



July 2018

### 13<sup>th</sup> ICA-AP Regional Assembly, Tehran, Iran



Dear Members,

The 13<sup>th</sup> Regional Assembly and 10<sup>th</sup> Cooperative Forum, will be held in Tehran, Iran from November 26 to 30. All information related to the Assembly is available at [www.regionalassembly.coop](http://www.regionalassembly.coop). The deadline to register for the Regional Assembly is September 30, 2018. For any queries regarding the Regional Assembly, Cooperative Forum or with respect to the website, please write to [regionalassembly@icaap.coop](mailto:regionalassembly@icaap.coop). We look forward to seeing you in Iran!

### ICA-AP ACTIVITIES MAPPING

#### ICA-AP and KFCC Workshop on Sustainable Development Partnership of Credit and Banking Co-operatives (WSDP)



Participants at the Workshop.

ICA-AP and the Korean Federation of Community Credit Co-operatives (KFCCC) Workshop on *Sustainable Development Partnership of Credit and Banking Co-operatives (WSDP)* was held in Seoul and Jeju, Republic of Korea from June 18-23. The objective of the workshop was to strengthen the credit and banking co-operatives in the region by establishing a vibrant platform of Financial and Banking Co-operatives from Asia and the Pacific.

The welcome ceremony was organized at the head office of KFCCC, in Seoul. Executive Director of KFCCC, Mr. Kim Ki Chang, inaugurated the Workshop and hoped that it will help improve communication and cooperation channels. 10 delegates from China, India, Indonesia, Myanmar, Nepal, The Philippines, Vietnam, Thailand and ACCU (International), participated in the Workshop and discussed ways to further develop and strengthen financial co-operatives in the region. The participants visited a local community credit co-operative, Honam Saemaul Geumgo, located in Jeju island.

KFCCC will continue to promote the transfer of the Korean financial co-operative model (Saemaul Geumgo) and share achievements and progress of the workshop with member organizations of the ICA-AP committee on Credit and Banking.

### **International School Co-operative Seminar on ‘Youth Empowerment Through Co-operatives for a Better World’**



Happy faces at the International School Co-operative Seminar! Photograph credit: ANGKASA

The ICA Committee on University / Campus Co-operatives in collaboration with the Malaysian National Co-operative Movement (ANGKASA) jointly organized the International School Co-operative Seminar from July 22-26, 2018 at Vouk Suites Hotel, Penang, Malaysia. The theme of the seminar was ‘Youth Empowerment Through Co-operatives for a Better World.’ The event was attended by 40 delegates from ICA member organizations, invited guests and resource speakers; and 70 high school students and teachers.

Dr. Mohd Azlan Yahya, Chair of the Committee and Vice President of ANGKASA in the ice-breaking session said that if youth are provided with skills and opportunities to reach their potential, they can become the driving force in achieving the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). ANGKASA’s approach is founded on supporting youth empowerment in co-operatives and partnering with all

stakeholders who support progressive development of co-operatives in schools. The participants were then invited to introduce themselves and highlight their inspiration in joining this Seminar.

Datuk Mohamad Ali Hasan, Vice President of ANGKASA officiated the program at the Official Dinner in conjunction with the Seminar. In his speech he mentioned that the basic idea of forming school co-operatives is to educate students on co-operatives, instill in them entrepreneurial skills, and to empower them by introducing a democratic approach. A recorded message from Mr. Balasubramanian Iyer, Regional Director, ICA-AP was screened to the participants. Mr. Iyer highlighted the importance of campus co-operatives especially in bringing youth together and developing their skills as campuses are the best training ground for leaders of the future.



