

ICA-AP Newsletter
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**International
Co-operative
Alliance**
Asia and Pacific

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10th Asia-Pacific Co-operative Minister's Conference



10th ASIA-PACIFIC CO-OPERATIVE MINISTERS' CONFERENCE

VISIONING AHEAD TO 2030

**Promoting Stronger Partnership
Between Government and Co-operative Stakeholders
in Realizing the Sustainable Development Goals**

**APRIL 18-21, 2017
MELIA HOTEL, HANOI, VIETNAM**

<http://www.vca.org.vn/coop2017.html>

The 10th Asia-Pacific Co-operative Minister's Conference will be held from April 18 to 21, 2017 in Hanoi, Vietnam. The theme for the conference is: "Visioning Ahead to 2030: Promoting Stronger Partnerships between Government and Co-operative Stakeholders in realizing the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)." The 10th Co-operative Ministers' conference will highlight the ways in which cooperatives are contributing to achieving the SDGs; explore ways to strengthen partnerships between Governments and Co-operative Stakeholders; and draw a road map to realizing the potential of co-operatives in sustainable development. The conference will be attended by Ministers in charge of cooperatives, representatives of governments, ICA-AP member organizations, and international development agencies.

A website has been created for the conference - <http://www.vca.org.vn/coop2017.html>. The site has information about hotels, visa procedure and other details. Please visit this site regularly as we will regularly update information. Please reach out to Ms. Tran Thu Hang, Vice Director International Cooperation Department, VCA at thuhangvca@yahoo.com and Ms. Savitri Singh, Program Director, ICA-AP, at savitrisingh@icaroap.coop in case you have any questions.

2016 Annual Activities Report

We are pleased to present the 2016 Annual Activities Report. 2016 saw us host a few landmark events - The Tagaytay+20 Third Regional Conference on Status of Women in Co-operatives, the First Asia-Pacific Youth Summit in Bali and the 12th Regional Assembly in New Delhi. All these events saw important declarations that as region we are committed to implement. During the Regional Assembly, our members showcased the impact their work was having and the role they are playing in implementing the Sustainable Development Goals. In addition to listing the activities carried out in 2016, this year also, we are featuring voices of members. Ms. Justine Lynn C. Limocon, Business Development Center Department Head, & Youth Program Coordinator, Lamac Multipurpose Cooperative, Philippines writes about her experience at the Youth Summit in Bali. The JA Group in Japan has been battling efforts by the Japanese government's efforts to dismantle multi-purpose agricultural cooperatives. The Regional Assembly passes a resolution supporting the efforts of the JA Group. Mr. Kenki Maeda, Manager, International Department, JA-Zenchu writes, "This resolution was a great support for the JA Group and other kinds of cooperatives working with the JA Group in pushing back the unfair recommendation." After being studied by the ruling parties, the recommendation was made moderate and integrated into a revision of the government's "Plan to Revitalize Agriculture, Forestry, Fishery and Rural Communities" made on 29 November 2016. Ms. Sylvia Paraguya, CEO, NATCCO, Philippines who participated in the ICA-MAFF training program writes, "I have seen how the federations are specialized in supporting the primary cooperatives; the similarities of structures and processes of specialized savings and credit federations across the world. There is much to learn from cooperative movements across Asia; the answer to our questions can be learned from our neighbors."

The 2016 Annual Activities Report can be accessed at: http://www.ica-ap.coop/sites/ica-ap.coop/files/Annual%20Activities%20Report-2016_0.pdf

Gender is more than a Statistic - Status of Women in the Cooperatives of the Asia Pacific Region

