

ICA-AP NEWSLETTER

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

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Celebrating 60 years of ICA-AP



In 2020, we mark 60 years of ICA in the Asia-Pacific region. Our growth has been hand-in-hand with our members in the region. Over the years, ICA-AP has collaborated with members over a number of key issues - enhancing gender equality and women's participation, youth participation, training and knowledge building, legal and policy advocacy, and business and trade enhancement. This month, we highlight the work done by ICA-AP and our members in developing human resources and highlighting key activities during the first two decades (1960-80).

ICA Asia-Pacific was first set up as the ICA Regional Office & Education Centre (ICA ROEC) in New Delhi in 1960. India's first Prime Minister Shri Jawaharlal Nehru, in his inaugural address at the Regional Seminar on 'Co-operative Leadership in South-East Asia' held at New Delhi said, *"The whole future of India really depends on the success of this approach of ours to these vast numbers, hundreds of millions of people. 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. It is a terrific job."* Since then the ICA-AP regional office has been active in capacity building and human resource development programmes to strengthen cooperatives across the region. Over the years, ICA-AP has developed educational programmes for leaders of cooperatives, senior trainers, and educators engaged in member education programmes. It has done this through technical meetings; expert consultations; research, studies and training programmes for trainers, managers and government officials; publications of books and periodicals; running a library and providing documentation services; and through in-house development programmes. ICA-AP has drawn on resource people and experts from international organisations and development partners such as the ILO and FAO, and collaborated with many members in the region to facilitate human resources development programmes. The Library which the ICA-AP used to run was recognized as a research centre by the universities and research institutions in India and a number of scholars made use of it for their doctoral programmes and research papers. The book, [50 Years of International Co-operative Alliance in Asia-Pacific \[1960-2010\] Serving Co-operatives](#), lists some of the major publication released over the years.

The Human Resource Development activities aimed to develop appropriate policies and programmes to protect and promote the interests of members. These included:

- ❖ The Field Education Development Programme (FED) using the *Cooperative Education Material Advisory Service* approach. A full-scale library of teaching and training material, including

training packages was developed for the use of member organisations and national cooperative training institutions;

- ❖ ILO/ MATCOM (Methods and Techniques of Cooperative Management) training packages on various subjects;
- ❖ ICA Fellowship Programme (1963) for persons with a good track record of cooperative work, to follow a particular course of study in cooperative activity, enabling them to contribute to the follow-up of cooperative activities initiated in the region;
- ❖ Teachers' Exchange Programme in 1968 for national cooperative training institutions in the region;
- ❖ ICA/ SCC (Swedish Cooperative Centre) Seminars on cooperative leadership and management;
- ❖ Specialised ICA/ILO training courses on Training Methodology and Techniques for Cooperative Staff in Asia. The first part of the programme was conducted in India in collaboration with the National Cooperatives Union of India's (NCUI) Vaikunth Mehta National Institute of Cooperative Management (VAMNICOM), and the second part was at the ILO Turin Centre in Italy;
- ❖ Developing horizontal programmes of cooperatives with the assistance of the UNDP-TCDC (Technical Cooperation among Developing Countries), under which needs and capacities of the movement were identified and documented;
- ❖ Carrying out the work of development and exchange of experiences under the Cooperative Development Decade (1971-1980). The Government of India had offered ICA 500 scholarships for co-operators from the region to be trained in India;
- ❖ Establishing high-level and active contacts with governments through Cooperative Ministers' Conferences, Top-level leaders' meetings, regional consultations, and cooperative fora;
- ❖ ICA/Japan Agricultural Co-operative Management Programme initiated with the funding support made available by the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries [MAFF], Government of Japan and in collaboration with the JA-Zenchu supported Institute for the Development of Agricultural Cooperation in Asia (IDACA). Started in 1986, the training program continues to this day and has helped strengthen management capacities of agriculture cooperatives, develop capacity of rural women to run cooperatives and aided in value chain development and agriculture marketing.
- ❖ In 2016, the ICA and the European Union signed a Framework Partnership Agreement to implement a multi-year and multi-country development programme aimed at benefitting and advancing cooperatives worldwide. The Partnership, "Cooperatives in Development: People Centred Businesses in Action," aims to among other things, strengthen the technical, institutional and political capacity of the member federations.
- ❖ ICA-AP continues to collaborate with all members in the region and with international organisations to provide technical assistance programmes; provide platforms and opportunities for cooperatives to engage; offer exchanges of co-operators, teachers, leaders and experts within and outside the region; and valuable cooperative literature on various sectors, technical topics, and management and training techniques.

The charts below highlights some of the activities from ICA-AP's first two decades (1960-80).

From 7 members in 6 countries in 1961, ICA-AP membership rose to 22 members from 8 countries by 1980.

ICA-AP functioned as a *Clearing House for Trading Information* during this decade. A series of Cooperative Trade Directories were issued. These included information on imports, exports, countries interested in imports and exports, documentation, and follow-up.

ICA-AP identified and facilitated a number of development institutions offering training courses in international trade.

Various trade agreements were promoted, led by UNICOOP Japan. These included the Thai - Japanese Maize Agreement; US - Japanese Soybean Agreement; Peru - Japanese Fishmeal Agreement; India - Japan Feed Meal Agreement; NAFED, India - Universal Cooperatives Agreement through Cooperative Business International, USA for niger-seed exports; NTUC FairPrice, Singapore - Agricultural Cooperative Federation of Thailand exchange of products.

1980: Regional Seminar on *Enhancing Women's Participation in Cooperative Activities*, Kandy, Sri Lanka

1978: The *ICA Cooptrade Project* was initiated in recognition of the imports by cooperatives in western countries from Asian countries. The project promote trade between coops within Asia, and with western coops to increase exchanges in trade. The project was transferred to ICA-AP in 1983.

1977: Basic courses for women co-operators held at Colombo, Sri Lanka and Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.

1976: Regional and national seminars, training programmes on *Training Methodology and Production of Training Aids* were held in India.

1975: The Regional Experts' Consultation on *Trends, Problems and Changing Needs of Cooperative Movements and the Role of ICA* was held in the Philippines.

1970-
1980

1974-78: The International Cooperative Trading Organisation was established in Singapore with 8 member countries - Australia, Indonesia, Iran, Malaysia, Philippines, Singapore, Sri Lanka & Thailand.

1972: The ICA-AP Committee for Agriculture and Trade for South East Asia and its Working Group on Trade Promotion established the *Cooperative Trade Exchange* in Singapore and appointed a Select Committee.

