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## Share your Story!

Share with us how you celebrated the International Day of Co-operatives! (email [anam.mitra@icaap.coop](mailto:anam.mitra@icaap.coop)). We would love to feature it in our next newsletter.

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**2017 International Day of Co-operatives- A message from our Regional Director**

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Recently, in an email, a member asked me to send information about the theme for International Co-operative Day this year. Without giving much thought, I asked my colleague to forward the [link](#) on the ICA website. The real import of the theme struck me when I was recently in conversation with Sylvia Paraguya, CEO of National Confederation of Co-operatives Inc. (NATCCO) in Hangzhou, China. She was talking about the Kaya platform they were developing to provide mobile banking access to members in hilly and rural communities. She talked about driving along the winding roads checking for data access to see if the platform was working. To what end? The members in the rural communities had no access to banks to transfer money to their children and had to take a bus to the town, spend a good part of the day in making the transfer at a steep cost. Sylvia passionately talked about how the platform would help these communities save time, money and effort. NATCCO did not have to go through this effort; they were doing fine without having to care for the remote communities. But, they did! This is where the co-operative difference comes in. Keeping the needs of members, all members, at the forefront. If we are of value to each of our members, we needn't have to worry about growth. If we don't leave anyone behind, we don't have to worry about numbers. If we care about members we don't have to worry about retention. The co-operative principles embody all that co-operatives stand for and the difference they make to the world. Let's make a different world!

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## Belt and Road Seminar on Rural Cooperative Finance, Hangzhou, China



The Belt and Road Seminar on Rural Cooperative Finance was held from June 23 to 25 at the Zhejiang Economic and Trade Polytechnic in Hangzhou, China. The seminar was attended by 35 participants from 14 countries. The focus of the workshop was on Rural Co-operatives Financial Services. These days, in many countries in the region, the attention is centered on farmers, specifically, the distress of farmers. This is a result of, among other things, falling prices, difficulty in repaying loans, availability of credit (and insurance), limited access to productive resources, and a weakening of membership groups (that could provide moral and other forms of support). The objective of the workshop was to address the importance of finance to ensure financial well-being to help farmers cope with shocks (natural or otherwise); bring the dual benefit of co-operatives and financial services to those who most need it; and ensure financial services provided to members - be it for input, storage, marketing, asset creation - is well utilized and

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productively used.

The Belt and Road is an ambitious initiative by China that seeks to promote a regional economic cooperation spanning four continents and covering of 66 countries. The Belt and Road initiative has components that are more than physical connections; it has economic (policy, trade and financing) collaboration, social interaction and cultural cooperation. It aims to generate mutual benefits, including environmental management and closer cultural exchanges. There is active promotion of E-Commerce and strengthening trade. Speaking at the opening, Ms. Wang Xia, President of All China Federation of Supply & Marketing Coops (ACFSMC), provided an overview of the Belt and Road Initiative and spoke about its importance to the Chinese governments foreign and trade policy. “The Belt and Road policy framework provides impetus for deepening trade in the region, building new bridges of mutual understanding, and funding to enable development.”



Mr. Balu Iyer in his opening remarks stressed, “the underlying basis for success will be the soft aspects - building human networks, enhancing capacity, and developing linkages. The cooperative model has immense relevance and OBOR provides the opportunity to enhance our work.”

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## 2<sup>nd</sup> Myanmar Training Workshop on Saemaul Geumgo



The Korean Federation of Community Credit Coops (KFCCC) organized the second training on the Korean Saemaul Geumgo development model for a group of 10 former and current officers from Ministry of Agriculture and Irrigation in Myanmar. This model has achieved sound growth on the basis of sustainable financial development by highlighting savings and by stressing the self-help cooperative principle. The workshop took place over 11 days from 22th May to 1st June. It consisted of lectures on co-operative principles, savings, loans, government's role in the Saemaul Geumgo Movement, etc. The participants visited Southern Cheonan Saemaul Geumgo and Daesung Saemaul Geumgo, to observe Saemaul Geumgo's development and operation on site. In addition, the participants took part in discussions about what they needed to do for the implementation and promotion of the Saemaul Geumgo Movement.

