

ICA-AP NEWSLETTER

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

November Newsletter

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11th Asia Pacific Cooperative Ministers' Conference

ICA-AP, in collaboration with the Jordan Co-operative Corporation (JCC) and the Ministry of Agriculture, will organize the 11th Asia Pacific Cooperative Ministers' Conference (APCMC). It will be hosted by the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan from 28 to 30 April 2024 in Amman, Jordan. The theme for the 11th APCMC is "Government-Cooperative Partnership for Cooperative Resilience, Sustainable Development & Inclusive Growth in Asia Pacific & MENA Region."

Appeal for Donations for the Cooperatives in Israel and Palestine

The International Cooperative movement stands in solidarity with the victims of violence in both Israel and Palestine and our members in the region. The ICA issued a [statement urging all parties to cooperate towards resolving this conflict peacefully](#). It has called upon the movement to support fellow cooperators in Israel and Palestine who have requested financial support. [Read more](#).

ICA-AP Updates

16th ICA-AP Regional Assembly held in Manila, the Philippines

The 16th ICA-AP Regional Assembly, held from 6-10 November 2023, in Manila, Philippines, was a gala affair. The Philippines hosted the Regional Assembly after two decades (last held in 2003) under the aegis of the Philippines Cooperative Affiliates (PCA). The Assembly comprised the Cooperative Forum, Regional Board Meeting, various events organized by the regional sectoral and thematic committees, and the statutory meeting of the Regional Assembly. The overarching theme this year was "Cooperatives: Our Common Agenda."

More than 250 international delegates from 21 countries (Argentina, Australia, Belgium, Brazil, Brunei, Canada, China, India, Indonesia, Iran, Italy, Japan, Malaysia, Nepal, Paraguay, S. Korea, Singapore, Sri Lanka, Thailand, Uruguay, and Vietnam) and around 285 delegates from the Philippines attended the Regional Assembly.

It started with two pre-events, the Regional Youth Workshop, held from November 3 to 5, and the 17th Asia Pacific Research Conference on November 4 and 5. The Youth Workshop provided a platform for the ICA-AP Youth Committee members to come together, strategize activities for the coming years, and create a synergy in the Asia-Pacific cooperative movement. The young cooperators concluded the workshop by signing the commitment to youth cooperativism. The research conference was an opportunity for academicians from the Asia Pacific region to hold mutual exchange and peer learning to promote accelerated actions for progress in Sustainable Development. The Dr. Mauritz Bonow Young Researchers Award was awarded to Dr. Jiyun Jeon from Korea (1st prize) and Ms. Kristine Atendido from the Philippines (2nd prize).

On November 6, the ICA-AP Regional Board met to discuss administrative issues and the budget and activities of 2024. The Board ratified the nomination of two new representatives, Mr. Alireza Banaeifar from Iran, and Mrs. Cao Xuan Thu Van from Vietnam. The meeting was also attended by ICA President, Mr. Ariel Guarco.

November 7 was dedicated to activities and statutory meetings of the ICA-AP thematic and sectoral committees. The Credit and Banking Committee held their meeting where members presented their country reports on financial cooperatives. It also organized a Regional Conference on the Credit and Banking Cooperatives to look at the synergies between the Financial Cooperatives and Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) as well as the regulatory challenges faced by financial cooperatives in Asia and the Pacific. The Consumer Committee organized a seminar with the Consumer Committee Worldwide (a global-level sectorial committee.) to accelerate the relations between the two committees and explore opportunities to collaborate. The committee also held its 57th statutory

meeting to review the activities of 2023 and plan the budget and activities for 2024. The Trade and Business Committee held its annual meeting and collaborated with the Network for the Development of Agricultural Cooperatives in Asia and the Pacific (NEDAC) to organise a seminar aimed at promoting sustainable agricultural supply chains and fostering partnerships among cooperatives within the Asia-Pacific region. The seminar provided an opportunity for the participants to share knowledge, exchange experiences, and collaboratively explore ways to align their efforts with the SDGs. In a pioneering effort, ICA-AP organised the Cooperative Trade Fair led by the Trade and Business Committee and the Federation of People's Sustainable Development Cooperative (FPSDC; an ICA member in the Philippines).

The ICA-AP Women's Committee, along with its statutory meeting, organised the 12th Asia Pacific Regional Women's Forum. The Committee celebrated its 25th anniversary this year with a thematic event on 'Gender Equality for a Brighter Future'. The Forum with the theme, 'Women Cooperators in the Future' marked the beginning of a new series of discussions on what lies ahead for women cooperators in the region. The Education Committee or ICEI held its annual meeting to discuss and finalise its strategic plan for 2023-2026 and the activities for 2024. The Youth Committee held elections for the positions of the Chairperson and Vice Chairperson of the Committee.

On 8 November, the joint opening ceremony of the 16th ICA-AP Regional Assembly and 11th Asia Pacific Cooperative Forum was held. It began with a vibrant Parade of Colors representing the 22 countries attending the Assembly. Mr. Ariel Guarco, in his inspiring opening speech, said that cooperatives are the most adequate model to solve socio-economic challenges globally. Addressing the gathering, Dr. Chandrapal Singh Yadav, ICA-AP President, highlighted the importance of the forum's theme 'Cooperatives: Our Common Agenda' and said that cooperatives ensure no one is left behind while achieving SDGs and their common agenda. Under Secretary, Mr. Joseph Encabo, Chairperson, Cooperative Development Authority of the Philippines stated that "Our Common Agenda is to build better lives for every individual in the world. Our role in this world is to cooperate and prove that cooperatives can be the pillars of change." Congressman Felimon M. Espares, who is also the Coop NATCCO Party List representative delivered a motivating keynote speech. He enlisted eight key areas of action for cooperatives to build their common agenda, which are – Policy formulation, Inclusion, Networking, Alliance building, Democratic governance, Strategic vision, Advocacy, and Knowledge sharing.

The Coop Forum, comprising of a plenary session and three breakout sessions was an opportunity for cooperators across the Asia-Pacific region to delve deeper into the issues and opportunities to build concrete and actionable common agenda for achieving sustainable development. The opening plenary on Accelerating the Cooperative Identity looked at ensuring cooperatives as a socio-economic model to remain relevant in addressing global challenges and accelerating the cooperative identity. The highlight of the Forum was the exciting announcement made by Mr. Andrew Allimadi, Coordinator of Cooperative Issues at The United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UNDESA), about 2025 being declared as the International Year of Cooperatives by the United Nations. We now have another opportunity to showcase to the world, the contribution of cooperatives to sustainable development. The three breakout sessions focused on cooperatives as drivers of taking the climate agenda forward, empowering cooperatives by promoting diversity and inclusion, and ensuring the relevance of cooperatives by embracing disruptive technologies for sustainable growth.

