

# ICA-AP NEWSLETTER

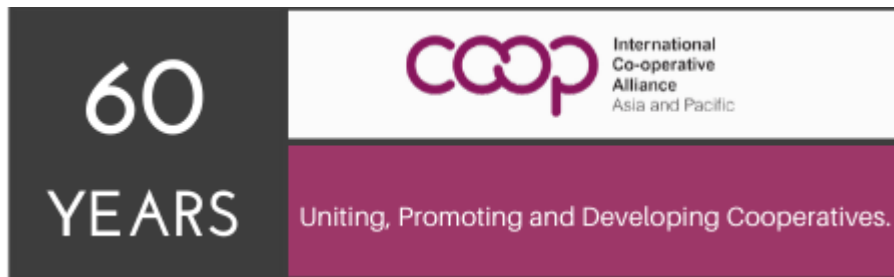
News from members, ICA-AP activities,  
ICA-EU Partnership update & more!

February 2020

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## Celebrating 60 years of ICA-AP



In 2020, we celebrate 60 years of ICA in the Asia-Pacific region. It has been an incredible journey, and the growth has been hand-in-hand with our many members in the region. To mark this landmark year, each month, we will highlight different areas and sectors of ICA-AP and its members' involvement over the past 60 years.

In this month's newsletter, we cover ICA-AP's inception in 1960; our first few members; and work in enhancing C-to-C: cooperation.

### **ICA comes to Asia Pacific**

ICA first came to being as the *Regional Office and the Education Centre for South-East Asia* in 1960. The Centre was a result of discussions at various ICA Congresses since 1948 on ways to engage national cooperative movements and bring them closer to the ICA. The aim was to address the socio-economic development challenges through cooperatives.

On November 14, 1960, the *ICA Regional Office and the Education Centre* was opened by the first Prime Minister of India, Shri Jawaharlal Nehru, on his birthday! In his inaugural address, Shri Nehru said, *"My outlook is to convulse India with the cooperative movement, or rather with cooperation: to make it, broadly speaking, the basic activity of India in every village as well as elsewhere; and finally, indeed to make the cooperative approach the common thinking of India...With that naturally comes processes of training, etc. We cannot just ask them to cooperate. Therefore, we have to train them in a very big way – educate them and give them some special training."* Dr Mauritz Bonow, President of the ICA, in his address added that, *"In doing so, we naturally would greatly welcome your help and assistance from your great experience in other countries, where this cooperative principle has gone far and is working efficiently in a big way. We would welcome that help and assistance."*

ICA-AP was the first regional office of the ICA, setting the tone for other regional offices in Africa, the Americas and Europe. In 1963, the Regional Office and the Education Centre were merged into one institution, the ICA ROEC; it was placed under the charge of the Regional Director in 1970. In view of the commendable work done by the ROEC, and the considerable demands made by cooperators from the Asia-Pacific region, the office expanded in 1963 from South-East Asia to become the ICA Regional Office for Asia. In 1990, it further expanded to become the ICA Regional Office for Asia-Pacific (ICA-AP). ICA-AP is currently headquartered in New Delhi, India.

### **Our first members**

In 1961, the first year of ICA in Asia-Pacific, we had 7 members from 6 countries. These were the All India Cooperative Union (now NCUI), Central Union of Agricultural Cooperatives of Japan (now JA-Zenchu), Cooperative Federation of Ceylon, Cooperative Union of Malaysia, Japanese Consumer Cooperatives Union, National Cooperative Council-Burma, and the West Pakistan Cooperative Union.

### **Cooperation among cooperatives (C2C)**

ICA-AP has carried out, and continues to engage in multiple development programmes for member organisations in the region, with the help and collaboration of national and international agencies.

One of the longest standing programmes has been the ICA collaboration with the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries (MAFF), Government of Japan, to implement its training project on *Strengthening management of agricultural cooperatives in Asia*. The project was initiated in 1986, and is currently in its third decade of implementation. Under this project, training courses on enhancing farmers' income and poverty reduction through cooperatives, farm guidance methods, joint collection, fostering core leaders of agricultural cooperatives, and other courses have been implemented. In 2017, the project was expanded to include capacity building programmes for Africa, in addition to Asia.

The interest in developing trade among cooperatives in the Asia Pacific region goes back to the 1960s. A trade survey was conducted during 1965-66 to understand needs and followed-up with conferences (1968 and 1970, Tokyo), trade fairs (1969, Iran), and bilateral agreements (Japan and India on sugar, Sri Lanka and India in fisheries). In 1974, on the recommendations of the Select Committee (1972) on Agriculture and Trade of ICA-AP, an International Co-operative Trading Organization (ICTO) was established in Singapore (with investments from Australia, Indonesia, Iran, Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore, Sri Lanka and Thailand) to encourage trade and render facilities for sale and purchase of produce. However, the ICTO had to wind up operations 1976 due to lack of member support.