1971-77: ICA-AP partnered with NCUI for the *Cooperative Field Education* project in Indore, India. This was a district level cooperative field education project funded by the Swedish Cooperative Centre. One of the components of the project was to enhance women and youth participation in cooperatives, and work on income generating activities. The success of the project led to the Government of India sanctioning 50 similar projects for NCUI, of which, 40 continued up till **2010**.

With the initiatives taken by ICA-AP in collaboration with members between 1960-1970, a number of positive outcomes in cooperative business and trade came about in the Asia-Pacific:

- **1963:** Trading agreements between UNICOOP Japan - National Federation of Cooperative Sugar Mills of India for molasses exports to Japan
- **1969:** Fishermen's Cooperative Union, Sri Lanka, exported 40 bags of conch-shells to the Small Industries Corporation of India; Consumer Cooperative Trading Company of Japan imported 20 tonnes of horsemeat from a cooperative trading organisation in Poland; A coir mat manufacturing cooperative in Kerala, India, exported 25,000 door mats to a cooperative wholesale society in Denmark
- **1970:** Trading agreement between UNICOOP Japan - National Agricultural Cooperative Marketing Federation of India for the export of card extraction meal to Japan
- **1971:** ICA led a trade promotion team to Australia, resulting in a substantial rise in the trade turnover between coops in Japan and Australia

1971: ICA-AP implemented a number of development programmes for member countries. 500 cooperative scholarships by the Govt. of India were offered to coops in the region for training in India on women and youth empowerment, particularly in relation to safe drinking water, income generation, nutrition, etc.

1970: ICA-AP convened a Commodity Conference in Tokyo with JA-Zenchu to bring importers of specified commodities together. The conference focussed on bilateral trade relations with respect to raw materials for animal feed, fruits, and vegetables.

1967-69: Following the Trade Survey Report: *Trading of Cooperatives in South East Asia*, a number of measures were initiated to assist trading coops directly. In '68, ICA-AP held the *International Cooperative Trade in South East Asia* Conference in Tokyo to explore possibilities for coops to come together to increase trade; and participated in the *Second Asian International Trade Fair* in Tehran in '69.

1960-1970

1965-66: Following recommendations of the Conference in '64, a *Regional Trade Survey* was conducted to investigate cooperative trade and initiate measures for its development in the Asia-Pacific.

1964: ICA-AP held the first top-level cooperative leaders conference on *The Role of Cooperation in Social and Economic Development*.

1962: ICA Regional Office in collaboration with UNESCO and NCUI organised the first regional seminar on *The Contribution of Cooperation to the Emancipation of Women*, at New Delhi, December.

1960: U Nyi Nyi, the first Regional Director of ICA-AP, in his paper on *The Role of Secondary Organisations in Developing Leadership at District and National Levels*, presented at the first international seminar organised by ICA-AP in Delhi, stressed the need to organise women for greater participation in the cooperative movement, particularly in capacities suited to their status as mothers and housewives.

This role takes on particular significance in the current global scenario, where COVID-19 has affected most countries, disrupted work and livelihoods, uprooted lives, and created social and economic upheavals which will have lasting impacts. Recognising the global strength and network of the cooperative movement and ICA, now is the time to fall back on the strength of the cooperative principles of cooperation and collaboration, to increase our resilience in these tough times. Indeed, as we have in the past, together, we shall overcome!

COVID-19 Response

Webinar: Post COVID-19 Response of Cooperatives in Asia-Pacific

A discussion with ICA President, Ariel Guarco and ICA-AP President, Li Chunsheng

Moderated by:
BALASUBRAMANIAN
IYER
REGIONAL DIRECTOR, ICA-AP

Ariel Guarco
PRESIDENT, ICA

Li Chunsheng
PRESIDENT, ICA-AP

WEBINAR: DISCUSSION WITH ICA PRESIDENT, ARIEL GUARCO &
ICA-AP PRESIDENT, LI CHUNSHENG

POST COVID-19 RESPONSE OF
COOPERATIVES IN ASIA-PACIFIC

May 13, 2020
17:30 hours (GMT +5:30)

Please register here: <https://bit.ly/3flUns2>

FOR DETAILS: INFO@ICAAP.COOP

 International
Co-operative
Alliance
Asia and Pacific

ICA-AP is delighted to announce a webinar with ICA President, Ariel Guarco and ICA-AP President, Li Chunsheng on **May 13, 2020**. The webinar on the ***Post COVID-19 Response of Cooperatives in Asia-Pacific*** will bring together perspectives on cooperative response, and is for us to share our work and future actions.

The cooperative movement in the region has responded positively to its member and community needs during COVID-19. Our members across the region have supported their governments with financial assistance, social assistance, and other immediate requirements. Now, as we look forward to a post COVID-19, this webinar brings global and regional perspectives on how ICA and the cooperative movement can respond.

Please register at: <https://bit.ly/3flUns2> and join us on Zoom on **May 13, 2020 at 17:30 hours (GMT+5:30)**

The schedule, Zoom meeting ID and password will be shared with you via e-mail one day before the Webinar.

For more information, please e-mail info@icaap.coop

Message from ICA-AP President and Regional Director

Greetings from ICA-AP! We are going through difficult times and seeing the impact of the virus through lockdowns, loss of jobs, steep drop in business, and a toll on mental and physical well-being.

In the midst of the crisis, it is heartening to see cooperatives, whose services are essential (dairy, agriculture, health, credit), discharge their duties admirably; motivating to see many cooperatives take part in the covid-19 response; encouraging to see contributions being made to Funds set up to meet short and long-term requirements, and taking action to direct members to options being offered under stimulus packages by governments.

We would like to hear about these and document them to show ways in which cooperatives in the region are responding and the measures they are taking. We welcome your thoughts on ways in which ICA (global and regional office) could support members in the region. We will call on you in case a member requests support and we see them benefitting your work/ support.

The decision about the World Cooperative Congress in December 2020 in Seoul should be made soon. This has bearing on the Region as we plan to hold the 14th ICA-AP Regional Assembly and Board elections during the Congress. The Asia-Pacific Regional Board will meet online on May 19 and take a call on the Regional Assembly. We will keep you posted once the decision is made.

The Regional Office though under lockdown, continues to operate remotely. The activities planned over the next two months have been postponed and will resume once we are clear about the lift in lockdown, ease of travel restrictions, and member's plans.

We will tide over these difficult times together, as cooperatives have shown their resilience in times of need and have evolved to meet emerging challenges.

In solidarity!