The welcome dinner hosted by the PCA brought delegates together to network and forge potential collaborations. The highlight of the evening was the first Asia Pacific Cooperative Excellence Awards. ICA-AP instituted the awards to honour outstanding individuals, cooperative organizations, and government ministries/ departments that have made remarkable contributions to the growth of cooperatives and have significantly benefited the cooperative movement. This year, the awards were

presented in two categories, enterprising cooperative and inspirational leader. Uralungal Labour Contract Co-operative Society Limited (ULCCS), a 100-year-old workers' cooperative from India won the award for Enterprising Cooperative. It is one of the best diversified primary cooperatives in the world and has proven its mettle by establishing a niche of its own in infrastructure development in India. ULCCS works towards fostering Economic Empowerment, Social Development and Environmental Sustainability. Acknowledging the new generational shift in the working class, ULCCS has diversified into IT and related sectors and set up various subsidiaries like the UL Cyberpark, UL Technology Solutions, Sargaalaya Arts & Crafts Village, UL Education, UL Agriculture and UL Housing to name a few among many others. Datuk Seri Dr. Abdul Fattah Abdullah from Malaysia won the award for Inspirational Cooperative Leader. He is the Vice President of the ICA-AP Regional Board and the President of the ASEAN Cooperative Organization (ACO). Previously, he has served as a State Assemblyman. With over 25 years of experience, he has been an advocate for the development of cooperatives as well as the progressing youth movement in Malaysia. He has initiated a lot of community care activities through ANGKASA CoopCare programmes and is committed to the spirit of the 6th Cooperative Principle: Cooperation among Cooperatives. More information about the winners can be found [here](#).

The Statutory meeting of the ICA-AP Regional Assembly took place on 9 November. Dr. Yadav and Mr. Guarco shared opening remarks. The assembly observed a moment of silence in the memory of Mr. B. S. Vishwanathan who was elected as the Chairperson in the first Regional Assembly held in New Delhi in 1995. He represented India in ICA for a record period of 27 years.

Mr. Balasubramanian Iyer, Regional Director of ICA-AP presented the 2023 activities report and the membership and financial situation since the last regional assembly in 2021. He shared updates on the activities of ICA-AP's Malaysia Business Office (MBO). The Regional Assembly ratified the merger of the ICA-AP Agriculture and Forestry Committees and named the new committee the Agriculture and Environment Committee. The CICOPA-Asia and Pacific Network, established as a regional organization of CICOPA in November 2021, had its first meeting at the Regional Assembly to discuss the potential of worker cooperatives in the Asia-Pacific region by exploring their relationship with gender equality, youth cooperation, digital technology and sustainability/climate change. Mr. Osamu Nakano, CICOPA-AP representative presented key updates of the network to the Assembly. The ICA-AP thematic and sectoral committees presented the key updates from their seminars and statutory meetings. The Cooperative Forum's Drafting Committee presented the [Manila Resolution on "Cooperatives: Our Common Agenda" for adoption by the Regional Assembly](#).

Mr. Abdel Fattah Al-Shalabi, Director General of the Jordan Co-operative Corporation announced the 11th Asia-Pacific Cooperative Ministers' Conference (APCMC) to be held in Jordan from 28 to 30 April 2024. The theme 11th APCMC will be 'Partnerships between Government and Cooperatives for Cooperative Resilience, Sustainable Development, and Inclusive Growth in Asia Pacific'. He invited all the member countries along with their relevant Ministers and encouraged them for their active participation in the conference.

Another significant moment of the Assembly was the signing of an MoU between the National Cooperative Council of Sri Lanka (NCCSL) and ICA-AP to host the 2025 Regional Assembly in Sri Lanka.

The day ended with the ICA-AP solidarity night and farewell dinner. The delegates enjoyed dancing to the tunes of the Filipino band.

On November 10, delegates had the opportunity to visit local cooperatives from different sectors like credit and saving, agriculture, consumer, multipurpose, and platform cooperatives.

It was heartening to have most of the members from the region meet in person after a long gap of 5 years. The last in-person Regional Assembly was held in Tehran, Iran in 2018, post which the Assembly in 2021 was held in hybrid mode due to COVID-19 imposed restrictions and saw very little in-person participation. The 16th Regional Assembly was an exhilarating journey of collaboration, learning, and inspiration.

Rewatch the highlights of the assembly [here](#). The photos from various events can be found [here](#).

ICYC Regional Youth Workshop

The ICA-AP Committee on Youth Cooperation (ICYC), with support from 1CISP Life and General Insurance (1CISP), MASS-SPECC, Youth Connect Cooperative, and ICA Member Coops, organized a Regional Youth Workshop for youth in Asia Pacific. The workshop took place from 3-5 November 2023 at the First Pacific Leadership Academy in Antipolo, Rizal, Philippines.

25 youth from four countries participated, representing ICA members the Iran Chamber of Cooperatives (ICC), 1CISP, MASS-SPECC, Federation of People's Sustainable Development Cooperative (FPSDC), National Cooperative Union of India (NCUI), and Union of Legitimate Service Consulting Cooperative (ULSCC). The event brought young people together for the exchange of ideas, networking, sharing of best practices, and building enterprise sustainability. The workshop aimed to explore ideas for the sustainability of youth-centric cooperatives and highlight the importance of education, training, and information for members, as well as inclusivity of the youth in cooperative management.

The workshop started with a welcome message by Mr. Alireza Banaeifar, then Chairperson of ICYC, emphasizing the purpose of the workshop. He provided the background and history of the workshop, which originated in 2018 during the Regional Assembly in Iran. During this event, ICYC conducted a workshop on creating business canvas for a cooperative business model, where young participants, mostly women, learned to design and develop cooperative business ideas. Afterwards, to sustain the program even amidst the COVID-19 pandemic, the ICA Global Youth Committee initiated the Replication Project, offering financial support for youth cooperatives. The two winning teams from the Asia-Pacific region (Philippines and Indonesia) successfully established cooperative businesses, achieving a 50% success rate.

ICYC aims to elevate this success rate to 100% by exploring the issues that young co-operators face after setting-up their cooperatives. Through this workshop, ICYC aimed to bring out concrete and feasible solutions not only to protect the coops, but to also improve the benefits for members of the coops.

ICA-AP Regional Director, Mr. Balasubramanian Iyer, welcomed all the guests and delegates and appreciated the sponsor cooperatives. Mr. Iyer emphasized that the significance of the movement does not lie in the quantity of participants, but on the quality and commitment of the young cooperators who are committed, willing, and empowered to contribute to the development of cooperative. He added that dedication and initiatives within the youth are the essential factors for success, and that youth should be leading the sector by promoting and advancing modern technology and digitalization within coops.

Dr. Yashavantha Dongre, Chairperson of the ICA-AP Research Committee and Co-Secretary of the ICA-AP ICEI, delivered the keynote address. He discussed "Building Sustainability through the Fifth cooperative principle on Education, Information and Training", and highlighted that it was only through involvement one can fully understand and practice cooperation among members and their coops.