Young cooperators enjoying the Seminar. Photograph credit: ANGKASA

Three resource speakers representing key stakeholders from the Malaysian school co-operative movement shared their expertise and their role in empowering school students through co-operative entrepreneurial activities. Ms. Zuraidah Yahaya from the Malaysian Co-operative Societies Commission (MCSC) presented a paper on the *History of Malaysian Co-operative Movement*. She explained the role of MCSC in assisting schools in establish and form school co-operatives and providing grants to start-up business. Dato' Kamarudin Ismail, Vice President of ANGKASA / ICA Board Member presented the *Overview of School Co-operative in Malaysia and the role of ANGKASA as an apex co-operative* in providing guidance and training as well as facilitating development of schools. The third paper on *Favourable Policies in Promoting Co-operatives in Schools* was presented by Mr. Wan Mohd Ariffin Wan Hussin, the Assistant Director of Ministry of Education, Malaysia. He touched on how the Government of Malaysia through the Ministry of Education makes it compulsory to establish co-operative in schools and encourages students' involvement in co-operatives by providing merits to students, which is a plus point for their application to university level.

On the second and third day, the delegates got the opportunity to visit three different school co-operatives around Penang. The first was to St. Georges' Girls' School, a normal day-school with a very enthusiastic co-operative team and numerous entrepreneurial activities. The students explained about their structure, support received by the Principal and teachers and took the delegates to tour the school including their co-operative homestay in the school compound. The second visit was to the MRSM Kepala Batas, a junior college boarding school. Here the students benefit from co-operative businesses as banking agents, laundry service providers, as well as a child care centres for the teachers. The co-operative employs 17 staff to cater to the members; it includes cooks, co-op cafeteria staff, and drivers of the co-op transportation service. The third visit was to the Al-Mashoor Islamic Girls School, a school co-operative that is active in tourism activities. The students shared their

experience in developing and offering affordable tour packages around Penang. Here, the delegates also got a taste of Malaysian traditional games and activities.

The delegates were inspired by the element of co-operative principles and values that are nurtured in the school students. A handful of delegates were very interested in collaborating, especially in adopting the Malaysian model of school co-operatives in their respective countries. It is ANGKASA's aspiration to have school co-operatives established in other countries and is looking forward to assist co-operatives in the Asia Pacific region in the development of co-operatives in schools either using the Malaysian model or in establishing a better model that suits the local conditions.

### **ASEAN Cooperative Commodities forward to the Globe**

The Cooperative League of Thailand (CLT) celebrated its Golden Jubilee and 2018 International Day of Cooperatives (Sustainable Consumption and Production) Celebration by organizing a seminar and an exhibition of products developed by co-operatives.



(L-R) The Ceremony is inaugurated by Dato' Abdul Fattah Abdullah and Mr. Mongkalat Pukanat. Photograph credit: CLT

The Seminar on, “*ASEAN Cooperative Commodities forward to the Globe,*” included keynote address and panel discussion. The keynote address was delivered by Dato' Abdul Fattah Abdullah, President of ASEAN Cooperative Organization (ACO) and President of ANGKASA, Malaysia. The panel discussion featured Mongkalat Pukanat, Chairman of CLT; Prayoon Inskul Deputy Director General of Cooperative Promotion Department (CPD); and Balasubramanian Iyer, Regional Director, International Cooperative Alliance Asia and Pacific; and was moderated by Dr. Asanee Rattanamalai, Master of Rassamee International School.

The interest in developing trade among co-operatives in the Asia-Pacific region goes back to the 1960s and Thailand has figured prominently in this regard. In 1974, based on the recommendations of Select Committee (1972) on Agriculture and Trade of ICA-AP, the International Co-operative Trading Organization (ICTO) was established in Singapore with investments from Australia, Indonesia, Iran, Malaysia, Philippines, Singapore, Sri Lanka and Thailand. Unfortunately, this initiative wound up in 1976 due to lack of member support. In the late 70s/ early 80s under an agreement between the JA-Zenchi and CLT an international trading plaza was set up in Bangkok to serve as a trading window for cooperatives. However, over time, as in the past, interest waned due to lack of member support.

The ASEAN Vision 2025 calls for a resilient, inclusive, people-oriented and people-centered community that engenders equitable development and inclusive growth. The ASEAN Economic Blueprint highlights the need to promote ASEAN agricultural cooperatives as a means to empower and enhance market of agricultural products, to build a network mechanism linking agricultural cooperatives, and to fulfill the purpose of agricultural cooperatives for the benefit of farmers in the region. This provides an opportunity for co-operative to engage and enhance co-operative to co-operative trade; strengthen engagement between ASEAN Secretariat and ACO; build value chains and the cooperative ecosystem; and promote the cooperative identity.