Li Chunsheng
President, ICA-AP

Balasubramanian Iyer
Regional Director, ICA-AP

ICA-AP Regional Director, Balasubramanian Iyer reflects on the resilience and role of the cooperative movement and ICA through difficult times in history, and the need now to come together: [“Bringing Cooperatives Together: Individually vulnerable, more than ever urgent to cooperate”](#)

Platform to share COVID-19 experiences, resources and needs



International Cooperative Alliance (ICA)

This group has been created for members to discuss various issues.

THREADS

POLLS

MEMBERS

FILES

SUBGROUPS

SETTINGS

ICA launched the Loomio discussion platform for members across the world to coordinate a global cooperative response to the ongoing COVID-19 crisis. The platform, created on www.loomio.coop, a worker cooperative based in New Zealand, provides the space and means to share and build the cooperative narrative in terms of the movement’s impact across socioeconomic scales, and create a consolidated response to the crisis.

Members are invited to share their ongoing experience and needs, including short-term and urgent ones such as medical supplies, and more long-term ones. There are five main threads on the platform:

- The situation on the ground
- How are you helping?
- What do you need?
- Cooperative Solidarity Fund
- Online resources and links

To join this discussion platform built by Loomio, click [here](#). For any questions regarding Loomio, please mail Santosh Kumar: kumar@ica.coop

Please allow up to 24 hours for a response and approval to join the discussion.

ICA-AP Members: Response Work

The table below provides a brief overview of the phenomenal response generated by the cooperative movement in the region. Coops across Asia-Pacific have risen to the current challenge by supporting their communities, collaborating with other coops and businesses, and coordinating with their respective governments to facilitate relief efforts. The table below provides a brief overview of our members’ response to the COVID-19 crisis.

Country	Assistance type	Member response
Australia	Facilitating coop collaboration	BCCM is recording and archiving the activities of Australian cooperatives in response to the Coronavirus pandemic. See their stories here: https://bccm.coop/bccm-members-take-action-on-covid-19/ .
	Facilitating communication and knowledge sharing	Capricorn Society is managing supply chain issues related to automotive repair and maintenance products. They organised an online member community platform: The Workshop in 2017. The Workshop now includes a COVID-19 community support forum for sharing of ideas and responses.
India	Food distribution	NAFED will distribute 6 lakh metric tonnes of pulses to nearly 20 crore households for 3 months under the PM Garib Kalyan Anna Yojana. NAFED is also expected to lift un-milled pulses from godowns and warehousing corporations to get them milled for transportation to different states under the National Food Security Act.
	Financial assistance; infrastructure for isolation wards; social assistance	NCUI has offered its hostel as a coronavirus isolation ward. All employees have also donated 1 day salaries to the PM CARES Fund. The cooperative sector in India is estimated to have contributed around \$6 million to the Prime Minister CARES Fund, along with contributions and assistance to the state level relief funds. The National Federation of Urban Cooperative Bank and Credit Societies has asked all urban cooperative banks to contribute 2% of their net profits to relief funds. Many of NCUIs Cooperative Education Field Projects across the country have distributed masks, educated people on precautionary measures, and arranged for food distribution through community kitchens. Cooperative banks and sugar factories have installed disinfectant tunnels to protect their employees and customers; Cooperative banks have also enabled door-to-door cash facilities through mobile ATMs.
	Financial assistance; distribution of protective gear and hygiene essentials	IFFCO contributed \$3.6 million to the PM CARES Fund: IFFCO responds to COVID-19 containment efforts; Provision of masks, soaps and other protective gear to farmers and labourers; more than 1000 relief/ awareness programmes have been organised during the lockdown; ensuring that production units and agricultural supply chain remain functional so that farmers don't face plant-nutrient deficiency and last-mile delivery constraints of products. IFFCO has also been supplying fertilizer to farmers at their doorstep through mobile vans.
	Moratorium on loan instalments	NAFCARD member organisations are in the financial services sector, and as an essential service category in India, their work continues. They have extended a moratorium on all loan instalments to their clients for a period of 3 months (1 st March-31 st May, 2020).
	Awareness and knowledge dissemination; provision of essential hygiene products (sanitizers, masks, etc.)	NAFSCOB has advised all its state, district and rural cooperative banks to play an active role in creating awareness among the farmers and customers of the bank – to prevent, arrest and contain the spread of COVID-19. They have provided sanitizers, hand wash and masks in all bank premises for use by staff and customers. All state and district banks have donated to the PM CARES Fund and the Chief Ministers' Emergency Relief Funds.

		Cooperative Banks have granted a moratorium of 3 months on payment of instalments on loans between 1 st March-31 st May, 2020.
	Social assistance to migrant labourers	The Uralungal Labour Contract Cooperative Society (ULCCS) has chartered 3 private buses to take 156 migrant workers back home to West Bengal before the lockdown began. Workers staying back in Kerala have food and accommodation through ULCCS, even though work remains suspended.
	Distribution of medical supplies and food	The SEWA Cooperative Federation distributes food and health kits among members - informal women workers. It also offers direct cash transfer for sustenance.
	Production and donation of medical supplies and other initiatives	The health cooperative SEWA Lok Swasthya is manufacturing low cost hand sanitizers and making low cost masks. It is also providing food to children and elderly people and disseminating communication material to spread awareness on social distancing and other preventive measures.
Indonesia		DEKOPIN has formed three task forces in key areas: 1). To provide medical equipment for hospitals which are at the frontline in fighting the outbreak; 2). To identify and collect data for cooperatives which are affected by COVID-19, in terms of business, decreased livelihood, employment; 3) To mobilise social solidarity funding, particularly of the Islamic Social Fund during the holy Ramadan month to help vulnerable people.
Iran	Production of masks and isolation gowns; social assistance through cleansing and disinfection of public amenities; online education services	Women co-operators in Iran at the forefront of campaign against COVID-19
	Distribution of essentials to hospitals	Rah-e-Roshd has been collecting, organising, and distributing the essentials that are needed by hospitals and healthcare centres. However, as far as Rah-e-Roshd's own challenges are concerned, they are facing the big challenge of sustaining their human resources.
Japan	Facilitating information sharing and compensation requests	HeW Coop: HeW Coop Japan set up a task force on February 19. Basic information on prevention, such as hand washing, was also shared. They collect information on member cooperatives by phone or e-mail; Respond to requests from member cooperatives - HeW Coop Japan submitted requests to the national government and political parties through Japanese Consumers' Cooperative Union (JCCU) regarding difficulties and challenges in the healthcare and welfare businesses. Compensation based on the period of suspension and the expected number of service users; compensation for medical institutions which provide outpatient services for those who returned to Japan or who had a close contact with the infected; establishment of conditions to secure resources such as face masks, protective suits, goggles and gloves for medical institutions and nursing-care facilities.
		NFUCA: is actively providing updates using social media, enabling connections among new students and between new students and senior students. They have escaped the worst-case scenario in sales related to new semester,