The ILO/SIDA project in 1978 was developed to promote trade between cooperatives within Asia and outside. The project was transferred to ICA-AP in 1983 and as part of this, there were trade directories developed, trade fairs organized, training and development programs carried out, the Singapore Business Office established and agreements signed. In 2012, the Regional Board approved the move of Business Office from Singapore to Malaysia.

The Malaysia Business Office (MBO) was set up in 2013 and staffed with seconded staff from All China Federation of Supply and Marketing Cooperatives (ACFSMC), Japanese Consumer Cooperative Union, and National Agriculture Cooperative Federation; with coordination and administrative support from Angkasa. The MBO was set up to increase business interactions and exchanges between/among consumer co-operatives and insurance and banking co-operatives; to promote cooperative trade in the areas of fair trade and B-to-B trade platform; to promote technical exchanges and assistances in IT technology; to transfer technical and managerial know-how in the areas of resource recycling and renewable energy; and to promote cultural exchanges of youth cooperators in the region.

## ICA-AP UPDATES

### ICA President Ariel Guarco visits Asia



In July 2019, Mr. Ariel Guarco, President of the International Cooperative Alliance (ICA) visited the Asia-Pacific region and interact with ICA members and government officials in Thailand, Singapore, Indonesia, China, Korea and Japan. In line with ICA's 2030 strategy, President Guarco's message to members across the Asia-Pacific region during his travels was: *"We have to represent and build relations with international organisations, at the same time, we need to identify the common issues across countries and see how we can address these."* More on his visit can be found at: [Travels with ICA President 2.0](#)

President Guarco continued these engagements by visiting ICA members and key stakeholders in Malaysia and the Philippines in February 2020. The travel to Malaysia was kick-started by opening the [Global Youth Forum: Cooperative Entrepreneurship 2020](#) (#GYF20) in Kuching, Sarawak, Malaysia. The Forum brought together over 150 young entrepreneurs and professionals from more than 50 countries from around the world, to improve their skills and knowledge and motivate them to enhance youth cooperative entrepreneurship. President Guarco in his address said, "Young people are not the future of the movement. They must be the present, because the urgent problems of today mean the future of our movement and our civilization is at stake." President Dato Fattah from Angkasa; Datuk Patinggi Abang Johari, Chief Minister Sarawak; and Datuk Abdul Karim,

Minister for Youth and Sports, Sarawak, recognised the importance of building networks, the cooperative business model, and the need to promote cooperatives among the youth as a resilient and inclusive model. The resounding message to the youth of GYF20 was “Go for cooperatives!”



President Guarco and Mr. Iyer with Angkasa President, Sarawak Youth and Sports Minister and other officials at the Opening Ceremony of GYF20 in Kuching, Sarawak, Malaysia

After the Opening of GYF20 in Kuching, Mr. Guarco went on to engage with ICA members and stakeholders in Malaysia, including Angkasa, Cooperative Institute of Malaysia, National Land Finance Coop Society Limited, Cooperative Commission of Malaysia, Ministry of Development of Entrepreneurs and Cooperatives and others. The discussions resonated with the principle of *cooperation among cooperatives*. Mr. Guarco succinctly said, *“the cooperative movement can form a better and peaceful global environment through close cooperation of cooperative members around the world”*. The Malaysian cooperative movement has come a long way (see country snapshot) and is expected to increase its contribution to the economy from 50 billion to \$100 billion.



Next on Mr. Guarco's travel was the Philippines. Mr. Guarco was given a public welcome at the Philippines Senate with majority leader Senator Juan Miguel Zubiri. Mr. Guarco's meeting with the Philippines Cooperative Center, Cooperative Development Authority, NATCCO, MASS-SPEC, VICTO, Metro South Cooperative Bank, AIMCoop, 1CISP, FPSDC, ULSCC, and other established federations in the Philippines, confirmed the solidarity of Philippine cooperatives with the three million cooperatives worldwide. As stated by the PCC in the [Manila Times](#), *"Philippine coops are a growing force in the Philippine economy and will definitely have more positive impact on the socio-economic and socio-political landscape"*.

Mr. Guarco's visit to the Philippines is viewed to boost the recognition of the Philippines cooperative movement (see: [Philippine country snapshot](#)). During his engagement with Key ICA members and stakeholders in the Philippines, Mr. Guarco reiterated the people-centred nature of cooperative businesses, *"We are a movement that puts persons in the centre of development, and there is no substitute to meeting people face-to-face...we are a people-centred economy, and we are speaking about ourselves. Coops are the economy in the hands of the people."* Keeping in line with the ICA 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the [Philippine cooperative movement](#) led by ICA members in the country has set its agenda to create the 'ideal frame of mind towards the new vision for 2030'.

