education on 2nd March.

The seminar focused on expanding the reach of co-op education and training through distance learning. It show-cased the actual experience of

the co-operative movement in Malaysia in distance education.

Members suggested that a joint meeting of the Asian and Global HRD Committees should be held in Seoul in October 2001 in conjunction with the ICA General Assembly. □

Regional Workshop on Management of Consumer Co-operatives In Asia-Pacific

The ICA Committee on Consumer Co-operation for Asia and the Pacific, at its meeting in 1997, decided to expose senior managers of consumer co-operatives in the region to successful experiments made in various aspects of consumer management through regional workshops.

Such workshop on Joint Buying Strategies for Consumer Co-operatives was organised by the Regional Office of ICA for Asia and the Pacific in August 1998 in Bangkok, Thailand.

The participants of this workshop were able to learn the actual concepts and benefits of joint buying.

As a follow-up of the Bangkok workshop, a Consumers Co-operative Forum was organised at Bali,

Indonesia, in December 1999. In this Forum, the participants deliberated on subjects like Member Participation, Community Impact, Employees' Education, Trading among co-operatives at international level and joint buying at national level. The ICA Committee on Consumer Co-operation for Asia and the Pacific in its meeting held in June 2000 in Singapore, decided to hold yet another workshop for the senior managers of the consumer co-operatives in the region.

This workshop was organised by ICA Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific in collaboration with the Singapore National Co-operative Federation (SNCF) and the technical support from the NTUC Fairprice Co-operative, Singapore on 21-23

February 2001 at the Park Royal Hotel, Singapore. 24 senior managers of Consumer Co-operatives from India, Indonesia, Japan, Mauritius, Sri Lanka, Singapore and Vietnam participated in the workshop.

The workshop discussed issues relating to the management of consumer co-operatives in Asia-Pacific region. The participants were able to learn from the operational and business experiences of the NTUC Fairprice in retail management; and deliberated on strategies to incorporate such experiences in their own consumer co-operatives and enhance their operational and business efficiency.

The next ICA General Assembly will be held in Seoul, Korea 12-18, October 2001.

ICFTU-ICAROAP Regional workshop on the Revised ILO Recommendation No.127 on Co-operatives

The International Confederation of Free Trade Unions – Asia-Pacific Regional Office (ICFTU APRO) and the International Co-operative Alliance, Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific held a Regional Workshop on ILO Recommendation No. 127 on Co-operatives in Singapore from 15-17 March, 2000, as a follow-up on the Regional Workshop on Employment Generation, Poverty Alleviation and Human resource Development - the Perspective of Co-operatives and Trade Union Movement, held during October 2000.

The workshop was attended by about 20 delegates from Co-operatives, Trade Unions, the ILO and the ICA.

Mr. Robby Tulus, Regional Director, ICA ROAP, extending a warm welcome to the participants, was optimistic that the workshop will lead to increased interaction between trade unions and the co-operative movements in the region. He exhorted the trade unions and co-operatives to adopt a joint strategy to ensure the endorsement of International Labour Conference Recommendation 127.

Mr. Noriyuki Suzuki, General Secretary, ICFTUAPRO and Mr. Mark Levin, Adviser, ILO Coop Branch, appreciated the efforts of increasing interaction between ICFTU APRO and ICA ROAP in their common pursuit to evolve innovative strategies in the areas of employment generation, poverty alleviation and human resource development.

Dr. Yehudah Paz from Israel made a summary presentation on the conclusions of the workshop.

The workshop agreed that the ILO revised Definition on Co-operatives should include co-operative values, autonomy, and sustainability in its contents so as to ensure its universal acceptance.



Participants of the workshop pose for a photo

The workshop recommended that a joint project between ICA ROAP and ICFTU APRO be initiated as a Pilot project in Nepal and the Philippines. The workshop also recommended the following preparatory steps:

i. To constitute a National Joint Committee having representatives of co-operatives as well as trade unions to identify development bottlenecks in the informal sector, the contradictions in government policies and those of multi-lateral agencies.

ii. To take action to materialise the pilot project based on the view of the NJC in the concerned countries.

iii. To link the objectives of the pilot project with Syndicoop propose presented by Mr. Mark Levin (ILO) at the workshop and to look into the possibility of obtaining financial support from Syndicoop

iv. To have effective involvement of ICA and the ICFTU in the Asia Pacific Region to implement the Syndicoop proposal.

OBITUARY

Mian Riazuddin Ahmed, President, National Co-operative Union of Pakistan, who has been an undisputed co-operative leader from Pakistan, passed away on 11 December, 2000 at the age of 81 years.

He was the founder of the National Co-operative Union of Pakistan and perhaps one person who devoted his entire life to the promotion and development of co-operatives in Pakistan. He represented Pakistan Co-operative Movement at the ICA and also national and international fora. Co-operation was his passion and devotion.

He left behind his wife, Mrs. Akhtar Riazuddin, three daughters Mrs. Nigar, Mrs. Shehwar and Mrs. Shehnaz.

May the Almighty God give them strength to bear this irreparable loss and may his soul rest in peace.

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CA holds Regional Consultation in Tehran

The ICA ROAP in collaboration with the Ministry of Co-operatives and Chamber of Co-ops of the Islamic Republic of Iran organized the 6th Regional Consultation meeting at Esteghlal Hotel, Tehran, from 1st to 5th July 2001.

The Regional Consultation was preceded by two very significant events, namely, "Dialogue of Civilizations" and "National Co-operative Forum" followed by another important meeting of "National Co-operative men's Forum of Iran".

Important outcomes of these allied events were effectiveness of co-operatives as an instrument to promote dialogue among civilizations for world peace; need to examine the possibilities to set up co-operative common market; and creation of a steering Committee to promote women co-operatives in Iran. 59 participants from 12 countries and three international organizations attended Consultation.



Minister Morteza Haji signs the Rio Declaration in the presence of Roberto Rigues, ICA President, Robby Tulus and B.D. Sharma looks on.



Delegates at the Regional Consultation. Seen in the front row Dr.S.S.Sisodia, Robby Tulus and Hon. Morteza Haji

The Regional Consultation gave an opportunity for high ranking government officials and co-operative executives to state their perspectives on the thrusts and recommendations made in 2nd Critical Study conducted by Messrs Ravi Shankar and Garry Cronan, in regard to co-operative policy development and legislative reforms.

The Consultation formulated the following key issues that are relevant for deliberations and decisions at the 6th Co-operative Ministers Conference to be held in Nepal in March 2002, as (a) elements of good co-operative policy; (b) contents of a draft policy statement; (c) proximity of co-operative legislation to International Co-operative Identity Statement (ICIS); (d) feasibility of a grid model to plot the position of co-operative legislation and policy; (e) analysis of impact of various laws other than co-operative law on functioning and operations of co-operatives; (f) general

co-operative law vis-à-vis sector laws; (g) application of co-operative law to different levels of co-operative structure, e.g. primary, secondary and tertiary; and (h) need for and nature of provisions of co-operative law for a graduated level of government regulation and disengagement. □

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ICA Regional Youth Seminar for Asia and the Pacific

The International Co-operative Alliance Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific (ICAROAP) organized a Regional Youth Seminar for Asia Pacific in co-operation with ICA Consumer Sub-Committee on University/College Co-operatives for Asia and the Pacific, in Tokyo, Japan, 25 to 27 June 2001.

The seminar was jointly hosted by the ICA, National Federation of University Co-operative Associations (NFUCA), Japanese Consumers' Co-operative Union (JCCU), and Japan Joint Committee of Co-operatives (JJC).

More than 100 young people from 11 countries gathered to discuss the theme of the seminar "Leaders toward Co-operation, Leading the New Century".

Inaugurating the Seminar, ICA President, Roberto Rodrigues, reminded the participants of his speech in 1997 when he said that "the young today will be the future pillars of our co-operative movement in the 21st century." In the afternoon, Mr. Rodrigues had a round table meeting with young people to discuss the future of co-operatives in the region and how young people can contrib-

ute to the development of the movement. He answered questions on the role of co-operatives in offsetting the effects of globalization. He also listened to suggestions made by young people on how to better integrate them in the co-operative movement. Finally, he encouraged them to always fight for

a world of peace and equity for all human beings, stressing that co-operatives provide the most effective institutional framework to channel the creativity of youth and hence address the manifold socio-economic issues impacting them.

Prof Nakamura Hisashi of the Ryuokoku University, Japan made a presentation on the 'Improvement of People's Living through Co-operative Networking'. He presented an in-depth analysis of the economic and political situation in the Asia-Pacific region. He closed his presen-



Roberto Rodrigues and others at the Youth Seminar

tation by proposing actions young people should take in each country. Robby Tulus, ICA Regional Director, talked on the 'Development of Co-ops in the Asia-Pacific Region in the 21st Century'. He gave an overview of the youth employment situation in the region, which is declining. He further gave ideas for the creation of employment among youth and emphasized the importance of education and training. Young people had the opportunity to discuss the following topics: "To develop local industry and improve people's living through co-operatives", "To develop campus co-operative activities for active campuses and better communities", and "To make attractive co-operatives to youth and community."

An evaluation on the last day, showed strong interest from young people to share and learn with other young people around the world. The participants unanimously agreed that the experiences they had gained from the two-days seminar will help them better contribute to their community work, and they requested that a web site be set-up to continue the dialogue. A set of recommendations will be submitted to the Asia-Pacific Standing Committee of the ICA to better implement youth integration in the region.



Asian youth in the forefront?

CA/ILO Workshop validates the Co-operative Leadership Development Manual for Women

At a workshop held in Bangkok, 20-23 August, the Co-operative Leadership Development Manual, developed jointly by the ICA and ILO Coopnet programme was validated.

The workshop was inaugurated by Tulus, ICA Regional Director, and attended by 20 leaders and trainers from ICA, ILO, Geneva, ILO Coopnet, India, Indonesia, Japan, Malaysia, Philippines, Singapore, Sri Lanka, Thailand and AWCF.

