

# ICA-AP NEWSLETTER

News from members, ICA-AP activities,  
ICA-EU Partnership update & more!

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## ICA-AP ACTIVITIES

### **ICA-AP Regional Workshop on “Management of Consumer Cooperatives”**

The ICA-AP Regional Workshop on “Management of Consumer Cooperatives” was held in Vietnam from November 4-7, 2019. The workshop was organized under the aegis of the ICA-AP Consumer Committee and hosted for the first time by the Saigon Union of Trading Co-operatives (Saigon Co.op). 33 co-operators and guests from India, Indonesia, Japan, Malaysia, Myanmar, Philippines and Vietnam attended the three-day workshop.

The program commenced with a welcome address by Mr. Haruyoshi Amano, the Chair of the ICA-AP Consumer Committee / Manager, International Department, Japanese Consumer Cooperative Union (JCCU). He provided an overview of ICA, the Committees of ICA-AP and the consumer cooperative movement globally. The Deputy CEO of Saigon Co.op, Mr. Anh Duc Nguyen, in his opening remarks said the workshop is a continuation of the sharing of retail experiences among ICA members. He said the shared knowledge would be valuable to members in improving their business qualitatively.

During the first session on Day 1, reports from the 18 participating organizations were presented. The reports covered topics such as history, business, activities, and challenges faced by each organization. This was followed by lectures by representatives from Saigon Co.op. Mr. Le Truong Son (Director, Invest Consulting Department) provided an overview of Saigon Coop; Ms. Ngo Thi Bich Lien (Director, Concept Management Department) spoke about the retail operations; Mr. Vo Hoang Anh (Director, Private Label Department) shared the development strategy of the private Label; and Mr. Bui Quang Vinh (Director of Logistics Dept.) presented their supply chain management.

Day 2 began with participants going on a field trip to Saigon Co.op's distribution and product inspection centers and five cooperative stores. At the distribution center they learned about the logistics of Saigon Co.op and at the product inspection center, about the quality assurance policies. Their visits to stores at Co.op Xtra Phạm Văn Đồng, Co.opmart Nguyễn Đình Chiểu, Co.op Food Pasteur, Cheers Gigamall, and Co.op Smile De Tham gave the participants an understanding of the scale and customer needs.



Participants at the Saigon Co.op distribution center.

On Day 3, participants were divided into four groups and each group was given the following questions to brainstorm:

- I. The key learning points from the workshop?
- II. The key recommendations to take back to their cooperative?
- III. Propose one project with an action plan to be implemented in the next six months.



Snapshots from the group discussions on day 3.

The groups then proceeded to share their thoughts and action plans with others. These presentations were followed by a debriefing conducted by Mr. Nguyen Long Trung (Director, Saigon Co.op Training Center). The training workshop ended on an optimistic note with participants confident that they will be able to take back new ideas to be implemented in their cooperatives.

## Management Capacity Building of Women and Gender Integration in Cooperative Development



Participants with Mr. Suvinda S. Singapulli, Commissioner, Department of Cooperative Development

The ICA-AP Committee on Women in collaboration with the National Cooperative Council of Sri Lanka (NCCSL) and support from the Japanese Consumers' Cooperative Union (JCCU) organized a Training of Trainers on "Management Capacity Building of Women and Gender Integration in Cooperative Development" at NCCSL in Colombo, Sri Lanka from November 4 to 8, 2019.

The objectives of the training were to take stock of the status and conditions of women in cooperatives in Sri Lanka and identify actions to promote gender equality. It looked at bottlenecks and challenges for women's participation in cooperatives; co-relation between women, cooperatives and gender equality; gender integration in cooperatives, strategies for gender equality, and policy level measures; and global and ICA's initiatives towards gender equality. The participants were also encouraged to share best practices adopted by cooperatives in Sri Lanka with a view to streamline the process of collection, analysis and dissemination of gender-disaggregated data.

Mr. Susil Shantha Weerasekara, Hon. Vice Chairman, NCC in his opening address noted the country's developments in the quest for gender equality and women's empowerment. Mr. Balasubramanian Iyer, Regional Director, ICA-AP introduced the participants to the program and delivered the special address on the need for gender integration in cooperatives. Mr. Suvinda S. Singapulli, Commissioner, Department of Cooperative Development in Sri Lanka in his inaugural address said that cooperatives have an important role in eliminating disparity and in driving social change. Mr. P. D. Liyanage, CEO, NCC, Sri Lanka delivered the vote of thanks to all dignitaries and participants.

