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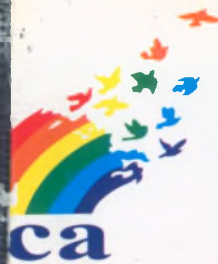
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# ICA Regional Women's Committee

A NEWS BULLETIN OF THE ICA REGIONAL WOMEN'S COMMITTEE FOR ASIA & PACIFIC



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## Gender and the 9th Asia Pacific Co-operative Ministers Conference-2012



ICA President Dame Pauline Green with H E Chumpol Silpa Archa the Deputy Prime Minister of Thailand

### From The Editor....

The Asia Pacific Co-operative Ministers Conference is a very important instrument for influencing the governments to create an enabling environment for co-operatives including gender mainstreaming and inclusion of youth. In the current conference very few women were seen and no participating Minister was a woman. The opportunity to participate in important forums like this and to be counted in numbers is still a far cry for women. The statements and papers hardly refer to gender/women concerns. However, 2 papers were exclusively focused on women co-operatives. We wish to see and hear at least 33% women but still a long way to go.

The nature of women participation in the conference was different this time, visible at leadership, heard as speakers but very low visibility at participation.

May our perseverance and "never say die" attitude will bear fruit sooner. This issue also includes message from ICA on IWD-2012 and observance by the members. -Savitri

The 9th Asia Pacific Co-operative Ministers Conference was held on February-27-29, 2012 in Bangkok hosted by the Royal Thai Government.

Out of about 300 participants and 36 speakers, only a few women were seen and heard. The women mostly seen were the staff or secretariat. There is need for women to participate in large numbers as delegates in such occasions which provides a platform for crucial discussions and policy making. Out of 36 speakers, 4 were women, only one representing her government. Of course, Dame Pauline Green was controlling the reign of leadership at the top.

Ms. Thetis Mangahas, Regional Deputy Director, ILO, Bangkok spoke on the topic "How to Achieve the Objectives of the UN International Year of Co-operatives."

Ms. Tsendsuren, Director of NAMAC from Mongolia





Ms. Bernadette Puyat



Ms. Tsendsuren

presented the success story of the Ur Jims Co-operative - "Co-operative Enterprises Empower Women". Ms. Oh Mi-yea, Chairperson of the iCoop Korea presented Success Story of "Consumer Co-operatives build Organic Farm Clusters in Korea".

Ms. Bernadette Puyat, Undersecretary, Department of

Agriculture, Government of Philippines Represented the government and made Country Statement.

Dr. Sunil Silva, CEO, National Co-operative Council of Sri Lanka (NCC) made presentation on the topic "Youth and Women Empowerment by Co-operatives".

## Observance of International Women's Day-2012

An interaction programme with the theme "The Women Co-operatives Build a Better Nepal" was held amidst a grand function, organized by the National Co-operative Federation of Nepal (NCF/N) on the occasion of 102nd International Women's Day at the Central Co-operative Training Centre in Kathmandu on March 8, 2012.

The programme was opened by the chief guest, Minister for Women, Children and Social Welfare, Mr. Dan Bahadur Chaudhary. More than 100 co-operators from all over the country attended the programme.

Addressing the gathering of women co-operators and other guests, Minister Mr. Chaudhary expressed happiness and extended a hearty congratulation to all the women co-operators as well as all the women of Nepal and the world on the happy occasion of the 102nd International Women Day. He continued saying that he is very happy to open the interaction programme on "Women Co-operatives Build a Better Nepal", which was very important theme for

building Nepalese people's better lives with the effort made by the Nepalese women.

Vice-chairman of NCF/N Mr. Bijaya Raj Ghimire highlighted the importance of observance of Women Day with varieties of activities.

The Co-chairman of National Co-operative Development Board (NCDB), Mr. Soraj Kumar Sharma said, "Efforts are required for generating women employment, enhancing agriculture and lessening defects in agriculture trade through co-operatives".