Ms. Anne-Brit Nippierd (ILO), Ms. Resita M. de Leon, ILO Coopnet and Romulo Villamin (ICA) facilitated the workshop. Ms. Brenda Tistiana, the writer of the manual also attended the workshop.

In a hectic 3-day programme, the participants, who were mostly trainers, gender experts and leaders, were able to validate the workshop.

Several suggestions were made to make the modules of the manual more effective.

The final modified manual is expected to be ready by the end of the



Participants at the Validation Workshop pose for a photograph

year, after which this will be disseminated to the ICA member organisations. National level trainers' trainings were to be organised, with technical input and support from the ICA/ILO Coopnet.

Mr. Juku Ozawa informed the workshop participants that the ICA Regional Women's Committee hope to organise 3 sub-regional workshops

(for Central and South & West Asia; South-East Asia and East-Asia & the Pacific) using the manual during 2002, so that the manual could be tested at field level. The workshop requested participants to provide more case studies, co-operative laws and other material to the writer, so that she could include them in the modified version and make the manual more comprehensive. □



Tulus, ICA Regional Director speaks at the workshop. Ms. Anne-Brit Nippierd (ILO) is also seen seated on his

International co-op trade fair and seminar held

Some two hundred producers co-operatives from Vietnam, China, Iran and the Philippines participated in the International Co-operative Exhibition 2001, organized by Vietnam Co-operative Alliance, ICA Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific and the Co-operatives & Small Enterprises Corporation, at the Vietnam Exhibition Center in Hanoi, from 27th August to 3rd September 2001.

Co-op products on display included agricultural commodities, processed goods, light industrial products, agricultural and industrial machineries, construction materials, and handicrafts.

Mr. Pham The Duyet, President of the Presidium of the Fatherland Front of Vietnam and Mr. Pham Gia Khiem, Deputy Prime Minister of Vietnam represented the government.

Speaking at the opening ceremonies, Dr. Nguyen Ty, President of the Vietnam Co-operative Alliance and Mr. Romulo Villamin, Director for South-east Asia, ICA ROAP underlined the importance of the trade exhibition

Representatives from the co-operative movement of Thailand and Australia also participated.

The week-long event also featured a 2-day seminar on international trade.

Pre-qualify names with .COOP

The International Co-operative Alliance (ICA) is providing its members a special service that allows them to reserve domain names in the new top level domain .coop prior to the official launch of .coop. This is an extraordinary opportunity for ICA members to show their co-operative difference and promote their co-operative identity on the Internet!

On the occasion of International Day of Co-operatives (7 July), a new .coop logo was introduced. The new logo with a vibrant colour and modern typeface exemplifies the innovativeness of the Co-operative Movement. The tagline - "one member, one vote, one domain" - focuses on the most important attribute differentiating co-operatives from investor-owned businesses - their democratic governance and the principle of democracy on the basis of one member, one vote. The new logo was tested with co-operatives around the world prior to launch.

As of July 2001, ICA members have been pre-qualifying domain names



The new .coop logo

of their choice. Many members have already taken advantage of this opportunity by quickly pre-qualifying the names they wish to use to demonstrate their co-operative difference. Do not wait, pre-qualify the names you wish now!

Members may pre-qualify domain names only for their own use. This includes their names and acronyms, their products and services and their wholly-owned subsidiaries. They will not be able to reserve the names of their members.

There is no limit to the number of domain names that each member can register.

The registration fee of USD 160 must be paid on-line by credit card at the time of pre-qualification.

It is expected that .coop will be launched in late September or early October.

However, regularly check the ICA web site www.coop.org or the .coop web site www.cooperative.org. For more information, contact Ms. Maria Elena Chavez at ICA, Geneva.

V. Kurien awarded the first Rochdale Pioneers Prize

Vergheese Kurien, nominated by the National Co-operative Dairy Federation of India, has been awarded the first Rochdale Pioneers Prize.

Dr. Kurien will receive a certificate at the ICA General Assembly, in Seoul, Korea, on 17 October.

He will also be invited to address the General Assembly.

Dr. Kurien has made an invaluable contribution to the dairy sector in India by helping to establish innovative and financially sustainable dairy co-operatives.



Dr. V. Kurien

He was also the "architect" of Operation Flood, the largest dairy development programme in the world.

In addition to help establish thousands of co-operatives, he also set up the well-known Institute of Rural Management in Anand.

The jury, which is made up of members of the ICA Board Presidium, received 16 nominations from individuals and co-operative organisations.

- Mats Ahnlund

Member education highlighted in Regional Workshop

Member education programmes in one form or another are still alive in Asia. In some countries, such programmes are even institutionalized within the coop system.

They represent efforts at addressing member participation as an important part of defining cooperative success. However, very little is known about these efforts and the valuable experiences they represent.

To address this gap, ICA ROAP and the Indonesian Cooperative Council (DEKOPIN) organized a regional workshop on "The Development of Member Education System in Asia" in Bandung, Indonesia, from 13-15 July 2001.

The workshop highlighted the actual experience of coop institutions in Asia in developing and delivering member education programmes.

Thirty participants representing national coop institutions from India, Indonesia, Malaysia, Sri Lanka, Thailand and Vietnam attended the regional workshop.

Training Programme for Managers of Consumers Co-ops

The ICA Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific, in collaboration with the Japanese Consumers' Co-operative Union (JCCU) and the Miyagi Co-operative (the fifth biggest consumer co-operative in Japan), plans to organise a training programme for managers of consumer co-operatives for a period of 4 weeks in Japan. The programme would be organised every year during 2001, 2002 and 2003.

Each year, three managers of consumer co-operatives from the region will be trained at the Miyagi Co-operative in Japan.

This year, the training programme is scheduled to be organized from 6-29 September, 2001.



Member education workshop in progress

Inter Co-op Tourism Seminar in Malaysia

Tourism products specifically designed for coop members and involving co-operatives at both ends of the market were developed recently. To pursue this, preliminary business arrangements were concluded between co-operatives.

These were the concrete results of the Inter Co-op Tourism Seminar held in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia from 11th to 13th June 2001.

The seminar looked at the global tourism market and the tourism products and services now offered by co-operatives. Special attention was also given to social and community tourism, where co-operatives can occupy a special niche.

Thirty-seven participants representing co-operatives engaged in travel and tourism in Malaysia, Singapore and the Philippines participated in the seminar. They included school co-operatives in Malaysia that promote, among others, domestic tourism.

The seminar was organized by the International Co-operative Alliance Regional Office for Asia & the Pacific and the National Co-operative Organization of Malaysia (ANGKASA), in collaboration with the International Association of Tourism Co-operatives (TICA). The World Tourism Organization based in Spain provided valuable inputs during the seminar.

The seminar was officially opened by Datuk Abdul Kadir Sheik Fadzir, the Minister of Culture, Arts and Tourism of Malaysia. □

Please send News and Views on your Co-operative movement to ASPACON for publication

Delhi Cabinet approves amendments to Co-operative Act

The Delhi State Cabinet has approved amendments in the Delhi State Co-operative Societies Act to simplify dispute mechanisms and keep government intervention as an exception in cases of public interest.

Under Section 34 of the Co-operative Societies Act, the term of the management body is to be two years and the committee must hold elections before the expiry of its term. However, no member of the management body will be eligible for any post if he/she

has held a post for two consecutive terms.

In order to increase women's participation in the management of these co-operatives, two seats will be reserved for them in all types of co-operative societies.

The committee or its officer can be removed by calling a special general body meeting and expulsion of a member of a society can be made only by a resolution passed by a three-fourth majority.

In order to prevent mismanagement and protect public interest, provisions have been made for timely audit and holding annual general body meeting.

The committee will have to file returns relating to its functioning within 30 days of holding the annual general meeting and the report should be submitted to the registrar of co-operative societies.

- *Indian Express*, June 22, 2001

"Globalisation is not a threat to co-operation"

Inaugurating the Conference on 'Strengthening Co-operatives in Kerala' organised jointly by National Co-operative Union of India, New Delhi, and the Institute of Co-operative Management, Thiruvananthapuram (India), Mr. M.M. Hssan, eminent co-operator and Minister for the Parliamentary affairs of Kerala said: "Globalisation is not a threat to co-operation. We achieved much in the field of science and technology and information technology, but we did not implement the IT in co-operatives so far. So we should take steps to link IT in co-operatives."

Former Chairman of IFFCO, Mr. Surendra Kumar Jakhar, shared his vision, perceptions on economic reforms and the problems faced by co-operatives in the new millennium.

Mr. Ajit Kumar Singh, Chairman, NAFED assured that NAFED will be procuring copra during this season.

Mr. B.S. Viswanathan, former President of NCUI and Director of IFFCO, stressed the need to review development of co-operative movement in each state and organise more conference.

He pointed out that in the United States and Japan, farmers are able to

get loans at 6 per cent interest, while in India it is very high at 18-20 per cent. We should take steps to reduce the interest rates and production costs.

Mr. Joseph Monipilly, Chairman, Kerala State Co-operative Rubber Marketing Federation, Mr. Jose Kuttiyani, President, Kerala State Co-operative Marketing Federation and Mr. P.A. Ummer, President, Kerala State Co-operative Bank, enumerated the problems faced by farmers in the fields of rubber, coffee, spices and coconut.

Mr. K. Srinivasa Gowda, Chairman, IFFCO and Chairman, Karnataka State Co-operative Marketing Federation was also present at the Conference.

Nearly 150 co-operators from different districts of Kerala attended the Conference.

Dr. K.A. Thambi, Secretary, NCCT welcomed the delegates while Dr. T. Paranjothi gave a vote of thanks.

- **K.S. Radhakrishnan Nair**
Publicity Officer,
Kerala State Co-operative Union

IFFCO likely to take JV route for infotec operations

The Indian Farmers Fertiliser Co-operative Ltd (IFFCO), the country's largest co-operative, is exploring the possibility of setting up a joint venture company to undertake its information technology operations.