25 individuals from ICA member organizations in Sri Lanka and cooperative department staff from different provinces participated in the workshop. They deliberated on strengthening policy; identifying and integrating gender-based gaps in cooperatives; mainstreaming gender in national policies (addressing safety and mobility); and targeting development programs. The training dwelled into how apex federations can use gender disaggregated data to plan, implement, monitor and evaluate in order to mainstream gender in cooperatives. The resources persons at the training were, Mr. Kumara Pothuwila, Project Manager of the We Effect funded project at NCCSL; Ms. Subhashi Dissanayake, Head of Business Planning, Development and Support at British Council in Sri Lanka; Ms. Ida Suhanya Jesu, Gender and Disability Officer, ILO Country Office in Colombo; and Ms. Taru Golla, Head of Partnerships with Access Livelihoods Consulting India.



Dr. Nandini Azad, Chairperson, ICA-AP Committee on Women address the audience.

Dr. Nandini Azad, Chairperson, ICA-AP Committee on Women delivered the closing address and traced the history of the women committee and its role in gender mainstreaming and advocacy to increase representation of women in cooperatives. She said the Committee has consistently presented the concerns of gender imbalances and systemic discrimination against women at various levels of cooperatives and at important forums like the Asia-Pacific Cooperative Ministers' Conference (APCMC). The Hanoi Resolution adopted at the 10<sup>th</sup> APCMC in 2017, called on all participants to “encourage and support women members’ participation (30 to 50% representation) in committees, bodies, councils and other higher-level cooperative structures.”



Ms. Simrin Singh (right), Director, ILO Sri Lanka & Maldives is presented with a memento.

Ms. Simrin Singh, Director, ILO Country Office for Sri Lanka and Maldives in her closing address welcomed the cabinet approval received for the country’s first - National Policy on Cooperatives. She said the ILO remains committed to accompany Sri Lanka in taking forward the National Policy and has also supported the translation of the policy document into Sinhala and Tamil. This endeavour would create greater discussion among cooperators, producers and consumers, and policymakers.



## ICA participates in the SAFIN Annual meeting in New Delhi



Speakers at the Clinic Session.

The Smallholder and Agri-SME Finance and Investment Network (SAFIN) is a partnership of actors that are committed to aligning their efforts to scale up access to financial services for agri-SMEs and for small commercial farms. With different tools and entry points, the members of the network work to bridge the investment gap in agriculture and food systems by financially empowering agri-SME and smallholder investors.

The 3rd Annual Plenary meeting of the SAFIN Network was held in New Delhi on November 10 and 11. The meeting consisted of presentations (blended finance and investment prospectus process), Partner Pitch Sessions and Clinic Sessions. The Clinic sessions were to pool partners' peer knowledge and support around new initiatives or products under design or early implementation. This year's sessions featured the Global Cooperative Impact (GCI) Fund supported by the ICA and a Technical Assistance Facility under development at AgDevCo.

The GCI Fund is designed to support cooperatives by providing funding for their long-term needs and building their capacity in financial management, business planning and impact measurement. The GCI Fund is an answer to a pressing need: while cooperatives foster stability and progress in developing countries, they have a hard time attracting funds to grow or get access to loans. This new Fund will answer those needs by providing finance to fund long-term needs and sustain cooperative development. ICA is currently fundraising for the Fund.

The GCI Fund plans to measure its impact through a specific developed tool. The monitoring process will be based on a matrix of user-friendly indicators agreed with beneficiaries at the time of application. The Clinic Session was to look at Impact Assessment tailored to the cooperatives' special needs, forms and capacities. Specifically to clinic was to focus on the following questions: Ways to fund activity and how it can be structured into the Fund? Impact assessment tools the GCI could use that are tailored to the cooperative sector? Define a social performance measuring tool that is not too complicated for our investees who will have limited capacities? Assessment tool could measure the contribution of cooperatives towards SDGs?

