

## ICA-AP NEWSLETTER

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

# March 2024 Newsletter

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## Asia Pacific Cooperative Ministers' Conference



ICA-AP, in collaboration with the Jordan Co-operative Corporation (JCC) and the Ministry of Agriculture of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, is organizing the 11th Asia Pacific Cooperative Ministers' Conference (11th APCMC) from 28 to 30 April 2024 at Crowne Plaza Jordan – Dead Sea Resort & Spa, Jordan.

The theme, "Partnerships between Government and Cooperatives for Cooperative Resilience, Sustainable Development, and Inclusive Growth in the Asia-Pacific, Middle East, and North Africa regions," emphasizes the pivotal role of cooperatives in socio-economic development.

Recognizing cooperatives as democratic, member-owned entities with community-centric structures, the conference aims to foster collaboration between governments and cooperatives. Clear legal frameworks and supportive policies are essential to unlock the full potential of cooperative enterprises, contributing to economic growth, job creation, and social development.

Government officials from 17 countries and cooperators from across the Asia-Pacific and MENA regions will convene to share insights into cooperative-government partnerships, network with influential leaders, and contribute to shaping policies for sustainable development.

For more information on the program, logistics, and speakers, visit <https://apministersconf.coop/>.

## Asia-Pacific Women CEOs in Cooperatives Summit – Registrations Open

ICA-AP in collaboration with its Committee on Women and Vietnam Cooperative Alliance (VCA) is organizing the Asia-Pacific Women CEOs in Cooperatives Summit on the theme, *'Empowering Leadership: Navigating the Future of Cooperatives with Women at the Helm.'* It will be held from 29-31 July 2024 in Hotel Melia in Hanoi, Vietnam. Targeting women in leadership roles, the summit is tailored to address their specific needs, foster critical dialogue, and provide rich and diverse inputs, empowering them with knowledge. It will serve as an enabling platform for sharing insights, learning from one another, and fostering valuable networks across borders and cooperative sectors.

To know more details and register, [click here](#).

## ICA Global Conference & General Assembly 2024



The ICA Global Conference and General Assembly are set to be held in New Delhi, India, from 25-29 November 2024. Hosted by the Indian Farmers' Fertilizer Cooperative (IFFCO) and the wider Indian cooperative movement, it will feature an array of events and activities. These include the launch of the UN International Year of Cooperatives (IYC), an International Exposition of Cooperatives, the ICA Bodies' Meeting on Deepening the Cooperative Identity, and various Sectoral & Thematic Meetings. The central focus of the Conference will be on celebrating Cooperation among Cooperatives, and its many manifestations in and for the 21st century.

The ICA-AP regional office is excited to work in close coordination with the ICA global office and the Indian cooperative movement to make these events successful. Stay tuned to <https://ica.coop/en> to know more!

### ICA-EU Framework Partnership Agreement Phase – 2

The ICA-EU Framework Partnership Agreement Phase 2 titled "People-centred businesses for sustainable, democratic, and inclusive development" officially kick-started on 1 April 2024. It aims to contribute to a strong cooperative movement that supports the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) by 2030.

The overall objective for the ICA's global office and its four regional offices (Europe, Africa, Americas, Asia-Pacific) along with their member organizations is to become strong actors at national, regional and global levels for sustainable and inclusive growth worldwide. It has 5 main outputs:

1. Enhancing knowledge sharing and capacity building for ICA member organizations to be active actors for the 2030 Agenda.
2. Strengthening the cooperative model and its actors through research, mapping, legal analysis and establishing the model in education.
3. Supporting advocacy, political dialogue and partnerships at all levels to promote the cooperative model.

4. Improving communication and visibility of the cooperative model to key stakeholders.
5. Establishing efficient project management, monitoring & evaluation systems supported by staff training.

The activities under these outputs include capacity-building events, research studies, policy dialogues, visibility campaigns, coordination meetings, and staff training - all geared towards strengthening the global cooperative movement as a force for sustainable and inclusive development aligned with the SDGs. Stay tuned!

## ICA-AP UPDATES

Meet Monalisa Kashyap, ICA-AP's Program Coordination and Advocacy Officer



**Hi Monalisa, welcome to ICA-AP! Please share a brief overview of your professional background and relevant experiences before joining ICA-AP.**

Thank you! Before joining ICA-AP as Program Coordination and Advocacy Officer for the ICA-EU Cooperatives in Development – People-Centered Businesses in Action Project, I worked as a Program Head at Access Livelihoods. I managed projects and partnerships across international, national, governmental, and non-governmental levels. I contributed to business development, program design & strategic planning, budget management, partner management and capacity building across Livelihoods, Employment, Entrepreneurship, & Leadership development, focusing on women & youth. Before Access Livelihoods, I worked



with Friends of Women World Banking (FWWB) as a Program Officer and led the capacity-building vertical focusing on strengthening Farmer Producer Collectives. In 2017, I completed a Post Graduate Diploma in Development Management from the Development Management Institute, Patna and graduated with a B.com (Accountancy Hon.) from Patna University.