The fertiliser co-operative has held detailed discussions with Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO), Indian Railways, Ministry of Non-Conventional Energy and several other co-operatives to link rural post offices through optic fibre network.

Information required by the farmers could be made easily available through the Internet. IFFCO also plans to utilise the network for its insurance business and marketing network.

IFFCO Managing Director, U.S. Awasthi, told the Hindustan Times that he plans to utilise the geographical information system of ISRO to provide information to farmers on the nature of soil, weather conditions and plants to be grown in a particular area.

- *Hindustan Times*, New Delhi,
24 August, 2001

SNCF holds Fifth Annual Co-opLeaders' Conference

The Singapore National Co-operative Federation (SNCF) organised the 5th Annual Co-operative Leaders Conference in Penang from 26-28 May 2001. The theme of this year's conference was 'Towards a More Dynamic Co-operative Movement - Promoting Greater Members' Participation and Movement'.

Highlights of the conference was the thought-provoking theme paper presented by Mr. Robby Tulus, ICA Regional Director for Asia-Pacific.

He mentioned "while usage of new paradigms of leadership, knowledge management, e-strategies and e-business, has to be the key strategy to making co-operatives sustainable. Back to basic means focusing on members, with a strategy that focuses on business excellence that will in turn empower members to become more involved and participative".

Three case studies were presented by Ms. Patricia Ng, Senior Manager, Humand Resources, NTUC Income, Miss. Lim Bee Lum, Honorary Secretary, NUS Multi-purpose Co-operative, and Mr. Richard Chua, Vice Chairman, Singapore Police Credit Co-operative.

The theme covered two pertinent areas. First, what strategies do our co-operatives adopt to expand their membership base; and second, how do our co-operatives promote their members' participation and involvement in co-operatives' affairs and activities.

In his welcome address, Mr. Tan Kin Lian, SNCF Chairman, said: "The success of co-operatives are built on the foundation of a strong membership base. Membership constitutes the greatest asset and is a source of strength to co-operatives. With a strong co-operative membership, co-operatives will be able to move ahead with confidence in contributing towards the social and economic well-being of their members and the public at large."

The annual co-operatives' conference provides a platform for the co-operative leaders in Singapore to get together to discuss a specific theme of immediate relevance and consider recommendations for implementation. The annual Conference also gives networking opportunities among co-operators for mutual benefits and thereby enhances co-operative spirits.

- SNCF Co-operator
Special Anniversary Issues/2001.

Government of India to amend Indian Insurance Act

Government of India has presented to Parliament a Bill to amend Indian Insurance Act to allow the formation of co-operatives in the field of Insurance.

It is expected that the Bill will be approved in winter session of Parliament, some time in November/December this year.

Important features of the Bill are:

(a) Insurance Co-operatives can be incorporated under existing co-operative law(s);

- (b) The minimum equity has been prescribed in Indian Rupees one hundred crore (one thousand million);
- (c) Insurance Co-operatives will be allowed in both the fields - General Insurance as well as Life Insurance;
- (d) Foreign equity participation allowed in co-operatives shall be limited to 26% of the total equity.

APHCO Board meets in Singapore

The board of Asia-Pacific Health Co-operative Organization (APHCO) met in Singapore, 19 to 21 July 2001.

The meeting was chaired by Dr. Vijay Deshmukh in the absence of Dr. Shoji Kato Chairperson of the APHCO.

Mr. Lionel Samarasinghe of National Co-operative Council of Sri Lanka informed the participants that his organization had prepared for the Asia Pacific Health Co-op seminar in conjunction with the board meeting in Sri Lanka. Dr. Deshmukh sincerely apologized to Mr. Samarasinghe for the postponement of the meeting and the shifting of the venue.

The meeting felt that it is necessary to coordinate the relationship between the IHCO (International Health Co-operative Organization) and APHCO, especially in view of the fact that Dr. Shoji Kato is the Chair of both IHCO and APHCO.

It was therefore suggested that APHCO members participate in the IHCO general meeting in Seoul during October as the observers and exchange ideas with IHCO members, to consider joining IHCO.

Dr. Bharat Pradhan reported that Plect-Nepal has developed a community hospital with the help of Dr Yasuyuki Takahashi and JCCU. The meeting also discussed the used medical appliances exchange programme'. Dr. Yasuyuki Takahashi reported that JCCU has been providing their used medical appliances to Mongolia. APHCO members who require used medical appliances could provide a list of their requirements to the secretariat for circulation to it's members.

The next General Assembly of APHCO will be held at Seoul in October in conjunction with IHCO General Assembly and ICA General Assembly.

Robby Tulus retires as ICA Regional Director for Asia-Pacific

Robby Tulus has retired voluntarily from the ICA for personal reasons. His retirement is effective October 1, 2001.

Mr. Tulus had taken over as the ICA Regional Director from the late Mr. G.K. Sharma in 1996. Prior to this, he had worked for two years as ICA Senior Policy Advisor.

Mr. Tulus pioneered the development of credit unions in Asia and particularly in Indonesia in the late sixties and early seventies. He had worked with the Canadian Co-operative Association for a number of years as Regional Director for Asia.

While regretting Mr. Tulus's decision to retire, Mr. Karl Fogelstrom, ICA



Mr. Robby Tulus

Director General, appreciated the contributions made by Mr. Tulus to the ICA's development and hoped he will continue his association with the ICA as a Senior Resource Person.

We, at the ICA Regional Office, wish to extend our gratitude to Mr. Tulus for all the good work he has done for co-operative development in this Region.

MR. B.D. SHARMA, Director, South, West and Central Asia, will function as Acting Regional Director effective October 1, 2001, till a new Regional Director is identified and takes over.

NCUI holds a national workshop on Public Relations

The National Co-operative Union of India (NCUI) held a national workshop on 'Public Relations: Key for Success of Co-operatives in the Present Era' on 19th July 2001 in New Delhi. The workshop was organised to discuss and analyse various PR activities and exercises undertaken by national and state level co-operative unions.

This workshop was a follow-up to another workshop held on 28th March 2001 on 'Strengthening Links Between Media and Co-operatives in the 21st Century'.

Inaugurating the workshop, Dr. S.S. Sisodia, President, NCUI, mentioned that this workshop is being held at a time when public relations have emerged as a vital ingredient for the success of organisations in every field. Though co-operatives in India have emerged as a vibrant sector of Indian economy, they still lack adequate and appropriate public relation efforts. It is important that the co-operatives should highlight their achievements in a forceful manner so that positive image of their presence is well projected, particularly since only the fittest will succeed in the current market economy.



Dr. S.S. Sisodia, President, NCUI speaking at the workshop. Mr. Ajit Kumar Singh, Chairman, NAFED, Mr. Ram Iqbal Singh, Chairman, NCCF, and Mr. Bhagwati Prasad, Chief Executive Officer, NCUI are also seen in the picture.

Mr. Vinu Wadgaonkar, General Manager, National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (NABARD), gave the Key Note speech. Other speakers included K.K. Ravindran (National Co-op Agriculture and Rural Development Banks Federation), S.K. Mahajan (IFFCO), B.K. Mishra (FISHCOPFED), P. Nair (ICA ROAP), T.C. Gautam (NCCF), Ms. Vivek Mewawala (NAFED), Ms. Asha Vohra (NAFCUB) Stalinas (TNSCU), Sanjay Varma (NCUI), etc. In his concluding remarks, Dr.

Sisodia assured the workshop that the National Co-operative Union will help other weak sectors of co-operatives in their public relations efforts. Mr. Bhagwati Prasad, Chief Executive, NCUI, gave a vote of thanks.

The workshop was co-ordinated by Mr. Mohan Mishra, Director, Public Relations, NCUI.

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

CA gets a new President

vano Barberini has been elected as ICA President at its General Assembly held in Seoul, Korea 17 October, 2001.

Mr. Barberini is President of Cagocoop, Italy, and has over 40 years' experience in the co-operative movement. He began his co-operative career in the consumer co-operative sector and since 1996 has held the position of President of Cagocoop, a multi-sectoral organization which represents over 1,000 co-operatives with more than

5 million members. Mr. Barberini has also been very active in working with European and international movements, promoting co-operative values and principles, collaboration among co-operatives and has also been involved in solidarity actions for developing countries and emergency aid.

ASPACON wishes the very best to the new President and we are sure he will take ICA to new heights.

— Editor



The Sixth Ministers' Conference to be held in Kathmandu, Nepal

The Sixth Co-operative Ministers' Conference for Asia and the Pacific will be held in Kathmandu, Nepal from 3-7 April, 2002, in collaboration with His Majesty's Government of Nepal and the National Co-operative Federation of Nepal.

The venue of the conference will be Hotel Soaltee Crowne Plaza, Kathmandu.

The ICA ROAP and the host organization were able to get very good rates for hotels in Kathmandu for this event.

Invitation letters and detailed information will follow.

This will be one of the major events of the ICA in this region and we request all co-operators to please keep these dates free.

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*ASPACON wishes its readers
Season's Greetings and a
Very Happy New Year 2002*

ICA Regional Consumer Committee meets in Seoul

The 34th meeting of the ICA Committee on Consumer Co-operation for Asia and the Pacific was held in Seoul, Korea on 14 October, 2001.

A total of 24 delegates from 10 countries and the ICA participated at the meeting. The Committee discussed the report on activities of the Consumer Co-operative Project of the ICA submitted by the Secretary of the Committee. It also broached on future activities for the year 2002.

Member delegates from Bangladesh, India, Indonesia, Japan, Korea, Singapore, Sri Lanka, Thailand and Vietnam submitted country reports, which was discussed at the meeting.