Former Member Secretary of NCDB Ms. Pampha Rai recalled the assurance of the former Finance Minister of the Nepal Government that women co-operative would be exempted from the imposition of tax. But it was not materialized so far. Co-operative sector is one of the three pillars (Co-operative, Public and Private) of economy for the national economic development and has been adopted as an economic policy; however, no support for women



Opening of the programme

economic development is found under the economic policy, Ms. Rai remarked.

Mr. KB Uprety, ED of National Co-operative Bank of Nepal and Gender Equality Sub-Committee Member Ms. Om Devi Mall were among the other speakers. Chief Executive Officer of Centre for Micro Finance (CMF) Mr. Tej Hari Ghimire presented a discussion paper on Women Co-

operators Build a Better Nepal.

The programme was chaired by NCF/N Committee Member and Gender Equality Sub-Committee Convenor Ms. Prabha Koirala. Other member of Gender Equality Sub-Committee Ms. Parbati Khand Rai extended a vote of thanks to the chief guest, Minister Mr. Chaudhary and others.

## **“Lively Women” competition (news from JCCU)**

Co-op Yamaguchi in Japan organized “Lively Women” competition. The Co-op Yamaguchi Lively Women Grand Prix Award ceremony was held on March 14 with the Yamaguchi Dietary Education club emerging as winners of the prefectural governor prize.

The prize was contested by various social groups dealing with livelihood, child-raising, and welfare and community development.

Co-op Yamaguchi in collaboration with the local government and with the support of local news media organized this event to recognize the significant contributions being provided by the groups and to further encourage the advancement of their respective activities.

This year is the 6th time the event had been organized. 37 groups in the prefecture submitted application to take part

in the competition and after severe screening Yamaguchi Dietary Education Club came out as the winner for their active involvement in food education for pre-school children, parent child cooking classes and rice harvesting tour. Ms. Nishimoto a representative of the club remarked, “We are truly grateful for this honourable award and we are motivated to reach many people the importance of eating habits.

The ceremony was attended by about 80 people including representatives of the various organizations and the judges. Masahiro Ariyoshi, the president of Co-op Yamaguchi gave the final remarks by saying, “making a large network through grass-root activities is very important for creating affluent society for Japan”. I’m looking forward to working with the various organizations and offering support for the expansion of their activities.

## ***UN Theme for International Women’s Day -2012***

***The UN theme for International Women’s Day 2012, celebrated annually on 8th March, is “Empower Rural Women - End Hunger and Poverty”.***

## **International Women’s Day – 8th March 2012 Message**

Ms. María Eugenia Pérez Zea, Chairperson of ICA Gender Equality Committee has issued message to commemorate the event. The theme of the message is:

“Recognizing women entrepreneurs as actors of the economic development and active stakeholders of people’s social change”. Summary of the message is placed below.

For full text, please visit [www.ica-ap.coop](http://www.ica-ap.coop)

“You must be the change you wish to see in the world” proclaimed Gandhi and women entrepreneurs have been keen to interpret this statement. Currently there are some 187 million women entrepreneurs throughout the world. These women have not limited themselves to dream their lives but have decided to live their dreams. They are driving forces of the economic development and social changes that make them actors of an historic change that cannot be reversed.

Women’s role in the economic growth and productive entrepreneurship has changed to the same extent as their role in society. They have overcome economic hurdles, worse sexist stereotypes, beliefs underestimating their capabilities and more globally, cultural barriers inherent in their places in society, and have faced up to the challenge of building up enterprises not only to survive but because

they felt capable of identifying opportunities to put into practice their own ideas. They are motivated by their commitment to a vision of life and incentivised by their innovative mind, tenacity, perseverance and strength, which are acknowledged as specificities of women’s nature.

Far from being helpless victims of injustice and exclusion that has been their lot all along the history of societies, women have shown their intelligence, high degree of resilience and courage when encountering hardships. They keep unveiling that they control their creativity skills and their passion is a key to their empowerment as a result of what they do that may be more or less important but the value of which is recognized as a talent to reinforce entrepreneurial activities.