## World Cooperative Congress and Regional Assembly



The count down to the 2020 World Cooperative Congress (WCC) officially began with a launch event in Seoul on February 11 in the presence of ICA Task Force members, ICA member cooperatives in Korea, officials from national and local governments and several civil society organizations.

The 33<sup>rd</sup> WCC will be held from December 11 to 17 in Seoul around the theme 'Deepening our Cooperative Identity.' The Congress will be an opportunity to celebrate ICA's 125<sup>th</sup> Anniversary and the 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the adoption of the Statement of Cooperative Identity. The previous two Congresses celebrated the approval of the Statement on the Cooperative Identity (31st Congress, 1995, Manchester) and the UN International Year of Cooperatives (32nd Congress, 2012, Manchester). This is the second time the Cooperative Congress is being held in Asia.

Speaking at the launch event, Martin Lowery, the Chair of the Congress Task Force stressed the importance of cooperative values and how they form the "essence of the cooperative difference." He shared the three main thematic pillars of the Congress: Deepening our Cooperative Identity; Innovation and Entrepreneurship; and Cooperatives' Global Responsibility in the context of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Prior to the Congress, there will be the International Cooperative Research Conference (10-12 December) and an International Cooperative Law Forum (12-13 December) to discuss themes related to the Congress. The Congress will officially start with an opening on December 13 and end with the General Assembly on December 16.

The Asia-Pacific region will hold the 14<sup>th</sup> Regional Assembly, Regional Board Meeting and Committee meetings during the Congress. The ICA regional committee meetings and Regional Board meeting will be held on October 12 and the Regional Assembly on October 13. During the Assembly, elections will be held to elect the new Board for the period 2020 to 2024.

We request members to block the dates, visit [www.ica.coop](http://www.ica.coop) and watch this space for more information.

### ICA-MAFF training update



The ICA-Japan Training Course on Fostering and Improving Management of Agricultural Cooperatives (ICA-MAFF training) kicked off in Bangkok with the inaugural ceremony on 3<sup>rd</sup> February. The training course with six participants from Bhutan, Cambodia, Kyrgyzstan, Lao PDR, Nepal and Sri Lanka. program was inaugurated by Pol. Lt. Gen. Viroj Satayasansakul, Vice Chairman of the Cooperative League of Thailand (CLT); in the presence of Mr. Nao Muramatsu, First Secretary in the Embassy of Japan in Thailand; Mr. Wiroj Pupaiboon, Director of Cooperative Technology Transfer and Development, CPD; Mr. Hirofumi Kobayashi, Executive Director, IDACA; and Mr. A.K. Taneja of ICA-AP.

Stay tuned for more updates on the ICA-MAFF training program!



## International Cooperative Banking Association



The International Cooperative Banking Association (ICBA) was reactivated during the ICA Global Conference in October 2019 in Kigali, Rwanda. The ICBA is the representative of cooperative financial institutions and cooperative banks, affiliated, directly or indirectly, to the ICA. As a global organization for cooperative banks, ICBA works to facilitate the promotion at the international and regional levels of the distinctive cooperative values of cooperative banks and of the advantages of using them over other banks; facilitate and encourage the exchange of information amongst members on key cooperative banking issues and foster inter-cooperation in the finding of solutions; support regional committees and their members, individually or collectively with specific challenges; and encourage inter-cooperation with other types of cooperatives and various bodies of the ICA. More information can be found at: <http://icba.coop/index.php>

The Board of the ICBA was reconstituted in Kigali and Mr. Bhima Subhramanyam from the National Federation of State Cooperative Banks (NAFSCOB), India was unanimously elected as the Chairperson. The other board members are Mr. K. Sivadasan Nair, Vice-President, ICA-AP Committee on Credit and Banking; Ms. Isabelle FERRAND, Chief Financial Officer of Credit Mutuel's central body; Mr. George Magutu Mwangi, Kenya Union of Savings & Credit Co-operatives Ltd.; Mr. Mieczyslaw Grodzki, National Co-operative Council; Mr. Kabir Ayinde-Tukur, Cooperative Mortgage Bank Ltd.; Mr. Ravinder Rao Konduru, NAFSCOB; and Mr. Ahmed Mohiuddin, Bangladesh Samabaya Bank Limited.

The revival/ reactivation strategies of the ICBA include formulating the 2020 workplan, disseminating the ICBA objectives, speeding up membership drive, meetings and coordination with

national and global agencies. ICBA aims to ensure that it plays a key role in ensuring viable, dynamic, democratic, autonomous, and flexible regulatory framework for cooperative banking institutions.

We wish the new Chairperson and board members the very best in their plans to revive and rejuvenate ICBA!

