

# ICA-AP NEWSLETTER

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

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## Obituary



**Mr. Kwek Kok Kwong**

1967 - 2020

We are shocked and saddened with the sudden demise of Mr. Kwek Kok Kwong, Board member of ICA-AP; Board member of ICA Global; Chairperson of the Singapore National Cooperative Federation (SNCF), and CEO of NTUC Learning Hub.

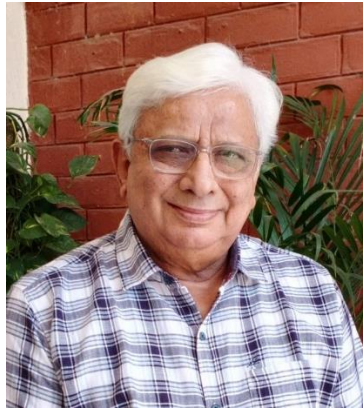
Recently, we had the opportunity to hear him congratulate the ICA Asia-Pacific on its 60th Anniversary and his desire to continue the strong relationship!

KK or K3 as he was popularly known, was very committed to the Asia-Pacific region and ever keen to see that cooperatives keep pace with technology. Under his leadership, [NTUC Learning Hub Co-operative](#) emerged as one of Singapore's largest continuing education and training providers. His vision was to see NTUC Learning Hub generate its own content, work with world-leading content providers, and equip workers with Adaptive, Technology, and Technical Skills to meet the Industry 4.0 needs.

Mr. Kwek Kok Kwong was elected to the Regional Board in November 2016 in India and to the ICA Global Board in 2017 in Malaysia. As CEO of NTUC Learning Hub Co-operatives since February 2013, he led Learning Hub to be a leading training organization and cooperative in Singapore, training more than 10,000 workers per month in various areas like trade skills, soft skills, IT, safety and health, so that they remain relevant to market needs. He graduated with a degree in Mathematics and Public Administration and is a certified Neuro-Linguistic Programming practitioner. Prior to joining NTUC, Kok Kwong served with distinction in the Singapore Armed Forces.

Our thoughts and prayers are with Mr. Kwek's family, staff at NTUC Learning Hub and SNCF.

Mr. Prem Kumar joined ICA-AP sometime in the 1960s and He retired from ICA-AP in the year 2007. He got an extension of two years. Finally, he left in the year 2010 (beginning) or end of 2009. When I joined ICA in the year 1990, he was Manager (Admn.) and PA to the then Regional Director. Later, he took over the ICA-MAFF long term training course till 2007.



**Mr. Prem Kumar**

We are deeply saddened with the sad demise of Mr. Prem Kumar. He was one the ICA-AP's longest serving staff members. He joined us in the 1960s and retired in 2007. He served as the Manager Administration, PA to the Regional Director, and coordinator of the ICA-MAFF, Government of Japan sponsored training programme.

Our thoughts and prayers are with his family and friends.

## Fundraising Appeal

**SUPPORT  
TYPHOON  
AFFECTED  
COOPERATIVES**

**DONATE TO 2020 PHILIPPINES  
TYPHOON SUPPORT**

Beneficiary: Alliance Coopérative Internationale  
Bank Name: KBC Brussels  
Branch Name: KBC Brussels Dailly  
Bank Address: Place Dailly 3 - 1030 Brussels - Belgium  
IBAN: BE28 7340 3825 7920  
BIC: KREDBEBB

A team from Leyte II Electric Cooperative in Tacloban City prepares for deployment to Bicol Region Tuesday (Nov. 3, 2020). Electric cooperatives in Eastern Visayas have sent 100 linemen to help in the immediate restoration of power in the typhoon-hit Bicol Region. (Photo courtesy of Leyeco II)

The Philippines was recently struck by two devastating typhoons, Typhoon Ulysses (international name: Vamco) and Typhoon Rolly (international name: Goni). Coming on the heels of each other, the typhoons hit Luzon, the Philippine's most populous and largest island. The series of storms (more are expected in December) are hitting the communities hard which are already reeling under the effects of the deadly COVID-19 Pandemic.

According to the Philippines Cooperative Center, the apex body in the Philippines, *“Floodwaters virtually submerged most parts of the Metropolis and other provinces – both in the South and in the North – that went to as high as beyond three (03) storeys in some areas. Some houses were washed away, and many vehicles got turned upside down by the rushing muddy waters. Even posh subdivisions with high concrete walls were not spared; with some of those walls coming down. Lifetime savings on furniture and appliances also got figuratively washed away with the flood waters. Following the onslaught of the floods, many houses were left bare, with only thick mud left as a dismal reminder of the catastrophe.”*

Our members in the Philippines are raising funds to assist cooperatives and communities in the hard-hit areas. They seek your support to not only to help members but also the staff to make sure they can bounce back to keep their cooperatives operational. Please send your donations to “2020 Philippines Typhoon Support,” and direct them to the following bank account:

<b>Beneficiary:</b>	<b>Alliance Coopérative Internationale</b>
<b>Bank Name:</b>	<b>KBC Brussels</b>
<b>Branch Name:</b>	KBC Brussels Dailly
<b>Bank Address:</b>	Place Dailly 3 - 1030 Brussels - Belgium
<b>IBAN:</b>	BE28 7340 3825 7920
<b>BIC:</b>	KREDBEBB

## ICA-AP ACTIVITIES

Online Event: 60th Anniversary Celebrations of ICA in Asia and Pacific



The International Cooperative Alliance Asia-Pacific (ICA-AP) celebrated its 60th year with a webinar on 13<sup>th</sup> November 2020. The Regional Office and Education Center (ICA ROEC) was opened on 14<sup>th</sup> November 1960, by late Shri Jawaharlal Nehru, the first Prime Minister of India. ICA ROEC was the first to be set up by the ICA as the precursor and a model for other regional offices. The Regional Office has been situated in New Delhi (India) from the start with branch offices in Singapore (1999 to 2012) and Malaysia (2013 onwards). Starting with 7 members from 6 countries, the ICA-AP today serves 110 member organizations from 32 countries.

Balasubramanian Iyer, Regional Director welcomed the participants and said that the pillars of support for the region were the 109 members from 32 countries who provide sustained support, the international community of cooperatives from all the ICA regions, our regional board members and leaders for their steadfast direction, our partners for their solid engagement, and the staff for their unrelenting commitment.