Speaking on the occasion, Dato Fatah Abdullah, Chairman Angkasa and ICA-AP Board member said that, "Co-operatives are agents of change, have commitment of members, and growing producer and consumer base. We need joint efforts to build the cooperative economy. Mr. Mongkalat Pukanat, Chairman of CLT, said that the Thai-ASEAN center and information hub has been created to act as a business hub to help enhance business, trade, industry, and service as well as facilitate and coordinate in this area.

The exhibition provided an opportunity for co-operatives from Thailand and other ASEAN countries to display their products and network among themselves. Dato Fattah Abdullah and Mr. Pukanat jointly inaugurated the Thai-ASEAN co-operative products center in the CLT campus.

## **NEWS FROM OUR MEMBERS**

### **Celebrating the 96<sup>th</sup> International Day of Co-operatives**

This year's International Day of Co-operatives (officially recognised on social media as #CoopsDay) was celebrated with gusto across the Asia and Pacific region. Members of ICA-AP put their best foot forward in ushering in the global day and in showcasing their work in "Sustainable Consumption and Production of Goods and Services."

The National Cooperative Federation of Nepal (NCF) along with the Government of Nepal, Ministry of Agricultural, Land Management and Cooperatives (MoALC) and the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) jointly celebrated the Day in Kathmandu. This is the first time such a tripartite celebration has taken place to mark #CoopsDay in Nepal! Mr. Renaud Meyer, Country Director, UNDP announced the launch of two projects in partnership with the Nepalese co-operative movement - supply chain management of fruits and vegetables and value chain development of agriculture products. NCF Chairman Keshav Badal, called on the urgent need for local co-operatives laws to align themselves with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

The Department of Agricultural Marketing & Co-operatives, Bhutan in collaboration with the Regional Agricultural Marketing and Cooperatives, Gelephu celebrated the Day with members from six different co-operatives in Sarpang Dzongkhag district. The co-operatives are engaged in agricultural production, livestock farming and savings and credit. Dasho Drangpon of the Gelephu Dunkhag Court graced the occasion as the Chief Guest. A special message from the Hon'ble Minister of the Ministry of Agriculture and Forests was read out to the gathering. The program included a quiz competition with questions centered around farming and the theme of sustainable production and consumption . The highlight of the day was a competition amongst the co-operatives to see who had the most forward looking and progressive vision for their co-operative.



Participants in Gelephu, Bhutan on July 7, 2018. Photograph credit: DAMC

The Central Cooperative Society (CCS), Myanmar organized festivals at local markets selling co-operative products and shared the ICA statement commemorating the Day through local media outlets. The event held in Nay Pyi Taw was attended by the Union Minister and Deputy Minister, Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Irrigation, Chairpersons of State and Regions Unions of Co-operative Federations and invited guests from INGOs and NGOs.



From the venue of the function in Nay Pyi Taw, Myanmar. Photograph credit: CCS

2018 was a special year for the Co-operative Development Authority (CDA) in the Philippines. They honoured the International Day of Co-operatives after several years and made it doubly special by holding their celebrations in Marawi City; a place *'ravaged by war, merciless pillage and looting.'* The Day saw the launch of the "Marawi Rehabilitation through Cooperativism Project" - a 76.15 Million pesos project funded by the Bangon Marawi Task Force, an inter-agency initiative of the national government to help rebuild the ruined city, livelihoods of its people, and the hope of its future.