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The participants who successfully completed the workshop, now plan to start lectures at the Myanmar Saemaul Undong Academy in Yangon, in order to teach village leaders about what they learned from this program. KFCC plans to support the establishment and operation of Saemaul Geumgo in Myanmar through 10 pilot townships. They hope that their continuous efforts will become seeds of hope and create big and sustainable changes.

### **Ambassador of India to Iran, Saurabh Kumar meets President of the Iran Chamber of Cooperatives**



Mr. Bahman Abdullahi, President of Iran Chamber of Cooperatives (ICC) met with H.E. Mr. Saurabh Kumar, Ambassador of India to Iran, and emphasized the need for steady growth emerging out of the interactions between Iran and India in the co-operative sector. Mr. Abdullahi said that, “Due to the role of cooperatives in various sectors of the economy, especially the agricultural sector, we are interested in the

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communication of knowledge and experience between the two countries.” Ambassador Kumar, while acknowledging the efforts of ICC President, emphasized the need for closer cooperation among cooperatives between the two countries that are represented at the ICA through several co-operative federations. He highlighted the historical friendship between the two countries and said that the way forward to strengthening the relationship and harnessing socio-economic opportunities, could be a memorandum of understanding on the agricultural sector between Iran and India.

The President of ICC presented five areas to the Ambassador of India, where both countries could initiate economic cooperation and development programs. These included agriculture, import of red meat and trade in the field of handicrafts. He sought the support of the Indian authorities to facilitate the exhibition of Iranian products in India and visits by trade delegations from both the countries. Ambassador Kumar agreed that the transfer of knowledge and expertise between Iran and India was a very good idea, and would provide valuable opportunities for both sides. This partnership will signal to the rest of the world, that Iran and India are strengthening relations to boost the co-operative sector together.

### **ICA-EU Partnership on Co-operatives in Development – People Centered Businesses in Action**



International  
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### **Establishing and Strengthening Co-operative Federations in Central Asia**

The [ICA-AP](#) and the [Cooperatives Union of Kyrgyzstan \(CUK\)](#) will jointly organize the Forum on Development of Co-operatives in central Asia from 30 June to 2 July 2017 in Bishkek and Issyk Kul in Kyrgyz Republic. Central Asian countries like Afghanistan, Kazakhstan, Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan are expected to participate

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along with participants from the Turkish Co-operative Union, the International Labor Organization, the European Union Delegation to Kyrgyz Republic and other development agencies. The forum is funded by the Japanese Consumer Co-operative Union (JCCU) and the ICA-EU Partnership on Co-operatives in Development. The occasion will also be used by co-operators gathered to celebrate the theme of inclusion on July 1, 2017 during the [International Day of Co-operatives](#).

Central Asian countries share customary practices of cooperation represented by their communitarian traditional institutions. During the Soviet Union period, cooperation was represented by state-controlled consumer co-operatives (potrebsoyuz) and collective farms (kolkhozes, sovkhozes). After the collapse of the USSR in 1991, Central Asian co-operatives are represented mainly by agricultural co-operatives and credit unions. The Forum is a platform for co-operative leaders, governments, and stakeholders to review the status and scope of co-operative movements in the region and develop a forward-looking strategy for the co-operatives to align well with the emerging trends of the global market. The Forum will look at best practices with an eye to scale-up and ways to create an enabling environment for the further development of co-operatives. Besides information sharing, the Forum will address cross cutting issues such as empowerment of women, gender equality, involvement of youth and [Sustainable Development Goals](#).