### Global Days of Listening: What can we do about environmental pollution?



*Photo taken from Global Days of Listening website*

The Global Days of Listening (GDoL) is a forum that has been facilitating the exchange of knowledge and experience on specific themes, every month for the past 10 years. It provides a forum for active listening to people around the world, “collaborating around each other’s paths of action toward a peaceful world”. The theme for the session held on 22<sup>nd</sup> February was focused on climate action, raising a very pertinent and particular concern: What can we do about pollution of the air, water, food, soil and environment?

ICA-AP was invited to be a part of this month’s Global Days of Listening (GDoL) session, to share the Asia-Pacific cooperative experience and endeavour in addressing environmental and social concerns. Ahsan Ali Thakur, representative with the Karachi Cooperative Housing Society Union Ltd. (Pakistan) and Chairperson of the ICA-AP Committee on Youth Cooperation (ICYC); and Salonie Hiriyyur Muralidhara from SEWA Federation (India) joined the Afghan Peace Volunteers in this GDoL session.

Ahsan shared his experience spearheading the *Go Green campaign under ICYC*, from 2017. The campaign works with cooperatives and communities in the Asia-Pacific, and has partnered with the

African Youth Network to encourage and facilitate tree planting drives. The campaign hopes to expand its scope in 2020 by involving youth from the Americas as well.

Salonie shared SEWA Federation's work with women-owned collective enterprises across agriculture, handicrafts, services, finance and vending. Of particular significance is SEWA's work in the agriculture sector in India. They have been promoting organic farming through their member cooperatives, facilitating trainings and demonstrations in organic farming techniques, and also promoting animal husbandry to restore soil fertility.

Other topics covered by speakers from around the world on GDoL included campaign strategies, post-fire land regeneration, methods of pollution remediation permaculture and organic farming, and farming following an earthquake. Follow the conversation [here](#).

### Meet Soobyeong Chae from ICA-APs Malaysian Business Office (MBO)

Soobyeong recently joined the MBO from the National Cooperative Federation (NACF), Korea. Follow our short interview to get to know him better!



Q1. Hi Chae! Welcome on board! Before we start, can you tell us about your background?

I majored in Business Administration and Literature at Yonsei University. When I was a high school student, I thought I would become a literature teacher; however, as chance would it, I decided to study business administration at the university. After several attempts to become a radio programme producer, I eventually joined the NACF. I don't know if there are any similarities between business administration, literature, radio programs, and agriculture, but I do hope they will cooperate with each other to help with cooperative matters (Of course I said in a job interview that they were relevant!).

I have been working with the NACF for about 10 years, and spent the first two years working on deposits and loans at a bank branch. Since then, I've worked in departments responsible for employee education and international cooperation until I came to the MBO. Before working for the NACF, I managed the sales of women's clothing and shoes for six months at the Lotte Department Store branch in Seoul.

Q2. So what inspired you to work with the NACF and in agriculture?

In Korea, the NACF and its member co-operatives are known together as NongHyup, which means 'agricultural co-operative' in Korean. Most Koreans know NongHyup because it has stores and bank branches across the country, more than any other competitor. Ordinary people vaguely think that NongHyup works for farmers, but they don't know exactly what it does. My understanding of NongHyup was at the same level. I had a romantic fantasy about agriculture, the first industry in the world, as I grew up in cities and never had an education in agriculture.

Nevertheless, I knew that NongHyup was an organization that helped socially disadvantaged farmers. One of the biggest goals of getting a job would be making money for a living, but it would be better if what I do could be of service to society. I would say that I ended up working for the NACF because working for agriculture and cooperatives satisfies both.

Q3. What is your role going to be at the MBO and how does working with ICA align with what you have done and want to do?

My primary role is to ensure that the ongoing dairy and sustainable tourism projects that the NACF has undertaken in Malaysia will be carried out in the next phase. If the two projects are successful, I could expand the scope of these projects to other countries in Asia.

I want to strengthen the role of the MBO in the financial sector as well. Currently, the NACF's financial group is very interested in Asian cooperatives. It established a joint venture with China Co-op Group a few years ago, and recently invested in a financial affiliate of the Indian Farmers Fertilizer Cooperative. Asian cooperatives can leverage Korea's experience in agricultural finance and capital, and the NACF can pave the way for entry into the Asian region, which will help both sides. In order to achieve the above goals, understanding of the cooperatives in the Asian region should be a priority. While at the MBO, I would like to meet as many Asian co-operators as possible.

## Announcements

ICA-AP Cooperative Research Conference: Call for papers



The ICA-AP Committee on Cooperative Research invites paper proposals for the 15<sup>th</sup> ICA-AP Cooperative Research Conference, which will be held from November 25-27, 2020 in Trivandrum, India. The conference is organized under the auspices of the ICA-AP Committee on Cooperative Research, with support from the Government of Kerala and the ICA-EU Partnership on Cooperatives in Development. The conference theme this year is “Confronting climate change through cooperative enterprise”.