		nevertheless, when the university opens in the future, they will have to operate cafeterias, stores and other areas by taking measures to avoid crowding. Thus, the number of users will be greatly reduced. This poses a challenge to NFUCA.
Kiribati		Kiribati has been lucky in remaining unaffected by COVID-19 so far. The Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Cooperatives (MCIC) however remains vigilant and has enforced protective measures and social distancing protocols.
Korea	Increasing sales of food staples; increasing capacities in special disaster zones due to covid 19; increasing mask distributions and sales; meal distribution	iCOOP responds to Covid-19 by increasing capacities in “special disaster zones” which had 70% case concentrations ; and COVID-19 Social Healing Project – a fund of KRW 4.9 million to support the underprivileged and travel and service organisations.
Malaysia	Financial assistance	ANGKASA has contributed US\$230,000 to the government and allocated US\$116,000 to cooperatives affected by the outbreak.
		The Cooperative Commission of Malaysia (SKM) is considering applications for deferment of loan repayments by cooperatives impacted by COVID-19.
Myanmar	Financial assistance, protective gear and food staples	Central Cooperative Society (CCS) has contributed 5 million Kyats, Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) outfits and masks to the COVID-19 National Committee. The 16 Union Cooperative Societies have contributed 13.08 million Kyats, bringing the total contribution of cooperatives in Myanmar to 13.08 million Kyats. They have also distributed staples such as rice, edible oil, beans, etc. to staff and members.
Nepal	Fund creation, financial assistance.	The National Cooperative Federation of Nepal (NCF) has created a Corona Prevention Fund to support the Corona Control Cooperative Centre and hand over the accumulated fund to Coronavirus Infection, Prevention, Control and Treatment Fund established by the Federal Government. NCF contributed NPR 2.5million towards the Centre, with technical and administrative assistance of the Manmohan Memorial Hospital. Ms. Om Devi Malla, Senior VP of NCF and coordinator of the Centre shares her thoughts here: https://www.karobardaily.com/news/interview/30814 https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HEECHoxmD_E&t=116s The cooperative movement of Nepal has contributed NPR 1.46 million towards the Federal Government Fund, NPR 1.38 million to the Provincial Level Government Fund, and 10.49 million towards other funds – coming to a total of NPR 21.17 million. The National Cooperative Bank limited has pledged NPR 1.1 million. Apart from this, consumer, financial and producer cooperatives are continuing services to their members and facilitating the movement of produce and consumption during the lockdown.
	Awareness campaigns; facilitating member	The Nepal Agriculture Cooperative Central Federation (NACCFL) is consistently using awareness campaigns to disseminate protective measures on health and sanitation to its farmers. NACCFL is also helping its farmers transport their

	farmer producers in distribution of produce	produce to its central market during the lockdown. They have started door-to-door delivery of their farmers' produce, and are lobbying with the federal government to deploy Dairy Development Corporation transporting trucks to reach the different dairy collection centres of agricultural cooperatives across Nepal. NACCFL has also contributed Rs. 500,000 towards two ventilators in a hospital.
	Financial assistance for relief materials	Several Jhapa-based coops have joined hands to contribute Rs. 15 million towards relief materials for poor families. These include Karnali Cooperatives, Birtamod, Nepal Multi-Purpose Cooperatives Mechinagar, Simrik Cooperatives, Birtamod, Hamroo Nepali Savings and Credit Ltd., and Mechi Cooperatives.
New Zealand	Communications with the government	Cooperative Business New Zealand (CBNZ) has been working to join the conversation with the government on the COVID-19 response, and see cooperatives as a key part of the economic recovery in New Zealand.
Pakistan	Social assistance	The Karachi Cooperative Housing Societies Union's representatives assist with the community social work.
Palestine	Distribution of essential hygiene supplies, food supplies	The Economic and Social Development Centre (ESDC) is handling the sterilisation materials for 26 cooperatives, to be used in production and other places with daily operations and customer interactions. ESDC is also part of a National Campaign to support the creation of home gardens by delivering 100,000 seedlings to 1000 coop members to enhance food security. They are conducting a survey of families/ farmers/ workers affected by the lockdown, resulting in losing jobs and incomes; implementing a voucher project to provide relief to the most vulnerable families. The consumer coops provided food baskets to the poor and offered basic food supplies at lowest prices.
	Food supplies	The Agricultural Cooperatives union of Palestine (PACU) provided food baskets for families in need; bought produce from farmers' and women's coops affected by COVID-19 restrictions. PACU is also lobbying for the diversion of funds from halted export and import activities to conducting trial shipments of PACU products to potential buyers in the UAE and Saudi Arabia.
Philippines	Provision of PPEs, financial assistance	CLIMBS Life and General Insurance Cooperative (CLIMBS) mobilised their own team to check on members' welfare in areas badly hit by COVID-19; increased access to online platforms for members to communicate their concerns; creation of the CLIMBS COVID-19 Task Force on March 11, 2020 to create a Crisis Management Plan and Crisis Communications Plan; launched an initiative for an "Adopt a Hospital Program" by providing Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)s and hot meals each Friday to front liners in identified COVID19 medical centres nationwide. CLIMBS provided PPEs worth P500,000 to front-liners as part of their P2million committed funds to help the government in collective action against COVID-19.
	Social assistance; food distribution; protective gear	NATCCO's partners at the epicentre of the virus in the Philippines distribute food in the community. NATCCO coops have distributed rice and canned food (2 weeks worth of supply) to its members across the province; knapsack sprayers to disinfect contaminated areas; protective equipment to hospitals