**That's great! What motivated you to work with cooperatives and join ICA-AP?**

I remember my post-graduation days when I was first introduced to the concept of 'Cooperatives' through books (Catalysing cooperatives), exposure visits (Amul, Mulkanoor, Amalsad), and movies like Manthan. I must admit that the course curriculum motivated me to explore the cooperative world in depth. Having gained experience in development consulting, I deliberately chose to focus on working closely with cooperatives, and I found no better platform than ICA-AP.

**As you embark on this new role of Program Coordination and Advocacy Officer within ICA-AP, what are some of your initial expectations or goals? How do you envision contributing to the organization's objectives?**

The cooperative movement has a vast and rich history. Hence, my initial expectation is to make myself well-versed in the cooperative world and understand the varied works/achievements that have been accomplished to date. Later, my preference would be to contribute and work towards cooperative policies and laws.

**In what ways do you anticipate your past experiences and skills will align with the responsibilities of your new role at ICA-AP?**

I have more than 7 years of experience in successfully executing large-scale projects involving multiple geographies, international and national partners, significant budgets, diverse team sizes, comprehensive research work, etc. I am fond of articulating key messages persuasively and engaging stakeholders by discussing the larger picture. I believe these skills align perfectly with the requirements of my new role at ICA-AP.

[Commemorating IWD – INSPIRE INCLUSION: An International Forum on Youth, Women, and Cooperatives](#)

Aligned with the United Nations theme "Count Her In: Invest in Women. Accelerate Progress" for International Women's Day 2024, the ICA-AP Committee on Youth Cooperation (ICYC) convened an online forum titled "INSPIRE INCLUSION: An International Forum on Youth, Women, and Cooperatives" on 8 March 2024 to commemorate International Women's Day. The forum focused on advancing women's economic empowerment in the cooperative sector, recognizing the transformative impact women can have on the growth of cooperatives, inclusivity, gender balance, and the importance of youth and women in cooperatives.

Ms. Gelizabeth Cabuhat, Vice-Chairperson of ICYC from the Philippines, outlined the agenda for the forum. She noted that this forum will emphasize the pivotal role of women in

cooperatives and acknowledge the exemplary contributions of women and youth in the cooperatives.

In her opening remarks, Chairperson Atty. Dulce Bustamante extended a warm welcome to participants hailing from diverse countries across the Asia Pacific region. She reiterated ICYC's unwavering commitment to fostering empowerment and inclusivity for women and youth.

Mr. Balasubramanian Iyer, Regional Director of ICA-AP, conveyed his appreciation for initiatives promoting women and youth empowerment, reaffirming his support for ICYC's youth-centric programs.

The forum was also graced by Ms. Ana Aguirre, President of the ICA Youth Committee (Global), who likewise expressed her support for the advocacy of ICYC for women and youth empowerment.

The forum was then moderated by Ms. Simren Singh, the Secretary of the ICA-AP Women's Committee. She expressed her gratitude for this collaborative program, on behalf of the ICA-AP Women Committee.

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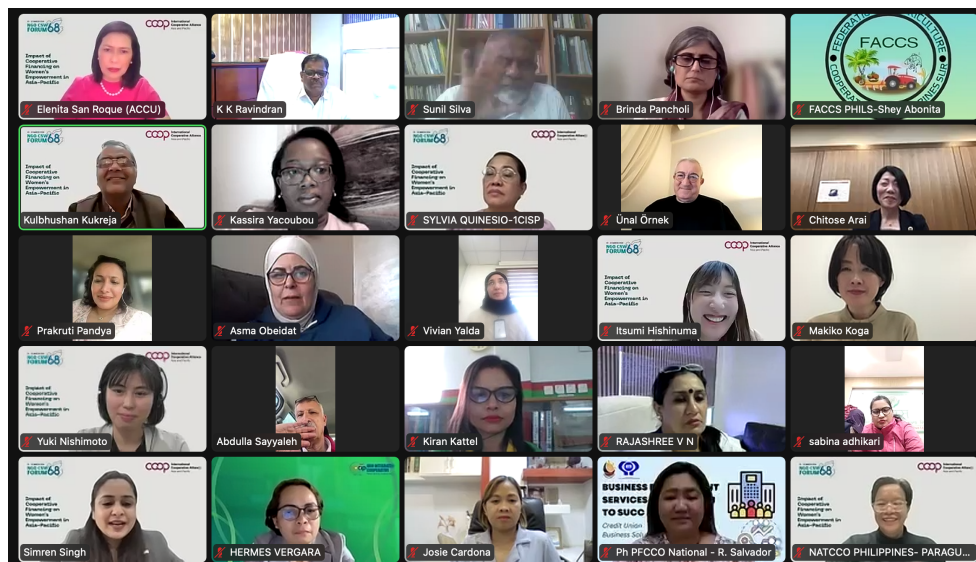
Ms. Nelusha Deshani of the National Cooperative Council of Sri Lanka, as the guest speaker, elucidated "Sri Lanka's Initiatives to Engage Young Women in the Cooperative Sector" to inspire greater youth involvement in cooperatives. Ms. Deshani highlighted the historical significance of women and youth in achieving the establishment and sustainability of cooperativism in Sri Lanka, noting the predominant female membership within Sri Lankan cooperatives. She emphasized cooperatives' role in promoting gender balance, inclusivity, and enhanced opportunities for women and youth.