To commemorate #CoopsDay, the National Cooperative Union of India (NCUI), organized a symposium on the theme "Sustainable Consumption and Production of Goods and Services" where the invited speakers were Shri Jalaj Shrivastava, IAS, Additional Secretary to Government of India, Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare; Shri R.S. Sodhi, Managing Director, Gujarat Cooperative Milk Marketing Federation (AMUL); Dr. Manoj Nardeosingh, Assistant Secretary General, African Asian Rural Development Organization (AARDO); and Shri Harvir Singh, Editor, Outlook Hindi. NCUI also organized its annual arts competition for young children on themes which included agriculture, family, climate change etc. All the paintings will be sent to IE-NO-HIKARI Association of Japan for *"The 26th Annual World Children's Picture Contest."*



The winner of the painting competition with his stunning art work! Photograph credit: NCUI

The ICA-AP Committee for Youth Cooperation (ICYC) under the aegis of the Chairperson Mr. Ahsan Ali Thakur undertook the 'Go Green Campaign' as a gesture of aligning SDG 13, i.e., Climate Action, that complements and furthers SDG 12, i.e. Responsible Consumption and Production. Mr. Thakur encouraged individuals and organisations from within the Asia Pacific co-operative movement to display values of Solidarity and Self-Help which are core values of the co-operative movement at large. He also requested them to inspire more young people in their network and outside to join the Campaign, and help him in his Mission to establish a sustainable environment and society. Volunteers joined the campaign by plating saplings and taking photographs of the event and sharing it widely on social media.



Teachers of C.P. BERAR High School for Girls, Karachi, Pakistan celebrating #coopsday by planting a tree and flowers in the cooperative school premises. Photograph credit: Mr. Ahsan Ali Thakur

## **The Sustainable Way Forward: Lessons for New Zealand**

Mr. Craig Presland, CEO, Cooperative Business New Zealand (CBNZ), has penned a compelling piece on the journey traversed by New Zealand towards contributing to sustainable consumption and production.

He begins the article in Vanuatu where he attended the ICA-AP Forum on Development of Co-operatives in the Pacific Islands. He drew inspiration from an installation made by a local tribesman exhorting people to pay heed to the damage climate change is wrecking on island nations such as his. The article moves on to facts about how widespread climate change induced destruction is, and how every country, no matter big or small has a role to play. He highlights the positive steps taken by New Zealand in slowing the destruction through the 'closing of new oil and gas explorations off the Taranaki coast recently, along with the new government's pledge to plant more than one billion trees over the next 10 years.'

Mr. Presland gives concrete recommendations for individuals and businesses on how they can do their bit for the cause of sustainable consumption and production. With respect to suggestions for co-operatives, he highlights how major co-operative players in his country, are already on the right path with respect to sustainability. They have committed to contributing to a waste management program, recycling cloth bags, cutting out plastic completely, and carrying out other socially conscious programs for the benefit of their communities.

To read the detailed article please [click here](#).

### **ICA-EU PARTNERSHIP PROGRAM ON CO-OPERATIVES IN DEVELOPMENT: PEOPLE CENTRED BUSINESSES IN ACTION**



In March 2016, the ICA and the European Union signed a Framework Partnership Agreement (Europe Aid/150-053/C/ACT/Multi) to implement a multi-year and multi-country development programme aimed at benefitting and advancing co-operatives worldwide. The Partnership is officially titled "Co-operatives in Development: People Centred Businesses in Action", translated into the social media hashtag #Coops4Dev (co-operatives for development). The Partnership has 8 Result Areas and 33 Activity Streams for delivery by 5 units, one housed in each regional office and one at the coordination level in Brussels. The AP unit has identified three strategic development priorities namely, participation of Co-operatives in Achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), Youth Inclusion in Co-operatives, and Exploring Work and Ownership Structures in Co-operatives. The ICA-AP implements the programme in collaboration with Alliance members and in partnerships with other stakeholders such as governments, international development agencies, private sector and NGOs in the region. You may read more about the Partnership [here](#).