		and clinics; financial assistance to overseas Filipinos through calamity loans with minimal interest.
	Financial assistance and distribution of medical essentials	MASS-SPECC contributed 15 gallons of concentrated bleach as disinfectants to Barangay 11 in Cagayan de Oro city; financial assistance in collaboration with CLIMBS, MSCB and SDCC to bring the produce of farmer cooperatives in the north to assist needy communities in the NCR.
	Distribution of PPE and medical essentials, food; social assistance	VICTO: Many of their coops have donated PPEs (personal protective equipment like masks, shields, gloves, etc.) and food packs to various hospitals and check-points. They are currently running a campaign for coops to share their responses and estimates of costs by posting on Facebook or Instagram with the hashtags #COOPtulong and #BangonCOOP. The first translates to 'coop help' and the second translates to 'rise, coops'. VICTO's new generation stores are at the forefront in their respective communities; distribution of alcohol and sanitisers for almost all customers. VICTO were first to provide free delivery of groceries for older persons who were at the most risk to contract the virus. They have taken the lead in the issuance of advisories (6 so far) for coops after consultation with all 10 other ICA members in the country.
	Supply of masks and sanitizer	AIMCoop is collaborating with the government and cooperatives to address the COVID-19 situation in the Philippines.
	Social assistance, supply of basic necessities	Philippine Cooperative Centre is serving its members and the community through the Cooperative Development Fund. They are also supporting the government in defeating COVID-19, and their members by supplying hygienic necessities such as alcohol, alcohol gel, preventive medical items, soap, detergents, cooking oil, food (milk, sugar, bottled sardines). These are produced and distributed by the cooperatives themselves.
	Financial assistance	1Cooperative Insurance System of the Philippines (1CISP) and the Philippine Cooperative Centre have contributed P2.5 million. 1CISP has also donated PPE to the Cooperative Health Management Federation (CHMF).
	Financial contribution for the purchase of PPE	First Community Cooperative (FICCO), Metro South Development Bank (MSCB), San Dionisio Credit Cooperative (SDCC), Novaliches Development Cooperative (NOVADECI), Tagalog Cooperative Development Centre (TAGCODEC) and Bohol Diocesan Multipurpose Cooperative have come together for the purchase of PPE worth P3.5 million, and distribution to hospitals.
Singapore	Distribution of masks, facilitating collaboration between coops	The Singapore National Cooperative Federation (SNCF) has collaborated with the Singapore Statutory Boards Employees' Cooperative and GP+ Cooperative to purchase and distribute masks to migrant workers; to fund sponsorship towards initiatives to support migrant workers; distribute snack hampers to front-liners.
	Financial assistance; insurance protection at no additional premium;	NTUC Income has announced that over 500,000 employees of organisations insured by its Group Employee Benefits policies will receive COVID-19 cover at no additional premium.

	supply of food and essentials	NTUC FairPrice Cooperative (FairPrice) is supplying food and daily necessities. They, along with strategic partners have pledged \$240,000 to the ComChest Heartstrings Buy community engagement initiative to benefit the less privileged. FairPrice has also pledged a donation of S\$500,000 to the Lee Ah Mooi Old Age Home, Metta Welfare Association, Assisi Hospice, Touch Community Services and Food from the Heart, through online grocery orders. Under FairPrice Group, NTUC Foodfare Cooperative and Kopitiam have provided S\$120,000 worth of MILO beverages to hospital healthcare workers.
Sri Lanka	Social assistance, Provision of food rations to needy members; provision of healthcare equipment	SANASA established a special disaster relief operation committee on 25 th March 2020 to address concerns regarding their daily wage employments, the daily cash-base business and shortages in daily essential requirements. The Committee was established through the donation of 1 day's salary of all employees of affiliated companies. This has gone towards providing food rations to needy members; providing assistance to low income communities; distributing relief ration packs to economically challenged families; providing healthcare equipment to hospital staff.
	Collaboration with local supermarkets for service delivery	Cooperative societies have collaborated with supermarket chains for the supply, operation and coordination of essential services.
Timor Leste		The Timor-Leste Credit Union (FCCHM) has been hit by floods, along with COVID-19. Due to the vast damages faced on account of the above, vast losses have been faced.
Vietnam	Facilitating export of medical equipment	The Vietnam Cooperative Alliance (VCA) has offered to connect global cooperatives and federations with the Government of Vietnam to facilitate the export of essential medical equipment that Vietnam has the capabilities to produce. This includes medical masks, medical clothes and ventilators.

ICA-AP updates

Cooperative Development Foundation (CDF) – Invest COOP Indonesia Project: *Breaking New Grounds for Small Aquaculture Producers. A case study of Canadian Assistance to build sustainable aquaculture Cooperatives*

By: Robby Tulus

The aquaculture sector, where populations of sea and fresh water are cultivated under controlled conditions, plays a very important role for human consumption as well as local employment. The demand for aquaculture products, especially seaweed, milkfish, and shrimp (SMS) is very high and continues to rise as people are adopting healthier seafood-based diets. In spite of such high demand, producers in coastal areas of Indonesia are still facing structural challenges of dependence on trader bosses and money lenders. Lack of working capital and poor market integration are weakening the ability of these small producers to capitalise on a growing market opportunity, consequently contributing to a decline in incomes, livelihoods and risking to reverse poverty gains. If this trend continues, and aquaculture stocks are exploited by trader bosses simply to reap as much profit

without heed for the environment, the problem will not just be poverty but also food safety, food security and environmental degradation.

State-managed aquaculture resources have come under scrutiny because of their top-down nature. Experience has revealed the need to co-manage these resources through bottom-up mechanisms, which can enable producers to have their say in managing coastal resources for betterment of their livelihoods. Cooperatives for small aquaculture producers are an effective mechanism to help producers to become masters of their own destiny. The case study below clearly illustrates this point.



The Canadian Ambassador, H.E. Cameron MacKay (second from right) during his visit to the drying platform of seaweed of the Jeneponto Regency seaweed project

The CDF INVEST COOP PROJECT

Indonesia is one of the largest maritime countries in the world, with immense and rich coastal regions, fish and aquaculture resources. With the knowledge that the provincial government of South Sulawesi was planning to boost aquaculture production among the poor coastal producers in a number of regencies in the early 2010s, the Canadian Cooperative Association (CCA), CDF Canada's predecessor, took the initiative to initiate a project with the assistance of the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA), currently integrated into Global Affairs Canada, to help these small aquaculture cultivators in 2015.

The idea was to boost their productivity and form well-governed cooperatives to gain access to markets and hence raise their income. CCA initiated INVEST Cooperative Indonesia as part of the multi-country coop development project, which also included Malawi, Mongolia and Peru. Following organizational changes and rebranding, CCA continues to actively implement international development projects under the name of CDF of Canada. The CDF of the Canadian movement has been in existence since 1947.



Robby Tulus (left) and Canadian Ambassador H.E. Cameron MacKay (right) ring an exposure visit to seaweed cultivation 300 meters off the coast of Jeneponto

CDF Canada entered into a partnership with the Marine Institute of the Memorial University of Newfoundland, to enhance the quality of seaweed products so as to meet international standards, to educate farmers about best aquaculture practices, sustainable aquaculture principles, warehousing, and also assist in identifying alternative aquaculture crops with co-op members. The second partner is Kospemindo, a marketing cooperative in South Sulawesi. Kospemindo, with the technical assistance of a number of experienced volunteers from Canada, as well as local consultants from Indonesia, provided training which generated four seaweed cooperatives in four regencies, namely in Bantaeng, Jeneponto, Takalar and North Luwu. With these four coops well-established, coop leaders and members were further trained on value-chain and market analysis, the design of sound marketing strategies and business plans, as well as strategic negotiations and contracting with buyers. The integrated cooperative model encourages sustainability by reducing uncertainty and risk.