Another speaker, Ms. Salonie Muralidhara, Strategic Consultant of SEWA Cooperative Federation, India also discussed women's involvement in developing the Indian cooperative movement. SEWA has 106-member co-operatives, with around 300,000 women members; truly an embodiment of women empowerment and cooperativism in India. Adapting the words of SEWA's Chairperson, Ms. Mirai Chatterjee, she noted *"But we need to do much more. Sustainability—both financial and in terms of women running their own cooperatives—is an ongoing challenge. As the external world of work changes, so also do our cooperatives need to change, adapt and re-orient their economic activities. The challenges are enormous and so are the opportunities. The SEWA Cooperative Federation is fully committed to supporting our sister cooperatives, and ultimately our members, strengthening their work in every possible way that would help them become sustainable, develop young leaders and continue their path-breaking work."*

In closing, Ms. Kiran Kattel, representing Nepal within ICYC, extended gratitude to the forum's speakers and participants. She thanked ICYC members for their attendance, as well as the ICA-AP Officers and Secretary, Mr. Shree Padmanabhan, for organizing the event.

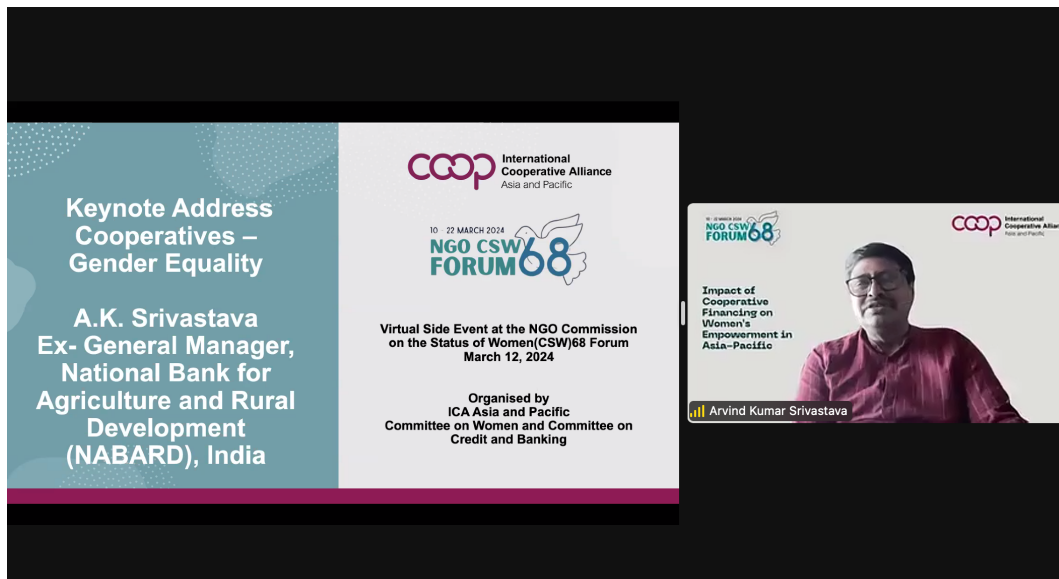
The ICYC looks forward to further collaborative programs aimed at advocating for women and youth inclusivity and empowerment.

## NGO CSW68 Forum Virtual Side Event on 'Impact of Cooperative Financing on Women's Empowerment in Asia-Pacific'



The ICA-AP Committee on Women and Committee on Credit and Banking organized a virtual side event at the NGO CSW68 Forum on 12 March 2024. Themed, *'Impact of Cooperative Financing on Women's Empowerment in Asia-Pacific'*, it was the second such event at the NGO CSW Forum by the ICA-AP Women Committee. Expert speakers from cooperatives in India, Nepal, Japan, and the Philippines discussed how cooperative banks, credit societies and cooperative insurance businesses impact women, and contribute to SDG 5 on gender equality. The program was attended by around 90 participants from Asia, Africa, and Europe.