The Clinic Session was owned by Balasubramanian (Balu) Iyer, Regional Director of ICA Asia-Pacific facilitated by Samuel Ssenyimba of Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation. The session was attended by among others, representatives from AFD, Coconut Industry Board (Jamaica), EU Delegation Delhi, Fundacion Capital, IFAD, ISF Advisors, Mastercard Foundation, and Small Foundation. The response to the GCI Fund was positive as the participants felt it would provide an avenue for cooperatives to get new funding. The participants discussed the rationale and possible pitfalls of targeting cooperatives, their evolving roles as financial intermediaries in new market landscapes with new data sources and value chain finance arrangements and value addition from intermediation, and the extent to which assessing fund impact on cooperatives may yield substantive information about impact on small

farmers. There were examples discussed from Sub-Saharan Africa (where an Uniform Code of Cooperatives exists to take account for –accountability, finance, governance) and the Caribbean. The challenges discussed were overcoming perception, government support double-edged when it came to cooperatives, governance structures and member involvement, regulatory environment, and interest of investors to invest directly in cooperatives.

### **11th Annual Meeting of ICEI and International Seminar on Curriculum Development for Cooperative Education in Nepal**

The ICA-AP Committee on Cooperatives in Educational Institutions (ICEI) with support from the ICA-EU Partnership organised its 11th annual meeting and the International Seminar on Curriculum Development for Cooperative Education on November 25-26, 2019 in Kathmandu, Nepal. It was organised in collaboration with the National Cooperative Development Board, Department of Cooperatives, National Cooperative Federation Ltd., Nepal Central Agriculture Cooperative Union Ltd., Nepal Central Multipurpose Cooperative Union Ltd., National Cooperative Bank Ltd., and Nepal Federation of Savings and Credit Cooperative Ltd.

The program was inaugurated by Hon. Minister Madam Padma Kumari Aryal, Ministry of Land Management, Cooperatives and Poverty Alleviation Nepal, who during her welcome address noted that, “The Cooperative Policy 2012 of Nepal seeks to promote cooperative education at secondary, higher secondary and higher education level. Formal cooperative education can create self-employment opportunities by attracting young manpower to cooperatives and also by expanding business, which will make the cooperative sector more competitive, capable and professional.” The program was attended by 22 international delegates from six countries and over 50 local Nepalese stakeholders including government officials, university faculty, Ph.D. scholars, and cooperators.



(L-R) Mr. Balasubramanian Iyer, Regional Director, ICA-AP, Mr. Keshav Prasad Badal, Chairman, NCF, Dr. Mohd. Azlan Yahya, Chairperson, ICEI, Mr. Dakhsya Paudel, Co-Chairman, NCDB & Mr. C. Bahadur Parajuli, Member secretary, NCDB

Nepal is currently involved in developing a globally compatible, high quality curriculum to facilitate formal education in cooperatives. The seminar was aimed at sharing international curriculum on cooperative education by ICEI committee members. Many of the members are senior faculty members of universities/colleges with experience in developing curriculum and teaching in areas related to cooperatives. Insights on school and university curriculum on cooperative education were shared by Dr. Mohd. Azlan Yahya (ANGKASA, Malaysia), Mr. Shinichi Maita (NFUCA, Japan), Prof. Zenaida Diola (MMAFECCO, Philippines), and Dr. Y. Dongre (University of Mysore, India). This was followed by a brief session on how campus cooperatives serve as a centre for practical learning and a few successful cases were shared by Mr. Huat (SNCF, Singapore), Mr. Ojima and Mr. Yazama (Students representing NFUCA, Japan), and Mr. Delmo (Eskwela Kooeratiba, Philippines). The seminar also looked at understanding the needs, vision and current status of curriculum development on formal education on cooperatives in Nepal; sessions that were taken by speakers from the National Cooperative Federation and Tribhuvan University.



Hon. Minister Madam Padma Kumari Aryal (center in pink) surrounded by the seminar's participants and speakers.

The meeting and seminar concluded by participants sharing inputs that will help shape the curriculum that is currently under way in Nepal and suggestions on strengthening the work pursued by the committee on promoting cooperatives in educational institutions. New members from Rah-e-Roshd (Iran) and Zhijiang Institute of Economics and Trade (China) were welcomed to the committee and activities for 2020 were finalized by the members.

#### About ICEI

The ICEI is one of the sectoral committees of ICA-AP, focused on the promotion and development of cooperatives in educational institutions. The Asia and Pacific region has cooperatives within the campuses of schools, colleges and universities, where the students, teachers and staff are its members. These cooperatives provide the necessary goods and services to the campus community, and at the same time, promotes cooperative culture and leadership development among students. At present, individuals from 12 countries are members of ICEI.

For queries and membership to ICEI, kindly contact [simren.singh@icaap.coop](mailto:simren.singh@icaap.coop).