ICA-AP commissioned the Second regional study of gendered database to assess the Status of Women in the co-operative sector. The study mirrors the challenges and limitations of being citizens of the Asia-Pacific region, tempered by patriarchal tendencies but balanced by the power of women's, social and people's movements. Government policy and laws provide it an enabling engendered framework; particularly, as the region is beginning to be the world's economic epicentre - indeed its future core. In the last 10 years, the global climate has changed in favor of women and the visibility of women has increased double fold. Men and women are both citizens of society as well as members of cooperatives and are striving for gender equality, gender mainstreaming - not segregation. Co-operatives mobilize women through collective bargaining for their productive assets (land, labor, training, wages, technology, markets and are not for profit but commercially feasible mechanisms); generate employment and jobs, financial inclusion practices, wide ranging service provision to members in their roles i.e. from being shareholders to care givers for households (factoring women's multiple roles); and give access to social protection, housing, health/child care, and financial services. Indeed, the winds of change for women are blowing in training, capacity building, through attendance of AGMs and other activities.

The need for enabling legislation to enhance women's participation cannot be advocated more for women to reach decision making levels in cooperatives. The data on board participation may reflect a lower level participation but at the grassroots, the reality is that a momentum has begun, given that the structures of patriarchy are being reversed at many levels. Indeed, Gender is more than a statistic as the report findings reveal. Our thanks to Dr. Nandini Azad for leading the study and members who contributed data. The Gender Study Report can be accessed at:

<http://www.ica-ap.coop/sites/ica-ap.coop/files/Data%20Study%20Report.PDF>

ICA-AP Committee on Trade and Business

Strong trading network among producers and consumer co-operatives is an area that can transform the way co-ops do business. In line with Principle 6 - Cooperation among Cooperatives, the ICA-AP has been encouraging interactions among others, consumer co-operatives, co-operative Insurance and banking; exploring ways to promote exchanges; and conducting workshops to strengthen capacity of members in Co-operative-to-Co-operative Trade (C2C). The Malaysia Business Office (MBO), established in 2013 has been working to facilitate trade linkages. A lot of ideas emerged during these interactions such as need of a trade portal, directory for co-op products, e-commerce, etc. For a more concerted action, it was felt necessary to constitute a Committee on Trade and Business that would provide direction and leadership in C2C. The formation of the Committee was approved by the 12th Regional Assembly on November 18, 2016. The overall aim of this committee is to promote the development of sound and effective trade and business and to develop appropriate policies and programs. In this respect, the committee will undertake suitable advocacy work and formulate viable strategies from time-to-time to build the trade sector. In terms of membership, the committee shall consist of persons/organizations working in the field of trade and business in the member-organization



The first meeting of the Committee on Trade and Business was attended by members from All China Federation of Supply and Marketing Cooperative, Angkasa (Malaysia), Federation of Peoples' Sustainable Development Coop (Philippines), Iran Chamber of Commerce, National Agriculture Cooperative Federation (Korea), National Cooperative Bank Limited (Nepal), and Japanese Consumer Cooperative Union. Datuk Abdul Fattah Abdullah from Angkasa, Malaysia was elected as Chair and Mr. Alireza Gharagozlu from ICC, Iran as Vice Chair. Incidentally, both are members of the Regional Board.

The Committee on Trade and Business will work closely with the Malaysia Business Office, increase members in the committee (from among those heading subsidiary commercial organizations and those involved in purchasing), develop business connections, facilitate business inquiry and explore the creation of a database of products. During the General Assembly in Kuala Lumpur in November, the committee will encourage participation from members in the region and outside in the Cooperative products exhibition.

Young Japanese Co-operators visit Consumer Co-operatives in Singapore and Vietnam



The Japanese Consumers' Co-operative Union (JCCU) organized a seven-day study tour for ten young Japanese consumer co-operators to NTUC FairPrice Singapore and Saigon Co.op Vietnam from February 12 to February 18. The tour which began in 2008 is in its tenth year of operation. The purpose of the study tour is to give the young co-operators an opportunity to learn how co-operatives in other countries operate, understand by experiencing how co-operative model is accepted by citizens, and exchanging ideas with the staff of the cooperatives visited. In Singapore, the group visited the head office of NTUC FairPrice, and received briefing on NTUC FairPrice and its group enterprises. The participants were impressed by NTUC Fairprice's endeavor to contribute to the community by offering various store formats (Fairprice, Xtra, Finest, Warehouse club and Fairpice shop) to meet varying customer demand. The group visited the NTUC Health Nursing Home, a social enterprise, which provides elder care. NTUC Health Nursing Homes strives to deliver trusted care to the elderly and focuses on active rehabilitation, to enable those with the potential for recovery to return to their home and community.