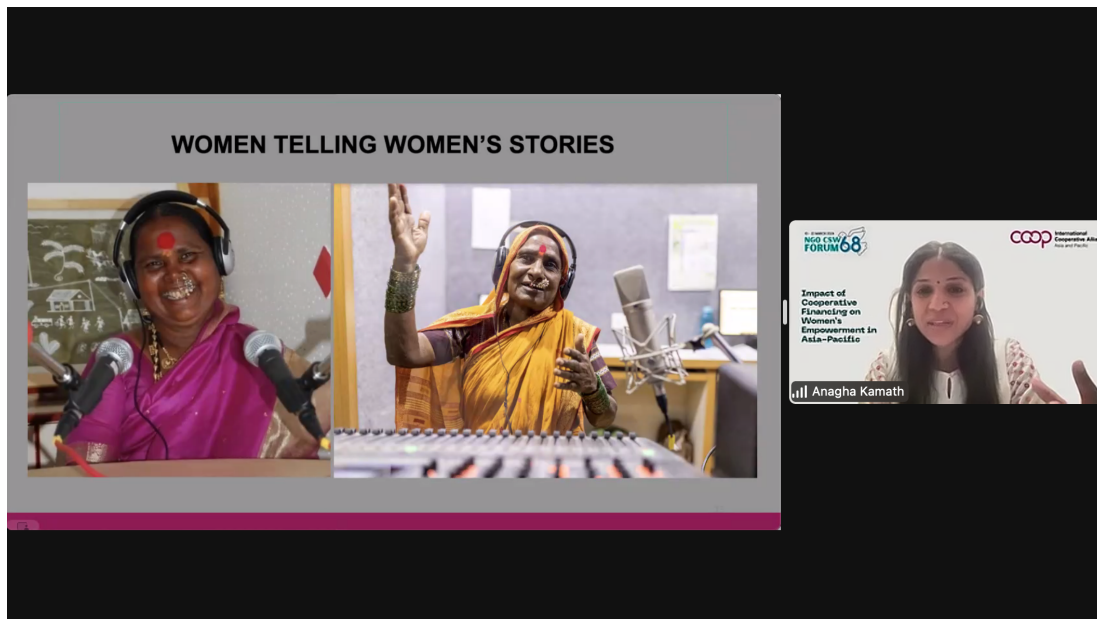
The Women's Committee Chairperson Ms. Chitose Arai delivered the opening remarks. She highlighted the theme of this year's International Women's Day, 'Invest in Women, Accelerate Progress.' The theme focused on actions to reduce gender disparities and inequalities to create prosperous economies and ensure sustainable societies. She noted that in the context of this theme, the UN NGO CSW is discussing issues and actions that can be undertaken in different parts of the world. The Women's Committee has taken many initiatives that resonate with this year's theme. Since its inception, the Committee has focused on the capacity building of women cooperators and given them international platforms for their visibility, mutual learning, growth, and networking. She welcomed the guest speakers and thanked them for taking time from their busy schedules to talk about how cooperative banks, savings and credit societies, and cooperative insurance businesses are advancing women's economic empowerment. She thanked the ICA-AP Credit and Banking Committee for co-organizing the program with the Women's Committee.



Mr. Arvind Kumar Srivastava, ex-General Manager at the National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (NABARD), India delivered the keynote address. At present, he serves as a Consultant at NABARD Consultancy Services and is the Editor of Samarth Sahkarita magazine in India. Mr. Srivastava highlighted examples from South Asia of how cooperative banks have ensured women’s financial inclusion and contributed to women’s empowerment. A few notable examples were of the Mann Deshi Mahila Sahakari Bank in India, Mahila Milan Savings and Credit Cooperative in Nepal, and Bangladesh Samabaya Bank in Bangladesh, among others. He shared about the reach of these banks and schemes and policies for women. Some of the banks are operating in remote and hilly areas where private financial banks and micro-lending institutions are not present. Mr. Srivastava underlined the need to advocate for greater autonomy for cooperative banks and savings and credit societies. He also added that for a sustainable future, emphasis needs to be given to responsible governance, women-centric schemes and products, improved databases, technology, and professional human resources.

The thematic session, facilitated by Ms. Sylvia O. Paraguya, CEO of the National Confederation of Cooperatives (NATCCO) in the Philippines saw four presentations and a brief panel discussion by cooperative experts.

Ms. Madhu Rayamajhi, Head of Business Development and Member Secretary of the Gender Equality Subcommittee, National Cooperative Bank Ltd. (NCBL) in Nepal discussed different initiatives taken by cooperative banks in Nepal to empower women. Some of these initiatives include - access to finance for women by providing financial instruments for small and medium-scale enterprises led by women, small farmers’ programs, subsidized loans, and fintech solutions adopted by cooperative banks that allow women to make transactions with ease. She shared about financial and digital literacy training imparted to women by cooperative banks. She highlighted some of NCBL’s initiatives to promote gender equality, such as the 50:50 ratio policy in primary cooperatives’ membership that provides equal opportunity to women to become cooperative members. She underlined the importance of 33% reservation for women in cooperative boards and provisions to form women sub-committees in Nepal that allow women to have collective bargaining power in cooperatives.



Ms. Anagha Kamath, Director of Mann Deshi Mahila Sahakari Bank in India discussed different products and services that are offered by her cooperative bank to women. Some of these include micro-savings accounts, micro-recurring deposit accounts, umbrella loans, joint-liability group loans, and weekly market loans, among others. She explained the role of women bank 'sakhis' or friends who assist members with digital banking and train women to use technology. She shared that the Mann Deshi Bank largely works with women who have not completed school. They focus on creating educational materials that are contextual and graphical so that women members can understand them easily. She also shared different initiatives taken by the Mann Deshi Foundation which is a sister concern of the bank. These include mobile skills training programs imparted via the bus travelling to different locations.