However when compared to the number of men entrepreneurs or holding executive positions in companies, figures reveal that women are still lagging far behind men. For example, out of 465 world entrepreneurs’ cases covered by the Endeavour Globally initiative, only 60 are women’s case studies. The Global Entrepreneurship Monitor, GEM, drew again the same conclusion in 2011, i.e. women are less involved in entrepreneurial activities than



## IMPORTANT

The meeting of the ICA Regional Women's Committee for Asia Pacific will be held on 26th November, 2012 in Kobe, Japan and the Regional Women Forum will be held on 27th November, 2012 at the same place.

men. Out of the 59 countries analyzed by the GEM, the only National Business Register in which women are more numerous is the Ghanaian one though the Republic of Korea is worth mentioning as a significant exception since women entrepreneurs are five times as many as men.

Our societies need women entrepreneurs but the creative, innovative and determined spirit of women should be backed up to further develop the predominant role they should play in the social and economic development. Governments, the private and the third sectors should stimulate favourable conditions in terms of education and funding instruments, policies aimed at reinforcing the access and support of women entrepreneurs, more particularly the younger ones.

Various initiatives from the co-operative sector have provided women with educational and financial opportunities to promote their entrepreneurship and there is tangible evidence that co-operatives empower women by

giving them a wider freedom of choice and action, encouraging their individual and collective self-development in the economic, social and family areas. An increasing number of women are directly involved in the management and administration of co-operatives and their organizations promoting thereby women's empowerment but the inequity gap is still large and its mitigation would require more sustained and long-term efforts.

The UN have recognized in different documents and strategies the strong linkage between a better education, access to technologies and employment for women, on the one hand, and poverty reduction as well as human development advancement, on the other hand. This approach has been integrated into the co-operatives' initiatives to promote women's entrepreneurship. Against this background, ICA urges again its members and all cooperatives members in the world to stay on course.

The recognition of the impact of women entrepreneurs' and managers on the economies must be supported by political and governmental actions through which governments and social co-operatives are invited to contribute to their fairness and growth.

May the year 2012, the International Year of Co-operatives, be also a springboard to foster even further women entrepreneurs and co-operatives' women members and the International Women's Day, 8 March, be the beginning of the achievement of this commitment.

## Gender and development (ILO)

Gender equality is considered a critical element in achieving Decent Work for All Women and Men, in order to effect social and institutional change that leads to sustainable development with equity and growth. Gender equality refers to equal rights, responsibilities and opportunities that all persons should enjoy, regardless of whether one is born male or female.

In the context of the world of work, equality between women and men includes the following elements:

1. Equality of opportunity and treatment in employment
2. Equal remuneration for work of equal value
3. Equal access to safe and healthy working environments and to social security
4. Equality in association and collective bargaining
5. Equality in obtaining meaningful career development
6. A balance between work and home life that is fair to both women and men
7. Equal participation in decision-making at all levels

Given that women are usually in a disadvantaged position in

the workplace compared to men, promotion of gender equality implies explicit attention to women's needs and perspectives. At the same time, there are also significant negative effects of unequal power relations and expectations on men and boys due to stereotyping about what it means to be a male. Instead, both women and men, and boys and girls, should be free to develop their abilities and make choices - without limitations set by rigid gender roles and prejudices - based on personal interests and capacities.

The ILO has adopted an integrated approach to gender equality and decent work. This means working to enhance equal employment opportunities through measures that also aim to improve women's access to education, skills training and healthcare - while taking women's role in the care economy adequately into account. Examples of these include implementing measures to help workers balance work and family responsibilities, and providing workplace incentives for the provision of childcare and parental leave.