#### ICA-AP ANGKASA Cooperative to Cooperative Trade Seminar



Dato' Abdul Fattah Abdullah (President of ANGKASA), Dato' Kamarudin Ismail (Deputy President of ANGKASA / ICA Board) and Mr Balasubramanian Iyer with participants of the seminar during closing session.

The ICA-AP Trade and Business Committee and ANGKASA organized the ICA-AP ANGKASA Cooperative to Cooperative (C-2-C) Seminar on November 28-29, 2019 in Johor Bahru, Malaysia. The seminar on the theme Inclusive and Sustainable Economic Growth was attended by 90 participants and resource persons from 17 countries across Asia Pacific. The seminar was held in conjunction with the Malaysia



Carnival of Cooperatives' Products and Minister Services (MACCOPS) exhibition, and was officiated by YBhg Dato' Mohd Redzuan Yusof, Minister of Entrepreneur Development.

The seminar provided a platform to share knowledge of success stories, collaborations, good practices; identify areas of challenges or concern; and suggest ways forward in terms of partnerships and coordinated efforts. It brought together members in the region to know more about inclusivity; specifically, on the theme of economic growth; as an effort to encourage better C-2-C interactions and move towards a sustainable society. The seminar also focused on 3 sub-themes: Agriculture: Sustainable Development of Agricultural Cooperatives for Food Security, Tourism: Cooperatives Promote Sustainable Tourism: Economic Productivity in Consumer Cooperatives. Five speakers and nine panelists took part in sharing their success stories and encourage potential collaborations and future partnerships between cooperatives in the region.

## NEWS FROM MEMBERS

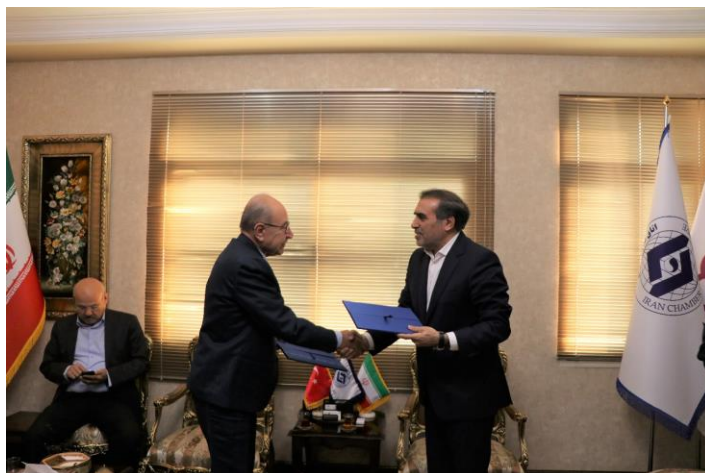
### Exploring cooperation among ECO member states

The Iran Chamber of Cooperatives (ICC) organized a three-day event to explore avenues for cooperation among cooperatives of the Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO) countries from November 11 to 13 in Tehran, Iran.

The representatives of the National Cooperative Union of Turkey met with the President of ICC to learn about the Iranian cooperative movement and held meetings with members of ICC. The Turkish delegation then visited two prominent cooperatives in Iran - Alvan Paint and Resin Production Cooperative and Production and Distribution Cooperative of Tehran Municipality Staff (Shahriar). According to representatives of the Turkish delegation, these visits were useful and illustrated the potential of the Iranian cooperative movement.

The Turkish delegation met with the Chairman of the board of Central Organization for Rural Cooperatives of Iran (CORC). At this meeting, the guests were introduced to the capabilities of Iranian agricultural cooperatives, especially in the field of horticultural production (saffron, pistachios, dates, apples, etc). On the final day, the delegation had meetings with some of the top fish-breeding cooperatives around Tehran. According to representatives of the Turkish delegation, Iranian cooperatives have a high capacity for aquatic production.

The highlight of the three-day event was the signing of an MoU between ICC and the National Cooperative Union of Turkey.



Signing of MoU signing between ICC & the National Cooperative Union of Turkey. Image credit: ICC



## Iran-South Korea Joint Seminar on Cooperatives Affairs

The second edition of the Iran Chamber of Cooperatives (ICC) and the Embassy of South Korea Joint Seminar on Cooperatives Affairs was held at Tehran's Milad Tower Conference Hall on November 27. This was held based on the positive feedback received at the first joint workshop on 'Supply Chain Management, E-commerce and International Marketing' in 2018.