Mr. Ariel Guarco, ICA President, in his message congratulated the region and said that during his visits, he had the opportunity to meet the dedicated members, steadfastly committed to principles and upholding the cooperative identity. Mr. Li Chunsheng, ICA-AP President extended his greetings and said that the setting up of the regional office reflected the global cooperative community to boost social and economic development across regions. The work of ICA and its members has been to serve as the bridge between cooperators to share experiences and opportunities to benefit the wider community. Mr. Sung-hee Lee, Chairman of National Cooperative Federation (NACF), Korea said that NACF owed its existence to the successful cooperative models which were passed on from other countries and enabled NACF to grow into the top 10 cooperatives in the world. He also mentioned that NACF was now committed to sharing its best practices with others. Dr. Chandrapal Singh Yadav, President NCUI and Vice President ICA-AP, extended his greetings and recollected the role played by NCUI as the apex organization in India right from ICA-AP's early days. The Indian Cooperative movement currently has 14 members in the ICA, who contribute immensely to the governance (serve on the regional and global board), support in the development and growth of cooperatives through trainings and exchanges by playing host to important events such as Regional Assembly; and enthusiastically taking part in regional and global events. Mr. Bruno Roelants, Director General ICA, who joined the webinar towards the end recollected his association with the Regional Office since 1995 and its contribution to meet the needs and aspirations of the members. He spoke of the important relations which the region has established with various constituents.

The segment, Voices from the Past, featured staff who had served at the Regional Office. Dr. Robby Tulus, Regional Director (1996-2001) spoke of the challenging times the region had to face due to various economic crises and the landmark adoption of the Statement of Cooperative Identity. He spoke of the multi-faceted staff deputed from six countries, the north-south collaboration, and the major events such as the Ministers' Conference. Dr. Chan-Ho Choi, Regional Director (2010-2014), spoke of his exciting time in seeing the region celebrate the International Year of Cooperatives in 2012 and the efforts to provide conducive legal environment necessary for the establishment and growth of cooperatives. He said that the Asia and Pacific region has many examples of special cooperatives in a wide variety of sectors, in that it looks like a cooperative department store! Mr. Amano Haruyoshi, from the International Department of JCCU spoke of their long association with ICA-AP and their contribution in deputing staff to the offices in India, Singapore, and Malaysia and their role in the development of consumer, campus, youth, and women committees. Mr. A.H. Ganesan, Programme Officer (1962-1999), spoke of his long association with the Regional Office and having witnessed the 25th anniversary, 50th anniversary, and now the 60th anniversary! Ms. Simel Esim, Manager ILO Coop spoke of the collaboration and cooperation between the ILO and the ICA-AP region from the early 60s; the role played by ILO specialists, trainers, and educators in supporting the strengthening of national cooperative movements, governmental cooperative development institutions, and the development cooperation projects.

The first members from the region were the Cooperative Federation of Ceylon [now National Cooperative Council of Sri Lanka]; National Cooperative Council-Burma [now Central Cooperative Society]; All-India Cooperative Union [now National Cooperative Union of India]; Central Union of Agricultural Cooperatives of Japan [now JA-Zenchu]; Japanese Consumer Cooperative Union [JCCU]; Co-operative Union of Malaya [now ANGKASA]; and the West Pakistan Cooperative Union [WPCU]. Mr. Toru Nakaya, Chairman of the Central Union of Agricultural Cooperatives, Japan in his message thanked the ICA-AP Regional Assembly for the support extended to Japanese cooperatives when they were facing issues regarding demutualization. Mr. Dato' Abdul Fattah Abdullah, President ANGKASA, spoke about ICA-AP serving as the platform to connect with cooperatives in the region, opportunity to participate in trainings and conferences, and in networking. He spoke of ANGKASA organizing important events like the Ministers' Conference, Registrars Forum, and the ICA General Assembly in 2017. Mr. Khin Maung Aye, the Chairman of the Central Cooperative Society, Myanmar, spoke about the development of cooperatives in Myanmar through the training received from member countries and their active participation in all activities. Mr. Sarath Weerasiri, Chairman of the National Cooperative Council of Sri Lanka, in his message highlighted the close relationship between ICA-AP and cooperatives in Sri Lanka through trainings, events, and exchange visits. Mr. N. Satyanarayana, CE, NCUI, spoke about NCUI's role from the beginning and the role played by the current 14 members. He thanked members from China, Japan, Korea, and other countries for the support extended through trainings which resulted in professional and personal development. He also spoke of the Blueprint for a Cooperative Decade in providing direction to the cooperative movement and the role in the Sustainable Development Goals.

Dr. U.S. Awasthi, Managing Director, IFFCO in his congratulatory message spoke of their close engagement with the regional and global offices of ICA. IFFCO has played an important part in supporting activities, chairing committees, helping during natural disasters, and in advocacy. He also spoke of the need for cooperatives to look at issues around technology, climate change and global warming, and in development of business opportunities. Dr. Nandini Azad, Chairperson of the ICA-AP Women Committee, traced the history of the women committee activities over the past 23 years, the support received from JCCU and the work carried out to increase the presence of women at leadership levels. She touched upon the landmark study on gender disaggregated data in 2005 and 2018; the three Tagatay Women's Conferences in Philippines (1997, 2006, 2016); and Women Forums. She highlighted the role played by women during the difficult times of the pandemic and the efforts to make them digitally literate.

Mr. Min Raj Kadel, Chairman, National Cooperative Federation of Nepal, spoke of their 23 years engagement with the ICA-AP and the benefits through experience sharing, participation in activities, partnership development, collaboration, and advocacy. Mr. Kok Kwong Kwek, Chairman, Singapore National Cooperative Federation, congratulated the office and said it is an established and well-regarded office. SNCF has been a member since 1985 and during all these years it has worked to build the capacity of cooperatives, develop sustainable methods, take a lead in youth related activities, and host several events. Mr. Bhima Subhramanyam, Chairman, International Cooperative Banking Association, in his congratulatory message praised the region for carrying out many programs, timely conduct of statutory meetings, and establishing closer inter-personal relations. He spoke of his good opportunity of associating with ICA-AP on many occasions and working closely on few areas of