*"We take another step towards globalizing social progress when we champion gender equality as a matter of rights and social justice, as well as efficiency and good business sense".*

Juan Somavia, ILO Director-General

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## Meeting of the Office Bearers



Meeting in progress

### *From The Editor....*

We are getting ready for the Regional Women's Committee Meeting and Forum-2012 during this International Year of Co-operatives -2012 which is a life time opportunity. This issue covers our activities regarding planning for the big events of committee meeting and forum and also revising and upgrading our capacity building programmes through upgrading resources. The story of a successful co-operative business and co-op social responsibility is also presented along with important news. Our endeavour is to present divers information for the benefit of the readers. Feedback from readers is requested -Savitri

The meeting of the office bearer of the RWC was held on 24th April, 2012 in the meeting room of the NATCCO in Manila, Philippines.

Ms. Hitomi Tanaka, Chairperson, two vice chairpersons, Ms. Emma Nieva and Ms. Kruewan Chonlanai and Ms. Savitri Singh Advisor Gender Programme and Communication of ICA-AP were present. Ms. Salome Ganibe, former Executive Director of AWCF was also present as observer.

The meeting was held to discuss the usual business of the committee and to plan the implementation of the activities in 2012 especially the meeting of the Regional Women's Committee, elections of the office bearers, strategy to increase number of members, organising of the regional women forum etc. These activities will be held in Kobe, Japan in conjunction with ICA-AP Regional Assembly and related events in November 2012.

Besides the meeting of the Office Bearers of the RWC,

**“Co-operative enterprises  
build a better world”**



the meeting of the Manual Review Committee was also held. The members discussed with the writer about terms and conditions of the writing of the advance version of the existing training manual for leadership development of women.

After detailed discussion with the writer and the committee members, it was agreed upon that :

An advanced resource guide is needed for training alongside the existing manual. The name of the document will be "Resource Guide for Advanced Training of Co-operatives on Entrepreneurship Development of Women and Gender Equality".

It is planned that the final draft of the guide will be ready by September-2012 and pilot testing will be done in December 2012.

## **“Will to Serve” The Story of San Dionisio Credit Co-operative**



*The Credit Co-op counter*

The office bearers of the Regional Women Committee visited the San Dionisio Credit Co-operative in Philippines following the meeting of the Officer Bearers of RWC and manual review. The team was received by Mr. Gari baldio Leonardo, Chairman , other Board Member and Ms. Cielo the Chief Executive Officer of the Co-operative. The Co-operative started in 1961 and currently having 70% of women membership. The Co-operative primarily provides credit services to members. However, it is also running a school for children and providing various services to members. The Co-operative can be found at the website - <http://sandionisiocredit.coop>.



*The School run by the co-op*





*The Chairperson and CEO of the San Dionisio Credit Co-operative with ICA RWC during the visit*

## Support system for Women in Consumer Co-operative



*Educational activity at a Child Care Centre*

A report by Ms. Hitomi Tanaka, Chairperson of ICA-RWC.

Child Raising Club are encouraging members' participation and supporting working moms.

Saitama Co-op, which is one of the biggest member co-ops of JCCU is located next to Tokyo and it has 880,000 members and 4800 employees. As of fiscal year 2010, it ranked 5th on the list of big co-ops in Japan.

Saitama Co-op mainly focuses on retailing groceries and non-food items through home delivery and store operation. Besides retailing business, it runs welfare and insurance business as well.

One of the remarkable characteristics is that 90% of its members and 80% of its employees are women. This

situation is very common in consumer co-ops in Japan.

Saitama Co-op provides its members with child care service during the members meetings, general assembly and training programs.

Every co-op store has a room for members meeting. 50 out of 52 co-op stores have assembly rooms, and Saitama Co-op has 8 special facilities for members. All of them are usable for childcare.

28 facilities are organizing "Parents and kids club" providing places for moms to chat freely as well as offering playground for kids. These facilities are helping mothers who work in the co-op.

Saitama Co-op has been promoting "balanced work with family life" and "pleasant working environment for both men and women".