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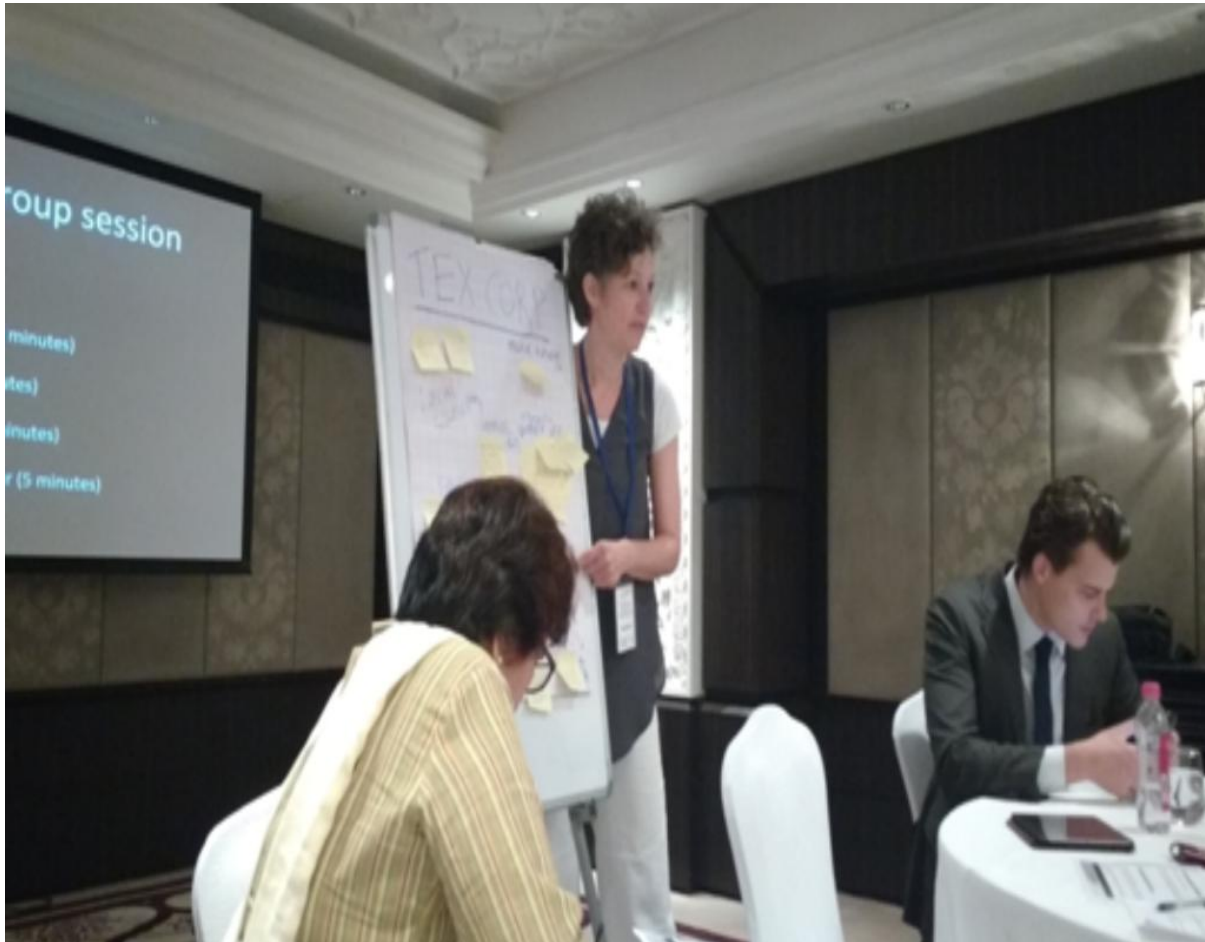




In June, Ms. Nazik Beishanly, President of the CUK who is spearheading the organization of the Forum in Bishkek, visited the ICA Asia and Pacific and exchanged notes on the movement in Kyrgyz Republic with the ICA-AP staff and familiarized herself with the work of the office. A delegation from the AP unit of the ICA-EU Partnership visited Ambassador Samargiul Adamkulova at the Embassy of Kyrgyz Republic to India in New Delhi, to apprise her on the objectives of the Forum and to gain her support to collaborate on the ICA-AP intervention, to develop and strengthen the co-operative movement in central Asia. Watch out for more on the Forum in the next edition of the newsletter.