Vietnam Co-operative Alliance (VCA) offered to host the next meeting of the Committee and that of the University Sub-Committee on Consumer Co-



Members of the ICA Consumer Committee and the University Sub-Committee at a photo opportunity.

operation. It was decided that the ICA-ROAP will inform the member countries on the venue and date for

the next meeting.

– A.K. Taneja

APHCO Board meets at Seoul

3rd APHCO General Assembly
Seoul, Korea / October 15, 2001



Mr. Lionel Samarasinghe, Vice-Chair of the APHCO presents a memento to Dr. Kato on his retirement. Juku Ozawa, Secretary to APHCO looks on.

The Sixth meeting of the board of Asia-Pacific Health Co-operative Organisation (APHCO) and its third General Assembly was held in Seoul, Korea on 15 October, 2001. The board meeting was attended by members from Japan, Malaysia,

Nepal and Sri Lanka and the General Assembly was attended by about 25 delegates from Japan and Korea, in addition to the board members. The board approved the workplan for 2002-2003. Dr. Shoji Kato, founder Chairperson retired due to ill health

ICA Business Office in Singapore shifts premises

The ICA Business Office in Singapore has been shifted to:

#12-02, SLF Building,
510, Thomson Road,
Singapore.

However, the telephone, fax numbers and the E-mail address remain the same.

and Dr. Takahashi (Japan) was elected Chair of APHCO. Mr. Lionel Samarasinghe (Sri Lanka) was elected Vice Chairperson.

The APHCO members presented a Plaque of Appreciation to Dr. Kato in recognition of his services in the field of Co-operative Healthcare at regional and global level. The members wished him good, healthy and long life.

– A.K. Taneja

ICA holds its General Assembly in Seoul

The ICA General Assembly was held in Seoul, Korea on 15-17 October, 2001 at the COEX Convention Centre, hosted by the National Agricultural Co-operative Federation, which is a very strong and successful co-operative.

A record number of 1062 participants and several hundred observers participated at the General Assembly. The President of the Republic of Korea, Mr. Kim Dae-Jung inaugurated the General Assembly, which opened with impressive cultural and video presentations, congratulated the ICA and NACF for holding such an important international event in Korea. He also mentioned that the General Assembly coincides with the building of peace through the historic North/South link in Korea under the Sunshine Policy.

The President hoped that practical ideas and agreements would emerge from this Assembly, which will give co-operatives in Korea to learn from the ICA member organizations in different countries and different sectors.

Mr. Chung Dae-Kun, President of IACF, welcomed the President of Korea and the First Lady and thanked



A view of the General Assembly (above) and the outgoing President Roberto Rodrigues (below)

them. He also greeted co-operators who came long distances to be in Seoul.

Mr. Kofi Annan, UN Secretary General also sent a message of greetings to the ICA General Assembly. The General Assembly was preceded by several meetings of ICA specialized organizations.

The General Assembly considered the difficult financial situation of ICA and



a resolution requesting member organisations to increase the membership subscription by 10 per cent was passed at this General Assembly.

A new ICA Board and Audit and Control Committee were also elected.

The next ICA General Assembly will be held in Oslo, Norway during 2003.

– Fanja Rasolomanana



Inaugural Ceremony of the General Assembly

ICA Global Research Forum held in Seoul



More than 35 researchers from a dozen countries met in Seoul during 11-13 October and considered papers on the theme 'Civil Society, Co-operation and Rejuvenation'.

Mr. Roger Spear, Head of the Research Committee retired and the

Committee elected Mr. Akira Kurimoto as the new Chair.

There was a joint session of the Forum with the delegates of the Youth Seminar.

Mr. Madhav Madane has been elected as the new Chair of the Asia-Pacific Regional Research Network.

Co-op Youth Seminar attracts delegates from 20 countries

More than 50 delegates represented co-operative youth projects in 20 countries during a day-long youth Seminar held in Seoul on 14 October.

Mr. Roberto Rodrigues, ICA President, in his speech, gave the advice to youth to (1) never fear experience but respect it, as experience is just the accumulation of failures; (2) life is



short so we need to enjoy life and not be afraid of making mistakes. We must give meaning to life by working to build a better world.

The keynote speech was given by Dr. Peter Davis. There was also a joint workshop with the Research Committee.

Several presentations were made by Dr. Ian MacPherson, Radhiyah Hussain and Mohammad Azri Harun from Malaysia and Koo Jung Eun from Korea.

Roger Spear, Chair of the ICA Research Committee compared the value in various co-operative models as a way to exchange knowledge.

SANASA Bank executives trained at Lucknow

The ICA ROAP, in collaboration with Bankers' Institute of Rural development (BIRD), Lucknow organised an Executive Development Programme for middle level managerial personnel of SANASA Development Bank (SDB), Sri Lanka, from 14-21 October 2001.

The training focused on an enabling strategies for structural reforms of co-operative banking system to meet the emerging challenges in the financial sector. The contents included conceptualization of co-operative banking system and its positioning in the financial sector. Besides, it also discussed HRD for co-operative banks and steps for their efficient operational management. Besides, participants were also exposed to actual field situation through their visits to co-operative banks in Lucknow.

10 Executive Officers of SANASA Development Bank, Sri Lanka, participated in the Training Programme.

— A.K. Taneja

General Council of National Co-operative Development Corporation meets

The General Council of NCDC was held in New Delhi on 04 October, 2001. Mr. Ajit Singh, President of NCDC and Union Minister for Agriculture called for a marketing revolution as a corollary to the green revolution, particularly in the context of the present WTO regime. He laid emphasis on marketing reforms calling upon the co-operatives to play an important role in efficient marketing of agro-products both primary and processed, for upon this would hinge value addition to the growers. "Co-operatives must take a lead to spearhead marketing revolution in accessing both domestic and global markets through efficient systems at farm level, networking and using IT based applications wherever possible."

During 2000-2001 the NCDC recorded a record disbursement of Rs.647.83 crores, which is a phenomenal increase of 40 per cent from the preceding year.

Mr. JNL Srivastava, Secretary (Agriculture & Co-operation, Government of India) felt that the role of co-operative sector in national economy is very great and co-



JNL Srivastava, Secretary (Agriculture & Co-operation), Government of India, addressing the meeting. Alongside are S.S.Sisodia, President, NCUI, P.K. Mishra, MD, NCDC and I.S.Chaturvedi, Deputy Managing Director, NCDC

operative sector is an integral part of our economy.

The Secretary noted the significant contribution of co-operatives in sectors like agriculture, credit, sugar, dairy, textiles, fisheries, distribution of fertilizers and agro-inputs, storage and marketing of agro-produces, etc. Thus co-operatives have a major presence in the agricultural sector. Mr.

P. K. Mishra, Managing Director welcomed the members and mentioned about the initiatives taken by NCDC to refocus its strategy, strengthening of its financial base and field units, organization changes, reappraising the whole spectrum of technical and management services.

– Ms. Archana Sood

Co-operatives can register new domain name

Co-operatives are now able to use .coop as a domain name and a unique address in the internet. Until now, co-operatives can only use .com or .org or .net to register their presence in the internet.

With the new domain name, co-operatives will be able not only to promote their own identity in cyberspace but also strengthen their linkages and business relationships. The worldwide co-operative movement last year won the top-level domain name <.coop>, one of the few approved by the Internet



Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers (ICANN). This will be available only to legitimate co-operatives and co-operative service organizations subscribing to the principles enunciated by the International Co-operative Alliance (www.coop.org).

The new domain name will be launched and available for use by the end of January 2002.

Meantime, co-operatives can pre-qualify and reserve a domain name of their choice at www.coop.org.

Fourteenth Indian Co-operative Congress held

The co-operative movement in India held its 14th Indian Co-operative Congress during 22-23 September, 2001 at the Siri Fort Auditorium in New Delhi. Distinguished guests like Hon. G.M.C. Balayogi, Speaker of the Lok Sabha, Mr. Ajit Singh, Minister of Agriculture, Government of India, etc. attended the Congress.

Mr. G.M.C. Balayogi, the Hon'ble speaker mentioned that co-operatives are important institutions in developing the national economy of the country, which bring about socio-economic changes in rural India.

Mr. Ajit Singh, Hon'ble Minister of Agriculture, Government of India mentioned about the high priority attached by the Government of India on human resource development in the co-operative sector. He lauded the role of National Council for Co-operative Training in this field and the support and initiative provided by the National Co-operative Union of India



Mr. K.C. Pant, Dy. Chairman of the Planning Commission of India gave the validictory address at the closing session. Dr. S.S. Sisodia, President of NCUI presenting a memento to Mr. Pant.

and the leadership role of Dr. S.S. Sisodia, the President of NCUI.

The Congress attracted thousands of delegates from all parts and provinces of India and is one of the most important events in the Indian Co-operative Movement.

Several delegates presented papers and situation papers on the development of co-operatives, their problems and the possible improvement strategies.

Regional HRD Committee meets in Seoul

The ICA member organizations should have a stake in the global learning center proposed by the global ICA HRD Committee for the idea to succeed. Recognizing the important role of apex bodies in the proposed center, it was suggested that ICA members put up the money to support its start-up and operations.

Guidelines should also be laid down to make clear the flow of information and the coordinating process involving the participation of members.

The proposal to set up the 'Co-operative Learning Information Center' was made during the 14th meeting of the ICA Committee on HRD and Research for Asia and the Pacific, held in Seoul, Korea on 14 October 2001.

The regional committee agreed to hold at least two regional seminars a year for its members, to be hosted by a member in one country and to be jointly organized with the HRD committee. Sri Lanka, India and Malaysia offered to host one seminar each in 2002.