Women are assigned in home delivery section divers 1.5t trucks and deliver goods to co-op members. However number of public childcare facilities is insufficient in Tokyo metropolitan area. In 2008, Saitama co-op built childcare center next to its delivery center for employees for securing working environment that allow moms work without worries. 4 out of 19 delivery centers currently have childcare facilities. As of April of 2012, 33 employees and 51 kids are registered as the user of the childcare center.

Users say, "Being close with my kids make my work more





Children are playing in a Child Care Centre



A very busy "Parents and kids club"

easy without worries" "Kids love warm atmosphere of the center" "Service charge is very reasonable" Relaxing atmosphere is kept in the office thanks to the kids. Childcare center is one of the attractions for part time workers and successfully retains female workers.

Saitama Co-op will keep taking measures to encourage women participation for decision-making process and providing learning opportunity as well as keep pleasant working environment for female workers.

## News From the Region

The national Council for Co-operative Education (NCCE) a department of NCUI, India has conducted a Leadership Development Programme for Chairpersons/Women Directors of Co-operatives of India from 10-12 July, 2012. About 45 women co-operative leaders from all over the country attended the programme. Ms. Savitri Singh, Advisor-Gender Programme of ICA-AP was invited to take a session on "Women & Leadership - Challenges & Strategies" with International perspective.

**Important Notice:** The meeting of the Regional Women's Committee for Asia and Pacific and Women Forum-2012 will be held on 26 November, 2012 followed by an exchange program on 27 November in Kobe, Japan in conjunction with the ICA-AP Regional Assembly and related events from 25-30 November, 2012.

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## Women in Co-operative Business: Japan



*Ms. Fujita, a member displaying the products*

### ***From The Editor....***

Thanks to UN International Year of Co-operatives-2012, many activities are being held by the cooperatives globally. Women are playing an important role in the success of cooperative business worldwide. The rural women, however, are largely engaged in basic agriculture, weaving and food processing where cooperatives thrive most. A story of women cooperators from Japan is being presented and also the issue includes data on status of women, UNCSW - 2012 focus on rural women and an FAO article on role and importance of cooperatives for empowerment of women. This newsletter contains success story, news, data and various information for keeping the readers well informed.

As usual, we welcome news and views from members.

Savitri Singh

The Co-operative movement in Japan is one of the most developed movements in the region. One of the significant feature of Japanese cooperatives is that a large number of women are involved, especially in agriculture and consumer cooperatives.

Women Food Processing Group of JA Hyogo Minami is one of the successful women groups in the prefecture.

The group started 8 years ago with ten members. The age group of members are 30-70 years. The aim of the group is to increase rice consumption in the prefecture. They start working at 4 am in the morning and supply products to marketing outlets of JA farmer members and JA restaurants. They use locally produced rice to make snacks and bread etc.





*Some members of the Women Food Processing Group*



*Sweet and cute bread*

The infrastructure for the workshop is subsidised by the government and the group uses its own resources as well. They pay 13% commission to JA for using JA Direct Farmers Market outlet. The annual turnover is US\$ 400,000 or Japanese Yen 400 million.

## **Cooperatives: Empowering women farmers, improving food security: FAO**

Rural cooperatives and farmers' organizations play a crucial role in the eradication of hunger and poverty. One of the ways they achieve this is through their vocation to empower small agricultural producers, and in particular women farmers.

Empowering women farmers improves food security for all. Women comprise on average 43% of the agricultural labour force in developing countries and produce the bulk of the world's food crops. While the vast majority of small scale producers experience difficulties accessing resources, socio-cultural norms particularly curtail women producer's access to productive resources including education, land, technologies, information, financial services, and markets.

Their presence in decision-making bodies, especially in leadership positions, also remains weak, and their needs as

farmers are seldom accounted for in policy and resource allocation. As a result, women farmers do not produce to their full capacity.

If women farmers had access to the same opportunities and resources as men farmers, their productivity would rise significantly and the food security of millions of people would be improved.