The event was attended by Mr. Mashallah Azimi, the Secretary General of ICC; Mr. Ryu Jeong-Hyun, Ambassador of South Korea to Iran; and Mr. Choi Hee-won, Head of the Rural Research team at National Agricultural Cooperative Federation (NACF) of South Korea. In addition there were businessmen and representatives of cooperatives from both sides.

Delivering his speech in the opening of the seminar, Ambassador Ryu Jeong-Hyun expressed gratitude to ICC and the Iranian government for making necessary arrangements to organize the seminar. Pointing to the significance of such events, he said that the South Korean government is determined to hold this event annually in collaboration with ICC. He said that, "Cooperatives create jobs and provide various services to society and in this way have a significant role in the economic development of the countries." He also stressed on the need for the two countries to share their knowledge and experience in order to expand their cooperation in a variety of fields through cooperatives and small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs).



Ambassador Ryu Jeong-Hyun addresses the seminar.

In his address, ICC Secretary General, Mr. Mashallah Azimi, presented a brief history of cooperatives in Iran along with the country's capacities and capabilities in various areas. According to Mr. Azimi, cooperatives are not just established for pursuing economic benefits, but are a movement towards promoting social justice and social welfare all around the world. He highlighted that in the past two decades, cooperatives have engaged in bigger and more important infrastructure projects across the globe. In Iran such infrastructure projects account for five to eight percent of the country's GDP. He highlighted the need for expansion of cooperation between the two countries SMEs in the era of sanctions, calling on the South Korean government to facilitate transfer of knowledge and experience to Iran through cooperation between SMEs. He concluded by mentioning Iran's plans for further expansion of the role of cooperatives in the country's economy. "According to the Sixth Five-Year National Development Plan (2016-2021), the share of cooperatives in Iran's GDP is set to increase to 25 percent from the current six percent. We hope to achieve this goal in a constructive cooperation with our reliable trade partners such as South Korea."

Mr. Choi Hee-won, Head of Rural Research team at National Agricultural Cooperative Federation of South Korea, presented the history about establishment of cooperatives in his country and explained some of South Korea's regulations, laws and acts regarding the cooperatives and the government's support system. Following the seminar, experts from Iran's cooperative movement presented on specialized topics like employment and entrepreneurship, cooperatives and the emergence of start-ups and the role of women in the development of the cooperative movement.

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 program aimed at benefitting and advancing cooperatives worldwide. The Partnership is officially titled "Cooperatives in Development: People Centred Businesses in Action", translated into the social media hashtag #Coops4Dev (cooperatives 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 Cooperatives in Achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), Youth Inclusion in Cooperatives, and Exploring Work and Ownership Structures in Cooperatives. The ICA-AP implements the program in collaboration with ICA members and in partnership with other stakeholders such as governments, international development agencies, private sector and NGOs in the region. You may read more about the Partnership [here](#).

### Workshop on Cooperatives in Educational Institutions held in Kigali



A group photo of the participants and speakers at the workshop.

The inter-regional workshop on cooperatives in educational institutions was a joint event organised by the ICA-AP Committee on Cooperatives in Educational Institutions (ICEI) in collaboration with ICA Africa under the ICA-EU Partnership in Kigali on October 14, 2019. The objective of the workshop was to share knowledge between ICA members and other stakeholders about cooperatives in educational institutions such as universities, colleges, and high schools. It also aimed at sharing the technical know-how about the management of cooperatives in educational institutions with ICA members in the African region.

The workshop was attended by 51 participants from diverse backgrounds including policy makers, students, university management and staff, and youth from Rwanda, Tanzania, Botswana, Kenya, South Africa, Uganda, DR Congo, Colombia, Somalia, Lesotho, Ethiopia, Ivory coast, Nigeria, Morocco, Ghana, Pakistan and Belgium. The workshop opened with addresses by Dr. Sifa Chiyoge, Regional Director ICA Africa; Dr. Jean Ngamiye, Vice Chancellor of UNILAK; and Mr. Balasubramanian Iyer, Regional Director of ICA AP. It was followed by a brief presentation on the ICA-EU Partnership by Mr. Marc Noel, the International Development Director of the ICA-EU Partnership.

During the first session, the ICEI Co-Secretary Dr. Dongre, made a presentation on cooperatives in educational institutions in the Asia and Pacific region and gave examples of the work of campus cooperatives across sectors including housing, credit, consumer and multipurpose campus cooperatives from India, Philippines, Indonesia and Sri Lanka. This session focused on the history and evolution of campus cooperatives in the region and the possibilities of different types of campus cooperatives. This successfully captured the audience's interest and helped set the learning mood!

