



9th Regional Women Forum -2016



The 9th ICA-AP Regional Women Forum held on 16 November 2016 in New Delhi was attended by 60 men

and women co-operators from 10 countries. The Forum is held biennially in conjunction with the Regional Assembly of the ICA-AP and the theme this time was: 'Women in Co-operatives: The Power to Act for a Sustainable Future.' Ms. Masako Shimbo, Chairperson of the Women's Committee and Mr. Balu Iyer, Regional Director welcomed the participants and laid out the framework for the forum. Dr. Chandra Pal Singh Yadav, President of NCUI in his opening address stressed on the importance of women in cooperatives and highlighted the various programs being implemented by NCUI to enhance and strengthen women's participation in cooperative business. Mr. Charles Gould, Director General of ICA in his special address touched on the fact that cooperative enterprises are recognized as important players within the private sector to achieve the UN SDGs. He also mentioned about ICA's campaign, "Coops for 2030," where cooperatives can make their pledges to contribute to achieving SDGs and report on their progress. The vote of thanks was delivered by Dr. Nandini Azad, Vice Chair of the Women Committee. Ms. Vasudha Mishra, Managing Director of the National Cooperative Development Corporation (NCDC) in her keynote address shared information on various schemes for helping co-operatives, especially women co-operatives in India. The other speakers at the Forum were Ms. Eva Majurin, ILO; Ms. Jaya Arunachalam, Working Women's Forum, and Ms. Ruth Jacutin, NATCCO, Philippines. The Forum also held a group discussion and based on the proceedings, a set of recommendations/resolutions were drafted for further detailed discussion among the members.

ICA/COOPFED Workshop on Development of Consumer Cooperatives in Sri Lanka

ICA/COOPFED Workshop on Development of Consumer Cooperatives was held on December 7, 2016 in Colombo, Sri Lanka. The Sri Lanka Consumer Cooperative Societies Federation Limited (COOPFED) hosted the workshop, which was attended by 74 delegates from consumer cooperative societies in Sri Lanka, Japan, India, Nepal, and Vietnam. The objectives of the workshop were to promote understanding of co-operative principles, to strengthen management of consumer cooperative societies and to understand the present status and problem areas of consumer cooperatives. The theme for this year was, "study effective operation of small-scaled store."



The inauguration ceremony started with welcome address by Mr D.S.K. Pathirana, CEO of COOPFED, followed by opening remarks from Mr. Amano Haruyoshi, Chairman of the ICA-AP Consumer Committee. The special speech was delivered by Mr. T.M.K.B. Tennekoon, Secretary, Ministry of Industrial Development in Sri Lanka, and special remarks by Dr. Bhagwati Prasad, Vice Chairman of Co-operative Housebuilding and Finance Co-operation Limited, India. Two reports were presented during the workshop on, "Consumer Cooperative in Sri Lanka" and "Cooperative Law in Sri Lanka." Two lectures were delivered by Ms. Nguyen Bich Ly, Director of Coop Food, Saigon Coop on, "Effective Operation of Mini Super Market" and by Mr. Rohita Annasiwatta, Head of New Business, Unilever Sri Lanka on, "Outline of Retail Industry in Sri Lanka and how to compete with the private sector for cooperatives."

A field visit was organized to the Negombo Multipurpose Co-operative Society Limited after the inauguration ceremony of COOPFED Workshop to revitalize Campus Co-operatives and launch of Financial Literacy in Sri Lanka. The Negombo MPCS has over 27,500 membership (40% of the population of the community) and its main businesses are co-operative bank, supermarkets, and pharmacies.

Diamond Jubilee celebration of Kerala State Cooperative and Agriculture Rural Development Bank



The Kerala State Cooperative Agricultural and Rural Development Bank Limited (KSCARDB) celebrated its Diamond Jubilee on December 14, 2016. As the Apex body of the Primary Co-operative Agricultural and Rural Development Banks in Kerala, KSCARDB has done yeoman service to its members in its 60 years' existence. Starting with its services in the initial years to address debt of farmers, it has moved to meeting production and long-term development needs; and most recently focused its attention on the needs of artisans and small entrepreneurs and specific in areas like village industries and rural housing.

The contribution of KSCARDB to the development needs of its community has been well recognized over the years through various awards - Government of India Trophy for Best All-round Performance 2014-15; Meloth Narayanan Nambiar Memorial Trophy for Best Performance in Lending; Punjab Chief Minister's Trophy for Best Performance in Loan Recovery; and the Federation Trophy for Best Performance in Deposit Mobilisation! The Chief Guest, Honorable Governor of Kerala, Justice (retd.) P. Sadasivam, recalled his association with co-operatives and called on the bank functionaries to broaden the choices of funds available to farmers and educate farmers about the schemes. The invited guests included the Minister of Agriculture, Mr. V.S. Sunil Kumar; Minister of Agriculture, Mr. K. Surendran; President of NCUI, Dr. Chandra Pal Singh Yadav; Chairman of NACRDB, Mr. Sukdarshan Singh Brar; and Balasubramanian Iyer, Regional Director, ICA-AP. Following the opening ceremony, a seminar was held to discuss the future of cooperative banks and how they should position themselves. The seminar was timely given the shadow of demonetization where cooperative banks were severely hampered in their operations.