One challenge that remains is to improve women's participation in co-operatives. The same socio-economic constraints that limit women's access to resources also often challenge their participation in organizations. 2012, declared the International Year of Cooperatives by the United Nations General Assembly, offers a unique window of opportunity for governments and development agencies to reinforce farmers' organizations and to support them to empower the women within their ranks.

For women producers, who are at a greater disadvantage, cooperatives offer networks of mutual support and solidarity that allow them to grow their social capital, improve their self-esteem and self-reliance, acquire a greater voice in decision-making, and collectively negotiate better contract terms, prices and access to a wide range of resources and services including:

- Agricultural resources and assets.
- Markets to commercialize their produce.
- Credit, capital and other financial services.
- Social services.

Numerous examples from around the world demonstrate how women producers are socially and economically empowered through their membership in cooperatives and farmers' organizations, allowing them to produce more, earn better incomes, and raise the living standards and economic and food security of their families and communities.

As part of the FAO Agricultural Commodities Project, the Exposure and Exchange Programme (EEP), one of FAO's initiatives to support women producers, brings together women leaders from the Self-Employed Women's Association (SEWA), a highly successful network of partner organizations that has over 1.24 million women members across India, 54% of whom are agricultural workers, and from producer organizations from other part of the world to exchange ideas and improve their organizations' operations. The EEP held in 2011 brought together women leaders from SEWA and from producer organizations from West and Central Africa. Many examples of women farmers' improved productivity were evoked during the meeting.

## **Reinforcing women's participation and leadership**

2012, the International Year of Cooperatives, offers a unique opportunity for the international community to address the challenge of improving women's access and leadership within cooperatives to empower them to improve their lives and that of their families' and



communities', and to support better global food security. Many effective measures can be adopted by governments, international organizations and cooperatives themselves to achieve this.

To this end, a range of recommendations were put forward at the Expert Group Meeting "Enabling rural women's economic empowerment: institutions, opportunities and participation" held by UN Women and the Rome-based UN agencies-FAO, the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) and the World Food Programme (WFP) in September 2011 in Accra, Ghana.

At the macro and policy level, the measures that governments can adopt include creating legislation and regulatory frameworks that ensure farmers' organizations can operate independently and offer incentives for rural women to join, reserving spaces for women farmer leaders to participate in country and global policy processes, and institutionalizing mechanisms to involve leaders of women farmers' organizations in agricultural and rural policy making.

Cooperatives can also be supported to establish quotas for the participation of women in their leadership and to create women-only committees to ensure they can voice their concerns strongly enough to exercise leadership; conduct training activities to sensitize cooperative members to the negative impact of gender inequalities in the home, farm/workplace, and in society as a whole; and to implement training programs that improve women farmers' access to agricultural technologies and allow them to develop their skills. Through their ability to reach marginalized groups, to empower their members economically and socially, and to create sustainable rural employment through equitable business models, cooperatives and farmers' organizations comprise unique platforms to provide women producers with the means to better contribute to global food security. By strengthening support to these organizations and facilitating women's membership, the international community will accomplish great strides towards the eradication of hunger.

*Source: Agricultural cooperative: Paving the way for food security and rural development Factsheet. FAO, IFAD, WFP (2011)*

## CSW 2012

The fifty-sixth session of the Commission on the Status of Women took place at the United Nations Headquarters in New York from 27 February to 9 March 2012. The closing meeting was held on 15 March 2012.

The 2012 session focused on the following key areas:

- **Priority Theme:** The empowerment of rural women and their role in poverty and hunger eradication, development and current challenges
- **Review Theme:** Financing for gender equality and the empowerment of women
- **Emerging Issue:** Engaging young women and men, girls and boys, to advance gender equality

- The Commission will focus on the empowerment of rural women and their role in poverty and hunger eradication, development and current challenges.