This was followed by showcasing of school and university cooperatives from Malaysia, Japan, Lesotho and South Africa. The participants keenly participated in this session and congratulated the presenters on their work. There were questions on modalities to set up these cooperatives, conditions necessary to make them inclusive and profitable for members, and ways to make campus cooperatives withstand competition from private players and make them sustainable.

The afternoon session comprised of group work, where the participants deliberated on six questions:

- How to overcome legal issues for formation of cooperatives in educational institutions?
- What can be the role of teachers, students and apex cooperatives in facilitating cooperatives in educational institutions?
- What can be the role of relevant stakeholders and support structures in furthering the movement (model bylaws)?
- What kind of business development plans can be devised for cooperatives in educational institutions?
- What are the expectations from government to facilitate the formation of cooperatives in educational institutions?
- How to create awareness about cooperatives in educational institutions?

The group discussions were helpful in understanding the context of cooperatives in Africa and the possibility of setting up cooperatives in educational institutions in the region.

In the closing session, the participants shared their feedback on the workshop and noted that they would go back to their respective countries and explore the possibilities of promoting and setting up cooperatives in educational institutions. Dr Jean Ngamiye thanked ICEI and ICA Africa for conducting the workshop and acknowledging it as an enriching experience for UNILAK and other participants.

### **Summaries of #coops4dev sessions at the ICA Global Conference on Cooperatives for Development**



Promotional standee at the ICA conference in Kigali. Image credit: ICA

On October 15, during the ICA International conference in Kigali, Rwanda, four parallel sessions looked at how cooperatives can be key actors of collective action to achieve the UN's Agenda 2030 and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Each session addressed a different goal, within the context of the significance of multi-stakeholder partnerships.

Parallel session 1: Tackling inequalities through the cooperative movement (SDG 10)



The session brought a rich dialogue among ICA member organisations, cooperative representative organisations and external experts (local authorities, global institutions, private sector) on tackling inequalities and the issue of impact measurement. Case studies showcased experiences and tools used by cooperatives in tackling inequalities, whilst external experts gave feedback, advice and a general overview of experiences working in partnership with the cooperative movement.

#### Parallel session 2: Women's empowerment at the forefront of sustainable development (SDG 5)

This session approached gender equality with emphasis on how policy agendas and the cooperative model can support processes encouraging self-empowerment for all and particularly for women. The session also illustrated the importance of building new partnerships between the cooperative movement and actors sharing the same values and principles of putting people before profit. A high level panel, four cases and a joint discussion brought about many learnings and insights, of which, the importance of approaching gender equality as a priority for both women and men (1), women's access to education (2), women's leadership (3) and gender mainstreaming of activities, projects and programs (4) were highlighted as key strategies of achieving gender equality within- and via the cooperative movement – and are thus guiding the recommendations.

#### Parallel session 3: Innovation in entrepreneurship through the cooperative model (SDG 9)

With the objective of understanding how the cooperative business model has fostered innovative entrepreneurship and functions as a catalyst of inclusive and sustainable development, during the first part of the session, cooperative entrepreneurs from diverse backgrounds and business fields shared with the audience their experiences including both successes and failures acquired when starting their respective cooperative. The four showcased field cases were coming from the 4 regions of ICA (Africa, Europe, America and Asia Pacific) and they represented different vulnerable groups such as youth, refugees, women and on people with disabilities. Regardless of their political, social, cultural and economic situation, all of them presented very similar challenges faced in their daily life: lack of opportunity, exclusion, minimum financial aid and no low representation on the drafting of social policy. At the same time, for all of them the cooperative model was one of the best options in order to start their entrepreneurship project due to its principles of cooperation, collaboration and sharing.

For the second part of the session, political representatives from CSOs, social networks and the government of Rwanda were invited to take the floor in order to address the challenges already put on the table by the field cases. During this part, the importance of partnership between cooperatives and other actors was mentioned as one of the most important points when talking about entrepreneurship and underrepresented groups. The cooperative movement was strongly encouraged to collaborate more with social networks and to avoid working in isolation. At the same time, there was also acknowledgement of the need to make more efforts and provide economic support in making sure that no one is left behind. The session finished with all the panelists pledging to work on their fields in order to enable a better environment for cooperative entrepreneurship both at a local and international level.