Ms. Sylvia Quinesio, Vice-President for Sales and Marketing at 1CISP in the Philippines introduced the Koop4HER insurance product tailored for women. Through a needs assessment study, 1CISP identified key areas of concern for women, focusing on life, health, and accident risks. The Koop4HER program was developed by her cooperative to address these needs. It includes holistic learning (H) with training in personal finance, risk mitigation, and women's leadership; entrepreneurship (E) providing livelihood solutions to women; and risk management (R) through two insurance products: 'Isabel' covering accidental death, disablement, medical reimbursement, and assistance for domestic violence, and 'Stela Juana' offering basic insurance with daily hospital income benefits. Eligibility for both products is for women aged 18-65.

Ms. Yuki Nishimoto from the Public Relations Division, Joint Management Department at CO-OP Insurance (Kyosai) Consumers' Co-operative Federation in Japan discussed how Co-op Kyosai focuses on women's needs in developing their mutual insurance products. She explained that as early as 1998, Co-op Kyosai launched the Co-op insurance TasuKeai Women's Course (plan) to address medical insurance needs for female-specific diseases, addressing hospitalization and surgery needs. Over the years, the insurance plan has been revised to provide more benefits to women. In 2022, they further enhanced the plan by



introducing hospitalization coverage regardless of illness or injury type. Additionally, Co-op Kyosai conducts the pink-ribbon campaign, raising awareness about breast cancer and supporting women's health beyond insurance.



The presentations were followed by a panel discussion on why financial cooperatives are a preferred choice for women amidst the growing presence of private institutions. Mr. K.K. Ravindran, Chairperson, ICA-AP Committee on Credit and Banking and Managing Director, National Cooperative Agriculture and Rural Development Banks' Federation Ltd. (NAFCARD) in India; Ms. Elenita V. San Roque, CEO, Asian Confederation of Credit Unions (ACCU) in Thailand; and Ms. Sylvia Quinesio shared their views. Some of the key discussion points on why women prefer cooperatives are –

1. Financial inclusion for women who are excluded from traditional financial systems, particularly rural and vulnerable women.
2. Opportunity for ownership and participation which assures women and builds their confidence.
3. A supportive environment for women members where they feel valued and empowered.
4. Flexible services and customized solutions for women such as small-scale loans.
5. Easy communications and negotiations because women members in a cooperative belong to similar backgrounds and understand each other's needs.
6. Financial dealings, transactions and claim settlement processes are faster and easier as compared to other institutions because cooperatives operate like a close-knit community and people know each other.
7. Educational and learning programs for women.

The panelists underlined the importance of adopting digitalization and technology in cooperative banks and credit societies as the competition from the private sector is fierce. They also stressed that cooperative organisations need to collaborate and work in solidarity for the benefit of cooperative members at large. Some commonly observed emerging trends in the region include –

1. Private institutions are expanding into rural markets, posing new competition for cooperatives. Cooperatives need to take suitable measures to face this growing competition.
2. Cooperatives are witnessing a rise in female participation due to added business services aimed at enhancing women's entrepreneurship skills.
3. Women are increasingly assuming leadership roles within cooperatives.
4. The widespread adoption of digital technology, accelerated by the COVID-19 pandemic, presents an opportunity for cooperatives to innovate and enhance member services through digital platforms.

The panelists noted that the future of cooperatives in the banking, finance, and insurance sectors is bright and will continue to have a profound impact on women. Some new types of non-banking financial services that cooperatives can look at are investment cooperatives and pension cooperatives.

Concluding the program, Mr. K. K. Ravindran presented a vote of thanks. He noted that the lectures and presentations by the guest speakers were very enriching. Addressing gender inequalities is not just to attain social equity but to promote sustainable economic growth in countries. Women contribute significantly to economic growth and development, and systematic investment in developing women's capacities and giving them opportunities is important to accelerate progress. He thanked the speakers for joining the program and declared the program officially closed with a group photo.

### 1st ICA-MAFF (Japan) Training Course on “Promotion of Sustainable Agriculture and Improvement of Farmer’s Income”



The Training course on “Promotion of Sustainable Agriculture and Improvement of Farmer’s Income through Development of Agricultural Cooperatives in FY-2023.” was organised by ICA-AP, in Thailand and Japan between 01 March and 29 March 2024. The objective of the training course was to review and study the roles of farmers’ organisations and find their new roles to meet “sustainable agriculture.” The training program was implemented by the ICA-AP with the collaboration of the Co-operative League of Thailand (CLT), and the Institute for the Development of Agricultural Cooperation in Asia (IDACA), Tokyo (Japan). It was funded by the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries (MAFF) of the Government of Japan.