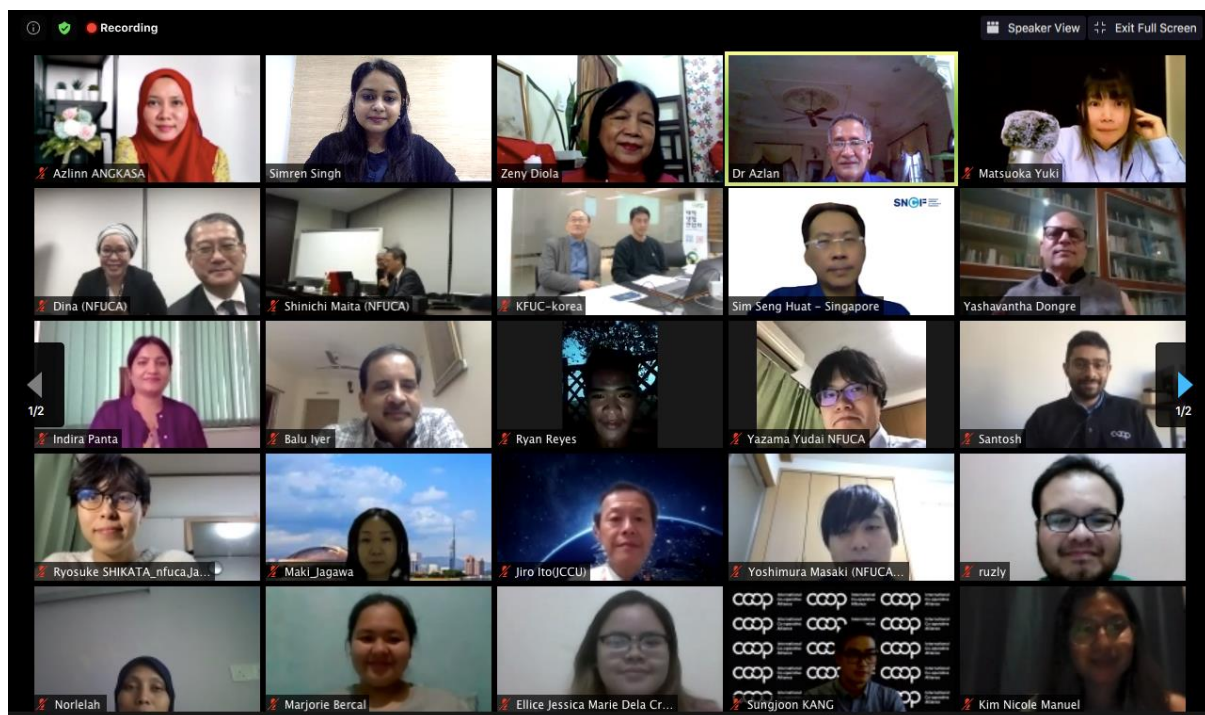
interest. Mr. Alireza Baneifar, from the Iran Chamber of Cooperatives, extended the best wishes from cooperatives in Iran and spoke about cooperatives and the work being carried out by them. He stressed on the need to look at education and research, role of youth and women in development, promote sustainable production and consumption, and strengthen relationship among countries through cooperative experiences.

Balasubramanian Iyer in his closing remarks thanked the participants for joining the celebrations and for the greetings, well wishes, and congratulatory messages! The voices from the region showed the close association with Regional Office, appreciation of the work done by the Regional Office, acknowledgement of the need for reinforcing joint work to look ahead, and add our collective forces in meeting the needs of members, interests of women, and aspirations of youth.

Messages were received from the Business Council of Cooperatives and Mutuals, Australia; the Cooperative Business New Zealand; Cooperative Institute of Malaysia, National Federation of University Cooperatives Association, Japan; and the Vietnam Cooperative Alliance.

The webinar was hosted by Savitri Singh and Simren Singh from ICA-AP; sessions moderated by Mr. Mohit Dave, ICA-AP, Prof. Yeshwanth Dongre, and Dr. Mallika Kumar, Shri Ram College of Commerce; and supported by Shivali Sarna and Shree Padmanabhan.

## Webinar: Impact of COVID-19 on Education and Cooperatives in Educational Institutions in Asia and Pacific



COVID-19 has majorly disrupted educational services around the world. For over eight months, teaching has shifted online; schools and universities in most countries continue to put in-person education in abeyance until it is safe to collectivise on campuses for classes, networking, and extra-

curricular activities. With the third wave of COVID-19 erupting in some parts of the world, uncertainty looms large over every sphere of life. Education remains one of the seriously affected sectors among many, especially with limited access to digital resources for students and teachers from the marginalised backgrounds to continue 'education-as-usual'.

Cooperatives in educational institutions, like other economic enterprises, are also facing the brunt of the ongoing pandemic with the inability to operate and serve its members physically on campuses. The disruption of normal educational activities has affected businesses and jobs for the students, the teachers, and the staff involved in campus cooperatives as members or part-time employees; along with posing other challenges, such as lack of in-person networking, isolation, insecurity about self, career, and future.

The ICA Asia and Pacific Committee on Cooperatives in Educational Institutions (ICEI) organised a webinar on 5<sup>th</sup> November 2020 to discuss the impact of COVID-19 on education and cooperatives in educational institutions (campus cooperatives) in Japan, Malaysia, Singapore, and South Korea. The webinar was attended by 50 participants representing ICA members, ICA staff, students, and educators in Asia and Pacific.

Mr. Balu Iyer, Regional Director of ICA-AP inaugurated the webinar. In his address, he remarked that the pandemic has exposed many inadequacies and inequities in the education systems around the world. Moving further, as public funds will be increasingly directed towards health and social welfare, there is a risk of curtailed public spending on education in the long term. Therefore, in the given scenario, it becomes critical to assess the impact of disrupted on-campus education during the pandemic on campus cooperatives and ascertain what can be done to mitigate the long-term impact on members. He also underlined the need for increased digitalisation in campus cooperatives and implementation of Cooperative Principle 6 (Cooperation among Cooperatives) at the domestic and the international level to support campus cooperative businesses and members' wellbeing.

Dr. Mohd. Azlan Yahya, Chairperson of ICEI and Vice-President of ANGKASA, shared the ongoing challenges of schools and school cooperative businesses in Malaysia. Over 800 children in primary schools and 1,300 children in secondary schools have been infected since the first wave of Coronavirus in Malaysia. Schools have been mostly closed until now and those which are gradually trying to reopen are facing an altogether new challenge. Parents and children are developing 'school phobia' due to rising number of cases. As a result, sharp decline in school attendance has been reported. On the other hand, campus cooperatives in schools are suffering due to reduced sales and revenue.

Mr. Shinichi Maita, Vice-Chairperson of ICEI; Managing Director and CEO of National Federation of University Co-operative Associations (NFUCA), discussed the impact of the pandemic on higher education and university cooperatives. In Japan, admissions and graduation ceremonies in March-April were halted. Classes were postponed and university campuses were closed during the national emergency which lasted for seven weeks between April and May. Since May however, universities have adopted hybrid model of teaching with most of the classes being held online. It was noted that NFUCA conducted a survey with about 35,000 undergraduate and graduate students to understand the impact of the pandemic on university cooperatives and support required by students. The findings of the survey indicated a decrease in household income for those who were part-time workers in



university cooperatives; reduced opportunities for networking and socialising for new students as they did not get an opportunity to meet and interact with one another personally; scepticism about timely completion of studies and securing jobs after graduation; and dissatisfaction with virtual learning environment as opposed to the physical learning environment. Further, it was reported that estimated operational turnover for university cooperatives has gone down compared to the last year. However, no capital shortage was reported in the Financial Year 2020.

Similar insights on the status of education and university cooperatives were shared by Mr. Kim Jong-weon, member of ICEI and President of Korea Federation of University Co-operatives (KFUC), South Korea. Classes in schools and universities are being conducted in a hybrid manner. Courses that require practical and laboratory application and with less than twenty enrolled students are being conducted offline, while rest are held remotely using online platforms. It was reported that even though access to online education is not a major challenge, quality of classes/lectures cannot be fully ensured using online platforms. Teachers also are finding it increasingly difficult to record lectures on their own. Further, there are more than 200 universities in South Korea and only 35 of them have campus cooperatives (stores, cafes, etc.). Due to the ongoing pandemic, only 40% of them are currently operational and their sales have sharply reduced (by 47%) compared to 2019, even though social-distancing and health protocols are being followed.