A very important cross-cutting mechanism throughout the coop enhancement process is the empowerment of women with gendered value chain analysis for shrimp, milkfish, and seaweed and additional crop(s) for sale through cooperatives and other channels. In doing so, sound cooperative governance was also intensively and experientially inculcated using the Development Ladder Analysis (DLA) method, facilitated by an experienced Canadian volunteer and assisted by local consultants.

In the second year of project implementation, access to finance was deemed imperative to support the South Sulawesi small aquaculture producers. Access to finance must begin with financial literacy training to equip these small cultivators with the basic know how and skills to defend themselves from the intrusion of moneylenders and middlemen who exploit their livelihood conditions. A third partner was identified by CDF Canada, namely the Credit Union Central Organisation (CUCO) of Indonesia that fielded experienced trainers on the important subjects of financial literacy and credit union development. The combination of high-quality production, access to finance and marketing creates a holistic approach to development in the aquaculture sector in South Sulawesi, whereas its sustainability is strengthened by collective actions through the cooperatives and credit unions built from the ground up.

Notwithstanding, existential challenges could not be easily shaken off. Historical evidence has shown that state-sponsored aquaculture in the past has failed because cooperatives were often indulged with government subsidies, leaving a climate of dependency among these small aquaculture producers and cultivators.

Thus, the newly organised cooperatives and credit unions are subjected to a dependency way of life and the additional burden of indebtedness to moneylenders and trader bosses. Changing the mindset of these farmers is therefore high on the priority list of CDF Canada. Experiential training and continuous education must be engendered. With proper guidance and mentorship by experienced Canadian volunteers and local consultants, the INVEST Coop project has been progressing steadily with increased self-reliance by both the male producers, as well as women cultivators in all four regencies.



Robby Tulus (front left), with the Canadian Ambassador, H.E. Cameron MacKay (centre) at the Jenepono Regency, where the seaweed project is being cultivated. They display the gender equality sign at the seaweed coop office in Jenepono, Indonesia.

In addition to intensive monitoring by voluntary cooperative leaders selected by CDF Canada, the government of Canada has also conducted its own field observation. Two successive Canadian Ambassadors to Indonesia and their development colleagues conducted their field observations on project sites of South Sulawesi (see pictures). The gendered value chain mechanism has been given particular attention. This mechanism empowers women to participate in decision-making processes of the cooperative, including production, handling and marketing of seaweed. Women have shown their vigilance in the strengthening of their cooperative enterprises, despite a familiar male-dominated environment witnessed in many rural communities in Indonesia. These women aquaculture coop members eventually decided to form their own Women Credit Union in South Sulawesi, and despite the disruption of COVID19, they have continued to discuss procedural and subject matters among themselves using online Zoom conferencing to formalize the establishment of

the much-anticipated Women Credit Union. In one regency in North Luwu, milkfish production has increased significantly and is now being primed not just for local consumption but also for exports. Marketing of seaweed also proceeds as planned, and in all these cases Coop leaders and members are heeding the advice to keep social distancing and by staying home as much as possible.

This case study is a demonstration of cooperative resilience in times of crisis. The long-term success of coops will obviously be determined by members themselves who will dictate the extent to which effort, time and space will be best utilized for the ultimate growth and development of their collective actions.

Robby Tulus is former Regional Director ICA Asia Pacific and currently a volunteer of the Cooperative CDF Canada. The views expressed are in a personal capacity and do not necessarily reflect those of CDF Canada.

#GoGreen 3.0

The Go Green Campaign, started in 2018, is an initiative of International Cooperative Alliance Asia-Pacific Committee on Youth Cooperation (ICYC), to link youth and SDGs on a single platform and create an identity for cooperatives as a sustainable model for environment and society. This year, ICYC will organise Go Green Campaign 3.0 in the month of July to fit with the 2020 theme for International Day of Cooperatives (July 4, 2020), *Cooperatives for Climate Change*.

The “*World Goes Green with Africa, America and Asia-Pacific*”, will be held in partnership with the Africa Youth Network, Americas Youth Network (CRJ) and ICA Sectoral organisation Cooperative Housing International (CHI). The Campaign is divided into three Regional Youth Weeks: the first from July 1 to 7, will be celebrated in the Asia-Pacific; the second from July 8 to 14, in Africa; and third from July 15 to 21, in the Americas. The campaign will display the role of youth and cooperatives can play through self-help and solidarity.

**WE NEED
VOLUNTEERS
FOR GO GREEN
CAMPAIGN 3.0**

WE NEED

- Graphic Designer
- Coordinator
- Social Media Marketer
- Content Writer

coop International Cooperative Alliance - Asia and Pacific Committee on Youth Cooperation
WWW.YOUTH-ASIAPACIFIC.COOP

ICYC takes this opportunity to call for volunteers to join this campaign. Volunteers will engage with the committee on aspects such as writing, designing, coordinating, and disseminating on social media.

Interested volunteers are requested to apply by submitting a one page statement of purpose and a detailed CV to ahsanalithakur@yahoo.com. Deadline for applications is **15th May 2020**. For more information, please read the profile descriptions below:

- [Social Media](#)
- [Content Writer](#)
- [Coordinator](#)
- [Graphic Designer](#)

Internship Experience

Anugya Chitransh joined ICA-AP in October for a 6-month internship. She shares her experience with the Regional Office in a candid post below:

I started my internship at ICA-AP's Delhi offices in October 2019, soon after I graduated from my master's programme in International Relations at Nanyang Technological University, Singapore. One of my areas of interest were supranational institutions and their affect in the Asia Pacific region. What better example could I find than ICA-AP? It checked off all the boxes - an international organisation working actively with national apexes and cooperative federations in the Asia Pacific region. The cherry on the cake was the fact that they were looking for researcher interns who would look at the cooperative sectors of countries in the region.

While I knew about the cooperative model and their contribution to the Indian economy and start-up sphere, I knew nothing about their global contributions. I didn't know how they were supervised or that they had a rich cultural context that led to their beginnings in each country. As I look back at myself, six months ago, I would have been hard-pressed to name more than three to four cooperatives, or even the fact that they were widespread in so many sectors other than agriculture and dairy.