Welcome new members

Palestinian Agricultural Cooperative Union, Palestine.

Palestinian Agricultural Cooperative Union (PACU), represents 79 agriculture co-operatives in Palestine. PACU promotes co-operatives run by local farmers to better represent their interests on a national and international level. They are working to organize the Palestinian agriculture sector to enhance their production performance and increase the productivity of the agriculture sector. They manage, fund and monitor the collective economic, social, cultural and environmental goals of its members. PACU has 15,000 individual members of which 1,400 are women. More information can be found at:

Website: www.pacu.org.ps.

Sharjah Cooperative Society, United Arab Emirates

Sharjah Cooperative Society (SCS) was developed as the first co-operative in UAE with the goal to spread co-operative services and raise the standing of living of its inhabitants socially and economically by adopting cooperative principles. They are a consumer co-operative whose purpose is to buy goods (food and non-food) and sell them at wholesale prices to members in their stores, and implement projects and services needed to improve member livelihood. They have several products marketed under their name, but also sell other brands. Their members are individuals. Most of their 25 branches are in the metropolitan area of Sharjah, but there are also some throughout the rest of UAE. In 2015, SCS had 19,075 individual members and 1,830 staff. More information can be found at: www.shjcoop.ae

UNESCO Recognizes Cooperatives

UNESCO has added co-operatives to the list of intangible cultural assets. Co-ops are among the sixteen new entries added to the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity. The decision was adopted by the

Intergovernmental Committee for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage, which took place on 2 December in Ethiopia.

The list of intangible heritage now includes the idea and practice of organizing shared interests in co-operatives. The list describes co-operative as entities that “allow for community building through shared interests and values creating innovative solutions to societal problems, from generating employment and assisting seniors to urban revitalization and renewable energy projects”.

Earlier this year, the correspondence collection of Robert Owen, founder of the co-operative movement, was also added to the UNESCO Memory of the World. The UNESCO established the Memory of the World Program in 1992, on the principle that the world’s documentary heritage belongs to all and should be preserved and made permanently accessible to everyone. Source: The Alliance

ICA-EU PARTNERSHIP



ASEAN Cooperative Business Forum workshop in Philippines

In recognition of the valuable role cooperatives play in building an inclusive and people centered economy, the Cooperative Development Authority (CDA) in collaboration with partner cooperatives and institutions organized the 6th ASEAN Cooperative Business Forum (ACBF) from November 28 to December 01, 2016 in Manila, Philippines.

In his speech at the opening of the forum, CDA Chairperson Orlando Ravanera lauded the efforts of the delegates to come together to respond to the challenges of the ASEAN Economic Community, which officially began last year. “Cooperatives are the cutting edge for a sustainable future. They strongly advocate for sustainability specially on food sovereignty. Now, we come together to explore intra-trading among the 300,000 agriculture co-ops in the ASEAN region.”

The 6th ACBF forum provided a platform for the different organizations to discuss key challenges and opportunities confronting them in their effort to establish an economic community within the framework of Social Solidarity Economy. The gathering signed a declaration that commits to promote and advance agriculture, strongly advocate sustainable agricultural technologies and promote local industries towards sustainable livelihoods and conservation of natural resources. http://asianfarmers.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/12/Final-2016-ACBF_Declaration_draft5.pdf

Following the Forum, the attending farmer’s organizations/ groups led by WeEffect organized a Post ACBF CSO Forum on December 1 and 2. The ICA-AP was invited to represent cooperatives sector at both the

events by the respective organizers and present successful cooperative models from the region. Ms. Savitri Singh, Program Director of ICA-AP made presentations and explained ICA initiatives on building cooperatives as a sustainable business model. She also discussed in detail the operations of two co-op agriculture business models from the region i.e. NACF, Korea and JA Zenchu, Japan that could be replicated in other countries for enhancing agricultural business.