To address some of these challenges, several measures are being adopted by the cooperatives to support and engage with students. Mr. Sim Seng Huat, member of ICEI and Senior Manager (campus and youth) at Singapore National Co-operative Federation (SNCF), shared that cooperative clubs in Singapore are engaging with school and university students through online workshops on cooperatives, awareness sessions, and training sessions on entrepreneurship. Similarly, measures like online orientation meetings with new students in Japan, partial operation of cooperative stores and cafes in Japan and South Korea and outlook to devise new business models for school cooperatives in Malaysia are being undertaken.

The webinar ended with a positive note that despite the operational challenges faced by campus cooperatives, there have been no complete shutdown of businesses and employee layoffs. In his closing remarks, Dr. Azlan thanked the participants and ICEI members for sharing useful insights from their countries. The webinar was moderated by Prof. Zeniada Diola (Co-Secretary), Dr. Yashwanth Dongre (Co-Secretary) and Ms. Simren Singh (Secretary) from ICEI.

## Webinar: Follow-up on ICA-AP Regional Capacity Building Programme on SDG-13: Climate Action



ICA-AP organized a follow-up webinar on 29<sup>th</sup> October 2020 for its Regional Capacity Building Programme on SDG-13: Climate Action. Past participants from Asian Confederation of Credit Unions (ACCU), Thailand, NATCCO Network, Philippines, Indian Farmers Fertiliser Cooperatives (IFFCO) and Krishak Bharati Cooperatives (KRIBHCO), India, presented reports on the actions taken by them post the training.

The original capacity building programme was held from 19 to 21 November 2019 at the CLT Training Center, Bangkok, Thailand on the theme: “Save the Environment to Sustain Future Generations.” The program was co-organised by ICA members - Cooperative League of Thailand (CLT) and All China Federation of Supply and Marketing Cooperatives (ACFSMC) and ICA-EU Partnership Project. The training curriculum was designed by experts from the Training Centre at GIZ, Thailand in consultation with ICA-AP to be most suitable to cooperatives in the region. Master trainers from GIZ were engaged to impart the training.

The training was in line with ICA’s commitment to strengthen the capacity of members in responding to Climate Change and was aimed at senior executives and leaders of cooperatives and focused on understanding the urgency of climate action, spread awareness, and take steps to address the effects. The two-days training was attended by 24 participants from eight countries including China, India, Philippines, Maldives, Thailand, Vietnam, Botswana, Nigeria and one regional organization, the Asian Confederation of Credit Unions (ACCU). The training concluded with action points to be implemented by participants using the skills and learnings from the training.

To track the impact of such training programmes and make it a continuous process, it is important to engage with the participants to know about their work. Due to the COVID-19 induced travel restrictions, the follow-up for Climate Action training was done via webinar.

Mr. Balu Iyer, Regional Director, ICA-AP, delivered opening address at the webinar and Mrs. Savitri Singh, Program Director, facilitated the discussions. The reports from the participants were encouraging and some of them had established a skill development programme to train and multiply trainers to spread awareness and impart necessary skills to the coop members. Taking inspiration and being empowered with knowledge from the training, the ACCU and NATTCO came together to jointly established a training programme. They further trained people from 13 cooperatives in Philippines. The trainers who graduated recently are being called as 'Climate Warriors'. Their task is to train cooperatives, spread awareness about best practices, and multiply trainers to cover all cooperative members and their community.

Ms. Elenita V. San Roque, CEO of ACCU has taken a lead and introduced Climate Action mechanism in the credit union (CU) network as following -

This is CU Business Solution 26: Guide to Climate Action

1. EVOLVING MENU of climate action programs
2. SIGNIFICANT FORCE we are 36 million strong in Asia (members) and 34,000 institutions
3. RECOGNIZE impacts of climate change to humanity
4. URGENT – to integrate climate action in our daily lives and in integrate in CU operations
5. Even the smallest contributions can counter a global climate challenge. It's the little things that matters most.

The ACCU has created information and awareness posters for members. The most important initiative are -

1. Adding the 6<sup>th</sup> C of Credit – Climate Compliance in Loan Assessment
2. Do-it-yourself Energy/Climate Audit
3. Credit Union Self-Assessment Waste Audit and Management
4. Waste Audit for Business
5. Climate Finance 6. Integrating Climate Actions in ACCU Business Solutions wherever applicable

Mr. Leonardo S. Banga from NATCCO-Micoop Group of Philippines reported that micro action completed within the four months of the training that included meeting with the stakeholders at primary level to discuss urgency of the climate issue, push for the inclusion of SDG-13 as one of the strategic objectives in the annual plan and target of primary coops, promoting the practice of reduce, reuse and recycle, review of credit /loan products attune to climate protection. They also introduced various simple actions for environmental preservation and protection.

Mr. Sudhir Kumar Sharma, Manager from IFFCO reported that the theme "Climate Action" motivates to raise awareness on the importance of addressing the ways to mitigate the impact of climate change. Social responsibility and social accountability are key to growth and development of the coop members. Coops should maintain the practice of Sustainable Production and Delivery to the Farmers and rural community by taking effective measures. He listed the key initiatives by IFFCO for climate action such as Nano Fertilisers to ensure sustainable use of agri inputs, Bio-Fertilisers, Save the Soil Campaign, Sustainable Agro Forestry, Neem Plantation for Clean Environment, etc.

Mr. L.P. Goodwin, Chief Manager from KRIBHCO, in his report, presented action taken by his organization to support climate action. KHIBHCO had started awareness campaign, focusing on soil health, proper use of fertilizer and other farm inputs, and plantation of trees.

A few participants from ICA Africa regions could not present the reports but they participated and got engaged in the discussions through chat box messaging.

In his concluding remarks, Mr. Balu Iyer expressed happiness on the remarkable actions taken by the participants and said that ICA will continue engaging with members on the SDG-13 and would also extend required capacity building programmes in the future.

## Youth Replication Project Winners Announcement



The Replication Project is an initiative of the ICA Global Youth Network, led and managed by the Executive Committee (EC) to understand existing cooperative youth projects, to support replication of existing models, and to create new ones. With the goal of having young people come together to start new cooperative projects, the programme was launched in mid-2020 and aims to have a global reach. The EC will choose at least 8 projects (two per region) and fund them with a maximum of EUR 10,000 per project. They will also recruit mentors from the ICA network to help support the building of strong foundations and structures.