The workshop focused on three main sessions: (1) Status of Youth Cooperatives in the Asia Pacific Region, (2) Cooperative Education, Governance, and Literacy, and (3) Cooperative Case Studies (including Introduction to CoopSpring Toolkit). Through these sessions, the delegates crafted a Strategic Action Plan for the Youth, which will serve as the starting point of the ICYC in crafting a final action plan for implementation from 2024 to 2026.

Session 1 was facilitated by experts from Malaysia and Philippines. Mr. Leo Panares from LAMAC Multi-purpose Cooperative from the Philippines discussed about their Youth Planet Laboratory Cooperative. The lead youth initiative was born as a business idea during the Coop Pitch, a side event aligned with the Asia-Pacific Youth Summit in 2016. It is now a diversified cooperative which supports youth in Agri-Enterprise Marketing Strategies, Livelihood and Entrepreneurship Trainings, and Leadership Development Trainings.

Mr. Mohd. Afnan Bin Hasim, ICYC Member, from Cooperative Institute of Management in Malaysia gave his insights on the importance of involving youth in cooperatives from an early age. Mr. Rico Renze Regala, representing Young Entrepreneurs Services Cooperative (YES COOP) from the Philippines, discussed their coop and how to establish and sustain a youth coop. YES COOP is a youth coop whose members and management are all youth aged 18-35, mostly young workers and entrepreneurs having passion and commitment towards cooperatives. Mr. Regala discussed the journey and challenges faced by YES COOP, and how to achieve sustainability and growth.

After identifying the status of youth cooperatives from the region, participants discussed Cooperative Education, Governance, and Literacy for Session 2.

Mr. Jaap van Waalwijk van Doorn, Manager of International Relations and Funding at Cresol, Credit Cooperative System discussed essential leadership skills of youth in coops and explained various forms of member benefits that will protect members and their family. Insights about the fundamental principles of Financial Literacy was discussed by Atty. Marx Nicholai Delmo, ICYC Member from Philippines. He explained the importance of understanding budget and savings and that such concepts are fundamental for members to navigate financial resources effectively. Mr Harold Kim Maggay from 1CISP discussed the Young Leaders Program and encouraged the delegates to participate and engage in the program. Their advocacy for youth inclusivity was also well-appreciated by the delegates.

The workshop provided ample networking opportunities for the participants. Through group activities, ice-breakers, and informal interactions, participants had the chance to connect with like-minded individuals from different countries and exchange ideas.

Session 3 focused about Cooperative Case Studies. It started off by an inspirational lecture from Ms. Heira Hardiyanti, Co-Founder of MYCOOLCLASS in Indonesia, and was followed by a group activity on identifying problems, issues, and challenges faced by Youth Cooperatives in the Asia-Pacific Region by Mr. Anurag Dang, Secretary, NCUI Youth Committee and a certified Coop Spring trainer. Mr. Dang provided five different case studies of youth-led cooperatives which were based from the ICA Global Youth Committee's CoopSpring Toolkit authored by Ms. Emily AM Lippold Cheney, member of ICA Global Youth Committee.

Ms. Emily, through her video message, provided a brief on the Toolkit and explained its two main sections: the CoopYouth Philosophy and the Practice of Cooperation, addressing challenges in cooperative practice. She expressed her hope that it will contribute to strengthening and establishing new cooperatives worldwide, particularly in the Asia-Pacific region.

As a result of the sessions, the delegates were able to craft a Strategic Action Plan for Youth, using the learnings, problems, and discussions from the workshop. There were proposed solutions and programs to the identified problems of youth coops in Asia Pacific.

Ms. Gelizabeth Cabuhat, ICYC Member from Philippines, delivered the workshop report, followed by the presentation of Strategic Plan by Atty. Dulce Bustamante, then Vice-Chairperson of ICYC and a vote of thanks by Mr. Shree Padmanabhan, Secretary of ICYC. Mr. Padmanabhan expressed gratitude to the sponsors for hosting the workshop in physical format and to the participants for their active engagement throughout workshop.

16th Annual Plenary Meeting: ICA-AP Committee on Youth Cooperation

The 16th Annual Plenary Meeting of the ICA-AP Committee on Youth Cooperation (ICYC) was held in hybrid format on 7 November 2023. Mr. Shree Padmanabhan, Secretary of ICYC, delivered the welcome message and set the agenda for the meeting.

Mr. Alireza Banaeifar, Chairperson, welcomed the members and guests to the meeting and extended his greetings to Ms. Ana Aguirre, President of the ICA Youth Committee, and Dr. Yashavantha Dongre, Co-Secretary, ICA-AP Committee on Educational Institution (ICEI), and Assistant Secretary, Vergel Hilario of the Cooperative Development Authority of the Philippines. In his speech, Mr. Banaeifar presented a comprehensive report from 2019 to 2023 which highlighted the success of various programs, including the Asia-Pacific Youth Summit, Coopathon, collaborations with different thematic committees of the ICA-AP, and the Go Green Campaign (GGC), the globally-known and recognized activity of the ICYC.

The pandemic was not a hindrance for the youth to continue advocating the GGC. In fact, in 2020, over 150 youth from across the Asia and Pacific region planted altogether 17,000 various tree saplings. Celebrating its 5th year in 2023, GGC was conducted during the Asia Pacific Cooperative Youth Summit 4.0 in Sabah, Malaysia.

Atty. Dulce Bustamante, Vice Chairperson, provided an update on the ICYC Regional Youth Workshop, which took place from 3-5 November 2023, at the First Pacific Leadership Academy in Antipolo, Rizal. She focused mainly on the solutions for problem statements identified by the participants based on case studies, extracted and modified by Mr. Anurag Dang, Secretary of the NCUI Youth Committee.

A pivotal moment during the meeting was the election of office bearers. Candidates gave their presentation on their statement of interests for the position of Chairperson and Vice-Chairperson. Ms. Gelizabeth Cabuhat-Generale from 1CISP Life and General Insurance was elected as Vice-Chairperson, and Atty. Dulce Bustamante from Union of Legitimate Service Contracting Cooperatives (ULSCC) as the Chairperson. The election results were declared and signed by the Election Committee.

The meeting was concluded with closing remarks from Dr. Ariel Guarco, ICA President; Dr. Chandrapal Singh Yadav, ICA-AP President; and Mr. Bhima Subramaniam, ICBA President. Their insights underscored the significance of the cooperative movement and the crucial role young leaders play in shaping its future.

The venue for next annual meeting will be decided during the next all-members meeting.