16th Asia Pacific Meeting of the ILO

The 16th Asia and Pacific Regional Meeting (APRM) of the International Labor Organization (ILO) was organized from 6-9 December 2016 in Bali, Indonesia. The meeting which is organized once every four years was attended by over 350 delegates (representatives of governments, workers' and employers' organizations along with several UN agencies and international institutions) including 24 ministers from 37 countries in the region. The Asia Pacific unit of the ICA-EU partnership participated in the meeting as an international nongovernmental organization. The meeting culminated with the passing of the Bali Declaration that makes a call to stakeholders of the ILO to act to promote decent work, foster inclusive growth, and social justice. The meeting further called on governments to strengthen the application of fundamental labor standard and the ratification and implementation of ILO conventions in the region. The meeting suggested additional measures to close gender gaps, break down barriers to women's labor force participation and advancement, promotion of equal pay for work of equal value, and extended measures for maternity protection and balancing work and care responsibilities. Taking stock of the 'Decent work' decade that began in 2005, the ILO's Director-General Guy Ryder said "implementing the (Bali) [Declaration](#) can change and improve the lives of many millions of workers and their families. It can begin the task of generating the 249 million decent jobs that need to be generated in this region if we are to implement [Goal 8 of the Sustainable Development Goals](#)."

Co-operatives are vehicles for socio-economic change and are positioned to play a relevant role in meeting the targets set out in the SDGs. The ICA and the ILO continue to engage in the interest of the development and growth of the co-operative movement worldwide. The ILO and the ICA launched a new initiative on the role of co-operatives in delivering on SDGs in the context of the post 2015 development framework. Besides its firm commitment on developing co-operative law and policy via its recommendation 193, the ILO has also widely recognized the co-operative enterprise as a practical option for the formalization of informal economy. This ILO recommendation is the only international policy framework for the co-operative development that has the added value of being adopted by governments, employers' organizations and trade unions, and supported by relevant civil society organizations^[1]. ICA-AP attended this important meeting giving importance to the bilateral relations of the ICA and the ILO as well as to put forth the co-operative perspective in various discussions on development.

Down the Memory Lane

By Sabitha Venkatesan, Librarian & Documentation Officer, ICA AP



I joined ICA Regional Office for Asia & Pacific in August 1989. Early on, I realized that education, training and information for sustainable development of co-operatives and cooperation among co-operatives, set co-operatives apart from other economic institution and that these unique principles necessitated the need for a clearing house for cooperative knowledge besides the exchange of information among co-operatives. I also felt there was need and wide scope for managing the clearing house of co-operative knowledge and facilitating dissemination of information and communicating for international cooperation. I remember that in 1997 Dr. Ian Macpherson, the Canadian historian and a supporter of the co-operative movement visited Bonow House, where the former library was housed, where he drafted the 7th principle “concern for the community” using the references that were available at that time. I consider myself fortunate to have been able to provide him with necessary available references.

The ICA Domus Trust Library and Information Centre co-operative library was established in 1960. Since then it has been providing information and authentic references in matters related to the co-operative movement worldwide, including the ICA member organizations. Over the years the library resources and services grew every year and it has been serving as the Information and Documentation centre for co-operatives. The centre is one of the largest in the region and advanced in terms of service to readers, infrastructure and technology applications. The library houses more than 25,000 volumes on co-operatives

and allied subjects, journals, newsletters and literature related to all sectors of co-operatives. In 2012, the library received about 5,000 publications from ICA Geneva library on all sectors of cooperatives in English language and additional 2,000 publications in other foreign languages (namely French, Italian, Spanish and German). In a way ICA-AP library has become a clearing house of global co-operative knowledge.

I have completed 18 years of active service from 1989 to 2003 and 2012 to 2016, working with ICA-ROAP and ICA Domus Trust. From 2010 to March 2012, I worked as librarian at the National Co-operative Union of India. In April 2012, I was asked to join the ICA AP library once again. I have been fortunate to work under different Regional Directors from different regions which provided me capacity building inputs for serving as a custodian of library and documentation centre. The year 2016 has been a significant one for me because of Regional Assembly meet at New Delhi, India, which allowed me to introspect at the end of my career on the role and scope of co-operatives and I thank the present Regional Director, Balasubramanian Iyer for giving me an opportunity to express my views through this medium.

Mrs. Sabitha Venkatesan retired from the ICA-AP as librarian on 31 December 2016. She can be reached at sabitha.venkatesan@yahoo.co.in.

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 Marque and
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UPCOMING EVENTS

- ICA-MAFF-JAPAN training course on fostering core leaders of agricultural cooperatives in Thailand and Japan from Feb 26 to April 11, 2017 (countries: Bhutan, Cambodia, Laos, Myanmar,

Nepal, Vietnam); contact: A.K. Taneja at taneja@icaroap.coop

- Creating Linkages for Co-operative Business and Marketing in Arab Countries – Sub-regional thematic seminar and networking meeting, in Jordan on February 7 and 8, 2017; contact Santosh Kumar at santosh.kumar@icaap.coop
- Women's Committee office bearers meeting and seminar in March 2017; contact Savitri Singh at savitrisingh@icaroap.coop
- 10th Ministers Conference from April 18-21, 2017 in Hanoi.
- Capacity Building Seminar for Central Asian Co-operatives in Kyrgyzstan in June (29-30).
- ICA Global Conference and General Assembly from November 14-17, 2017 in Kuala Lumpur



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