The Youth Network had received over 150 applications, which were reviewed by members of the Youth Network Executive Committee and a representative from the International Summit of Cooperatives. The judges selected nine youth-led ventures from across the world that will receive funding of EUR 10,000 each and support from mentors to help them develop cooperatives.

The panel of judges selected the following winning projects:

1. [The Young Peoples' Multipurpose Coop](#) from Zimbabwe, to install solar panels in housing cooperatives
2. [The Enhancing Organic Food Cropping Cooperative](#) (ENOFOCC) from Cameroon, to collect manure to create organic fertilisers

3. [RedRoot](#) from Philippines, an IT coop to create an event management tool for cooperatives
4. [PerMaTa](#) from Indonesia, to recycle waste - the project is led by young people affected by leprosy
5. [Fashion Design](#) from Guatemala, to design and sell fashion items using unique Mayan textiles
6. [Revolusar](#) from Brazil, to install solar panels in favelas
7. [Fundacja Splot Społeczny](#) (FSS) from Poland, to tackle pollution and implement waste management solutions
8. [The Guild](#) from Turkey, to set up an interpreters' workers cooperative
9. [FACTIC](#) youth network from Argentina, to help two of their applicants:
  - I. AfriCo Online from South Africa to create an online marketplace to promote fair and local products across southern Africa
  - II. Brand K Communications Coop Technologies from Kenya to set up an IT cooperative

**From the Asia and Pacific region, two entries have won the funding – RedRoot from Philippines and PerMaTa from Indonesia.**



From the founders of the Red Root Artists Cooperative, this initiative is a cooperative-driven, youth-led, **Pioneering Virtual Events Platform** to consolidate various youth partners, stakeholders, and event industry suppliers to cater to the need for events, both Virtual (Phase 1) and Physical (Phase 2). This platform is envisioned to become the go-to platform for physical and virtual event bookings for organizers/managers, talents, technology and logistics provider, catering service and more!

Additional Support Required:

Training on financial management, fundraising, networking, human resources, youth engagement (under 20), and supply-chain management applications. More details can be found [here](#).



PerMaTa is an organisation of people affected by leprosy with three branches in Indonesia. The core of the cooperative will be waste recycling. The idea for this arose considering the garbage lying around everywhere and therefore, the business model is based on the concept of the "Waste Banks", which is already practiced in several parts of Indonesia, but not in their region.

Additional Support Required:

Bookkeeping and finances, marketing, developing innovative ideas, and further strengthening of team to become confident, strong young team members. More details can be found [here](#).

### ILO Coop 100 Symposium

To celebrate the 100th anniversary of its Cooperatives Unit (COOP), the ILO organised a two-day international symposium. On the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> November 2020.

Held virtually, the symposium highlighted the contribution of cooperatives and the wider social and solidarity economy (SSE) in advancing social justice, decent work, and the sustainable development agenda. It brought together policy makers, researchers and practitioners who reflected on historical perspectives, legal and policy frameworks, measurement, management, sustainability, platform economy and future of work issues among others. The event was live-streamed on ILO TV in English, Spanish and French, the recording for the same can be accessed here – [Day 1: English](#) and [Day 2 – English](#).

The opening remark for the Symposium was shared by ICA President Mr. Ariel Guarco. He said that ICA deeply values celebrating the 100-year milestone of the ILO's Cooperatives Unit.



Referring to the first Director of the ILO, Mr. Guarco mentioned, Albert Thomas understood that cooperatives were vital to improving the living conditions of workers. Hundred years later, strengthening the ties between the ICA and the ILO is more important than ever considering the challenges facing the world today.

He also noted that the cooperative identity is enshrined in ILO's Promotion of Cooperatives Recommendation, 2002 (No. 193). The MoU signed last year during ILO's Centenary, demonstrates the commitment of the two organizations to walk together toward a future of work that incorporates cooperative values and principles leaving no one behind. Mr. Guarco said that this symposium is a very good opportunity to strengthen the cooperative paradigm globally.

The event was also participated by ICA staff - Hagen Henry, Stefania Marcone, Mr. Hyungsik EUM, Jeffrey Moxom, and John Emerson as speakers and chairs for different sessions.

The session wise details of the two-day symposium can be found [here](#).

## NEWS FROM MEMBERS

The Department of Co-operative Development (CDC) from Sri Lanka has joined International Cooperative Alliance (ICA) in November 2020. With this, ICA now has 110 members from 32 countries in the Asia and Pacific region.

The Department of Cooperative Development (DCD) is presently established under the Ministry of Industry & Commerce, Resettlement of Protracted Displaced Persons, Cooperative Development and

Vocational Training & Skills Development. There are 75 national level cooperative federations and societies are registered under DCD. The objectives and functions of DCD include:

1. Registering national level cooperative unions / federations and all island cooperative societies and guide them.
2. Doing financial audits annually of all registered cooperative unions/federations and societies.
3. Coordinating between the government and the cooperation.
4. Propagating cooperative business.
5. Maintaining good governance and strengthening cooperative societies.
6. Conducting cooperative societies along cooperative policies and Cooperative Act No. 05 of 1972.
7. Coordinating between institutes and external parties related to cooperative service.
8. Assisting the government in development projects launching.
9. Coordinating all provincial cooperative departments.
10. Making cooperative policy and coordinating each province to execute the policy.

More information if available at [www.coop.gov.lk](http://www.coop.gov.lk).

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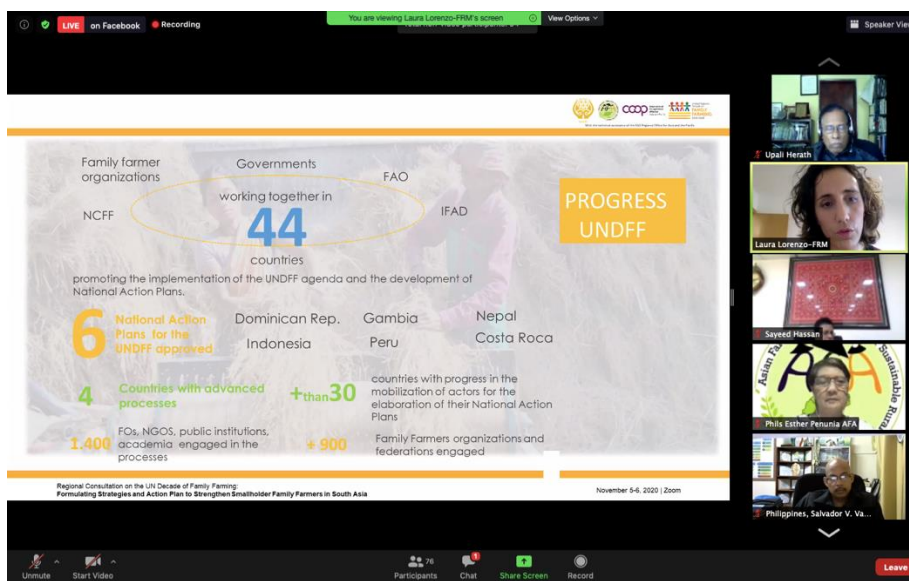


## UNDF Regional Consultation Meeting





ICA Asia-Pacific (ICA-AP), in collaboration with the SAARC Agriculture Centre (SAC), Asian Farmers Association for Sustainable Rural Development (AFA), the Food and Agriculture Organization – Regional Office for Asia Pacific (FAO-ROAP), and with the support of the ICA-EU Partnership<sup>1</sup> organised an online “Regional Consultation meeting on the UN Decade of Family Farming (UNDF): Formulating Strategies and Action Plan to Strengthen Smallholder Family Farmers in South Asia”. The meeting was useful for the onset of formulating a Regional Action Plan that defines the key priorities, strategies, and actions to implement the UNDF in South Asia. The meeting was held on 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> November 2020 and was attended by around 150 participants from the government, family farmers organizations, cooperatives, academia, civil society, research institutions, and intergovernmental organisations from the South Asia.