17th ICA Asia-Pacific Research Conference & Research Committee Meeting

The 17th ICA-AP Research Conference was held on the theme "Cooperatives Advancing Social Responsibility for the 2030 Agenda" from 4–5 November 2023 at Polytechnic University of the Philippines in Manila. It brought together over 50 academicians from 8 countries in the Asia Pacific

region for mutual exchange and peer learning to promote actions in Sustainable Development. The conference addressed a wide range of research topics from different scientific fields and traditions including corporate social responsibility, creating shared value, stakeholder engagement, elderly care, digital platforms, among others.

A sub-committee, consisting of Dr. Yashvantha Dongre, Dr. Sidsel Grimstad and Dr. Hilda San Gabriel, was set up during the conference to review and adjudicate the best research papers. The committee awarded the first prize to Dr. Jiyun Jeon, Research Fellow, Lingnan University, Hong Kong for her paper on "How do Cooperatives Diversify New Practice? Fair Trade of Korean consumer cooperatives." The second prize was awarded to Ms. Kristine B. Atendido, Student, Bachelor of Science in Cooperatives, Department of Cooperatives & Social Development in the Polytechnic University of the Philippines for her paper on "Youth Capabilities & Capacities and their Involvement in Cooperatives as Perceived by the Bachelor of Science in Cooperatives Students."

Jiyun's paper explains how and why organizations under the same institutional logic exhibit different practices by highlighting the relationship between the language and practice of the actors. The paper explores how and why Korean consumer cooperatives, notably, Dure, iCOOP, and Hansalim have established diverse Fair Trade practices despite being positioned in nearly identical institutional contexts. She argues that translation of the discourse of Fair Trade, reframing it based on local practice, text production, and discursive action make up the dynamics of Korean consumer cooperative's Fair Trade practices. This paper contributes to developing the theory of institutional logic and discursive practice by providing an extended view. The author also offers practical advice to practitioners in the field to raise their understanding of the diverse practices of organizations.

Kristine's study aims to explore the perceptions of Bachelor of Science in Cooperatives students regarding youth's capabilities, capacities, and involvement in cooperatives. The data collection commenced through structured survey questionnaire formulated by the researchers and implemented through Google Form. To analyse and interpret the data gathered, descriptive statistics specifically frequency and weighted mean were used to provide statistically factual information. The findings from this research shed light on the students' perspectives and contribute to a deeper understanding of how youth perceive their roles and contributions within the cooperative sector. This study differs from others as it presents recent and practicable information, particularly, it is entirely focused on the perception of cooperative students themselves. The study also aims to determine the effectiveness of the existing Bachelor Program in Cooperatives in producing graduates who are eligible to lead in Cooperatives.

After the closing session of the Research Conference, the 9th meeting of the ICA-AP Committee on Cooperative Research was held on 5 November. Committee Secretary Mr. Mohit Dave presented a report on activities held in 2023. Committee members discussed the planning for 18th Research Conference and other events to be scheduled in 2024. Co-option of new members and office bearers was also approved.

[Asia Pacific Regional Women's Forum on 'Women Cooperators in the Future'](#)

The ICA-AP Committee on Women organised the 12th Asia-Pacific Regional Women's Forum on 7 November 2023 in Manila, the Philippines. The theme of the forum was 'Women Cooperators in the Future' and was attended by 40 participants.

On 19 September 2023, the Committee celebrated its 25th anniversary under the theme, 'Gender Equality for a Brighter Future' with the participation of 170 delegates (both onsite and online). Through thematic presentations and members' views, the outcome was that while the committee is on track in

promoting gender equality in cooperatives, the road for full gender equality is long and many more things are needed to be done and considered with the changing times. The 12th Asia-Pacific Regional Women's Forum marked the beginning of a new series of discussions on what lies ahead for women cooperators in the region.

The Committee Chairperson Ms. Chitose Arai welcomed the guests of honour – Mr. Ariel Guarco, ICA President and Dr. Chandrapal Singh Yadav, ICA-AP President, Mr. Balasubramanian Iyer, ICA-AP Regional Director and distinguished participants of the forum. She presented an overview of the forum theme following which a special video was played capturing the 25 year long journey of the Committee.

Mr. Ariel Guarco, in his address recognised the four pillars of the Committee's core work: economic empowerment; social empowerment; training, education & knowledge exchange; and solidarity. He noted that solidarity is the most relevant of all the four pillars as it is the one that frames women's struggle for a more equitable world within a broader doctrine, that considers the human being as the main protagonist of economic relations and allows his/her development together with others, without leaving anyone behind.

Dr. Chandrapal Singh Yadav, in his address, noted that the ICA-AP Women's Committee plays a very important role in giving a broad perspective at Asia-Pacific level on what needs to be done to promote gender equality in cooperatives. He added, we are living in the 21st century and that the world is fast changing. We need to adapt and grow faster than we realise and this change will come only from within. We need to include everyone and be as involved as possible to make our businesses grow and change our lives for the better.

The Committee has representation of women cooperators from 14 countries - Australia, China, India, Iran, Japan, Jordan, Malaysia, Myanmar, Nepal, Palestine, Philippines, Sri Lanka, South Korea, and Vietnam. There are wide range of issues that are unique to each country and cooperative sector to which our members belong. However, some subjects are common and cut across sectors and countries like –

1. Women's participation in the cooperative labour force
2. Education and skills for women cooperators in the future
3. Women's leadership in cooperatives

There were three presentations by guest speakers and the forum session was moderated by Ms. Evangeline Lopez, Payment Services Group Head and Platform Manager, KAYA Payment Platform, NATCCO.

Ms. Priti Patel, Vice-Chairperson of the ICA-AP Committee on Women and Vice Chairperson, Gujarat Mahila Credit Cooperative, India presented an overview of evolving industries/markets exploring new business opportunities for women in cooperatives. She said that the industries and markets constantly evolve due to technological advancements, shifts in consumer preferences, economic developments and societal changes. Understanding these shifts is crucial for women and cooperative organizations which seek to stay competitive, navigate emerging trends, and harness the potential of evolving industries and markets. She shared some of the new areas which offer opportunities for growth and adaptation like Artificial Intelligence, fintech, electric vehicles, and e-commerce. She also presented useful examples of new kinds of cooperative businesses that urban women can take up such as cloud kitchen cooperative, clean care cooperative (offices and residences), delivery service cooperative, pet care cooperative and online learning cooperative.

Ms. Juhee Lee, Team Lead, International Relations, iCOOP, South Korea presented on the education and skills of women cooperators with future needs. Ms. Lee provided a broad overview of the cooperative landscape in South Korea. Cooperatives in South Korea are in many sectors such as wholesale and retail, education, agriculture and forestry, manufacturing, arts and sports, health and social welfare, among others. She noted that in consumer cooperative sector, majority of the members are women. About 3.3 million people in South Korea use consumer cooperative products, which is about 6.5% of the population. A family member, often a woman, usually becomes a member of consumer cooperative. Consumer cooperatives can help members grow by educating and empowering members. Ms. Lee presented examples of new areas where activities are being conducted by iCOOP, keeping pace with the evolving societal needs and aspirations. For example, focus is being given on lifecare, health and wellness and interesting activities are organised such as vegan days, barefoot walks, health circles so that members can feel more involved, and identify new areas for participation and growth. She also gave examples of climate-action activities such as no-plastic campaigns where women are getting involved by an increasing number. She underlined that these new areas are where human resource development needs to focus, and education and skills of women need to be enhanced. As these new areas will be more prominent in the future, they offer huge scope for women in the cooperative sector.