## Why Is This Theme Important?

- Rural women constitute one-fourth of the world's population. They are leaders, decision-makers, producers, workers, entrepreneurs and service providers. Their contributions are vital to the well-being of families and communities, and of local and national economies.
- Yet rural women's rights, contributions and priorities have been largely overlooked. Rural women have also been hard hit by the economic and financial crisis, volatile food prices and export-driven agriculture. They need to be fully engaged in efforts to shape a response to these inter-connected crises and in decision-making at all levels.
- Unleashing the potential of rural women will make a major contribution to ending poverty and hunger, and to accelerating the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and realizing sustainable development.

## Global Data-2012

(Source: <http://www.unwomen.org/how-we-work/csw/csw-56/>)

- 70 percent of the developing world's 1.4 billion extremely poor live in rural areas. Sub-Saharan Africa is home to nearly one-third of these, while South Asia is now home to about half.
- In 2010, 925 million people were chronically hungry, of whom 60 percent were women.
- Agriculture provides a livelihood for 86 percent of rural women and men, and employment for about 1.3 billion smallholder farmers and landless workers, 43 percent of whom are women.
- An estimated two-thirds of the 400 million poor livestock keepers worldwide are women.
- The burden of unpaid care work is substantial. Globally there are 884 million people without safe drinking water, 1.6 billion people without reliable sources of energy, 1 billion people who lack access to roads, 2.6 billion people without satisfactory sanitation facilities, and 2.7 billion people who rely on open fires and traditional cooking stoves. Rural women carry most of the unpaid work burden due to lack of infrastructure and services.
- In rural areas of the developing world, excluding China, 45 percent of women aged 20-24 were married or in union before the age of 18, compared to 22 percent of urban women.



## News from Members: KCHSU, Pakistan

### Cottage Industries run by women in Rural Areas



An artisan showing his creations to buyers

Historically, economic participation of women in Pakistan had been constrained by lack of access to education, credit, training, market linkages, linkages among researchers, planners, policy makers and the financial sectors. We at KCHSU recognise that access to credit alone is not the solution of women's economic problems but to create women entrepreneurs may help to a great extent. About 60% of poor women run cottage industries from homes as they do cloth printing, embroidery work and stitching. These items are sold in nearby markets.

A group of about ten women can make 100 pieces of hand embroidered short dresses in one month.

In the rural areas of Sind province of Pakistan, women are known for producing very fine handicrafts made on Khadi fabric and Sindi Ajrak, a kind of Sindi traditional fabric.

They work hard and procure raw material to produce embroidered dresses, dress material, traditional caps studded with mirror and many other items.

All these handicrafts produced by these women are purchased by the Karachi Cooperative Housing Society Union Limited (KCHSU) and displayed in ICA Expo-2012 in Manchester.

The women wing of KCHSU approached these women for providing them marketing support and place in urban areas to sell their products.

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### Please save your dates: Upcoming Events

- ICA Regional Women's Committee Meeting and Regional Women Forum, study visit and exchange program will be held on 26-27 November, 2012 in Kobe, Japan
- The ICA-AP Workshop on Enhancing the Role of Women in Co-operative Business will be held in Lao on 17-20 December, 2012

### Important Announcement

Membership of the Regional Women's Committee is open. Please ask for Nomination Form to [savitrisingh@icaroap.coop](mailto:savitrisingh@icaroap.coop). Each ICA member from Asia Pacific is entitled to send nominations to the Committee. Membership of the Committee is free.

### Highlight

The numbers of women participation at decision making level has slightly improved and there are now quite a few women at the leadership as following:

#### NATCCO, Philippines :

1. President - Ms. Amneris Gozun Gabriel
2. CEO - Ms. Sylvia Okinlay-Paraguay

#### VICTO, Philippines :

3. CEO - Ms. Mercedes Castillo

#### NCF, Singapore :

4. CEO - Ms. Dolly Goh

#### ICA-Asia Pacific :

5. Ms. Hitomi Tanaka

Vice Chairperson of ICA-Asia Pacific Regional Board