The government officials presented a situation on family farming in their country, as well as on-going and planned efforts to make a national action plan for the UNDF. Firsthand experiences from family farmers’ organisations from Nepal, India, and Sri Lanka regarding supporting the National Family Farmers’ Committees and multi-stakeholder dialogues were also shared with participants. Break-out group discussions were held to identify key priorities such as policies, actions, and studies/researches that need to be undertaken at the regional level and that will further support the development and implementation of a Regional Action Plan for UNDF, anchored in the UNDF Global Action Plan.

<sup>1</sup> In March 2016, the ICA and the European Union signed a Framework Partnership Agreement to implement a development programme aimed at benefitting and advancing cooperatives worldwide.



In the break-out sessions, the participants committed to pursuing the following priority policies, actions, studies, and researches at the national and regional level.

1. Develop an enabling policy environment to strengthen family farming
2. Support youth and ensure the generational sustainability of family farming.
3. Promote gender equity in family farming and the leadership role of rural women.
4. Strengthen family farmers' organizations (FFO) and their capacities to generate knowledge, represent farmers concerns and provide inclusive services in rural areas.
5. Improve socio-economic inclusion, resilience, and well-being of family farmers, rural households, and communities.
6. Promote sustainability of family farming for climate resilient food systems.
7. Strengthen the multi-dimensionality of family farming to promote social innovations, contributing to the territorial development and food systems that safeguard biodiversity, environment, and culture.

The participants further committed to operationalize the UNDFP global action plan at the country level through the development and implementation of National Action Plans, led by inclusive, multi-stakeholder process (governments, farmers organization, civil society, research organizations, cooperatives and private sector). It was decided that the regional level will institute mechanisms for the formulation, implementation, and monitoring of the UNDFP plan both at the national and the regional level.



Lastly, the organizers committed to finalizing and packaging a Regional Action Plan for UNDF in South Asia based on the results of this meeting that will be endorsed by SAARC leaders. Within the next two months another multi stakeholder virtual process will be convened to finalize this plan for endorsement by SAARC leaders. The participants called on their governments and international development partners to mobilize resources to support the implementation of South Asia's Regional and National Action plans for the UNDF.

### Remote Result Oriented Monitoring Mission on Cooperatives in Development People-Centred Businesses in Action

A Result-Oriented Monitoring (ROM) review of the ICA-EU Partnership in the Asia and the Pacific region took place from 16<sup>th</sup> to 20<sup>th</sup> November 2020, undertaken by ROM expert Mr. Mikel Cordoba from Madrid, Spain. In this timeframe, the ICA-AP team organised interviews with the project focal points, the persons in-charge of the project budget/ finances, each member of the team involved in the intervention, and the beneficiaries. The interviews were conducted online through Zoom platform.

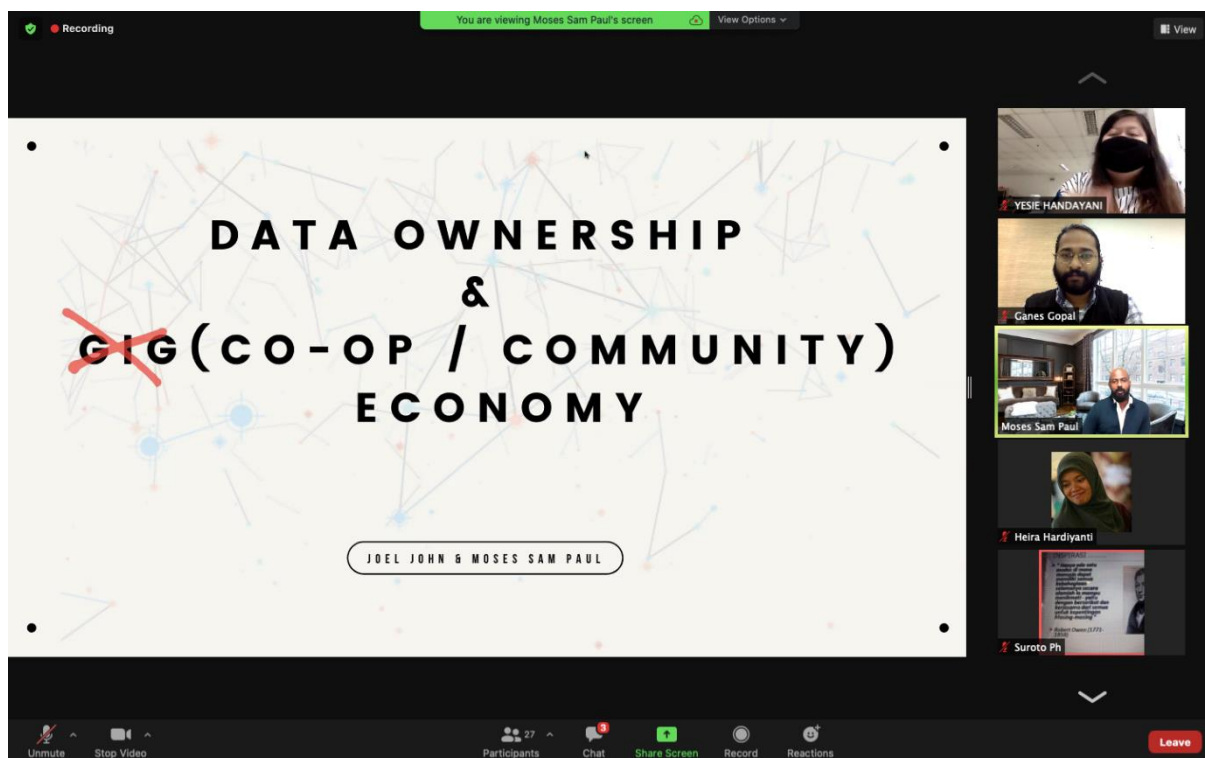
The ROM Global Consortium has been contracted by the European Commission (EC) to implement the ROM review of a selected list of Centrally Managed Thematic Interventions (CMTI) which are managed by the EC Directorate General of International Cooperation and Development (DEVCO). In this framework, they had planned a remote ROM review mission to the intervention "Cooperatives in Development People-centred Businesses in Action" (C-371375). The objective of the ROM reviews is to provide an external opinion on project implementation in order to support the European Commission's services and the implementing organizations through advice and recommendations, based on an analysis of project documentation and consultations with all parties involved, including beneficiaries. It aims at enhancing the European Commission's accountability and management capacities with a strong focus on the results.