Ms. Lecira V. Juarez, Managing Director, Asia Pacific Rural and Agricultural Credit Associations Center for Training and Research in Rural and Agricultural Banking (APRACA-CENTRAB), the Philippines presented on Underlining the importance and challenges of women in cooperative leadership. Ms. Juarez presented an insight into her own leadership journey in the cooperative sector. She noted that she became a member of a cooperative at 18 in 1983 and became the first lady director of a primary cooperative at 22. She was the first woman BOD Chairperson of MASS SPECC and was also the first woman BOD Chairperson of NATCCO. At the age of 40, she was the youngest Chairperson of Cooperative Development Authority (CDA) in the Philippines. She highlighted that it was never easy for her. She noted that if a woman is young, single, and vulnerable, the journey automatically becomes tough and challenging for her. She added that biases and stereotypes will always remain against women. However, what always stands out is their knowledge on cooperatives. She underlined the importance of learning deep and wide for women in the cooperative sector. She also highlighted that there are several policies and laws in favor of women in the Philippines and in the cooperative sector. It is important for women to make themselves aware of these policies and laws, and for cooperatives to follow them. She noted that women when they assume leadership in cooperatives, bring on board not only their knowledge and experience but also their heart and commitment to cooperatives.

In the open discussion, the participants appreciated the presentations made by speakers and new areas covered by them. Most of the participants enquired about how to involve youth, in particular young women, in the cooperative sector. The speakers unanimously responded that to attract more youth in the cooperative sector, it is important to undertake new and innovative activities that are topical and relevant for youth. It is important to educate young people through formal and informal channels about the advantage of cooperative business over others and show them the possibilities that cooperatives can venture into any industry or market.

Ms. Arai thanked the guests of honour and guest speakers for their rich and insightful addresses in the forum. She noted that the presentations gave a new perspective to the audience that will be very helpful in the future. She thanked the moderator and presented a token of appreciation on behalf of the Committee to the moderator and guest speakers.

Seminar on Enhancing Sustainable Agricultural Supply Chains through Partnership among Cooperatives in Asia and the Pacific

The seminar on "Enhancing Sustainable Agricultural Supply Chains through Partnership among Cooperatives in Asia and the Pacific," was jointly organized by the ICA-AP Trade and Business Committee and the Network for the Development of Agricultural Cooperatives in Asia and the Pacific (NEDAC), to explore ways to align cooperative efforts with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and promote sustainable agricultural practices. It was held on 7 November 2023 in Manila, the Philippines.

Moderated by Mr. Balasubramanian Iyer, Regional Director, ICA-AP, the seminar featured three distinguished panelists: Dr. Lionel Dabbadie, Senior Fisheries and Aquaculture Officer of the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), who discussed FAO's support to agricultural and fisheries cooperatives; Mr. Ray R Elevazo, Deputy Administrator II, Institutional Development Service (IDS), Cooperative Development Authority (CDA), who explored the links between SDGs and cooperative development; and Mr. Zulkiflee bin Aspan, Director of the Central Zone, Cooperative Institute of Malaysia (CIM), who delved into practical approaches for enhancing supply chain resilience and sustainability.

The seminar featured insightful presentations, including the significance of agricultural cooperatives in creating resilient supply chains, showcasing successful case studies, exploring the direct links between SDGs and the cooperative sector, and discussing practical approaches to enhance supply chain resilience and sustainability. The seminar facilitated knowledge exchange, identified strategies to foster cooperative partnerships for agricultural development, and emphasized the importance of multi-stakeholder efforts in advancing sustainable agriculture.

Meeting of the ICA-AP Trade and Business Committee

The third ICA-AP Trade & Business Committee meeting for the year 2023 was held in Manila, Philippines, on 7 November 2023. This meeting was attended by 13 cooperative representatives from 6 countries, namely Malaysia, the Philippines, Korea, Sri Lanka, China, and Thailand. The meeting was chaired by Datuk Seri Dr. Abdul Fattah Abdullah, the Chair of the Committee and the President of ANGKASA and the ASEAN Cooperative Organization (ACO).

The committee officially ratified the inclusion of two new members from the Cooperative League of Thailand (CLT) - Mr. Poramate Intarachumnum and Mr. Phanuwat Wanraway. With their addition, the committee's membership has expanded to a total of 24 members and 2 observers, representing 13 cooperatives across 9 countries.

The minutes of the previous meeting was formally confirmed. Ms. Wan Azwati Wan Mohamed, the committee's secretary, presented the 2023 activity updates and outlined the activity plan for the year 2024. The engagement in this meeting facilitated a thorough review of past actions and provided a strategic outlook for future endeavors, setting a solid foundation for the committee's continued progress.

In conclusion, the Chair expressed deep gratitude to all members for their active engagement, valuable insights, and unwavering support during the meeting. The collaborative efforts have greatly contributed to committee's productivity and enrichment. The next meeting will be held in January or February 2024. Members were encouraged to stay engaged, maintain open communication, and continue their support for the committee's mission.

The 57th meeting of the ICA-AP Consumer Committee and Collaboration Seminar 2023 with Consumer Co-operative Worldwide

ICA-AP Committee on Consumer Cooperation held its 57th meeting followed by the collaboration seminar with Consumer Cooperative Worldwide (CCW) on 7 November in Manila Philippines, in conjunction with the 16th ICA-AP Regional Assembly.

It was the first on-site committee meeting in the last 4 years due to the COVID-19 pandemic and was attended by 20 participants (including 7 committee members) from 7 countries. Mr. Yamakoshi Akihiro, the chair of the committee opened the meeting and welcomed Prof. Petar Stefanov, the president of CCW.

Prof. Stefanov thanked the ICA-AP Consumer Committee for inviting delegates from CCW to the meeting and for organizing the collaboration seminar. He hoped that they could cooperate to develop consumer cooperative movements around the world.

In the meeting, Ms. Itsumi Hishinuma, committee secretary presented the activity and financial reports for 2023 and the activity plan and budget for 2024. She mentioned that in 2023, the committee could hold a webinar, training program in Japan, regional workshop in South Korea, on-site meeting and a collaboration seminar with CCW. The training programs and workshops were organized every year from 1991 and 2000 to 2019 respectively but stopped amid the pandemic. She was pleased that the committee could resume these events again in 2023 and thanked the host organizations for holding the events again. There were two participants in the meeting who attended the training program in Japan and shared their experiences. For the next year, the committee will hold at least 3 events including a regional workshop in Vietnam, a training program in Japan and the 58th committee meeting. These reports and proposals were unanimously agreed upon by members attending the meeting.