#### Parallel session 4: Globalization of inclusive ethical value chains

This session aimed at elaborating on the significance of multi-stakeholder partnerships and the role that the cooperative movement can play in moving the globalization of value chains in a fair, ethical and inclusive direction. Representatives of the European Union, civil society, multi-actor networks and the Cooperative movement highlighted that cooperatives facilitate individual producers' collective voice and negotiation power with key players across the supply chain for fairer returns to their members and communities; cooperatives at both ends of the supply chain have been joining forces to shorten value chains, improve product traceability and adopt environmentally friendly practices; human due diligence is key to fair and ethical value chains; financial support and investment into programming for the implementation Agenda 2030 needs to be dedicated to multi-stakeholder partnership initiatives –SDG Fund; partnerships with like-minded organisations like Fairtrade movement and other multi-stakeholder networks for South-South /Global-South Cooperation need to

fostered by political and financial frameworks that allow for this, boosting their capacity to reach the poorest of the poor and address local needs that are linked to global challenges.

The discussion was further enriched by case studies from 3 geographical areas showcasing examples of the impact of cooperatives at local communities embedded in value chains (south-south, global – south cooperation). Youth, women and informal workers have been in the spotlight while exchanging on inclusive value chains and it was repeatedly mentioned that cooperatives are agents of change, they can boost livelihood opportunities, shape leaders that put people and their prosperity before profit, they are key actors for inclusive growth towards just economies and societies for all.

### **Aflatoun Global Social & Financial Skills Conference**



Participants at the Conference. Image credit: Aflatoun International

The Aflatoun Global Social & Financial Skills Conference 2019 (AGSC19) took place at the Postillion Convention Center in Amsterdam on October 30 and November 1. The three-day conference brought together 250 plus government officials, CSOs, private sector organizations, international agencies, foundations and thought leaders from 170 organizations across more than 80 countries in the field of social, financial and entrepreneurship education. The conference had two key themes: Girls empowerment and Employment & Entrepreneurship.

Ms. Sigrid Kaag, Minister for Foreign Trade and Development Cooperation, Government of the Netherlands and Mr. Klaas Knot, President of De Nederlandsche Bank, opened the conference and spoke of the importance of savings for children and young people. The conference was diverse and comprehensive covering informative speaking sessions, panel discussions and workshops focusing on – developing life skills at early age, integrating financial and entrepreneurship education in national curricula, school-to-work transition, importance of investing in a professionalized teaching workforce, ensuring inclusivity (of children) in decision making processes; exploring partnerships for sustainability, quality and scale, and investing in initiatives to ensure peace and security, among others.

The conference had a dedicated break-out session on ‘Partnering with Cooperatives’ which was facilitated by Ms. Anam Mittra from ICA-AP and Ms. Daisybelle Cabal from NATCCO, the Philippines. Aflatoun has a successful partnership with NATCCO for more than a decade. NATCCO has been implementing the Aflatoun program, making the Philippines one of the pioneering countries in the network. The break-out session was an opportunity to share about cooperatives and the history and work of ICA-AP. The participants were divided into groups and each group was asked to conduct a SWOT analysis of cooperatives implementing the Aflatoun curriculum, and a possible action plan of how this partnership could be taken forward. The response was quite positive with some of the participants already familiar with the cooperative model, and the rest who understood the democratic

nature of cooperatives, and saw an organic linkage with Aflatoun's goal of empowering young people. ICA-AP and Aflatoun International have signed an MoU to take forward these conversations to a fruitful partnership.

The broad takeaways from the conference were:

- Social and financial education should be a part of all programs. Including social and financial education as part of programs that focus on health & reproductive rights, labor migration, environment, etc. It helps to achieve program goals and has a greater impact on those participating in the programs.
- Ensuring programs are scalable is important. It ensures that the programs reach as many children/ young people as possible and does not create a divide between those that have had the program and those that have not.
- Building partnerships is key to ensuring that most number of young people benefit from various interventions.

### **Capacity Building Program on SDG-13: Climate Action**

The ICA-AP Regional Capacity Building Program on SDG-13: Climate Action, themed 'Save the Environment to Sustain Future Generations' was held from November 19 to 21, at the Cooperative League of Thailand (CLT) Training Center in Bangkok. The program was co-organized by the ICA-EU Partnership, All China Federation of Supply and Marketing Cooperatives and CLT.

ICA-AP is committed to strengthening the capacity of members in responding to various challenges and 'Climate Change' is one that needs immediate attention. ICA is working to strengthen the know-how and skills of the cooperatives in the SDGs and helping cooperative enterprises in responding to the UN's call for action.