In this context, the discussions assessed the project status through an analysis of the documentation and meaningful consultations with all the parties involved, including ICA members, partners, and the beneficiaries. The reviewer especially looked at the progress from the previous such review conducted

in February 2019 in terms of input provision, activities undertaken, and results delivered (outputs, direct outcomes). The reviewer dwelled deeper into the analysis of the project action plan (indicators, activities, outputs, and results). The following aspects/ criteria were examined during the review mission - i) Relevance, ii) Coordination, complementarity, EU added value, iii) Intervention logic, monitoring & learning, iv) Efficiency, v) Effectiveness, vi) Sustainability, vii) Cross cutting issues (gender, human rights, environment, climate change), and viii) Communication and visibility.

The remote mission was undertaken across all the four regions of the ICA (Americas, Africa, Asia-Pacific, and Europe) between 16<sup>th</sup> November to 4<sup>th</sup> December 2020. The reviewers will submit a report in the coming months highlighting the strengths and weaknesses of the project implementation with a view to assist the EC Operational Managers and key stakeholders to deal with questions and problems that have emerged, to find solutions and revise approaches, and where relevant, to adapt to changing circumstances.

### Coopathon 3.0 Webinar: Data & Cooperative Identity



As part of the Coopathon 3.0 initiative, the International Cooperative Alliance Asia and Pacific organized a webinar on 25<sup>th</sup> November 2020 on “Data and Cooperative Identity”. The speakers were Mr. Moses Sam Paul and Mr. Joel John are the Bharat Inclusion Initiative (BII) fellows, an initiative of Centre for Innovation Incubation & Entrepreneurship (CIIE) at the Indian Institute of Management- Ahmedabad.

Mr. Ganesh Gopal, Programme Officer, ICA-AP started the session with the opening remarks and the larger idea of why technology-infusion and digital-transformation is the need of the hour for the coop ecosystem. He emphasised, how, by pursuing this, cooperatives, with their inherent structural

advantages can become an aspirational entity in this digital era, rather than a traditional one. He welcomed the speakers and touched upon the theme of Coopathon 3.0 – Technology and Cooperative Identity and expressed hope that several innovative solutions were expected to emerge as part of such cooperative-hackathons organised by the ICA-AP regional office.

The presentation largely led by Mr. Moses Sam Paul started off with discussing the importance of the “Third Pillar” (as described by Dr. Raghuram Rajan in his book by the same name) and the role that ‘communities’ play as one of the three building blocks of a good society; with the other two being the State and the Markets.

He spoke about the existence and emergence of the skill-based communities and their importance within the societal structure over time. From this, he built upon how one can envision the development of a data distributed community platform where cooperatives can play a pivotal role. The presentation also addressed the role that Cooperatives could play as data-fiduciaries and custodians of data for a group of people by essentially helping them retain control and choice over the use of one’s own data; which can even be used as a tool for furthering benefits of its stakeholders including - access to credit, financial services, employment based on skill-based matching etc.

Moses said that with the advantages of cooperative-model, they can be transformed in this digital age into organisations which can be agile and at the same time increase access to several services, therefore, he stressed on the need for building the next such ‘Tesla for cooperatives. He also exhorted the need for more such initiatives like the Coopathon and the importance of youth, young-innovators, and technology enthusiasts being part of such a forum for exchange and development of ideas and solutions.

Towards the end of the programme, there was a very lively moderated questions & answers (Q&A) session with several questions discussed regarding: data democratisation, how technology can be applied with the Coop-model to make it inclusive for marginalised groups, how blockchain can be used with respect to the discussed models, etc.

Ms. Shivali Sarna, Communication Officer, ICA-AP, thanked the speakers for the enlightening session and made the closing remarks where she spoke more about the Coopathon 3.0, encouraging more registrations and support from the youth and cooperative fraternity. It was also mentioned that this is the first time that the cooperative hackathon is being organised fully online and for at an international level.

The webinar saw active participation with several participants from all over the Asia and Pacific region. The recording of the webinar can be found [here](#).

## Announcements

### Coopathon 3.0 – An Online Cooperative Hackathon



ICA-AP along with its partners is organising the third edition of Coopathon – a cooperative hackathon, to identify and solve contemporary problems and pressing challenges in the social and services sectors. Coopathon 3.0 will be a fully online 72-hour hackathon event, for participants across Asia and the Pacific region from 11<sup>th</sup> December (Friday) - 14<sup>th</sup> December (Monday) 2020. More information can be accessed on the website [www.coopathon.coop](http://www.coopathon.coop).

Preparations for Coopathon 3.0 are in full swing and the organizing team is gearing up to welcome the diverse group of participants from across the borders and nationalities! The registrations for the event have been closed now with 80+ entries received.

This Coopathon is the first of its kind since it is the first time such a cooperative-hackathon is being organized as a fully online-event and that too for an international participant audience. The third edition also brings a diverse pool of partners and mentors to provide pre, during, and post-event support, mentorship, and industry-connect for the participants to develop successful solutions.

Coopathon 3.0 is being organized with the support of eight partner organisations from six countries, which are namely:

1. **The Malaysian National Cooperative Movement (ANGKASA)**, the apex cooperative body recognised by the government to represent the Malaysian cooperative movement at national and international level, is one of the promotional partners for the event.
2. **Indonesian Consortium for Cooperatives Innovation (ICCI)** is an institution engaged in promoting cooperative innovation in Indonesia through regulatory advocacy, research and development, dissemination of ideas, collaboration between multi parties: associations, government, cooperatives, campuses, media, and the private sector. It is an outreach and design partner for the event.
3. **Indonesian Cooperative Management Institute (IKOPIN)** aims to organize an education system with a strong scientific and technological basis, synergizing between various disciplines

in the developing cooperatives and globally oriented entrepreneurship. It is the mentor recruitment partner for the event.