Collaboration seminar between the ICA-AP Consumer Committee and CCW:

After the meeting, the collaboration seminar between the ICA-AP Consumer Committee and CCW was held. CCW is a sectoral organization of the International Cooperative Alliance for consumer cooperatives. It was a valuable opportunity for the two committees to explain their activities to each other and share ideas on how to collaborate and accelerate cooperative movement in the world together.

Following the opening remarks from Prof. Stefanov, Mr. Yamakoshi presented the overview of the ICA-AP Consumer Committee. He explained that the committee was established in 1977 to help promote consumer coop activities in the Asia Pacific region. Currently, the committee is composed of 17 organizations from 12 countries. It has been financially supported by JCCU and other member organizations which host and organize events as committee activities. The committee's main activities are the Training Program in Japan, Regional Workshops, seminars on specific topics such as HR development, webinars, publication, research and annual meetings. The committee has been one of the most active committees in the Asia Pacific for a long time.

Mr. Todor Ivanov, CCW secretary presented the overview of CCW. Currently, CCW is composed of 17 member organizations in Europe, 4 in Asia-Pacific, 5 in the Americas and 1 in Africa. Some members also join the ICA-AP Consumer Committee. As missions, it initiates and facilitates the strategic development of consumer co-operatives and promotes active communications and information sharing with all members and ICA. One of its interesting activities is the 2022 International Children's COOP Competition to promote cooperative identity and consumer cooperative culture. Children aged 5 to 18 painted a drawing with a co-op mark and these paintings are exhibited in Brussels. There are

also members' collaborations in co-op digitalization, store formats, private labels and food sustainability policy. CCW has now started the Coop2Coop e-commerce platform as a pilot project.

After learning about the two organizations, participants watched the short video of the CCW's Coop2Coop e-commerce platform. Cooperative producers, wholesalers, and retailers come together on the platform to showcase their products and they can also find products they need. If they find products attractive, then they can directly chat with each other on the platform to get further information and start a transaction.

The participants discussed how the ICA-AP Consumer Committee and CCW can work together to accelerate the consumer cooperative movement around the world. They also talked about the e-commerce platform. Mr. Ivanov said that he would like cooperatives in the Asia and Pacific region to also join the platform so that it can accelerate Cooperation among cooperatives even in the business area. Even though it just started and is in the testing stage, if they join, try and share ideas of how to improve the platform and how to overcome the challenges, in the long-term platform would be much more efficient and even attract more users.

At the end of the seminar, the chair and the president of the two committees gave closing remarks and messages and hoped for their further collaboration.

[Regional Conference on Credit & Banking Cooperatives & Committee Meeting](#)

The ICA-AP Committee on Credit and Banking (ICCB) organised a Seminar on Sustainable Finance on the November 7 in Manila after its Statutory meeting.

The first part featured a compelling presentation by Ms. Cristina M. Liamzon, on the pivotal role of financial cooperatives in advancing the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). While presenting a framework to envision a role for cooperatives in addressing the challenges of the SDGs, particularly in the context of the climate crisis she also explored various innovative and unconventional responses and solutions to SDG-related challenges.

Ms. Cristina's presentation commenced with a compelling overview of the 17 SDGs, emphasizing the 'Why's and What's' through engaging video clips. Cooperatives, particularly financial cooperatives, were underscored as key actors in achieving the SDGs through their triple role – as economic actors creating opportunities, people-centered enterprises contributing to social equity, and democratic institutions playing a leading role in society. Ms. Liamzon showcased impactful initiatives from the Philippines-NATCCO, demonstrating the substantial contributions of cooperatives to specific SDGs. Examples included cooperative efforts for poverty eradication, food security, gender equality, and disaster relief operations.

A significant portion of the presentation was dedicated to exploring the cooperative response to climate change. Policies developed by coop members, products and services geared towards sustainability, and achievements in climate action were highlighted, illustrating the pivotal role cooperatives can play in addressing environmental challenges. Ms. Cristina urged cooperatives to think beyond traditional approaches, proposing innovative strategies such as scenario planning for environmental crises, conducting visioning exercises, and building a strong culture of appreciation for the SDG framework within cooperatives.

The second part of the seminar was a **discussion on 'Regulatory challenges faced by Financial Coops in Asia & Pacific'** led by members of the audience including committee members and observers who discussed several issues faced by financial cooperatives in the region. It was noted that credit is crucial in economic and social empowerment of poorer sections. Financial cooperatives provide access to

credit and other financial services, particularly to people in the lower stratas of the society who otherwise would remain excluded from the financial system. The Chair noted that financial cooperatives apart from their direct contribution in building sustainable communities as a Cooperative, also significantly influence the contributions of Cooperatives in other sectors to SDG as well, through developing Green and responsible finance policies. Similarly, it was observed a robust regulatory system is essential for financial cooperatives to grow while maintaining stability, high level of public confidence and protecting clients under all circumstances. It was also observed that dual control, govt interferences, excessive control infringing autonomy and independence, the trend of ongoing reforms leading to dilution of Cooperative character and erosion of cooperative advantages and competitive strength etc. are some of the serious challenges they are facing today.

The office bearers of the committee participated in the seminar along with the ICA-AP staff namely, the Secretary of the committee Mr. Kulkbushan Kukreja and Ganesh Gopal.

11th Asia Pacific Cooperative Forum on ‘Cooperatives: Our Common Agenda’ in Manila, Philippines

The 11th Asia Pacific Cooperative Forum on the theme ‘Cooperatives: Our Common Agenda’ was successfully held on 8th November 2023 in Manila, the Philippines. The response to the Forum was enthusiastic with the participation of more than 600 attendees representing 22 countries. The Forum hosted 16 speakers from 11 countries and witnessed a thought-provoking plenary, three informative breakout sessions, and the adoption of the Manila Declaration. The discussions during the Forum delved into crucial topics such as cooperative identity, driving the climate agenda forward through cross-sector collaboration, empowering cooperatives by promoting diversity and inclusion and ensuring cooperatives’ relevance by embracing disruptive technologies for sustainable growth.

It was exciting to hear Mr. Andrew Allimadi, Coordinator on Cooperative issues at the United Nations Department on Economic and Social Affairs speak about the resolution on cooperatives in social development calling for the proclamation of 2025 as the International Year of Cooperatives. The resolution - presented by the Government of Mongolia – was adopted on 3rd November during the 47th plenary meeting of the United Nations General Assembly (recording in this [link](#) – to watch the adoption of this resolution from minutes 25 to 35).