### **Best paper award for young researchers**

The organisers have also announced a *Best Paper Award* for young researchers (researchers not over 35 years). Two of the best papers presented at the conference will receive the award, amounting to US\$ 500 and US\$ 300 respectively.

More details about the call for papers can be found here: <http://icaap.coop/sites/icaap.coop/files/CfP%20Trivandrum%20Conference.pdf>

All abstracts of the papers should reach Mr. Mohit Dave, Secretary, ICA-AP Committee on Cooperative Research at [research@icaap.coop](mailto:research@icaap.coop) on or before **1<sup>st</sup> July, 2020**.



*The articles related to the ICA-EU Partnership in this newsletter have been co-funded by the European Union. The contents of these articles are the sole responsibility of the International Cooperative Alliance Asia-Pacific and can in no way be taken to reflect the views of the European Union.*

GYF20



The Global Youth Forum Cooperative Entrepreneurship 2020 (GYF20) was a first-of-its kind week long immersive training for youth entrepreneurs (ages 18-35) and cooperators from around the world. GYF20 took place at the Majestic Riverside Hotel in Kuching, Sarawak, Malaysia from 3<sup>rd</sup>-7<sup>th</sup> February 2020 with over 150 youth participants from 50 countries and 20 trainers, professionals and experts from around the world.

The training program was spread over 5 days and had a combination of plenaries, interactive sessions, meeting and networking sessions, an action zone for interaction, brainstorming and innovation, and of course, leisure activities! Each day witnessed almost 4 blocks of 15-20 parallel sessions, cutting across topics ranging from business model generation, cooperative entrepreneurship, strategy, cooperative governance, designing media campaigns and visibility, the sustainable development goals, network mapping, cooperative legal frameworks, cooperative research, project management, and many more.

From the Asia-Pacific region, we had participants and trainers from Malaysia, Singapore, Philippines, Indonesia, Kyrgyzstan, Mongolia, Pakistan, Palestine, Iran, India, Sri Lanka, Japan and Nepal. The picture below is a good reflection of the phenomenal energy and positive exchange experienced at GYF20.





This first edition of the Global Youth Forum 2020 was a success in achieving its objective of providing quality training in cooperative entrepreneurship to youth and cooperators from around the world. With the aim of creating a global network of youth in entrepreneurship and cooperation, GYF20 was

a forward-looking event that has taken the first concrete step in creating a strong cooperative future that takes forward the cooperative principles. The main outcome of the event was the passing of the GYF20 Youth Resolution. The GYF Youth Resolution for policy advocacy was created through inclusive and democratic discussion, and is reflective of the social and economic agenda that is foremost on the minds of our global youth today.

Reflections from AP participants at GYF20

[Coops4dev website: A world of cooperative development to discover](#)



The ICA-EU partnership on international cooperative development (#coops4dev ) celebrates its fourth anniversary with a brand-new website: <https://coops4dev.coop/en> 

Following **four intense years** of dedicated work to bring the cooperative model to the forefront of international development policies, the ICA-EU partnership coops4dev team across the four ICA regional offices will share their regional and global outcomes on the coops4dev website. The site will feature the mapping of cooperatives, status of legal frameworks, reports and publications, and Series of documentary films. These activities constitute the **main achievements of coops4dev** since the ICA-EU Partnership kicked off in March 2016. All in all, the number and pace of activities is not only proof of a frenetic agenda, but also an innovative plan that aims to strengthen the role of cooperatives as a key development actor.

### **Cooperative Mapping and Legal Framework Analysis**

The coops4dev website embeds an interactive map that allows the user to consult the latest results of two exciting long-term research projects in the Asia-Pacific: a mapping of cooperative actors and a legal framework analysis.

Having entered the era of data and statistics, coops4dev has launched an ambitious initiative to **map a variety of cooperative actors in the AP region and around the globe within the ICA membership**, regardless of their size, turnover or sector. This project intends to offer an accurate picture of the cooperative context at national and regional levels, with the objective of better identifying the strengths and challenges of the cooperative movement and identify potential areas of action, such as partnerships, opportunities and advocacy. From Asia-Pacific, the mapping is currently underway for Iran and the Philippines.

The **legal framework analysis (LFA)** provides in depth insights into cooperative law. It evaluates the national cooperative legislation, by analysing main characteristics and contents, with particular regard to regulations regarding the identity of cooperatives and its distinction from other types of enterprise. Given the fact that the national legal landscape is crucial to an enabling environment for cooperatives, this project will provide valuable input to advance advocacy initiatives on the promotion of regulations that can help cooperatives to develop and thrive. The website showcases LFAs for Japan, Jordan, Korea, Nepal, Palestine and Vietnam.