4. **Incubator.coop:** Based in Australia, it is an incubator for member-owned enterprises and other innovative ideas that are cooperatives or companies with a cooperative constitution. It is the mentorship and promotional partner for the event.
5. **KODI:** It is a Fintech start-up in Indonesia enabling a digital cooperative movement to empower the grassroots economy by providing business opportunities to coops and communities. Kodi is an organising partner for the event.
6. **Mondragon Team Academy, Korea:** Based in Spain, it is part of a global network of social innovation ecosystem labs who have adopted Finnish Educational methods. They are supporting in event outreach and planning mentoring sessions with the participants.
7. **TinkerHub Foundation:** An Indian non-profit initiative that aims to use 21st-century technologies and learning methods to foster a fresh breed of highly skilled young people empowered with technical and social skills. Tinkerhub is the technology partner and will assist participants with tools, skills, experiential learning methods associated with innovation & entrepreneurship.
8. **Travelling University:** Based in Spain, it is an educational platform cooperative that designs creative, human, entrepreneurship and leadership international learning experiences. They are supporting in event outreach and planning mentoring sessions with the participants.

The event also features eight mentors from seven countries, bringing on board experience from diverse fields to add value to the prototype-building process.

#	Name	Work Profile	Country
1	Ms. Revathi Sharma Kollegala	Entrepreneur; Product Strategist	India
2	Mr. Rohan Clarke	Chair, BCCM Platform Coop Taskforce Co-Founder, Incubator.Coop, Geddup And Fairbnb Australia	Australia
3	Mr. Iruma Tanaka	Seikatsu Club Kanagawa, A Consumer Cooperative	Japan
4	Ms. Isabella Ipollito	Iproject Manager Legacoop Liguria	Italy
5	Mr. Dingdong Comeros	Area Manager, VICTO National	Philippines
6	Mr. Sam Moses Paul	Technology and Public Policy Professional	India
7	Mr. Andreas Arnold	Co-Founder Platform Cooperatives Germany eG, Business Consultant and Community Builder	Germany
8	Mr. Greg Brodsky	Co-Director, Start.Coop	

The detailed profiles of all the mentors are available [here](#).

## Short Film Competition: #COOPSFC2020



ICA-AP's Committee on Cooperatives in Educational Institutions (ICEI) initiated the first ever regional coop short film competition in September 2020. The entries are invited from students, faculty, and staff from any school, college, or training institute from any country in the Asia and Pacific region. The deadline for registrations has been extended until 31<sup>st</sup> January 2020.

### MAFF Training Course

The ICA and the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries (MAFF) of the Government of Japan, Tokyo signed an agreement for the implementation of the “**Capacity Building Project for Farmers’ Organizations to Support the Development of Food Value Chain in Asia and Africa in FY-2020**” for the period from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2020 to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2021, which comprises the four programmes as follows:

1. **Programme-1:** Training Course on Strengthening Management and Development of Agricultural Cooperatives and Farmers’ Organizations in Asia and Africa.
2. **Programme-2:** Training Course on Empowering of Rural Women for Improvement of their Leadership and Business and Management.
3. **Programme-3:** Training Course on Strengthening of Marketing through Improvement of Quality of Farm Produce and Expansion of Marketing Channels.
4. **Programme-4:** Follow-up Guidance and Survey of Ex-participants.

Given the ongoing impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and continuing restrictions on travel, the three training programmes are to be held online. The second training course on “Empowering of Rural Women for Improvement of their Leadership and Business and Management” will begin in December 2020.



## 15th ICA-AP Cooperative Research Conference

The Cooperative Research Conference 2020, organized by the ICA Asia-Pacific Committee on Cooperative Research (CCR), will be held in Trivandrum, India on 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> December 2020, at the Agricultural Cooperative Staff Training Institute (ACSTI). Themed around “Addressing climate change through cooperative enterprise”, the conference is being organized by the CCR with the support of ACSTI, Government of Kerala, ICA Domus Trust, Uralungal Labour Contract Cooperative Society (ULCCS) and the ICA-EU Partnership on Cooperatives in Development (#coops4dev). Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the conference will use a hybrid model, combining online and physical meeting to showcase the presentation of papers and discussion.

The ICA-AP CCR will bestow two young researchers (not over 35 years of age) with the Dr. Mauritz Bonow Young Researcher Award. The award will carry cash prize of US\$ 500 and US\$ 300 respectively.

## 14<sup>th</sup> ICA-AP Regional Assembly



The ICA-AP Regional Board, in its online meeting on 27<sup>th</sup> October 2020, approved a hybrid regional Assembly structure. ICA-AP will first hold its Regional Assembly online in February 2021 followed by an in-person Regional Assembly to conduct the Regional Board elections, in conjunction with the ICA World Cooperative Congress in Seoul, Republic of Korea in November/ December 2021.

The 14<sup>th</sup> Regional Assembly will be held online on 24<sup>th</sup> February 2021 from 11:00 to 13:00 hours India Standard Time to consider administrative issues and approve the postponement of the ICA-AP Regional Board elections. The online assembly will be open to members who have paid their subscription fees for 2020. All items will be approved by show of hand during the online Assembly.

Information related to agenda, registration, and meeting joining details is being posted on the official website of the 14<sup>th</sup> Regional Assembly - <http://regionalassembly.coop/>.

## Postponement of World Cooperative Congress



### **ICA 33rd World Cooperative Congress to be held in Seoul, the Republic of Korea from 1-3 December 2021**

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the International Cooperative Alliance (ICA) Global Board has postponed the 33<sup>rd</sup> World Cooperative Congress. The ICA has announced that the event will be held in Seoul, the Republic of Korea from 1<sup>st</sup> to 3<sup>rd</sup> December 2021. The theme for this event will be “Deepening our Cooperative Identity” to strengthen the cooperative movement’s role in addressing global challenges and also explore avenues to improve lives at the local and global levels.

The Congress will consist of pre-events from 28-30 November followed by the conference itself from 1-3 December. More details of the schedule are available at <https://ICAWorldCoopCongress.coop>

The 33<sup>rd</sup> 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.

The World Cooperative Congress 2021 will be held at the Grand Walkerhill Hotel, in Seoul: <https://www.walkerhill.com/grandwalkerhillseoul/en/>

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

## Upcoming Events

- Launch of Aflatoun Manual for Cooperatives – **2<sup>nd</sup> December 2020**
- Online Cooperative Hackathon - *Coopathon 3.0* – **11<sup>th</sup> – 14<sup>th</sup> December 2020**
- 15<sup>th</sup> ICA-AP Cooperative Research Conference will be held in Trivandrum, India at the Agricultural Cooperative Staff Training Institute (ACSTI) – **17<sup>th</sup> – 18<sup>th</sup> December 2020** (Virtual)
- Online Training: *Empowerment of Rural Women for Improvement of their Leadership and Business Management in Asia and Africa* - **December 2020 – January 2021**
- Online Training: *Strengthening Management and Development of Agricultural Cooperatives and Farmers' Organisations in Asia & Africa* - **February – March 2021**
- 14<sup>th</sup> ICA-AP Online Regional Assembly – **24<sup>th</sup> February 2021**
- ICA 33rd World Cooperative Congress to be held in Seoul, the Republic of Korea – **1<sup>st</sup> – 3<sup>rd</sup> December 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.



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 Co-operative Alliance and can in no way be taken to reflect the views of the European Union.