Part I of the course was inaugurated by Mr. Poramate Intarachumnum, Chairman of **CLT** at their training centre in Bangkok on 2 March. He was joined by Ms. Oranuch Kanpai, Dy. Executive Director of CLT and other staff members of CLT, Mr. Hirofumi KOBAYASHI, Executive Director, IDACA, Mr A.K. Taneja, Project Coordinator of ICA-AP, in welcoming all the participants. There were 07 participants from 06 countries – Bhutan, Cambodia, Fiji, Indonesia, Philippines and Thailand. The classroom sessions covered topics like the Historical Development of Thai Cooperatives, Governance and Management of Agricultural Cooperatives as Business Organizations (GMAC), Business Development, Developing Action Plans and Transforming Action Plans to Projects, and Planning, Scheduling, Executing, and Monitoring Projects (PSEMP), among others. The field visits to various agricultural and credit cooperatives further enriched participants with practical insights.



Part II was hosted by IDACA in Tokyo. Participants learned about the Organization and Business of Agricultural Cooperatives in Japan (JAs), case studies on JA's marketing and business strategies, organic agriculture, innovative concepts like 6<sup>th</sup> Industrialization, educational and public relation activities of JA, etc. Given the experience gained by the participants through classroom lectures, field study visits in Thailand and Japan, interaction among themselves and based upon their work environment, the participants developed their Action Plans and presented them on the final day of the training course.

The Closing Ceremony was organized on 28 March at IDACA. It was attended by Ms. Sato and Ms. Azumi, Officer in charge of the ICA-JAPAN Project, MAFF; Mr. Kobayashi; and Mr. Baba Toshihiko, Sr. Executive Director of JA-Zenchu. Mr. Daisuke Asano, Counsellor of the Emerging Region Division, Export and International Affairs Bureau, MAFF, sent a video message for the participants. Mr. A.K. Taneja, ICA-AP Course Coordinator presented a brief report of the



training course. On behalf of the participants, Mr. Namagey Wangdi, from Bhutan presented a vote of thanks.

### Building Capacities: Session on Exploring the Evolving Cooperative Business Model



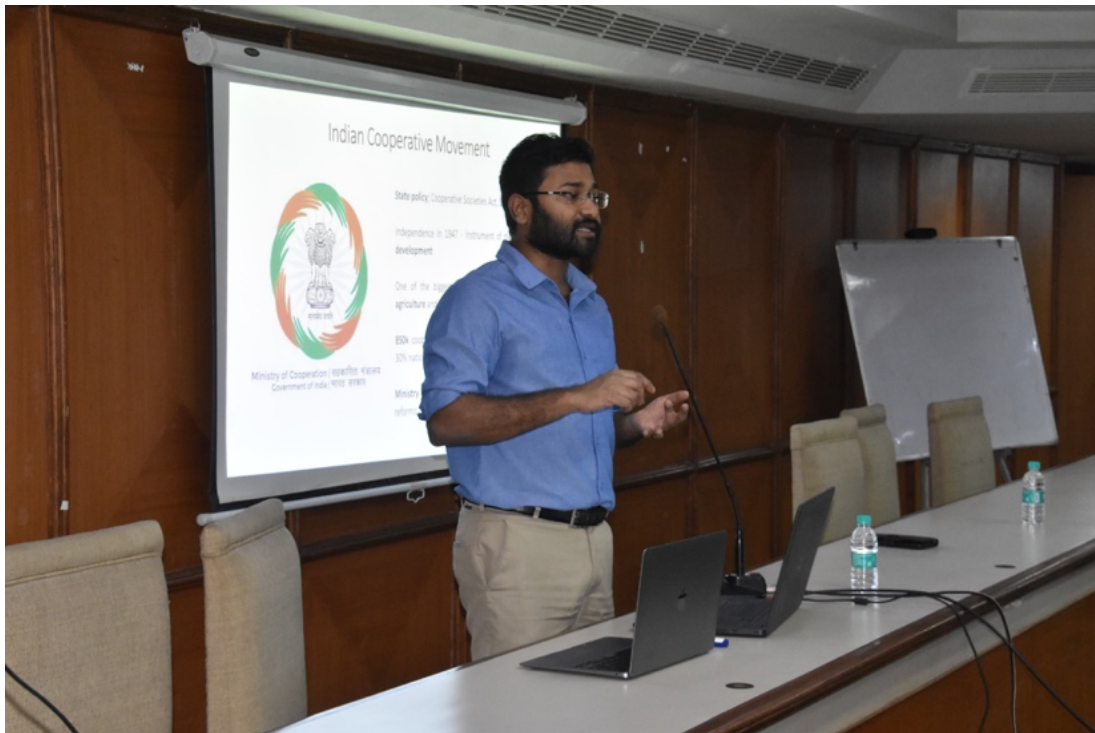
The National Cooperative Union of India (NCUI) through its training and education division, the National Centre for Cooperative Education (NCCE) organised a capacity-building session as part of its 5-day Certificate Course titled "Coops4SRD: Sustainable Rural Development."