### **More than a presentation card, more than a tool**

This website contains, therefore, **useful and interesting insights** not only for the cooperative movement, but also to any person concerned with international development, the Agenda 2030, entrepreneurship, social economy, cooperative law or those eager to plunge into a wealth of **inspiring examples of cooperatives that have brought sound benefits to their communities** through a people-centred and democratic approach.

### **Country snapshots**

12 country snapshots are now available on the [ICA-AP website](#) for public view. These include snapshots for Australia, China, Indonesia, Japan, Korea, Malaysia, Nepal, Philippines, Singapore, Sri Lanka, Thailand and Vietnam.

Come and visit us to discover the world of cooperative development, and discover cooperatives offering solutions to build a fairer and more sustainable economy.

### **ICA-AP: IRMA – member partnership – Internship**

By Dr. Manvir Singh

Dr. Manvir Singh, a Veterinarian and working as Senior Associate (Productivity Enhancement Services) at NDDDB Dairy Services, India, is currently pursuing the Post Graduate Diploma in Rural Management (Executive) at Institute of Rural Management (IRMA), Anand. He had the opportunity to work at the Malaysian National Cooperative Movement (ANGKASA) under the Project work Module (Internship) facilitated by ICA-AP and IRMA. He shares his experience with ANGKASA below: Prior to working at ANGKASA, I was unfamiliar with the dairy production scenario in Malaysia and how cooperatives are facilitating dairying in this part of the globe. Interning at ANGKASA was a valuable learning experience. My knowledge about the many roles of the cooperative movement broadened but more importantly, I learnt a great deal about many of its activities for welfare of its members.





My project involved “Examining Factors of Production in Scaling-up Dairy Production”. The goal of this project was to examine the various factors of dairy production in scaling up dairy production to achieve self-sufficiency in milk production and contribute to economic development of Malaysia. Based on findings, recommendations were shared with top Management of ANGKASA. This project gave me an opportunity to research and communicate with various stakeholders in dairying in Malaysia while analysing my findings. I was extended full support with the project by ANGKASA, which enabled me to take initiative while also being able to ask for help as required to complete tasks.



Overall, I believe my internship at ANGKASA was a worthwhile experience. It gave me an opportunity to network and learn more about dairying in different country and context. Most importantly, I learned the importance of cooperative movement in Malaysia in community development and how ANGKASA affects positive change in the lives of cooperatives members. My experience was amazing and I enjoyed the opportunity to learn from the friendly and supportive staff of ANGKASA, especially to mention Ms. Farihah, my reporting officer.

Cooperation among cooperatives will provide an opportunity to learn from each other and members can be benefitted from other's competency in the specific area, as dairy cooperative movement in India can be an example of bringing self-sufficiency in milk production and economic development of smallholder farmers through cooperative movement.

During my internship, I was in Kelana Jaya, a bustling suburb of Petaling Jaya city of Selangor state. I made routine to visits to the picturesque Taman Bandaran or Kelana Jaya Lake Park for evening walks, when not out for fieldwork. No other county is "Truly Asia" as Malaysia because there is only one place where all the colours, flavours, sounds and sights of Asia come together. No other country has Asia's three major races, Malay, Chinese, Indian, plus various other ethnic groups in large numbers. Nowhere is there such exciting diversity of cultures, festivals, traditions and customs, offering myriad experiences. In addition, the rich heritage of multi ethnic culture created an amazing variety of food to choose from, with traditional famous Malaysian food like Nasi Lemak or Chinese, Thai, Vietnamese, Indonesian, Indian or continental cuisines.

Thank you to everyone for an enjoyable learning opportunity!

## ICA-AP Member Activities

### The joint seminar on the Role of Women in Cooperative Economy

The joint seminar on the **Role of Women in Cooperative Economy** sought to empower and explain the economic role of women in society and share successful experiences. The seminar was held at the Iran Chamber of Cooperatives (ICC), with the presence of the President of ICC, the Ambassador of South Africa in Iran, UN resident coordinator in Iran, Director of International Affairs of Vice President for Women and Family Affairs and a large number of women cooperators from Iran and South Africa. The seminar took place on February 16, 2020.



Bahman Abdollahi, the president of Iran Chamber of Cooperatives, emphasized that, *“In the international cooperative movement, women have a special place...Currently, in Iran, of the 93,500 active cooperatives, 11% of them (10,000 cooperatives) are dedicated to women, and more than 32% of the country’s active cooperatives are women’s cooperatives.”* Overall, Iranian women’s cooperatives and unions are active in 96 fields of manufacturing, service and distribution issues that service, industry and mining, agriculture and handmade carpets cooperatives. With 93%



contribution, they are the largest contributors to the cooperative economy.

He also referred to the economic and social capacities of South Africa to develop cooperation between two countries, focusing on women’s empowerment. *“Given the importance of training and its capacity in the cooperative sector, it is important for Iranian women to take advantage of this opportunity to update their skills.”*

H.E. Mr. Khumalo, the South African Ambassador to Iran highlighted the role of women in South African development and their role in the country's economy and the history of National Women's Day in South Africa. He also mentioned the role of women in Iranian-Islamic culture and celebrated Women's Day in Iran.