ICA/ICFTU/NUC/NCF joint workshop held in Kathmandu

A joint preparatory workshop organized jointly by the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions, Asia-Pacific Regional Office, the ICA Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific, the National Trade Union Congress of Nepal and National Co-operative Federation of Nepal, on 'Joint Pilot Project on Organizing the Informal Sector through Co-operatives' was held at Kathmandu from 20-21 December, 2001. Twenty participants (10 from the trade unions and 10 from the co-operative sector in Nepal) attended the workshop. Topics discussed were 'Globalisation, Labour Market Challenges and responses by trade Unions and Co-operatives' and 'Organizing informal sector through co-operatives'. The workshop was moderated by B.D. Sharma, regional director of ICA, assisted by A.K. Taneja, Program Officer. After discussions, it was decided that a joint pilot project be taken up to organize handicrafts craftsmen and carpet weavers' through co-ops, to be replicated in the Region.

— A.K. Taneja

Office Bearers of ICA Regional Women's Committee meets in Seoul

Office Bearers of ICA Regional Women's Committee met in Seoul on 16 October, 2001 to discuss on the activities for the year 2001 and the plans for 2002.

The meeting was attended by Ms. Rahaiah Baharen, Chairperson, Ms. Preema Shanti Sooriyarachchi, Vice-Chair, Ms. Junko Itoh, representing for Ms. Hatsuko Omori (Vice-Chair), Ms. Akiko Yamauchi, from JCCU as an observer, and Mr. Juku Ozawa, ICA-ROAP, Secretary.

Mr. Juku Ozawa, secretary, informed the meeting on the activities undertaken during the year 2001 based on the decisions taken at the previous office bearers' meeting. The meeting also discussed scheduled activities for 2002.

The meeting decided that the next ICA Regional Women's Forum should be held during January 2003, in conjunction with the ICA Regional Assembly. Though there was a suggestion that governance should be the theme of the Forum, a final decision will be taken at the next meeting of the office bearers.

The meeting further discussed where the name of the Committee should be changed to 'Asia-Pacific Gender Equity Committee' in tune with similar changes made in the nomenclature of the global women's committee. The office bearers felt that the views of committee members should be sought and the secretariat has issued a newsletter requesting opinion from the members. Another important

point discussed at the meeting was the holding of sub-regional workshops to train trainers, using the Leadership Training Manual prepared by the ICA ROAP in collaboration with the ILO Coopnet. It was decided that three sub-regional workshops, one for the ASEAN region, possibly in Malaysia or Singapore, one for Central, South and West Asia region, in India, and a third for Far East and Pacific region, either in Japan or Korea will be held during 2002. Member organizations in these regions will be contacted to host these workshops.

The next meeting of the office bearers will be held on 29 March 2002 in Malaysia.

– Juku Ozawa

First ICA-Japan training course for rural women agricultural co-operative leaders held

The International Co-operative Alliance Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific, in association with its member organisation in Japan, the Central Union of Agricultural Co-operatives of Japan (JA-Zenchu) and the Institute for the Development of Agricultural Co-operation in Asia (IDACA), organised the 1st ICA-Japan Training Course for "Strengthening Women's Agricultural Co-operatives in Rural Areas and Improvement of Farm Management and Rural Life" in Thailand and Japan. Eight participants – two each from India, Philippines, Thailand and Vietnam, attended the Training Course.

The Course held from 22 September to 26 October, included a 10-day comparative field study visits from 22 to 30 September 2001 in Thailand. The study visits were held in collaboration with the Co-operative

Leagues of Thailand (CLT) and Co-operative Promotion Department, Government of Thailand. The programme is funded by the Government of Japan in the Ministry

of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries (MAFF). The objective of the training course was to facilitate improvement of living standards of farm households through women's



Participants of the course with Mr. Y. Nakaoka, Managing Director of IDACA (seated 3rd from the left)

participation in the organisational structures and business operations of agricultural co-operatives.

Field study visits were also arranged to agricultural co-operatives and women's associations in Fukuoka Prefecture of Japan. The participants also held group discussions and prepared brief reports on the experiences gained by them.

An end-of-the-course evaluation session was also held. In view of the experience gained by the participants

through class room lectures, field study visits in Thailand and Japan, interaction among themselves, and based upon their own work environment, the participants were able to develop brief outlines of their action plans, which they would recommend to their organisations on return to their home countries.

These plans were developed through holding group discussions and on the basis of their discussions with their seniors before joining the training

course. The concluding session was held on Thursday, 25 October 2001, with Mr. Osamu Takasawa, Director, Technical Co-operation Division, International Affairs Department of the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries (MAFF) as Chief Guest.

Mr. Yoshitada Nakaoka, Managing Director of IDACA and Mr. K. Sethu Madhavan, Planning Officer of ICA ROAP addressed the closing session.

-K. Sethumadhavan

ICA President visits ROAP

Ivano Barberini, the newly elected President of International Co-operative Alliance has recently visited the Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific. This is his first visit to India. He was in New Delhi at the invitation of the National Co-operative Union of India to be the chief guest of one of its national events.

needs of membership in the context of globalisation. All ICA staff members should work towards the achievement of this visualization, both at the regional as well as the global levels. To make this happen, ICA has appointed a task force that is looking into various organizational, structural, financial and administrative pers-



ICA President with the ICA ROAP staff

The President made it a point to visit the Regional Office. He mentioned that the International Co-operative Alliance has its strengths in the form of its global presence and goodwill among its member organizations. This strength needs to be further enhanced to address the emerging

pectives. The President mentioned that he hopes to visit the Region more often for more a longer duration, so that he could study and understand the co-operative system in this part of the world.

- P. Nair

Consumer Co-op Managers trained in Japan

The ICA Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific in collaboration with the Japanese Consumers' Co-operative Union and the Miyagi Co-operative organised a training programme for managers of consumer co-operatives in Japan 6-29 September, 2001. Three managers, one each from the Philippines, Thailand and Vietnam attended the training.

New Regional Director

Mr. Shil-Kwan Lee, joins the ICA Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific as its new Regional Director, effective January, 2002.



Mr. Lee, who has been the General Manager, International Co-operation Office of National Agricultural Co-operative Federation, Korea, replaces Mr. Robby Tulus, who retired during October 2001.

Edited by P. Nair Communication Officer, ICA ROAP. Printed at Document Press, HS-14, Kailash Colony Market, New Delhi-110048. India. Tel: 91-11-6432836 E-mail: amin_zaidi@yahoo.com



Welcome to Seoul!

THE ICA General Assembly that opens in Seoul tomorrow morning – the first to be staged in Korea – promises to be a significant milestone in ICA’s long story.

Although the aftermath of New York on 11 September has resulted in a few cancellations, the General Assembly has attracted a record number of 1,062 registered participants, including 300 from Korea and 230 from neighbouring Japan. In addition, the opening ceremony will bring in another 500 guests from Korea, which has a strong and successful co-operative movement.

The host organisation, the National Agricultural Co-operative Federation, is providing 100 staff members to assist with the organisation of the General Assembly. The NACF Chairman, Chung Jae-kun, will be giving an address of welcome tomorrow morning.

A major coup for the ICA is the participation at the opening ceremony of Upachai Panitchpakdi, Director General designate of the World Trade Organisation. His keynote speech will tie closely with the main General Assembly theme of “Co-operation and Peace in the

A participant books a tour at the registration stand for the General Assembly at the COEX Centre - Photo by Jin-seung Yang



Era of Globalisation” and delegates will listen to the thoughts of the next head of the WTO with keen attention.

International co-operative visitors began converging on the COEX Convention Centre last Friday when the ICA Board held its first meeting and the Research Conference got under way. The pace warmed up over the weekend as most of the ICA Specialised Bodies held meetings.

This is YOUR Newsletter

Annyeong-haseyo and welcome to General Assembly News. This daily newsletter is brought to you by the ICA Communications Committee. The ICACC’s generous sponsorship has helped to make this publication possible and its members take great pride in assisting ICA with its global communications responsibilities.

General Assembly News is a truly co-operative venture, and we are specially grateful for all the help we are receiving from the Korean host organisation NACF.

Our newswriting team and photographers will be out and about reporting on all the major business sessions and social events. But please don’t forget this is YOUR publication, so if there is anything you would like us to publish, we will be glad to help. You can find our staff in the Communication Unit, Room 332 of the COEX Convention Centre.

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ICA Director General Karl-Johan Fogelström is interviewed by the News

It's been a challenging year!

Question: What was your view of ICA when you took over as Director General last year?

Answer: I knew this would be an interesting and challenging job, as it is my personal conviction that ICA has a mission to fulfill. There is a great need for a global organisation to advocate the essence of what co-operatives stand for. With my background in the Swedish Co-operative Centre, I am fully aware of the need to adjust to a changing world and changing conditions – that is part of the challenge.

Q: What were your first priorities when you arrived at ICA?

A: The first thing I did was find out the direction the Board had set down for the ICA, and then I extracted the four main focus areas. These were then discussed and confirmed with the Board. My view is that the Director General and the secretariat must take their lead from the Board.

These focus areas are promoting co-operative identity; increasing our international presence and representation; improving co-operative development in emerging countries; and being the focus for co-operative rethinking. I must stress that these four focus areas are by no means new. They are a restatement of the basic reasons for the ICA's existence.

Q: Are you satisfied with what has been achieved in the first year?

A: The financial situation was a shock to me. I knew there was a problem, but not one of that magnitude. I realised that restoring a balance between revenues and expenditure had to be the short-term



priority and it has occupied the bulk of my time. We will have achieved this balance in 2001 and that is a major achievement for everyone involved. Having done that we can now turn our efforts towards the main mission for ICA.

Q: Do you think ICA and its members, as democratic bodies, can react swiftly enough in this rapidly changing world?

A: This is the million dollar question, striking the balance between maintaining democracy and business efficiency. In a co-operative, it is imperative that the policy and direction of the business is established through the democratic process. But when it comes to “doing the business”, every co-operative has to live in the real world and be competitive. Providing this happens, there is no reason why co-operatives should not only survive but also thrive, because there is no doubting that the essence of the co-operative idea has a great appeal to today's world.

Q: Is the tragedy of 11 September and its aftermath going to change everything?