Mr. Ganesh Gopal, Lead - Entrepreneurship Development at ICA-AP delivered this session on 12 March 2024 and presented on the '*International Cooperative Landscape: Recent Developments and Coop Business Model.*'

The training organised by NCUI underscored the importance of the cooperative enterprise model and its importance for creating resilient, community-owned structures for sustainable rural development. The session outlined recent developments in the cooperative landscape and shared an understanding of evolving business models. It aimed to equip participants, around 60 agribusiness management students, with the knowledge and insights necessary to navigate the complexities of the cooperative sector in India effectively. Given the renewed impetus given to cooperatives in the country, including the mega projects on food security, agricultural exports and high-quality seeds for agriculture, the theme chosen was relevant and timely.

The capacity building program crafted to cater to freshers, students, youth, and cooperative trainers, unfolded an in-depth exploration of essential aspects integral to the establishment and thriving operation of cooperative societies. Encompassing a holistic curriculum, participants delved into topics ranging from the foundational elements of the cooperative business model to the intricate process of Business Model Canvas preparation. Social enterprise dynamics, case studies on campus cooperatives, successful cooperative business

models, and an exploration of the key components of cooperative entrepreneurship were also integral components of the comprehensive program.



Mr. Gopal, in his session, elucidated crucial aspects such as the procedural intricacies of forming a cooperative, a comprehensive exploration of the 7 cooperative principles, a comparative analysis distinguishing a company from a cooperative, and the presentation of exemplary cooperative models from sub-domains of the primary sector across the world. The session highlighted the relevance of encouraging youth participation in the cooperative movement, emphasising its resilience during times of crises and uncertainty.

The "Coops4SRD" Certificate course which was tailored for students specialising in agriculture and agribusiness management, seeks to actively engage youth in the cooperative movement. Recognising the potential of young minds to inject fresh perspectives, technological innovations, and enthusiasm into the cooperative sector, the course endeavours to pave the way for a sustainable and fulfilling career for the participants.

Mr. Gopal's session delved into recent trends and developments shaping the global cooperative landscape. From emerging cooperative examples across the globe to innovative approaches in cooperative governance and management such as digital cooperatives, platform cooperativism, and climate-smart agriculture practices participants gained insights into the evolving dynamics of the cooperative sector. The real-world examples and case studies empowered participants to envision novel strategies for fostering cooperative sustainability, encouraging them to join the movement and seize the opportunity to bring about tangible change in rural development.

Participants at the end of the training engaged in an interactive session where they discussed newer job opportunities, the impact of technology and AI on the cooperative sector, activities



of ICA-AP at the regional and international levels and recent policy changes within India's cooperative sectors. They were also informed of the pivotal role that education and knowledge exchange play in fostering a vibrant, adaptive and resilient cooperative ecosystem.

The session encouraged young students to drive positive change and contribute meaningfully to the sustainable development of rural communities.

### ICA Meet & Greet for Cooperatives in Asia-Pacific



The International Cooperative Alliance has introduced a "Meet and Greet" initiative to familiarise potential members and cooperatives with itself. These virtual gatherings explore the advantages of ICA membership for cooperatives, methods for joining, the range of services provided by ICA and its regional and sectoral offices, and testimonials from satisfied members. Join us on May 28, 2024, to discover more about the cooperative movement in Asia and the Pacific region. [Register here](#).

### Celebrating World Earth Day: Webinar on Climate Smart Agriculture



Commemorating World Earth Day, the ICA-AP Committee on Agriculture and Environment is hosting a webinar on Climate Smart Agriculture: Perspectives for the Asia and Pacific region on 25 April 2024. This webinar aims to explore the transformation of traditional agri-food systems into climate-smart agriculture; address barriers to Climate Smart Agriculture (CSA) adoption; understand multiple CSA objectives and how to prioritize them; identify opportunities for climate-related financing and green agri-investments. To know program details and register, [click here](#).