As I worked on the country snapshots, I was able to observe cooperatives of countries that were at different stages of economic development. Due to this, while the cooperative principles remained uniform, there was innovation in the way they did their business. Platform cooperatives were more widespread in Australia and New Zealand, while the Philippines had laboratory cooperatives and advocacy cooperatives. The smaller Oceania countries favoured agriculture, copra and financial cooperatives. When I had to shortlist case studies, I got the opportunity to see many different models such as the Drawa Block Forest Communities Cooperative in northern Fiji that not only protects the rainforest, but also, generates and sells carbon credits; Coop Incubator Ltd. in Australia which is a cooperative in itself and also an incubator for cooperatives; Arghavan Dasht-e Paezan in Iran which is the world's only Fairtrade certified saffron farmer's cooperative; World Travellers Ltd. in New Zealand which is redefining travel agencies and trip planning for its customers; and so many more others that are doing exceptional work in their communities, and in the way they do business.

A look at the cooperative history of any country is incomplete without analysing how the laws governing the sector have changed over the years. Since most countries in South and Southeast Asia were former colonies, the initial legislation/regulation were passed by the colonial rulers and very much inspired by the cooperative laws in their home countries. They were adapted, especially in the Pacific countries of Vanuatu and Papua New Guinea, for "native" cooperators. Australia and New Zealand had separate laws for cooperatives, mutuals and friendly societies. It did take me a while to understand the different terminology!

Towards the second-half of my internship, I also had the opportunity to interact with people at the Malaysia Business Office. That proved extremely useful when I started working on a consumer sector snapshot. The broad definition of consumer cooperatives and what parameters different countries take to label one as a consumer cooperative led to many engaging conversations within the office.

As I move on from ICA-AP, I will fondly remember not only the work I did here but also the people who make up the organisation. Through all of this, my colleagues, supervisors and especially Regional Director Mr. Balasubramanian Iyer, were extremely supportive and willing to answer my doubts and listen to my opinions. Other than work, I also got the opportunity to interact with them, and get to know them over lunch breaks, coffee breaks and office parties. It was an extremely fun and enriching experience!

Member updates

ICA-AP has two new members, Climbs Life and General Insurance Cooperatives (CLIMBS), Philippines and National Federation of People-based Cooperative Enterprises (INKUR), Indonesia.

Climbs Life and General Insurance Cooperatives (CLIMBS), Philippines



CLIMBS is a life and non-life insurance cooperative. It started in 1971 as an experiment in mutual protection, as an alternative to insurance products offered by big traditional insurance companies. With increasing numbers of members over the years, CLIMBS has increased the number of services to cover their increasing needs. It eventually ventured into partnerships with other cooperatives through Coop Assurance Center (CAC) to become a distribution channel of insurance products and services to its members, and to become a financial solution provide to cooperatives and their members.

From humble beginnings, to date, CLIMBS grew into a cooperative with assets worth 3.64 billion pesos, life confirmation of coverage of 4.2 million and non-life insurance of 32,000 policies. Today, CLIMBS is now a group of companies with insurance as its major business complementing each other and creating a holistic range of products and services for its members. Website: www.climbs.coop

National Federation of People-based Cooperative Enterprises (INKUR), Indonesia

inKUR

INKUR is an umbrella organisation for the real sector cooperative movement engaged in the retail, service and production sectors throughout Indonesia. Members of INKUR are composed of multiple cooperative sectors which are genuinely developed from the ground up by the respective founding communities, some of which resulted from a spin-off mechanism initiated by leaders of large credit unions in Indonesia.

Website: www.inkur.id

ICA-AP now has **109** members from **32** countries.

ICA-EU Partnership: Updates

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 co-operators from around the world. GYF20 took place in Kuching, Sarawak, Malaysia from 3rd-7th February 2020 with over 150 youth participants and 20 trainers, professionals and experts from 50 countries. From the Asia-Pacific region, we had participants and trainers from India, Indonesia, Iran, Japan, Kyrgyzstan, Malaysia, Mongolia, Nepal, Pakistan, Palestine, Philippines, Singapore, and Sri Lanka.

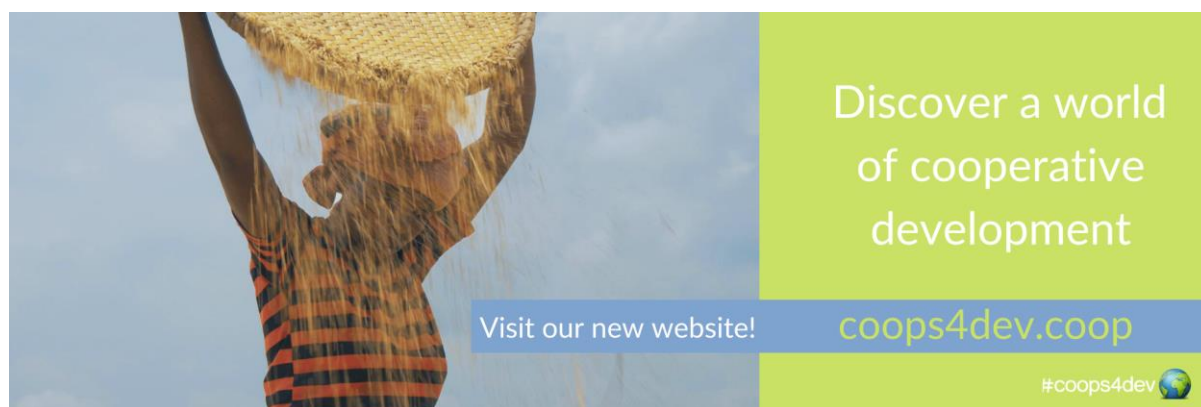
Know more about participants from the Asia-Pacific here: [Link](#)

Inra Sumahamijaya, a cooperative entrepreneur from Indonesia and Ambassador of the Global Cooperative Entrepreneurship (GCE) programme under [#coops4dev](#) shares his reflections on, and expectations from #GYF20 in this video:



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Global Cooperative Entrepreneurship



A webinar on Knowledge Base Platform (KBP) was held on 8th April 2020, within the framework of ICA-EU Partnership ([#coops4dev](#)). The webinar, an initiative between the GCE programme and CoopStarter, was to share the KBP with GCE mentors and have them contribute to it. GCE mentors from Asia and Pacific and ICA-AP staff members also attended the webinar along with mentors and colleagues from other regions.