## Forum on Development of Co-operatives in the Pacific: A Summary Report



L to R: Mr. Ridley Joseph (Registrar of Co-operatives, Vanuatu), Mr. Balu Iyer (RD, ICA-AP), H.E. Mr. Bob Loughman (Deputy PM, Vanuatu), Mrs. Savitri Singh (Program Director) and Mr. Santosh Kumar (Program Manager)

### Introduction

The ICA Asia and Pacific in collaboration with the Office of Registrar and Business Development Services, Vanuatu organized the Pacific Forum (ICA-AP Forum on Development of Co-operatives in the Pacific Islands) on 5-6 July 2018, with the participation of delegates from co-operatives, government and CSO groups from Fiji, Kiribati, Papua New Guinea, Solomon Islands, Australia and New Zealand, Indonesia and Nepal. The Pacific Forum co-funded by the ICA-EU Partnership on Co-operatives in Development, comes as the first sub-regional activity in the Pacific after the [ICA-AP conference on co-operative development in Fiji in 2008](#). The activity aimed at mainstreaming representation from Pacific co-operatives in ICA's development process proved very useful in understanding the realities of doing co-operative business as well as challenges faced by institutions like federations and offices of registrar of co-operatives, in the Pacific Islands.

The Forum also proved helpful in bringing co-operative apex organizations in Australia ([BCCM](#)) and New Zealand ([CBNZ](#)), and sectoral federations in Nepal ([NACCFL](#)) and Indonesia ([KOPWANI](#)) closer to the stakeholders representing co-operative-development in the Pacific. Additionally, the participation of strategic international development actors like Vanuatu Association of NGOs ([VANGO](#)) Pacific Islands Association of NGOs ([PIANGO](#)), [ILO Coop](#) Unit, [ILO Country Office for the Pacific](#) and the Melanesian Spearhead Group ([MSG](#)) added the much needed dimension of regional integration for development of co-operatives in the Pacific Islands.

Read the detailed Report about the Proceedings and Recommendations of the Forum [here](#).

### The Forum

The Pacific Forum that opened with messages in support of co-operative development in the region by H.E. Bob Loughman, Deputy Prime Minister, Republic of Vanuatu, Mr. Balasubramanian Iyer, ICA Regional Director (Asia Pacific), Mr. Donglin Li, ILO Director for Pacific Island Countries, H.E. Wera Mori, Minister of Trade, Commerce and Industry (PNG), Mr. Peter Eafeare, Deputy Director General, MSG and Mr. Joseph Ridley, Registrar of Co-operatives, Vanuatu, was able to achieve its listed

objectives of understanding the challenges, and exploring opportunities for developing co-operatives & institutions in Pacific Island countries. The ICA-AP is currently working to create a platform to work on promotion and development of co-operative enterprise model in the Pacific. A short snapshot of status, realities and challenges presented by key resource persons from Pacific Island countries is placed below:

- a.) Mrs. Kammani Betiota, Registrar of Co-operatives, Government of Kiribati informed the Forum that there had been a 94% increase in the number of co-operatives in the last 4 decades and that there were 11 business sectors covered by co-operatives in the country with copra-farming and fisheries dominating the space. She stated that there was an increase in government's subsidy to co-operatives along with the government's efforts to release contemporary training manuals for members of co-operatives. She also informed that there was an ongoing review of the national ordinance and regulations on co-operatives in Kiribati. Mrs. Betiota highlighted legal compliance, outdated legal framework, political interference and lack of access to international development & capacity building funds as the main challenges faced by co-operatives in Kiribati. Her recommendations for the way-forward included membership to the ICA, exercises to add value to strong business sectors (copra and fishing) and an international review of co-operative laws in Kiribati.
- b.) Mr. Stephen Sallun, Registrar of Co-operatives from Papua New Guinea joined H.E. Mr. Wera Mori, Minister of Trade, Commerce and Industry (PNG) in representing the country, and stated that there were 6000 registered co-operatives and that almost 60% of co-operatives operated in sectors like coffee cultivation, copra farming and producing vanilla palm oil. He further mentioned that the high quality coffee from co-operatives in PNG were exporting to premium markets. He identified digital payments to members, increasing access to finance and increasing partnerships as areas of opportunity of PNG co-operatives. Mr. Sallun informed the Forum that lack of accurate data on co-operatives, limited research, lack of compliance with financial regulators and an inadequate policy framework for co-operatives, as the main challenges. His recommendations to the Forum included data collection initiatives, accessing development funds to strengthen PNG co-operatives and a comprehensive review of co-operative legislation while also drafting a national policy on co-operative development.
- c.) Mr. Tony Sewen, Chairperson ORCBDS, Vanuatu with support from Mr. Ridley Joseph, Registrar of Co-operatives informed the house that there were 356 active co-operatives in the country with a membership of 14438 individuals. He mentioned that co-operative average growth was 1.3% in this decade, and that almost 50% of co-operatives operated in the retail sector. He further informed that co-operatives in Vanuatu had recently established a Vanuatu Co-operative Business Network as an apex body to represent – unite – serve co-operatives and to support the People's Plan (National Strategic Development Plan) by leveraging the co-operative advantage in sectors like education, sustainable agriculture, food security while addressing issues of inclusion, unemployment and gender equality. Mr. Sewen also highlighted that the legal framework for co-operatives in the country was outdated and that high cost of transportation, lack of proper agri-support infrastructure and training on a range of capacities of members, were the main challenges in the road to development of co-operatives in Vanuatu. He did however bring out C2C trade, increasing co-operative membership, developing visibility strategies and an active membership with ICA as the immediate ways forward.
- d.) Mr. Benjamin Inukoru, Registrar of Co-operatives for the Solomon Islands informed the Forum that co-operatives in the country were established by virtue of an ordinance in 1957 with the proliferation of consumer co-operatives in the form of *rural trade stores*. He added that co-operatives in the country declined in the 1980s with more than half the number going into liquidation and the continued absence of co-operative apex associations. He was quick to add that there had been a resurgence in the 1990s albeit a slow one in the development of co-operatives in the country. The credit co-operative sector since then had emerged as one of