Ugochi Daniels, UN Resident Coordinator in Iran emphasized the importance of women from the UN perspective and pointed to the importance of Iran as one of the founders of the United Nations. Ms. Daniels noted the importance of the international cooperative movement in empowering women. "Since this event is co-organized by the Iran Chamber of Cooperatives, I would like to highlight that cooperatives play a big role in the promotion of gender equality and women empowerment. At a time when income inequality is rising around the world, it is good to be reminded that solutions to inequality do exist. The cooperative model is foremost among these solutions, since it contains aspects of sustainable development at its core and is based on ethical values and principles. Cooperatives' open membership model affords access to wealth creation and poverty elimination. This results from the co-operative principle of members' economic participation: 'Members contribute equitably to, and democratically control, the capital of their cooperative.' Because cooperatives are people-centred, not capital-centred, they do not perpetuate, nor accelerate capital concentration and they distribute wealth in a fairer way", she said.



Tahmineh Daniali, Consultant of ICC on Women Affairs emphasized the importance of women's economic participation in the development of societies: "One of the strategies used to empower women is to emphasize that women's participation is not only about benefiting from the benefits and outcomes of development programs, but rather participating actively in the implementation of economic development plans. This partnership is only possible through the presence of women in cooperatives".

**Leila Falahati**, Director of International Affairs of Vice President of I.R. Iran for Women Affairs cited statistics on the status of women in the world, "According to statistics, the world has become more developed but not equal, and the gap between countries has deepened, and yet sustainable development should be considered as a more serious concept". She also pointed to Iran's position on gender equality in the world and emphasized that more attention should be paid to women in country's development plans.

The rest of the event was dedicated to women entrepreneurs in the Iran's cooperative sector. Khatereh Ostadrezai, Head of Women Commission of ICC and Goharshad Salehian, Effat Raeisi, Tahereh Shekarchi, Anahita Eslahpazir as the Iranian cooperator and entrepreneur presented their views and experiences in the field of entrepreneurship in cooperative movement.



A statement of cooperation between Iranian and South African co-operators and entrepreneurs was issued at the joint seminar. Major outcomes of the seminar are highlighted below:

Outcome of the joint seminar on the **Role of Women in Cooperative Economy** are as follows:

1. Finding 3 main common fields of business for women in both countries;
2. Establishment a Joint Economic and Cultural Committee for Women;
3. Institutionalization of the seminar and its purposeful and annual organization;
4. Exchange of creative students in the field of entrepreneurship;
5. Knowledge and skill transfer programs through physical or virtual B2B and B2C meetings;
6. Planning to create scholarship and study opportunities for young entrepreneurial women;
7. Holding workshops to empower women in business, handicrafts and tourism with the responsibility of the Women Commission of ICC;
8. Exchange of business delegations from business women from / to Iran and South Africa;
9. Holding specialized exhibitions on specific fields in both countries;

The seminar can be viewed here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mhg5n83aB-k&feature=youtu.be>

### Vietnam Cooperative Alliance (VCA) 2019 Activities Report

In 2019, the economy of Vietnam continued to develop at a growth rate of 7.02%, with a stable macro economy and improved business environment. The annual average consumer price index (CPI) controlled at the lowest rate of (2.79%), expanding the scale of the economy achieving 262 billion USD. The average income per capita was 2,800 USD, with export valued at 517 billion USD and over exported value was 10 billion USD. The collective economy and the cooperatives also received these benefits, and contributed to socio-economic development, particularly in the rural and agricultural sector. Highlights of the Vietnam Cooperative Alliance (VCA) 2019 activities are as below:

- ❖ The collective economy and the cooperatives of Vietnam continue to develop and contribute to the socio-economic development, creating jobs, increasing the income, improving living conditions, securing social security and sustainable poverty reduction. There are 2,640 newly established cooperatives, 16 federations of cooperatives and 9,500 pre-cooperatives,

achieving 6% and 136% of the plan 2019. As of January 2020, the total number of cooperatives and pre-cooperatives is 24,618, 85 federations of cooperatives and 110,000 pre-cooperatives. Total members are over 7 million people and attracting over 1 million new members and 3.4 million members of the pre-cooperatives.