A: The events are still fresh in everyone's minds and it is too soon to judge the long-term consequences. But it is certainly a brutal reminder to all of us that the state of the world is not perfect. There are key issues that need to be addressed. Terror is terror and there have been people with mad minds throughout history, although now their madness can be exposed more dramatically than ever before. What has happened should lead us all to the conclusion that one way of working against terrorism is to strive to remove the apparent injustices in the world. Co-operatives will have a significant role to play in this process because they are by nature socially inclusive.

Regional Directors look to the future

THE ICA Regional Directors meeting took place on 13 October, just after the completion of the ICA Board Meeting. Regional Directors from Africa, Asia and Europe met with the Director General and staff from the Secretariat.

New members of the “Team” are Bernard Kadasia from the Regional Office from East, Central and South Africa, B.D. Sharma and Shil Kwan Lee from the Asia Pacific region, Cristina Simone from the Project Office in Argentina, and Dominick Kurstjens, the new Finance Manager of ICA, who all displayed new synergies that could be readily felt during the

meeting. Karl-Johan Fogelström opened the meeting and Jan-Eirik Imbsen chaired the meeting. In attendance also were Ada Kibora, Regional Director of West Africa, and Gabriella Sozanski, Regional Director of Europe. Yours truly, outgoing Regional Director of Asia Pacific, participated during the beginning of the meeting.

Apart from discussing budget and financial routines, the Directors also discussed future Regional Assemblies and future collaboration with partner agencies. One important feature of the meeting is the discussion on

“transparency” – i.e. the communication effectiveness and information imperatives between the Secretariat and Regional Offices.

The meeting did not fail to address the important issue of cost efficiency that will impact healthily on the operations of Regional Offices without negatively affecting the achievement of development results.

A foundation for future growth and development in various ICA regions has indeed been set in place.

Robby Tulus



Delegates at the Youth Conference

Youth committed

MORE than 50 delegates represented co-operative youth projects in 20 countries during a day long youth seminar. It opened with an address by Shin-ja Chul, Executive Vice-President of NACF, in which he described NACF's role in Korean rural development.

It was followed by a speech from Roberto Rodrigues. The ICA President's most inspiring words came when he put down his paper and talked from the heart. The advice he gave included: (1) Never use your experience but respect it. Experience is just the accumulation of failures. (2) Time is short so we need to enjoy life and not be afraid of making mistakes. We must give meaning to life by working to build a better world.

Every co-operative should have a youth organisation or a youth chapter, and at least one young person should be elected or co-opted to the co-operative board.

During the keynote speech, Dr. Peter Davis gave the memorable advice not to be deterred by reality. The important initiatives to activate youth need determination and patience to work. And initiatives must come from both directions.

Today, young people are being socialised into a highly individualistic society, and they need to be a part of establishing a strong and clear co-operative counterculture.

The aim of the youth seminar was to examine and compare opportunities for youth co-operatives and youth

involvement in existing co-operatives. The joint workshop with the Research Committee led by Ian MacPherson from the University of Victoria informed us that there are thousands of small school, university, and multipurpose co-operatives run by young people. Numerous examples were reported by Radhiyah Hussin and Muhammad Azri Harun from Malaysia and Koo Jung Eun from Korea, youths active in local co-operatives. Roger Spear of the ICA Research Committee noted the value in comparing co-operative models, as a way to exchange knowledge.

Small discussion groups were formed after lunch. They focused on food safety, co-operative financial services on-line and service co-operatives in development. General impressions about the discussion were positive although more time was needed as the debates were just starting. Group representatives will present the findings of each discussion group during the business forums on Wednesday.

All the papers written by the youth participants have been printed in the book "ICA Youth Seminar, Enhancing the Co-operative Movement through Youth Commitment". It can be ordered from the organisers at icaseoul@icaseoul.org and write (youth papers) as subject.

Jo Nam Kook and Fanja Rasolomanana should be complimented for the programme they put together.

Michael Horvath & Dwayne Pattison

Co-ops best for protecting life, says Chair

THE International Health Co-operative Organisation (IHCO) had its Board meeting on 13 October, and with the retirement of Dr. Shoji Kato, IHCO President since its inception, a new President and a new Board was elected.

The new Chairperson elect is Jose Carlos Guisado from Espriu, and the Vice Chairpersons are Dr. Takahashi, Japan Health Co-operative Association, Celso Barras from UNIMED (Brazil), Per-Olof Jonsson, MEDCOOP (Sweden), and members are J-P Girard, CCC, Dr. Noordin from KDM (Malaysia), Dr. Valery Shipunov from MedCoop (Russia).

In his parting speech, Dr. Kato expressed his belief that co-operatives are the best economic organisations to protect people's health and life.

He looked back over his contributions during the past ten years, and thanked all those who worked so closely with him – especially Mats Ahnlund – for the assistance and co-operation rendered. He also reflected on the recent tragic events of 11 September and the ensuing war.

"Co-operatives, once again, are the best solution to the deteriorating plight of so many people, but we must work harder", he said. There was a vigorous round of applause for Dr. Kato after his sincere and emotional speech from all those present, demonstrating their appreciation of his hard and devoted work.

Robby Tulus

IMPORTANT NOTICE

Participants for the opening session of the General Assembly should note the following:

- 1. You must bring your passport.*
- 2. Admission card should be submitted to get the admission ribbon. (You should receive an admission card at the time of registration).*
- 3. Battery-powered electronic equipment (including Cameras) should be left in the cloak room.*

MEET THE ICA TEAM HER

WE'RE at your service! Many of the ICA staff who normally work in different parts of the world have gathered in Seoul to meet and serve members at the General Assembly and Specialised Bodies meetings. Here is a short summary of who we all are and what we will be doing:

Vivianne Dubini, head of the General Assembly Registration, is a long-timer at the ICA Secretariat in Geneva and normally works as financial officer.

Marie-Claude Baan, also from Geneva, is working both with registration and the New Members Welcome Ceremony. At the Head Office she works as administrative assistant.

Patricia Vaucher is working as Secretary to the Research Committee. She is also liaising with all interpreters during the Plenary Session and Business Forums, ensuring all documents are in order, and taking care of the smooth running of the ICA Stand. She is the ICA documentation officer at the Secretariat in Geneva.

Fanja Rasolomanana is working with NACF for the youth conference and the youth co-ordinators meeting. She is also assisting in the production of this newsletter and working with the ICA Communications Committee. She co-ordinates the ICA print and on-line publications and is the ICA youth co-ordinator at the Secretariat in Geneva.

MariaElena Chavez is working with the ICA Global Women's Committee and also moderating the Panel of Thinkers. She is Director for NGO/UN relations at the Secretariat in Geneva and the ICA Deputy Director-General.

Jan-Eirik Imbsen is the Secretary of both the ICA Human Resource Development Committee and CICOPA. He is also assisting at the Business Forum on Service with Care. He is Director of Development and is based in Geneva.

Si-Hyung Jo is the main liaison between ICA and the hosts, NACF. He is also the ICA person responsible for technical and practical co-ordination. In



Geneva he is the ICA Agricultural Adviser and is also assisting in the Member and Sectorial Service Department.

Mats Ahnlund is "co-ordinating" the other ICA staff, before and during the

Researchers go down on the farm

THIRTY-FIVE researchers from more than a dozen countries met in Seoul from 11 to 13 October to consider papers with the theme 'Civil Society, Co-operation, Rejuvenation'. The Research Committee elected a new Chair, Akira Kurimoto, who has succeeded Roger Spear. M. Madane is the new Chair of the Asia-Pacific Regional Research Network.

The International Co-operative Research Conference was preceded by a study tour organised by the host organisation, NACF, with visits to ginseng and environmentally sustainable farms around the Seoul area.

Papers presented will be made available after the ICAGeneral Assembly. For further information, contact Research Secretary () or Kurimoto ().

Patricia Vaucher



A ginseng farmer tending his farm (above left); Ian MacPherson examines ginseng at a farm (right); and (below) members of the Research Committee listen to a briefing.



HERE IN SEOUL 2001



the ICA Agricultural
s also assisting in the
Sectorial Services
and is "co-ordinating" the
F, before and during the

GA. He is also secretary of CCI, IHCO,
ICA Housing and TICA. He is Director,
Member and Sectorial Services.

Dominick Kurstjens is the newly
appointed ICA Financial Manager. He
keeps the ICA Financial Committee and

the ICA Board happy (normally) with his
reports on ICA finances.

Karl-Johan Fogelström is the boss
of everything.

**Gabriella Sozanski, Bernard
Kadasia, B.D. Sharma and Ada Kibora**

are all Reg
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examines ginseng at a farm (above
briefing.



Members of the ICA Board meeting at the COEX Centre during the weekend

The website that says 'I love you'

WHEN you arrive in a country where 40 per cent of the population have internet access you know you must be in ... the USA? No? Well perhaps the United Kingdom, or Germany? Actually no. In fact it is Korea, where 22 million people, 40 per cent of the population, have access to the net. Only Switzerland, Scandinavia and Canada are more wired.

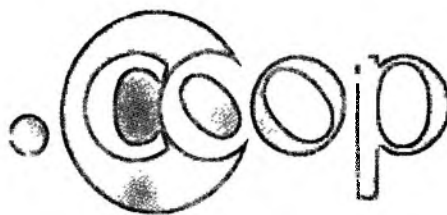
With such high usage of the internet it is no surprise that e-business is booming in Korea. In May 2001 alone online sales amounted to US\$215 million, up 100 per cent on the year and approaching 2 per cent of all retail sales. Agricultural products are fuelling much of the growth and the agricultural co-operatives are leading the way.

NACF employs a large department dedicated to providing IT services to the 1500 member co-operatives. Practically all co-ops are connected to a wide area network providing a host of information services, all through a simple web interface.

Farmers can get the latest prices, weather information, online banking and other services from the elegantly

designed, integrated portal at <http://www.nonghyup.com>. They are also setting up their own home pages.