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## AP Unit participates (actively) at the Indo-Dutch Sustainability (INDUS) Forum



The embassy of the Netherlands hosted the Indo-Dutch Sustainability (INDUS) Forum on June 19, 2017 at Taj Palace Hotel, New Delhi, to look at ways to turn sustainability related challenges into business opportunities. The ICA-EU partnership was represented by the AP unit that attended the event and participated in the working groups and made a compelling case for businesses to explore co-operative networks in India. The Forum was graced by the presence of Dutch Vice Minister for Foreign Trade Mr. Marten van den Berg. The forum was organized jointly by the Centre for Responsible Business (CRB) and the MVO Nederland that works with its global network of 2,300 Dutch companies, all of whom are interested in doing sustainable business worldwide, including in India. Most of those companies have an international orientation and are facing

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sustainability questions throughout their value chain and trade relations. The slogan of the INDUS Forum: "Let's make all trade and investments between India and the Netherlands Sustainable" was at the centre of the Forum. Starting with innovative pilots between Indian and Dutch companies, the INDUS Forum hopes to accelerate sustainability within the core business of all involved and, working for people, planet and profit as a key element of this approach. The INDUS network aspires to be the platform for innovative sustainable and inclusive business models, involving companies and practitioners from India and the Netherlands. As part of the follow up, the organizers will introduce an online platform on which a community of Indian and Dutch companies and practitioners would meet mutual 'demand' (sustainability challenges) with 'supply' (good practices).

### **Release of the first Co-op Mic video**

Co-op Mic is ICA-AP's newest initiative to use the power of a public forum for deliberating and discussing co-operatives. A platform where we get the opportunity to invite experts, entrepreneurs and friends of the cooperative movement, to share their experiences, ideas and thoughts on mainstreaming cooperatives within the development discourse.

Our first speaker was Dr. Gopi Ghosh who spoke on the topic of 'Cooperatives in India and their potential in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Dr. Ghosh is an inspirational speaker who is a strategic consultant in agriculture, sustainable development, knowledge management, cooperatives and creativity. A Fulbright scholar, he has extensive experience of working with a variety of cooperatives in India and abroad.

The first instalment of Co-op mic was immensely successful with a large online audience watching the live streaming of the talk. You can watch the video for the event [here](#).

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International Co-operative Alliance  
**Global Conference  
and General Assembly**  
Co-operatives: Putting People  
at the Centre of Development  
13-17 November 2017 - Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia



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## UPCOMING EVENTS

### July 2017

- Global Board meeting, Sofia, Bulgaria, July 4-5 201
- DG DEVCO (EC) Partnership Forum, Brussels, July 6-7, 2017
- 17th ICA-AP Regional Workshop for Managers on “Management of Consumer Co-operatives in Asia-Pacific,” Singapore, July 25-28, 2017
- Training Course on “Empowering Women in Business and Management of Agricultural Cooperatives, Thailand and Japan, 16th July to 10th August 2017

### August 2017

- ICA-AP and DAMC Training of Trainers for “Building Management Capacity of Women for Co-operative Development,” Bhutan, August 1-6, 2017
- International Youth Day, New Delhi (India) August 12, 2017
- ASEAN Cooperative Development Seminar, August 24-25, Philippines

### September 2017

- Policy Event on Bridging the Gap in Co-operative Law for Youth, Bhutan
  - Consultation on ‘Autonomy- focus on self-reliant co-operatives’ co-organized by
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ICA-AP and Access Livelihoods Consulting India Ltd, 14th-15th September, Hyderabad, India.

### October 2017

- Capacity Building & Cooperative Development Seminar, Mongolia
- 2nd meeting of the ICA-AP Committee on Forestry, which will be held in S. Korea on 20th October 2017 in conjunction with “2017 Korea Culture Forest EXPO”, to be held at Yeongju-city, Gyeongsang-province (Southern part of Korea) between 20th and 29th October 2017.

### November 2017

- 12th ICA-AP Cooperative Research Conference, “COOPERATIVES: The key solution for Social Innovation.” Organized with the 'Department of Management of Cooperatives at the Graduate School in Sungkonghoe University, November 11-12, 2017. Abstracts should reach Mr. Ashok Kumar Taneja, Secretary, ICA-AP Research Committee at [taneja@icaroap.coop](mailto:taneja@icaroap.coop) on or before 28th July 2017
- Global Workshop on University and Campus Co-operatives, Kuala Lumpur (Malaysia)

### December 2017

- Co-operative Platform for Networking with CSOs, Venue (tbc)



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