the stronger areas of business. He further informed that sectors covered by co-operatives like fisheries, land purchase and use, saw-mills had gone inactive and that strong support was needed to develop co-operatives in agriculture and allied businesses. He also brought out an interesting fact that the legislation on co-operatives in the Solomon Islands was based on the colonial 1904 Act on co-operatives in India, and that since 1987 ILO had continued to assist the country in revising their co-operative law. While Mr. Inukoru also identified co-operative legislation as one of the main challenges, he also stated capacity building, especially of youth and women members had become vital. Since their establishment in 1957, only 404 co-operatives had been registered out of which 68% or 274 were not operational, 115 remained dormant and only 4% or 15 were actively functioning.

#### Participation of ICA Members & International Agencies

ICA members *CNBZ*, represented by Mr. Craig Presland; *BCCM*, represented by Ms. Alexandra Hordern; *NACCFL*, represented by Mr. Khem Bahadur Pathak, Mr. Rudra Bhattarai and Ms. Meena Pokhrel; and *KOPWANI* of the Dewan Koperasi Indonesia (*DEKOPIN*), represented by Ms. Siti Nurul Aini stepped up to share insights from their respective movements and brought out the their challenges while offering support and guidance to co-operatives in the Pacific. Ms. Hordern facilitated the interactive group-working session while Mr. Presland, Ms. Aini and Ms. Pokhrel joined to help engage group members in highlighting main areas of collaboration and developing synergies in their plans.

The presentations from representatives of co-operatives from the Pacific Island countries and the ICA membership was supported by insightful statements and informative presentations by Mr. Donglin Li of the ILO who brought out the relevance of ILO recommendation 193 on promoting co-operatives; Ms. Davila Andrea of the ILO Coop Unit who introduced important contemporary ILO tools for co-operatives including Think.Coop, Start.Coop, MYCOOP, MY-Fin-Coop etc; Mrs. Savitri Singh of the ICA-AP who highlighted the role of ICA in development of cooperatives and her extensive work in promoting women led co-operatives; and statements in support of co-operatives and regional integration of actors responsible for co-operative development from Mr. Peter Eafere & David Hopa of the MSG; and Ms. Ekta Singh of PIANGO and Ms. Anne Pakoa from the Vanuatu Human Rights Coalition and Board Member VANGO.