In Vietnam, the participants visited the Saigon Co.op headquarters and were briefed on the history of Saigon Co.op and Coop Mart supermarket chain and their business operations. The group visited two stores, Co-op Mart and Xtra. Xtra is operated as a joint venture hypermarket between Saigon Co.op and NTUC Fairprice. The participants learned that Saigon Co.op focuses on human resource development, such as sending staff overseas to study and utilizing the training center for store staff education. Through the study visit, the participants learned that both NTUC FairPrice and Saigon Co.op have different processes of growth from the Japanese co-operatives, but the philosophy behind the co-operative businesses itself is the same.

Follow-up Guidance and Survey of Ex-participants of ICA-JAPAN Training Courses to Malaysia and Vietnam

A three-member team consisting of representatives from IDACA and ICA-AP visited Malaysia (February 5 to 12) and Vietnam (February 13 to 18). The purpose of the follow-up guidance and survey of ex-participants was to assess the impact of training of the ICA-MAFF (Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries), Government of Japan training courses from 2014 to 2016. In particular, to see how Action Plans drafted by the participants were being implemented upon return to their country. The follow-up study was conducted through a questionnaire, exchange of views and ideas with the participants and visits to some of the cooperatives where the participants were working.



In Malaysia, Mr. Takeshi Usui, Program Coordinator IDACA; Ms. Eiko Oshita, Program Coordinator IDACA; and Mr. K. Sethu Madhavan, Advisor (Membership of ICA-AP) visited: (a) Malaysia Cooperative Societies Commission; (b) Malaysian National Cooperative Movement (ANGKASA); (c) Coconut and Pam oil growing sites of National Land Finance Cooperative Society (NLFCS) in Perak; (d) Pineapple growing site of Koperasi Serbaguna Anak Selangor Berhad (KOSAS) in Banting, Selangor; (e) Cooperative College of Malaysia

(CCM); and Pasar Tani Seksyen-17 (weekly market-direct sales shop) in Petaling Jaya. Five out of six participants who attended the training courses from 2014 to 2016 attended the joint meeting at ANGKASA office on 6th February. The implementation of action plan for some exceeded expectation, for some it was still under implementation, and for the rest it was still being conceptualized. The sponsoring organization said the training courses were very useful and should be continued as there were significant improvements in the performance of participants after they had attended the training courses.



In Vietnam, Mr. Takeshi Usui, Program Coordinator IDACA; Ms. Eiko Oshita, Program Coordinator IDACA; and Ms. Savitri Singh, Program Director, ICA-AP held review meetings. Most of the participants reported that they have been able to disseminate the training to fellow coop members through meetings, workshops and trainings. One of the participants, Mr. Van Huy reported that he was able to expand the cattle feed business in his coop. Some participants had to discontinue their implementation plan due to lack of funding. All the participants reported that the training was very useful in building their individual capacity to serve the cooperatives and members with more efficiency. They expressed that ICA and IDACA should continue with the training program.

New ICA Members

The Nasinu Land Purchase & Housing Cooperative Limited (NLPHCL) from Fiji and the Nepal Multipurpose Central Cooperative Union Limited (NEMCCU) joined ICA in February.

NLPHCL one of the most thriving coops in Fiji develops and sells land in Nadawa/Nasinu areas of Fiji. In 2015, the co-operative had 446 individual members and 96 member societies. The members are those who have paid for their share of lots and are entitled to a piece of lot at a nominal price. The co-operative owns 326 acres of land. NEMCCU is a member-based national organisation of multipurpose cooperatives. They were established to promote multipurpose cooperatives all over Nepal. In 2015, the co-operative had 94,771 individual members and 140 member cooperatives.

The current total membership of ICA-AP is 96 members from 30 countries.