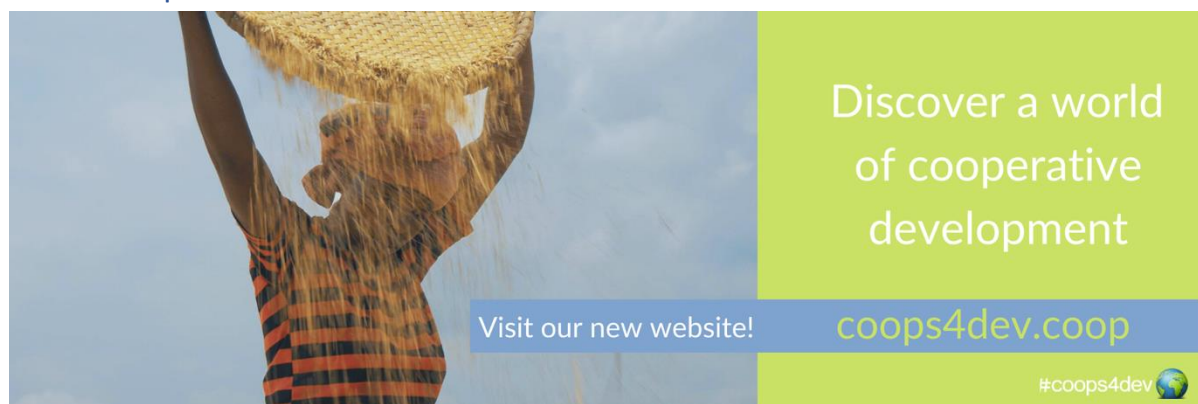
A Knowledge Base? What Is It?

The KBP builds on the fifth cooperative principle (education, training and information) and is imagined as a 'cooperative search engine' of information and resources. The idea of developing an open-source software to index resources (guides, e-books, explanatory videos, etc.) emerged through the Erasmus+ CoopStarter 2.0 project led by Cooperatives Europe and was up-scaled by the GCE programme. Both initiatives aim to train mentors from cooperatives and youth organizations to stimulate youth cooperative entrepreneurship.

The software will enable GCE mentors to reference existing material on cooperative entrepreneurship, access publications in a variety of languages. The users will be able to contribute to the growth of the knowledge base, by sharing resources and information that will be peer-reviewed and validated by

other mentors. Users will be able to learn about cooperation and entrepreneurship by joining this online global community.

Research updates



Legal Framework Analysis

The national reports of Australia, Fiji, and New Zealand were recently completed. These and other national reports can be accessed at the [#coops4dev website](#).

The research on Mapping of Cooperatives

ICA-AP has launched the full-scale study on Mapping of Cooperatives in the region. The mapping research aims at collecting and publicising exhaustive and up-to-date statistics of cooperative organisations in different countries to showcase the cooperative impact and provide data for advocacy. Currently, National Reports for Iran and the Philippines can be accessed at [#coops4dev](#)

Country snapshots

Country snapshots for Australia, China, Fiji, Indonesia, Japan, Kiribati, Korea, Malaysia, Nepal, Philippines, PNG, Singapore, Sri Lanka, Thailand, Vanuatu, and Vietnam are now available on the ICA-AP website.

International Day of Cooperatives: Cooperatives for Climate Action: SDG 13



Join us in celebrating the International Day of Cooperatives this 4th of July, 2020! In our commitment to the Sustainable Development Agenda, the theme this year is in support of SDG 13: Climate Action: **Cooperatives for Climate Action**. We are inviting the global cooperative community to continue pushing for actions that will address climate change. Cooperatives worldwide can take this opportunity to show leadership and share their cooperative values in combating this global issue. A Cooperator's Communications Guide will soon be available to help cooperatives use this day to illustrate the importance of taking action to battle climate change.

As we did last year, together with [DotCoop](#), we are launching the 2020 International Cooperative Day interactive map to illustrate how cooperatives worldwide are taking action to battle climate change, and celebrating their successes. Get more information [here](#) on how to participate. Last year we registered more than 130 events in around 40 countries worldwide. This year, while we may be under COVID-19 related restrictions across the world, we will continue virtual engagements and initiatives to address this important theme. We also encourage you to promote **#CoopsDay** and **#Coops4ClimateAction** widely on all your social media channels. This event will focus on the contributions of cooperatives to combating climate change, one of the most severe challenges facing our planet during the 21st century.

The cooperative movement can use this important opportunity to take a stand as a global actor of change and collaborate with its partners within the international community. This collective effort can significantly impact the climate agenda and achieve a fair, green and just transition for all communities, leaving no one behind.

Follow **#Coops4ClimateAction** and **#CoopsDay** on social media for updates on activities planned to mark the International Day of Cooperatives.

Announcements

World Cooperative Congress



It is with regret that due to the COVID-19 pandemic we have to postpone the 33rd World Cooperative Congress. This important event will still be held in Seoul, Republic of Korea and is now scheduled to take place between the **1st and 3rd of March 2021**. The preparatory events, namely the **ICA Cooperative Research Conference** and the **International Cooperative Law Forum**, will take place between the 26th and 28th of February.*

With the COVID-19 pandemic, the 33rd World Cooperative Congress will be an opportunity to look back and validate the cooperative movement's resilience, leadership and solidarity during times of crisis. This event will now serve as an important forum to:

- Discuss why the cooperative identity, including definition, principles and values, is needed now more than ever;
- Show cooperative resilience by sharing experiences and testimonies; and
- Discuss how cooperatives can significantly contribute to the global economic, social and environmental reconstruction.

As originally defined, the theme of the Congress will still be '**Deepening our Cooperative Identity.**' Looking beyond the COVID-19 pandemic, we look forward to deepening our understanding of how our cooperative identity has enabled us to tackle this crisis and how we will overcome other global challenges like climate change, sustainable development, peace and equality. Together, we can cooperate to create a better, fairer and more inclusive world for generations to come.

For more information, please visit the ICA [website](#), or send an email to ica@ica.coop.

Sincerely,

Bruno Roelants
Director General

**The dates for these events are subject to be further rescheduled should the pandemic make it necessary for force majeure.*

ICA-AP Cooperative Research Conference: Call for papers



The ICA-AP Committee on Cooperative Research invites paper proposals for the 15th ICA-AP Cooperative Research Conference, which will be held from November 25-27, 2020 in Trivandrum, India. The conference is organised under the ICA-AP Committee on Cooperative Research, with support from the Government of Kerala and the ICA-EU Partnership on Cooperatives in Development (#coops4dev). The conference theme this year is “Confronting climate change through cooperative enterprise”.

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 on or before **1st July, 2020**.

Upcoming Events

- International Day of Cooperatives – July 4th
- Regional Board Meeting (online) – May 19th
- World Congress – March 1st-3rd, 2021

The Covid-19 outbreak has disrupted many scheduled plans and activities across the world. Following WHO guidelines and government advisories, ICA-AP and members have put out on hold physical activities planned for the time being. We will update you as and when the rescheduled dates are available.



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