#### Main Findings & Conclusion

Mr. Balasubramanian Iyer, ICA-AP Regional Director provided a comprehensive round-up and action plan to the participants wherein he highlighted Education, Ineffective legal & policy environment, lack of co-operative statistics, lack of access to finance as the main & common challenges for co-operatives in the Pacific. He further brought out that the two important and ongoing activities of Mapping co-operative actors and the Legal Framework Analysis of the ICA-EU Partnership would certainly benefit the stakeholders. He went on to invite the members of the audience to the Second Asia Pacific Co-operative Youth Summit (18-21 August 2018) in Cebu, the Philippines and the 13<sup>th</sup> ICA-AP Regional Assembly (26-30 November 2018) in Tehran, Iran, in order to help co-operatives in the Pacific build their network and learn about other movements outside the Pacific. He further stated that the upcoming APEC meeting in PNG and the ADB meeting Fiji, as well as the upcoming Voluntary National Reviews of the SDGs for Fiji and Vanuatu in 2019 at the High Level Political Forum of the UN were important events to make the Pacific co-operatives' voices heard. He concluded by presented a three-pronged plan to the Forum viz. Short Term: Increasing Membership and inclusion of Pacific co-operatives in ICA-AP committees; Undertake mapping and LFA exercises and arrange exchange visits. Medium Term: Developing Partnerships with MSG, PIANGO and building a favorable eco-system for co-operatives especially in sectors like finance and insurance while promoting cross sectoral synergies, and in Long term: Support the creation of an enabling environment, strengthen co-operative federations and establish a regional network for co-operatives.

## International Day of Co-operatives 2018

The Forum officially closed with the observance of the 2018 International Day of Co-operatives on 7 July, themed on Responsible Consumption and Production with the participation of H.E. Mr. Charlot Salwai Tabimasmal, Prime Minister of the Republic of Vanuatu along with international participants. The opportunity was live streamed on Facebook as part of ICA-AP COOP MIC series and can be found here:

[https://www.facebook.com/100009208309471/videos/2038151703168420/?source=feed\\_text](https://www.facebook.com/100009208309471/videos/2038151703168420/?source=feed_text)

## **POLICY WATCH**

### **Historic breakthrough for Sri Lanka Cooperatives as President includes them in National Economic Council**



President Maithripala Sirisena awards a young cooperative employee winner at the 96th International Cooperative Day event in Batticaloa. Photograph credit: thesundayleader.lk

During the International Day of Cooperatives celebration in Batticaloa, Sri Lanka, President Sirisena announced that the Sri Lankan co-operative movement will be invited to sit in future sessions of the National Economic Council (NEC). He announced several relief measures, including exemption of the sector from paying income tax, as a way to revitalize the sector. President Sirisena bolstered the confidence of the audience by sharing how he started his career as an employee of a cooperative, and how he believed that co-operatives were people's movement. Minister Rishad Bathiudeen, in-charge of the Ministry of Co-operatives, added that co-operative employees will receive additional allowances and pensions, and co-operative organizations struggling to pay off their loans will be provided funds from the Treasury.

## **ANNOUNCEMENTS**

### **Exciting line-up for the Upcoming Asia Pacific Cooperative Youth Summit 2.0!**

With the Summit only a few days away to be held in Cebu, The Philippines, here is a sneak peek at some of the Speakers lined up for the Summit Well!

Ms. Raquel Choa, Founder, The Chocolate Chamber, The Philippines



Growing up in difficult circumstances, Raquel's memories of her grandmother making chocolate tablea (pure chocolate) and her stories about the legend of Maria Cacao greatly influenced Raquel Choa's later life. Unable to complete her education, she earned a meagre living, married at 16, and subsequently had eight children to care for. Despite the difficulties, she rediscovered her passion for chocolate and was able to overcome many obstacles. She became a successful entrepreneur and known as the Chocolate Queen of Cebu.

Ms. Trinh Thi Ly , Human Resource and Tourism Services Manager, Sinh Duoc Herbal Cooperative, Vietnam



Ly is one of the co-founders of the model "Sinh Duoc Ecosystem". She received a B.A of English for Scientific Purposes from Hanoi University of Science and Technology. Born in a rural area, Ly can understand the farmers' needs, desire when taking part in production, and developing a Cooperative. In addition, she has gained practical experience from her participation in community activities, events for the youth in her university and her village, so that she has the suitable methods of operating the model of community tourism to maintain a healthy interaction between local people and tourists in the "Sinh Duoc Ecosystem".