Two years ago NACF launched the Hanaro Club cyber shopping mall for domestic agricultural products. The award-winning site rapidly became the



best cyber mall in Korea. It broke records for the number of items offered and for the single largest daily sale - US\$ 100,000 of rice.

NACF followed the success of Hanaro Club with a second cyber mall exclusively for Japanese customers, tapping into their love for particular Korean products like kimchi mushrooms, ginseng and honey. These guys really are seizing the e-business revolution. When it comes to globalisation NACF are very clear about the challenges. In

the report 'Agricultural Cooperatives in Korea' NACF point to the twin threats faced by co-ops: the expansion of multinational companies, and the information technology revolution. NACF's answer is 'Sang Seng' - Mutualism - and a plan to strengthen the co-op sector by strengthening membership, coupled with business development. Their objective is simple: to create 'First Class' co-operatives and an affluent co-operative community.

Success will depend partly on active members talking to each other and to the co-op. One of the features of the NACF portal is a 'cyber club' encouraging members to discuss topics of common interest.

Obviously to get the full benefit you have to read Korean, which unfortunately I don't. But I laughed out loud when I clicked on one of the threads and my computer started chanting 'I love you'.

What a nice country.

Malcolm Corbett

Malcolm Corbett is a director of internet co-operative Poptel, registry operator for the new Dot Coop internet domain

Korean media takes a shine to ICA

THE KOREAN media is showing keen interest in the ICA General Assembly. On 12 October, reporters from the Korean Broadcasting System (KBS), the biggest broadcasting station in Korea, were sent to the COEX to cover the ICA Board Meeting. KBC televised it on prime time news at 9 pm. Meanwhile, Yonhap News

(YTN), which distributes news to most newspapers in Korea, forwarded news on the ICA board meeting to all local newspaper companies.

The most influential newspaper in the Korean agricultural sector, the Farmers Newspaper, carried the news about the ICA Board Meeting and ICA Research

Conference and will continue to cover all events at the General Assembly. NACF's Organising Committee for the ICA General Assembly has been keenly promoting this global co-operators' festival and the idea to build "Co-operation and Peace in the Era of Globalisation".

Foreign Exchange?

For a good
co-operative
deal visit the

NACF Bank

on the third floor
of COEX

Focus on Singapore Business Office

THE ICA Standing Committee of Asia Pacific met on the evening of 11 October at the COEX. While they are called "Standing Committee", members could not "stand" any more and, instead, had to "sit" with their legs crossed during dinner in a fine traditional Korean restaurant.

The Agenda of the Standing Committee was straightforward. They discussed the report of an Evaluation Team which resolved to continue the ICA Business Office in Singapore. The report spelled

out the parameters of the Office, which will undertake economic activities in the area and some designated programmes, all of which will continue to be coordinated and directed from the Regional Office for Asia Pacific located in New Delhi, India.

Royal Professor Ungku A. Aziz, President of ANGKASA in Malaysia, is the Chairperson of the Standing Committee.

Robby Tulus

Now we can all sing the praises of co-operation in harmony!

OST of us in the co-operative and mutual sectors regularly sing the praises of the many positive benefits these forms of business ownership should bring. Unfortunately, and embarrassingly at times, we have often lacked the hard commercial data to back up our claims. The result has been a ragged chorus out of harmony, timing and precision.

All this has changed with the publication of a crucial new study entitled "Valuing Our Mutuality". This volume is a response to the growth of demutualisation, a phenomenon in the insurance and other sectors that has been sweeping the commercial world.

Now for the first time we have had the data to answer two critical questions. How do mutual insurers perform compared with their stock market-quoted competitors? And does demutualisation actually bring any benefits to the policyholders? On both counts, it is good to see that, in general, the results of the survey are extremely encouraging for our movement.

The report has been prepared after extensive research by ACME (Association des Assureurs Coopératifs Mutuels Européens), the European Association of ICMIF, the International Co-operative and Mutual Insurance Federation. As far as is known, it is the most wide-ranging study on the subject ever undertaken.

As David Hollas, Chief Executive of the UK-based Co-operative Insurance Society and Chairman of ACME, notes in the introductory message, the results show that mutuals have nothing to fear from other forms of insurance. Indeed, he says, the study clearly demonstrates that mutual insurers usually outperform stock market companies. If only the policyholders who have already benefited from the short-term greed of a cash bribe or a handout could be persuaded to see it the same way!

David Hollas goes on to assert that the study clearly shows that the mutual concept responds to the challenges and insurance needs of society today. Mutuals are efficient; they are customer-focused, competitive and

creative. But they are also socially responsible ... modern, even forward-looking," he writes.

Altogether the study draws on a comprehensive sample of 97 companies in 11 countries (about a quarter of the whole European insurance market) to compare the performance of mutuals and stock market companies. In terms of market performance, in both the life and non-life markets, co-operatives and mutuals are shown to be more successful than their stock market counterparts, with greater premium growth and lower operating expenses. When it comes to claims payments, mutuals are demonstrated to have generally higher ratios, indicating that more money goes back to the policyholders per premium paid.

by JOHN HAMER

Looking at mutuality in practice, the report turns on its head the often repeated argument – one frequently used in co-operative retailing as well, not least by this writer – that listed companies are subject to close and critical scrutiny which should in turn ensure superior financial performance. It is not necessarily so, apparently. "These assumptions are unreasonable and may be based on poor empirical data. For example, two Swedish companies, TetraPak and Ikea, are not listed on the stock exchange and yet have achieved multinational success."

The study goes on to highlight mutuals as creative and innovative in product development and in the use of new technology, as well as sensitive to policyholder influence, loss prevention and socially responsible investment. "In all these activities, member value is the guiding principle," it states.

So why demutualise? The report has its finger on the button when it refers to a "circle of self-interest": people and professions who have much to gain when a mutual company is wrested from its true

owners, the members and policyholders. First among these is senior management, who are driven by the forces of personal financial gain and empire building. Next come the advisers – management consultants, accountancy and law firms – who have a vested interest in providing an "independent" voice that tells the managers what they want to hear, and whose income can increase ten-fold if a demutualisation is approved. Other villains in this scenario include the board of directors and the media, not to mention – last but not least – the hapless policyholders lured into carpetbagging by the promise of "free" cash or shares.

So can the circle of self-interest be broken to protect the mutual form? The report looks at the possibility of changes in legislation as one route to explore – though this takes time.

More realistically, perhaps, the report cites other remedies by identifying the two potentially weakest points in the circle: the board of directors and the media. "A board that is committed to mutuality is the best way to prevent a demutualisation," it states. "If the board members will not participate in the circle of self-interest, the circle is broken." As for the media, the report rightly recognises that there has been a failure in the mutual sector to get our message across strongly enough, partly because – until now – we have lacked the appropriate ammunition for an informed and substantiated argument in favour of mutuals.

Let's hope this report marks a turning point in what is now a race against time to preserve those mutual insurers still remaining in some parts of the world. And let's hope "Valuing Our Mutuality" is given the widest possible circulation to boards of directors and to key journalists in the business and personal finance media. It is a report that deserves to be read.

The report "Valuing Our Mutuality" is published by ACME, PO Box 21, Altrincham, Cheshire WA14 4PD, UK (email: acme@icmif.org). Price for non-members £200 sterling or 350 euros.



Youth shows commitment

Studies in concentration and commitment. Delegates (above and below) at the well attended Youth Conference on the theme of 'Enhancing the co-operative movement through youth commitment' at the COEX. See the report on the conference on page 3.



This newsletter is published for the International Co-operative Alliance by the ICA Communications Committee.

Seoulful Notes

Suits You Sir!

IF you're spoiled for choice in this shoppers' paradise, why not seek out one of the local tailors and have a few made-to-measure suits or jackets run up? Many tailors here in Seoul offer a two or three-day service, including a couple of fittings, and with such a massive selection of materials in the finest mohair and silk, the only problem is what to select. One of ICA's more sartorially elegant staff members, accompanied by a handsome young co-operative internet entrepreneur, were observed in the famous It'aewon district restocking their wardrobes. The ICA staffer was particularly impressed that the tailor, whom he had visited while in Seoul a few years before, still had all his measurements on file. Look out for some smartly dressed guests at tonight's welcome reception!

The Honesty Test

ONE delegate at the Research Conference put the honesty of our host country's citizens to the test after rushing to a meeting at COEX at the end of last week. Leaving his hotel with two bags stuffed with vital documents, the researcher put them on the sidewalk while waiting for his bus. It was only when he reached the conference centre that he realised to his horror that he'd left one of the bags behind. After a sharp rise in his blood pressure and a race back to the hotel, there was much relief when it was discovered that the missing bag was safe and sound and had been handed in to reception by a passer-by. It was a piece of research the absent-minded professor doesn't plan to repeat in a hurry.

Weather Watch

The weather here in Seoul has been fairly kind to us so far, and the forecast for tomorrow is continuing warm and sunny just like our Korean hosts.

General Assembly NEWS



Issue 2

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SEOUL 2001
GENERAL ASSEMBLY

Kofi Annan's message of hope

The following is the text of the Message to the ICA General Assembly in Seoul from the Secretary-General of the United Nations, Kofi Annan. Mr. Annan has just received this year's Nobel Peace Prize jointly with the United Nations.



IT GIVES me great pleasure to send my greetings to the International Co-operative Alliance's 2001 General Assembly.

This year's theme - "Co-operation and peace in an era of globalisation" - highlights the role that co-operatives can play in making globalisation work for all the world's people.

Co-operatives help people help themselves. Throughout the world, they have built a long and noble tradition of addressing poverty, creating opportunities, and fostering peace. Co-operatives must now respond to the great

changes and challenges being brought by globalisation and increased interdependence among peoples and nations. Fortunately, the values of co-operation - equity, solidarity, self-help and mutual responsibility - which have served the movement for so long, can today be touchstones for our shared endeavour to build a more just and inclusive world.