The Forum reaffirmed the Statement on Cooperative Identity and its promotion in theory and practice at all levels of cooperative functioning. It recognized the need for cooperatives to drive the climate agenda forward by advancing sustainability through cross-sector collaboration, and reimagining how we produce, consume, and dispose of resources. It also recognised diversity and inclusion by appreciating the inherent ability of cooperative enterprises to mainstream women, youth and marginalised sections of society, thus creating equal opportunity for all. It also recognized the urgency of technology adoption to increase participation, service and competitiveness of cooperative enterprises in realizing their inherent sustainable future; recognizing the shift towards digitalization and the requirements for digital channels for cooperative shared services, and improved digital tools and technology for enhanced productivity, risk management with cybersecurity system to protect members’ identity and data. The Forum highlighted the relevance of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) the importance of positioning cooperatives in the Global Development Agenda, and the creation of enabling legal, policy and regulatory climate to realise the complete potential of people-based economic enterprises in the Asia Pacific region.

The Manila Declaration, adopted in the Forum, calls on cooperatives to initiate activities at the national and local levels to preserve and promote the cooperative identity towards reaching our common agenda. It urges national cooperative movements to call on their Governments to update cooperative

laws and policies in conformity with the universally accepted statement of the cooperative identity. It calls upon national Governments, inter-governmental agencies and other stakeholders to recognize cooperatives as representatives of a significant section of the population and to work in cooperation with the national, regional and global cooperative movements in tackling climate change and pursuing the achievement of the SDGs.

The Declaration urges all stakeholders to initiate activities at the national and local level to pursue and achieve inclusive and democratic sustainable development by increasing member participation, and with a greater focus on women, youth and indigenous and marginalized people while addressing their socio-economic, cultural and environmental needs and aspirations. They need to harness the power of cooperation among cooperatives and expertise in the Asia-Pacific region and around the world, to ensure access to technology for all sizes of cooperatives, showcase the use of technology to expand the reach and diverse community, and the practice of cooperative values and principles in the digital economy. It stresses the need to assess and measure the contribution of cooperatives while augmenting cooperative research and using technological tools to gain knowledge, efficient data, and management capacity, to enable the dissemination of information on cooperatives as well as sustain sovereign support from national Governments and other stakeholders.

[ICA Regional Workshop for Leaders of Consumer Cooperatives in Asia-Pacific in South Korea](#)

The Regional Workshop for Leaders of Consumer Co-operatives in Asia-Pacific 2023 was held in South Korea and hosted by iCOOP Korea and the ICA-AP Consumer Committee from 16 to 20 October 2023. The workshop was attended by 18 delegates from 8 countries including Iran, Japan, Malaysia, Philippines, Singapore, South Korea, and Vietnam. It was the first in-person workshop since the pandemic. Under the theme "Sustainable Co-operative Development and Adaptation of the Cooperative Identities," the participants visited the Goesan Natural Dream Park and facilities operated by iCOOP to learn the business model and activities of iCOOP Korea. They learned how cooperatives can meet new needs in today's society while putting cooperative identity into practice.

At the opening ceremony, Mr. Akihiro Yamakoshi, Chairperson of the committee gave the opening remarks and Ms. Jeonghee Kim, Vice Chairperson of the committee and Chairperson of iCOOP welcomed the participants to the Park. Following the ceremony, Ms. Gwibok Oh, Managing Director of iCOOP explained about Goesan Natural Dream Park and iCOOP. There was also an exciting bowling competition at the sports center of the park where the participants of the workshop and the board members of iCOOP competed in small groups and received prizes.

The next day, they had a field trip to the Laver factory, fishcake factory, healing center, inspection center, and library operated by iCOOP. They learned how iCOOP produces its private brand products considering sustainability and how iCOOP tries to encourage people's healthier lifestyles. After the field trip, the participants joined the iN Natural Dream 2023 International Symposium and presented to the members of iCOOP how coops in their countries tackle challenges such as climate crisis, ageing society, and economic low growth. Following the symposium, a discussion and conclusion session of the workshop was held. Participants discussed important requisites for sustainable cooperative development, examples of the adaptation of cooperative identity, and what they learned during the workshop.

On the fourth day, they visited the Suwon Community Center of iCOOP in Seoul. The center has an iCOOP café, a healing center, a grocery store, and a clinic. They enjoyed meditation stretches like Yoga in the healing center and shopping in the iCOOP store.

The workshop was a valuable opportunity for the participants to think about how they can put cooperative identity into practice while meeting the current needs and how to encourage sustainable cooperative movements in today's society.

10th Policy Forum on Development

ICA Asia and Pacific office was invited to the 10th Anniversary event of the Policy Forum on Development (PFD) in Brussels from 27 to 29 September, 2023. This was part of its consultations to capture the views of the multiple PFD stakeholders, Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) and Local Authorities (LAs). Representatives from the ICA global and regional offices along with Ms. Mirai Chatterjee, Chairperson, Self-employed Women's Association (SEWA), India and Nicolas Dimarco, Cooperator, FACTTIC, Argentina attended the event.

The theme of the PFD was "Multistakeholder partnerships for building a better future: The quest for equality and opening up civic space." Under the overarching themes, topics of discussion included informality, climate change and climate justice, and resilience to the multiple current crises. Migration, urban development, education and culture, and digitalisation were discussed, with clear links to increasing inequalities. The importance of gender and youth was addressed as transversal dimensions. While these topics were approached in general terms, the debate was linked to Global Gateway as a central framework for international cooperation and partnerships and assessed the role civil society and local authorities can play to support its successful rollout.

ICA-AP actively participated in the discussions, requesting CSO consultation and involvement in all future geographic programmes. The EU Delegations should consider cooperatives as partners across all programmes and advocate for dedicated CSO allocations towards cooperatives. ICA-AP reiterated that the EU should invest in local businesses, cooperatives, smallholder producers and family farmers in rural areas to help rural communities become catalysts of an inclusive and equitable rural transformation that, in turn, can support sustainable urbanization. ICA-AP also suggested that the EU should simplify the design and delivery of EU external assistance by lifting administrative and financial barriers for CSOs that cannot carry high risks and costs related to programming. This will allow CSOs and cooperatives to be better represented at the EU partner country level.

PFD Asia Pacific also had a regional meeting on the sidelines of the event, led by Julia Puno from APRN and Bernadia Tjandradewi from UCLG-Asia Pacific. It was useful to make introductions for new members of the team and develop key messages to be shared from the region. ICA-AP remarked that the EU should promote and strengthen the development of alternative digital platforms – platform cooperatives, that promote the democratisation of data, redistribution of wealth and ensure decent jobs and social protection for workers in the platform economy. Also, the EU should acknowledge community ownership through cooperatives and the role of citizens as consumers, workers and investors as a pathway to achieving the green transition.

The meeting was a good opportunity to connect with fellow participants, gain insights, and contribute to shaping the future of our partnership with the European Commission. As a follow-up, ICA-AP has also responded positively to the call for expression of interest for the selection of members of the Global Gateway (GG) Civil Society and Local Authorities Dialogue Platform.