- ❖ There are 1,580 production and business cooperatives in line with the chained production values in the local and overseas markets and they apply the high technology, safety and health application criteria, signing long term contracts with the companies.
- ❖ VCA organized the national conference on summing up the non-agricultural cooperatives, co-hosted with the Ministry of Planning and Investment to organize the 1st Cooperative Economic Forum. The National Conference sum's-up the 15 year implementation of the 5<sup>th</sup> Central Resolution, session IX on continuing innovation, development and improving the economic effectiveness of the collective economy. It proposed important solutions to develop the cooperatives in the period of 2020 -2025 and the vision of 2030.
- ❖ VCA, in coordination with ICA-AP and the Institute for Organic Agricultural Economic of Vietnam organised the ICA-AP Cooperative Registrars' Forum on "Creating Enabling Legal Framework and Policies to Promote Sustainable Development of Co-operatives in the 21st Century". It was highly appreciated by the Leaders of the Government of Vietnam and 113 international delegates from 22 countries.
- ❖ VCA warmly welcomed the working visit of ICA President, Mr. Ariel Guarco at VCA's head office and to two agricultural cooperatives in Gia Lam, Ha Noi.

## REGIONAL EXCELLENCE AWARD FOR THE BEST WOMEN'S COOPERATIVE'S IN SOUTH INDIA

Inaugurated by the Hon'ble Governor of Telangana, Dr. (Smt.) TAMILISAI SUNDARARAJAN



The Regional Excellence Award for Best Women's Cooperatives was inaugurated by the Hon'ble Governor of Telangana with a crowd of 3000 women entrepreneurs from Tamil Nadu, Karnataka,

Andhra, Telangana at ICNW H.Q. in Chennai. The Adiramapattinam cooperative (Tanjore) of the WWF – ICNW with the fisher women members of the Indian Cooperative Network for Women won the Tamil Nadu award for regional excellence.

Four awards were given including the Best Cooperative award to best cooperative to Chennai (North and South, Chennai). She mentioned all State awards were based on stories such as in Karnataka the Bellary cooperative branch won the award for its early rehabilitation of Devadasis, while the Telangana branch was awarded for their maximum loans disbursed. The Andhra branch was awarded for their focus on stopping the exploitation of lace workers from wholesales WWF, providing the capital/ marketing for self-employment. The function was held on the occasion of the 88th Birth Anniversary of Legendary Social Worker & Cooperator Padma Shri. Dr. Jaya Arunachalam on 8th February 2020 at Chennai WWF, H.Q. auditorium. President, WWF-ICNW and the Chairperson of the ICA-AP Women's Committee (first Women Global Board member, International Raiffeison Union, Germany), Dr. Nandini Azad welcomed the gathering by highlighted the role of poor women co-operators in the informal sector; WWF sister's concern ICNW enhances the social/financial independence of poor women, provides low interest loans encouraging women's entrepreneurship and growth.

Shri. N. Ravi, Chairman, Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan (Publisher of The Hindu) mentioned that the WWF-ICNW is based on two pillars, Trust and self-confidence of women in the family. He congratulated the awardees for their dynamism, leadership and high level efficiency. Hon'ble Governor of Telangana, Dr. (Smt.) Tamilsai Soundararajan congratulated the awardees and advised the hard-working poor women to look after themselves and focus on their health issues.

## Member updates



### **Mr. Min Raj Kadel, Chairperson of National Cooperative Federation (NCFN), Nepal**

Mr. Kadel, from Kathmandu, has been involved with cooperatives for over six decades. He has served as the Senior Vice Chairperson on the NCF Board, the Chairperson of Nepal Federation of Savings & Credit Cooperative Union, the Second President and the First Vice President of Association of Asian Confederation of Credit Unions. Mr. Kadel is also the founding Chairperson of the Jana Kalyan Savings & Credit Cooperative Society.



### **Mr. Seong-hee Lee, 24<sup>th</sup> Chairman of National Agriculture Cooperative Federation (NACF), Korea**

Mr. Lee has been a lifelong co-operator, beginning his career 45 years ago at Naksang Agricultural Cooperative, an NACF member. He has been elected President of Naksang thrice and has served on the NACF

Board and as Chairman of the Audit Committee. Mr. Lee has stressed on the need to come together and expand joint activities among cooperatives to improve the socio-economic status of co-operators in Asia-Pacific.



**Mr. Sarath Weerasiri, Chairman of National Cooperative Council of Sri Lanka (NCCSL), Sri Lanka**

Mr. Sarath is also Hon. Chairman of the Kuliypitiya District Cooperative Council and Bingiriya Multi-Purpose Cooperative Society, Director of Sri Lanka Consumer Cooperative Federation, and one of the Young Cooperative Leaders in Sri Lanka. He has extensive experience in national and international level trainings on cooperative development, business management, good governance and rural development.

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## UPCOMING EVENTS

1. UNDESA Cooperatives Development Workshop for Pacific countries, Fiji, March 3 – 5
2. ICA Global Board meeting, Finland, March 13-15
3. Policy Forum Development (PFD) Meeting, Belgium, March 23-26
4. Capacity Building of Cooperatives in Kyrgyzstan: Training of cooperative management, India, April 26 – May 2
5. Regional Board Meeting, Philippines, May 17



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