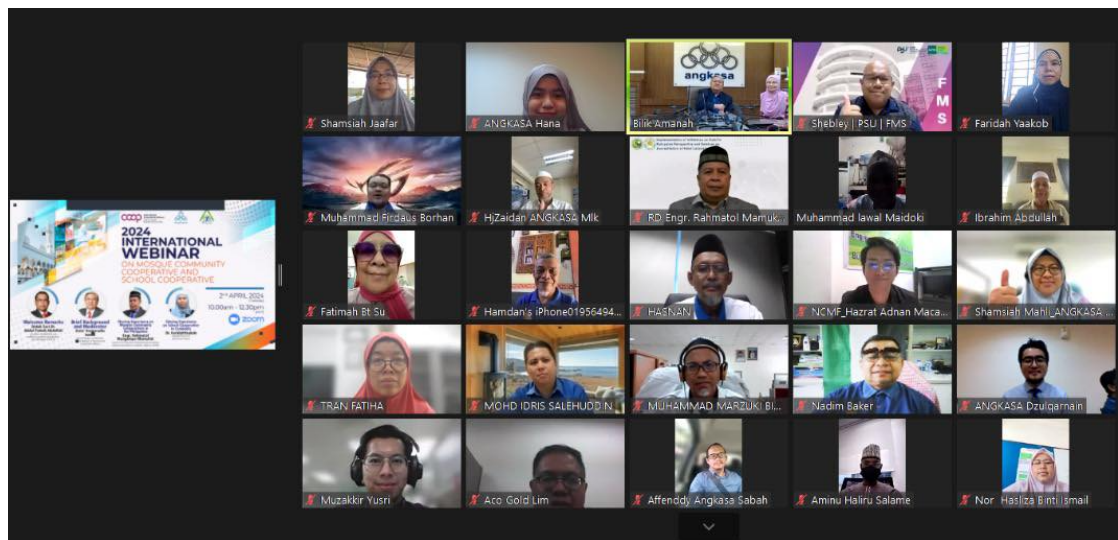
## Member Updates

NEFSCUN from Nepal Partners with Aflatoun International to Empower Youth



The Nepal Federation of Savings and Credit Cooperative Unions Limited (NEFSCUN) and Aflatoun International have joined hands, signing a Memorandum of Understanding to empower youth across Nepal. Together, they aim to impact 50,000 young individuals in secondary schools, collaborating with cooperatives and the Ministry of Education. A Training of Trainers is being planned to kickstart the journey towards transforming education and promoting social and financial literacy.

## Strengthening Community Cooperation



ANGKASA is committed to strengthening community cooperation through the Kariah Mosque Cooperative (KKM) and School Cooperative at the international level through knowledge-sharing and expertise-oriented efforts to empower the cooperative's products and services.

ANGKASA in cooperation with ASEAN Cooperatives Organization (ACO) and ICA-AP Malaysia Business Office (MBO) organised the '2024 International Webinar on Mosque Community Cooperative and School Cooperative' on 2 April 2024. Datuk Seri Dr. Abdul Fattah Abdullah, President of ANGKASA and ACO, emphasized the significant potential of cooperation in driving the development of the cooperative movement. He highlighted that both models of cooperatives possess unique strengths capable of delivering positive impacts to the community.

Moderated by Dato' Kamarudin Ismail, Board member of ANGKASA and ICA, the webinar saw the participation of as many as 75 participants from five countries namely Malaysia, Philippines, Cambodia, Vietnam and Nigeria.

Dr. Fattah shared Malaysia's cooperative landscape, with 548 KKM and 2,485 school cooperatives benefiting over 2 million members. ANGKASA encourages these community cooperatives in ASEAN and Asia-Pacific to collaborate and promote this community cooperative model for the well-being of future generations.

The webinar highlighted the experiences related to SMEs in the Philippines by the Director IV of the Muslim Economic Affairs Bureau, National Commission On Muslim Filipino (NCMF), Engr. Rahmatol Mangampo Mamukid and of School Cooperative in Cambodia by Deputy Director of Norol Iman Schools, Dr. Faridah Yaakob. Dr. Mamukid highlighted ANGKASA-

NCMF's cooperation (through an MoU signed in Manila, Philippines on 6 November 2023) to elevate the socio-economic status of Muslim communities in the Philippines, focusing on improving the market for halal products. Dr. Faridah shared Norol Iman School's success in fostering cooperative entrepreneurship among students. The school registered on 28 February 2023 is a secondary school in Kandal Province, Cambodia with 1,080 female students and 89 teachers and staff. The entrepreneurial culture culminated in the establishment of Norol Iman School Coop Mart, inaugurated earlier this year by Dr. Fattah.

## Policy & Legal Watch

### The Ministry of Cooperation in India Launches National Cooperative Database



Picture credits: [pib.gov.in](http://pib.gov.in)

In a significant milestone, the Union Home Minister and Minister of Cooperation, Shri Amit Shah, inaugurated the National Cooperative Database and unveiled the 'National Cooperative Database 2023: A Report' in New Delhi on 8 March 2024. The database, accessible with a simple click, will centralize all information related to the cooperative sector, fostering its expansion, development, and delivery. It will guide the sector's growth, identifying areas for expansion and providing invaluable insights for policymakers, researchers, and stakeholders. Utilizing the latest technology, the database portal will offer guidance to small cooperative societies, connecting them with larger networks and international markets. This initiative marks a significant step towards integrating cooperative entities and leveraging their potential for global outreach and development. [Read more.](#)





## UPCOMING EVENTS

- Webinar on *Climate Smart Agriculture* by ICA-AP Committee on Agriculture and Environment – 25 April 2024. Register here.
- ICA-AP Regional Board Meeting in Jordan – 27 April 2024
- 11th Asia Pacific Cooperative Ministers' Conference in Jordan – 28-30 April 2024
- Regional Workshop by ICA-AP Trade and Business Committee, ICA-AP Consumer Committee, and Saigon Co-op in Vietnam – May 2024
- ICA Meet & Greet for Cooperatives in Asia-Pacific – 28 May 2024. [Register here](#).
- International Day of Cooperatives – 6 July 2024
- Asia-Pacific Women CEOs in Cooperatives Summit on '*Empowering Leadership: Navigating the Future of Cooperatives with Women at the Helm*' by ICA-AP, ICA-AP Committee on Women and Vietnam Cooperative Alliance (VCA) in Hanoi, Vietnam – 29-31 July 2024
- ICA General Assembly in India – 25-30 November 2024