Member Updates

New Members

The [ACDI Multipurpose Cooperative](#) from the Philippines joined ICA in November 2023. They are an institutional cooperative serving members from the entire Armed Services of the Philippines (AFP) and

other uniformed personnel, including active service, retirees, and civilian employees. While their primary services are savings and lending, they also have a flying school, a tour agency, agriculture production and retail (dairy, rice, imports/exports), and insurance services. They are the largest cooperative in the country and were recognised as the Most Outstanding large cooperative by the Cooperative Development Authority (CDA) of the Philippines. They have 138 offices across the Philippines.

[One Cooperative Bank](#) (One CB) was admitted as a member in October. It was formed by the merger of the Metro South Cooperative Bank (existing, ICA member), Consolidated Cooperative Bank and Bataan Cooperative Bank and is now the largest cooperative bank in the Philippines. Their direct members are primary cooperatives and individuals and they provide full banking, savings, financial and credit services for their members.

All India Cooperative Week in India

The 70th All India Cooperative Week was celebrated from 14-20 November 2023 with the theme, "Role of Cooperatives in Making India a \$5 trillion Economy & SDGs." Hon'ble Prime Minister, Shri [Narendra Modi](#), on the eve of 70th All India Cooperative Week stated that cooperative sector has remained the focal point of various schemes introduced by the Government of India in the past 9 years and that cooperatives have a very crucial role in strengthening Indian economy, ensuring our villages turn self-reliant and making India a developed economy.

Hon'ble Union Cabinet Minister of Fisheries, Animal Husbandry and Dairying, Shri Parshottam Rupala inaugurated the celebrations on 16 November at NCUI Headquarters in New Delhi. Citing various successful coop models from countries like America and Japan, Shri. Rupala noted that the lack of comprehensive employment data although cooperatives are significant job providers. He urged NCUI and other national cooperative federations to compile such information across the sector. He emphasized that cooperative membership is a prime asset to leverage upon by deploying 'Coop Sena' to build an "AtmaNirbhar Bharat" (self-dependent India). NCUI President, Mr. Dileep Sanghani acknowledged the suggestions of Shri Rupala, and said that NCUI is putting these in place. Dr Bijender Singh, Chairman of NAFED, India stated that cooperative image building is a must while Dr. US Awasthi, Managing Director of IFFCO stressed the need for cooperatives to grab the golden 'opportunity' to increase their membership and ensure younger generation, join the cooperative sector.

Shri. Rupala released two training modules: (1) Business Promotion & Diversification of PACS and (2) Training Module on Housing Cooperatives, developed by the National Cooperative Resource Centre, established under the aegis of NCUI. These modules were developed as per the directions of the Hon'ble Union Minister of Cooperation. The PACS training module merits special attention in the wake of the government's priority to revamp the functioning of PACS in a big way. Besides these two training modules, a fundamental book named 'Decoding the Cooperative Law' was also released.

Earlier, as a precursor to the week-long celebrations, the 3rd Cooperative Fair 2023 was held from November 3 to 8 November at NCUI in New Delhi. Pan-India artisans from 45 cooperatives, SHGs & FPOs had set up stalls and registered good sales this year as well.

Based on the Cooperative Week celebrations guidelines prepared by NCUI, cooperative organizations at national, state and district levels organize various events, conferences, seminars, workshops, etc during the Cooperative Week. Some of the details can be accessed [here](#).

**Source: NCUI Facebook Page*

6. Policy and Legal Watch

2025 declared as the International Year of Cooperatives

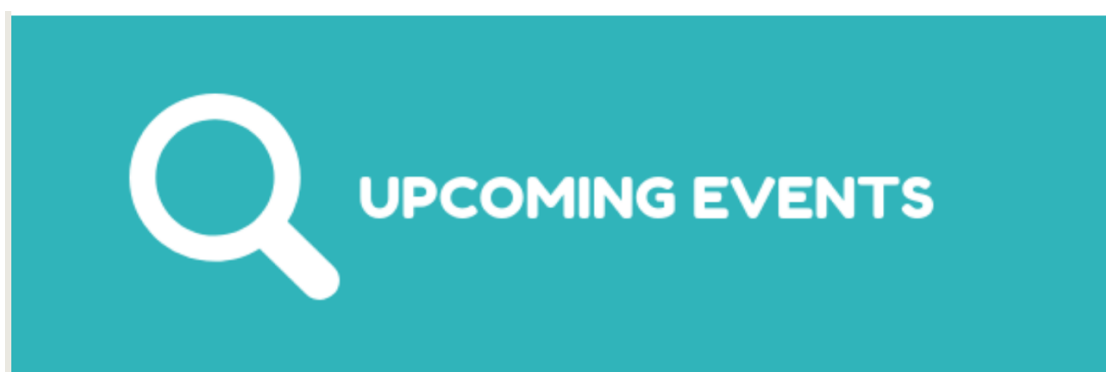
The United Nations General Assembly, on 3 November, during its 47th plenary meeting, adopted a new [resolution on cooperatives in social development](#) calling for the proclamation of **2025 as an International Year of Cooperatives**. It encourages all member states, as well as the United Nations and all other relevant stakeholders, to take advantage of the International Year of Cooperatives to promote cooperatives and raise awareness of their contribution to the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals and overall social and economic development. The resolution was presented by the Government of Mongolia. [Read more](#).

ICA position paper: Cooperatives as key partners in realising the Agenda 2030

September 2023 marked the mid-point in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The United Nations hosted the SDG Summit which culminated in Member States adopting a [political declaration](#) with a call to action to reverse the declines and accelerate the progress to achieve the [2030 Agenda and implement the SDGs](#). The ICA position paper stresses the effective role of cooperatives as partners in the implementation of the Agenda 2030 by identifying concrete and tested cooperatives' contributions to the 17 SDGs. It calls for a robust and conducive policy and regulatory environment to unleash the full potential of cooperatives as drivers of sustainable development. [Read more](#).

ICA takes part in the newly launched Global Gateway Civil Society and Local Authorities Dialogue Platform

The International Cooperative Alliance (ICA) has been selected as a member of the [Global Gateway Civil Society and Local Authorities Dialogue Platform](#) (GG Dialogue Platform), which was launched on 24 October by the European Commission at the margins of the [Global Gateway Forum](#), held in Brussels. The role of the GG Dialogue Platform is to assist the European Commission in the implementation of the Global Gateway Initiative, by ensuring that it contributes to sustainable investments and delivers on its goals in line with its principles. [Read more](#).



- ICA-AP Regional Board Meeting in Jordan – 27 April 2024
- 11th Asia Pacific Cooperative Ministers' Conference in Jordan – 28-30 April 2024
- International Day of Cooperatives – 6 July 2024