Ms. Kanupriya Sehgal, Founder, Bee Positive, India



Kanupriya is a former journalist turned agriculture professional who has been associated with the farming sector since 2012. She feels most at home in the rural hinterland and has visited some of the remotest villages of India as a part of her work. Her close association with agriculture helped her realize some of the biggest challenges in the sector. She realized that if the economic situation in the villages has to be improved the rural women have to be empowered and trained in income

generating activities so that they too can contribute to the GDP of the country. Since these women lived in areas where there was an abundance of natural resources Kanupriya decided to train them in beekeeping because beekeeping is a virtual goldmine! Kanupriya organized these trainings through her socially sustainable start-up BeePositive++ which she set-up in 2016. BeePositive++ was handpicked by the India's premiere Institute-The Indian Institute of Technology(IIT)-Delhi for an exclusive mentorship program and was given a grant and an award of excellence by the Department of Science and Technology, Government of India.

Mr. Yonten Dorji, Chairperson, Shamo Zhimpu Production Youth Cooperative, Bhutan



Mr. Dorji is the Chairperson of the Shamo Zhimpo Production Youth Cooperative which is a registered group under the Cooperative Act of Bhutan. The main objectives of the Cooperative are to substitute imports of mushrooms in Bhutan, to generate youth employment opportunities and to enhance sustainability and food sufficiency. Mr. Dorji has received specialized training in the cultivation of mushrooms and hopes to expand the membership of his cooperative to include more youth and provide them with gainful employment, and contribute to sustainable agriculture.

Mr. Mark Villarin, Co-Founder, Red Root Artists Cooperative, The Philippines



Mark Villarin is a technology entrepreneur, founding member and chairperson of RedRoot Artists Cooperative. His recent project on Pag-IBIG Fund Video has won the "Award of Excellence" in the 16th Philippine Quill Awards. He was also given an award by the Local Government of Quezon City in recognition of his contribution to the community as the cooperative chairperson. He is the project lead of the modernization of 7 national museums in the Philippines and counting.

**Applications are open for the Social Cooperatives International School, Naples, Italy**



Poster for the Call for Registrations. Photograph credit: [www.cicopa.coop](http://www.cicopa.coop)

The Social Cooperatives International School, which runs from October 25-28 in Naples, Italy, brings together entrepreneurs, thinkers and practitioners from the co-operative and social enterprise sectors around the world to share experience and best practice. The topics for this edition are out and it is already possible to register. **Early bird registration deadline is 30<sup>th</sup> of August!** The event is organised by Confcooperative Federsolidarieta, the Italian Federation of Social Co-operatives, with support from CICOPA, the International Organisation of Industrial and Service Co-operatives.

Last year was a great success hosting 35 cooperators from 9 different countries (Italy, Belgium, Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Poland, United Kingdom, United States, Japan, Sri Lanka) with a focus on communication, social farming and management. For more information on the programme and registration click here : <http://www.cicopa.coop/news/social-cooperatives-international-school-2018/>



#### **August 2018**

- Second Asia-Pacific Co-operative Youth Summit, Pinamungajan, Cebu, The Philippines, August 18-21. More information at: [www.youth-asiapacific.coop/youth-summit/](http://www.youth-asiapacific.coop/youth-summit/)
- ICA-AP ACFSMC Seminar on Development of e-Commerce Platforms (tbc)

#### **September 2018**

- International Workshop on Strengthening of Women's Co-operatives, New Delhi, India, September 5-6.
- Implementation of next steps for Co-operative Development in Central Asia, Bishkek, Kyrgyz Republic, September 10-14.

#### **October 2018**

- Young Development Professionals' Meet, New Delhi, India, October 25-26.

#### **November 2018**

- 13th ICA-AP Regional Assembly and 10th Co-operative Forum, Tehran, Iran; November 26-30. Theme: Co-operatives Help Economies Become More Resilient and Sustainable. More information at <http://www.regionalassembly.coop/tehran2018/>