In most countries where ICA-AP members are present, agriculture and allied sectors including forestry and fisheries are main stay of life. Climate change and agriculture have a complex relationship. Land is a source of greenhouse emissions – agriculture, forestry and other land use account for 23% of the global greenhouse gas emissions and at the same time land acts as a sink and sequester carbon. ICA members can take an important role in driving climate change actions.

The capacity building program was conceptualized and designed in consultation with GIZ, Thailand, to build the capacity of leaders and managers of cooperatives. The objectives of the program were to raise awareness, enhance capacity and build partnerships among member cooperatives, and focus on three specific targets of SDG 13:

- 1) Target 13.B - mechanisms to address Climate Action
- 2) Target 13.3 - improve education, raise awareness and build human and institutional capacity on climate change mitigation, adaptation, impact reduction and early warning.
- 3) Target 13.2 - integrate climate change measures into national policies, strategies and planning

The opening program was attended by Mr. Balasubramanian Iyer, Regional Director, ICA-AP, Mr. Poramate Intarachumnun, Chairman, CLT, Ms. Francesca Gilli, Attache/Programme Officer of the Cooperation Section, European Union Delegation in Thailand and Ms. Savitri Singh, Program Director, ICA-AP.





During a group activity at the training.

The sessions covered key themes such as ‘Change before Climate Change Us’ and ‘Triple Benefits of being More Efficient and Emitting Less’. At the end of the workshop, the 31 participants from eight countries across Asia and Africa had deepened their understanding on SDGs and its relevance for cooperatives. They were able to explore and analyse the impact of climate change on various sectors (agriculture, fisheries and consumer) and exchange good practices/lessons-learned on how to reduce or cope with climate change risks. The training provided them with:

- An understanding on the enabling environment and tools required to address climate change
- A cooperative mechanism to address climate action
- Methods to integrate climate action into the cooperative strategy/plan and
- Ways to monitor and evaluate the strategies/plans



The participants, dignitaries and speaker at the training program.

## Research Watch (October-November 2019)

### Legal Framework Analysis (LFA)

- 17 national reports have been completed including Bhutan, India, Indonesia, Japan, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kiribati, South Korea, Kyrgyzstan, Mongolia, Myanmar, Nepal, Palestine, Sri Lanka, Vanuatu, Vietnam and Lebanon.
- National reports of Jordan and Palestine have been uploaded for public viewing on the [#coops4dev](https://www.coops4dev.org/) website. More reports will be uploaded in December.
- The structure for the regional LFA report is currently being discussed with the CU and other regional offices.

## Mapping of cooperatives in South Asia and Pacific

The state of cooperatives in Nepal, Malaysia, Sri Lanka, Australia, Kiribati, and Vanuatu were studied and mapped through secondary research. The key parameters studied were contribution of cooperatives to the national economy, sectoral distribution of cooperatives, genesis and evolution of the cooperative movement, historical and current laws on cooperatives, and association with the international cooperative movement and ICA. The snapshots of seven countries are available on the ICA-AP [website](#).

## Mapping Research

- Mapping reports for [Iran](#) and [Philippines](#) have been uploaded on the #coops4dev website.
- Mapping survey for other countries in the Asia and Pacific region are underway.

## Study reports

The report on 'Autonomy and Independence of Cooperatives in India' and 'Cooperatives in Industrial and Service Sectors in the Asia and Pacific Region' have been released and available at the #coops4dev resources section: [https://coops4dev.coop/en/c4dev\\_resources/publications](https://coops4dev.coop/en/c4dev_resources/publications)

## Global Thematic Research on Youth

The country level reports for India, Indonesia, Iran, Korea and Philippines have been completed and shared with the CU for compilation of the global report.

## **UPCOMING EVENTS**

### December 2019

- ICA-AP Cooperative Research Conference, Newcastle, Australia, December 12-14
- Second ICA-AP Meeting on Development of Cooperatives in Pacific Islands, Newcastle, Australia, December 13

### January 2020

- Global Board meeting, Brussels, January 10 and 11

### February 2020

- Global Youth Forum, Kuching, Sarawak, Malaysia, February 3-7.
- 3<sup>rd</sup> ICA-MAFF Japan Training Course on 'Fostering Leaders for Management and Development of Agricultural Cooperatives in Asia 2019', Thailand and Japan, February 2- March 18.
- MBO Council Meeting, Sanya, China, February 18
- UNDESA Cooperatives Development Workshop for Pacific countries, Fiji February 25-27 (tbc)