Sub Regional Co-operative Development Meeting on Enhancing Co-operative Linkages



The sub-regional co-operative development meeting to 'Enhance Co-operative Linkages', was organized in the Dead Sea region of Jordan on 7 and 8 February 2017 as part of the ICA-EU Partnership on 'Co-operatives in Development – People Centred Businesses in Action.' The meeting was organized in collaboration with Alliance member – Economic and Social Development Center (ESDC) of Palestine and the Jordan Co-operative Corporation (JCC), the national umbrella organization for co-operatives in Jordan. The meeting was attended by the Saudi Arabia Co-operative Societies Council, ILO representatives from Jerusalem and Amman, We Effect and Oxfam GB from Palestine and government representatives from the Ministry of Economy (UAE) and the Ministry of Labor (Palestine). The aim of the meeting was to explore a co-operative development platform on the lines of the [Cooperatives Europe Development Platform](#) in the Asia Pacific region. The objectives of the meeting were to explore potential synergies in development cooperation and build relationships with civil society actors *while* instituting mechanisms to understand priorities, monitoring co-operative policies and finding opportunities for international co-operative trade.

The meeting was organized under the patronage of His Excellency Mr. Khaled Hunifat, Minister of Agriculture, the Hashemite Republic of Jordan. Mr. Khaled Al Jama'ani, General Manager, JCC, Mr. Akram Al Taher, ESDC General Director and Mr. Balu Iyer Regional Director – ICA Asia and Pacific, addressed the meeting in the opening ceremony. The meeting was split into four sessions a) An overview of the co-operative movement in the sub region along with the work of the ICA in the Asia and Pacific; b) Sub regional platform for co-operatives in which invited co-operatives shared information about the status of co-operatives in their countries; c) Government dialogue where government representatives shared the latest from co-operatives in their countries; and d) Presentation from international agencies - ILO Amman, We Effect – Palestine and Oxfam GB (Palestine). The international development agencies shed light on their plans to achieve the SDGs, market development and access to Syrian refugees to labor market through co-operatives. The presentations were followed two working groups, one on networking & social programs by co-operatives and the other on trade linkages and mechanism to monitor co-operative policies. The key points raised and discussed in the working groups were:

1. Need to map community needs
2. Regional uniform co-operative law and Implementation of feasible taxation system for coops
3. Address the need for access to finance and loans for co-operatives

4. Promote voluntary work to provide decent work and support needs of the community.
5. Research on co-operatives and market opportunities; niche markets need to be identified
6. Enhance strong relationship with the ICA

On day two, the participants visited the MRS consumer cooperative society and the Iraq AL Amir Women Co-operative Society in Wadi EL-Seer near Amman, Jordan.



The banner features the ICA logo on the left, which consists of stylized letters 'i', 'c', 'o', 'o', 'p' in red and blue. To the right, the text reads: 'International Co-operative Alliance', 'Global Conference and General Assembly', 'Co-operatives: Putting People at the Centre of Development', and '13-17 November 2017 - Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia'. Below the text is a photograph of several men in traditional Islamic attire (kacip and songkok) speaking at a podium. A purple circular graphic in the bottom right corner contains the website address 'www.malaysia2017.coop'.

Register for the global
COOP Marque and
a .coop domain name at
www.identity.coop

UPCOMING EVENTS

March, 2017

- ICA-AP Women Committee office bearers meeting and seminar, Kyoto, Japan, March 2017;

April, 2017

- 10th Asia Pacific Co-operative Ministers' Conference, "Visioning Ahead to 2030: Promoting Stronger Partnerships between Government and Co-operative Stakeholders in realizing SDGs." Hanoi, Vietnam, April 18-21

MAY, 2017

- ICA Asia Pacific Meeting on Networking with Civil Society Organizations, Bangkok, Thailand date to be confirmed
- 40th year celebrations, NATTCO, Manila, Philippines, May 25

JUNE

- Workshop on Development of Co-operatives in Central Asia, Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan, 29-July 2



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