The United Nations is glad to enjoy the support of the world's co-operatives, and very much looks forward to our continued partnership. Please accept my best wishes for a successful Assembly.

ICA welcomes new members

THREE new members from three different regions (Americas, Asia and Europe) have been admitted by the ICA Board. The one from the Americas region is Casa Nacional del Profesor (CANAPRO) in Colombia, from the Asia region it is the National Federation of University Co-operative Associations (NFUCA) in Japan, and from the European region the Estonian Co-operative Association (ECA) in Estonia.

Following their admission the current membership of ICA stands at 253 in 99 countries, comprising of 243 national co-operative organisations, four international co-operative organisations, and six associate members. 28 members are located in Africa, 77 in the Americas, 56 in Asia and the Pacific, and 92 in Europe.

CANAPRO in Colombia was formed in 1999 with 22,800 individual members and has since grown to 23,000. They solved the housing problems of 235 families associated with the urbanisation of Senderos de Casilla. They created a supermarket to serve members, built a training center for skill training programmes, and arranged post-graduate education



One of our youngest co-operators at last night's Welcome Reception for participants at the General Assembly.

(PhD) under an agreement with the "Manuel Fajardo" post-graduate school in Havana, Cuba. CANAPRO also invests in Hotel Agua Blanca enabling its associates to use these hotel services as co-owner.

NFUCA in Japan has 220 member co-operatives consisting of 207 primary university co-operatives, 10 Business Associations, and three Inter College Co-operatives. It has 1,357,284 individual members, with a share capital of US\$ 8,987,647, and a turnover of US\$ 1,757,313,000. NFUCA concentrates

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ICA President Roberto Rodrigues is interviewed by the News

Now our voice is being heard!

Question: *You've been ICA President for four years. What do you see as your greatest achievements in this time?*

Answer: The most important thing for me is that the Board has become very active. It has been taking decisions and making reforms, and these have been acted upon by the secretariat. The creation of special committees of the Board is a consequence of that. The second most important thing for me is that the new management has taken much greater control over the whole structure of ICA. The big problem before this was that ICA's regionalisation structure had been introduced without a high enough level of controls.

Last but not least, the ICA has gained a stronger position at world level with organisations such as the UN, WTO, FAO and ILO. Now our voice is being heard and listened to. Not only this, but all the travelling I and the Vice-Presidents have been doing for ICA – 79 countries in four years! – has ensured that ICA is becoming more visible with governments. Through raising the profile of ICA we have been able to make an important contribution to the way governments behave towards co-operatives.

To give you an example, in 2000 I had a meeting with the President of Poland and persuaded him to support the co-operative movement there. Later I received a phone call from Polish co-operatives about a law that was about to be signed by the President which would have been very harmful to housing co-operatives. I contacted the President, reminded him of our conversation, and he vetoed the law. In situations like this the role of ICA can be important to our members.



Question: *What about disappointments during your term of office?*

Answer: One problem is that in ICA the structure is not strong enough for such a big organization. In the end this comes down to money, and ICA simply doesn't have enough of it. Another disappointment has been that since the beginning I have been pushing for more powerful communication of co-operative and ICA matters, both internally and externally, and this simply has not happened as much as I wanted. My hope now is that the .coop initiative will help communication to move forward in the future. My last disappointment has been the failure of co-operatives to follow our own fundamental principle of co-operation between co-operatives. This has been brought home to me by the business office that we created in Singapore to foster business between co-operatives, and where the results so far have been disappointing.

Question: *Has the job been easier or more difficult than you expected?*

Answer: It's been very much as I expected, although being out of my own country for half of the time meant losses for me in family and business terms. This was worse than I had bargained for!

Question: *How do you see ICA's position in relation to globalisation?*

Answer: The most significant thing that has struck me during all my travelling has been the growing social gap between rich and poor. Social exclusion and the concentration of wealth are threatening the world. I think that one result of September 11 will be a rethink on this problem. We must combat the causes of social exclusion, which creates a climate in which terrorism of all kinds can flourish. Maybe now, in the new world climate, defending peace and democracy will give co-operatives an even more important role for the future. That's what I call the second wave of co-operative history.

Seeking better lives for fishing communities

THE International Co-operative Fisheries Organization (ICFO) met on Sunday, 14 October 2001, with delegates coming from France, Hungary, Indonesia, Japan, Philippines, Korea, Russia, and Vietnam. A representative from FAO in Rome also attended the meeting.

Issues concerning food security and equitable trade of fishery products were

addressed, and a resolution is being chalked out to emphasise the need for a balanced and equitable system of fish importing/exporting countries. Compliance with UNCLOS and FAO's Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries was also emphasised with the view that such compliance will create better livelihoods for fishing communities.

Mr. Masaaki Sato, Secretary of ICFO, explained about the planned ODA Seminars for 2002, one in Vietnam with the Vietnam Co-operative Alliance, and one in Thailand with the Co-operative League of Thailand. Mr. Shoji Uemura, President of ZENGYOREN, is the Chairperson of ICFO.

Robby Tulus

Youth in focus

APPROXIMATELY 30 participants attended the 7th Meeting of the ICA Consumer Sub-Committee on University/College Co-operatives for Asia and the Pacific chaired by Mr. Okayasu.

The morning meeting focused on the establishment of a youth committee in the Asia and Pacific region. Concerns were raised about the role of the sub-committee if the youth committee was initiated and whether or not the youth in the region were ready to create such a group. As a stepping-stone to the youth committee it was proposed that there should be a youth representative from each sub-committee member.

Plans for the 2002 Youth Seminar in Malaysia were discussed without reaching any conclusions. However, debate took place as to whether there should be a seminar next year in light of budget and time constraints.

Looking towards 2003, it emerged that there was a possible conflict between the 2003 ROAP Regional Assembly held in the Philippines and the Norway Global Youth Seminar. The group visited Sejong University in Seoul on Monday.

Dwayne Pattison

Social tourism - a new paradigm

THE General Assembly of the International Association of Tourism Co-ops (TICA) addressed vital issues related to the change of TICA from an Association into a NETWORK, to be called TICA Network in the future, and thereby converted the Board into a TICA Network Steering Group. Maurizio Davolio, Chairperson of TICA, explained the rationale behind these changes, attributing value to the results achieved by TICA so far, and emphasising also its relationships with the Bureau International du Tourisme Social (BITS).

On the latter, TICA will encourage its membership all over the world to join BITS either as full/regular or associate members. BITS has been an advocate of the new paradigm of the tourist industry that promotes tourism image and activities not as an elitist phenomenon but as a more human, supporting, social and truly responsible activity.



Members at two of the many meetings taking place this week



In doing so they have strongly supported the Global Code of Ethics for Tourism, which underlines the ethical aspects of tourism and approved by 113 countries during the general assembly of the World Tourism Organization held in Santiago, Chile, in October 1999. BITS represents a network of more than 140 members in 35 countries, creating a

meeting place for private bodies, associations, trade unions, co-operatives, governments, regional authorities and companies who share "Tourism for All" and want to develop new business opportunities or projects for markets such as youth, family and senior tourism markets.

Robby Tulus

First Rochdale Pioneers winner

VERGHESE KURIEN, nominated by the National Co-operative Dairy Federation of India, has been awarded the first Rochdale Pioneers' Prize, which will be presented at today's opening session of the General Assembly.

Dr. Kurien has made an invaluable contribution to the dairy sector in India by helping to establish innovative and financially sustainable dairy co-operatives.

He was also the "architect" of Operation Flood, the largest dairy development programme in the world.

In addition to helping establish thousands of co-operatives, he also set up the well-known Institute of Rural Management in Anand.

The jury, which is made up of members of the ICA Board Presidium, received 16 nominations from individuals and co-operative organisations.

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What a welcome! Guests enjoying the spectacular Welcome Reception last night for participants at the General Assembly



ICA welcomes new members *continued from page 1*

its activities in guiding and coordinating its member co-operatives, provides membership education and staff training, undertakes research, supplies business material and manages infrastructure/facilities, and provides mutual insurance for members.

ECA is the second member organisation of ICA from Estonia. The first Co-operative Association was founded in Estonia in 1919. After independence of the Republic, the co-

operative movement was restructured, and the Association was re-established in 1992.

ECA plays a major role as guardian and promoter of the co-operative principles in the country in the interest of its members. It is an umbrella organisation of 15 central co-operative unions and 45 co-operative societies, mainly involved in consumers, agriculture, banking and housing sectors.

Robby Tulus

This newsletter is published for the International Co-operative Alliance by the ICA Communications Committee.

Seoulful Notes

Sleepless in Seoul

WHY does everyone from the Asia Pacific region look so happy here at the General Assembly? One reason, of course, is that they are delighted with the outstanding success of the host country's organisation of this get-together. Another reason is that they are probably getting some sleep at night, unlike our friends from Africa, Europe and the Americas who are lucky to get three of four hours' slumber as their body clocks adjust to the different time zones. If any participant has effective advice on how to get off to sleep (pills? counting sheep? reading ICA reports?) please pass it on to us.

Doctor's Orders

THIS region of the world is famous for its interesting medical cures, and also has some intriguing tests of what is good and bad for your health. One of this newsletter's staff members took a test from a medical expert (at least, the guy claimed he was an expert!) and was recommended a diet of fewer cigarette and mobile phone calls (no surprise there, then) and more bananas and ginseng tea. More surprising, however, was the advice that peaches and grape were much better for his health than apples. So much for the saying that "an apple a day keeps the doctor away".

The Invisible Speaker

ALTHOUGH this year's Yout Conference was a great success, the delegates had a problem identifying one of the speakers. The rostrum was so tall and the speaker was so petite, that hardly anyone in the meeting room could see her! Perhaps there should be a competition to guess her identity.

Weather Watch

TODAY we have been promised some sunshine. Our hosts must be congratulated on fixing the weather so effectively.