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# **Review of and Strategies for Co-operative Development in East, Central and Southern Africa**

**Proceedings of the First African Ministerial  
Co-operative Conference, Gaborone, Botswana  
11- 12 May, 1984**

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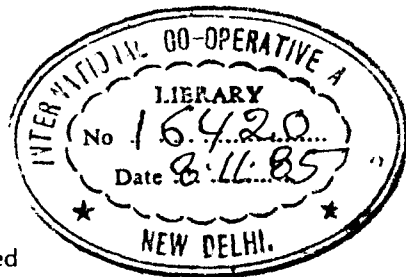
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Proceedings of the First African Ministerial  
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334 (6)  
ICA 360

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## PREFACE

The convening of the First African Ministerial Co-operative Conference in Gaborone, Botswana, is a realisation of a long term desire by the International Co-operative Alliance, Regional Office for Eastern, Central and Southern Africa, to bring together top policy makers in the Region to review the past performance and lay out future strategies for co-operative development in the Region.

The decision to convene the conference was made by the Regional Council which is the highest policy making and advisory organ of the International Co-operative Alliance for this Region. The Council realises the positive role that governments in the Region are playing in the promotion of co-operatives. It was, therefore, seen necessary to invite Ministers responsible for Co-operative Development, the Commissioners and/or Directors of Co-operative Development, the Chairmen and Chief Executives of the National Apex Organisations to attend the Conference. The primary purpose of the conference was to provide an opportunity for the delegates to exchange views, experiences and knowledge, on matters and issues crucial to successful co-operative development in the Region.

The countries invited to the conference are those whose co-operative movements are members of the International Co-operative Alliance, viz: Botswana, Kenya, Lesotho, Mauritius, Somalia, Sudan, Swaziland, Tanzania, Uganda and Zambia. Zimbabwe, which is in the process of becoming a member of the ICA, was also invited as a special case with a full delegation headed by a Cabinet Minister. The following institutions were also invited and sent their delegations as observers:

- The Swedish Co-operative Centre (SCC)
- African Co-operative Savings and Credit Association (ACOSCA)
- Centre on Integrated Rural Development for Africa (CIRDAFRICA)
- International Labour Organisation (ILO)
- Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations (FAO)
- Principals of Co-operative Training Institutions in the Region.

The actual Ministerial Conference which took two days was preceded by a three-day meeting of the Conference Preparatory Technical Committee of experts from all the invited countries and organisations. The Technical Committee discussions were based mainly on two sets of publications. First there was the key note working paper entitled *The Role of Co-operatives in Economic and Social Development in East, Central and Southern Africa* which was produced by the ICA Regional Office. The second set of the documents were the country papers, which were produced by each of the delegations, describing in detail, the history, role, performance, policy and future of co-operatives in each country. In addition, there were various other documents which served as reference materials for the Technical Committee which broke into four working groups each covering one key area of the co-operative movement.

The report of each of the four technical groups was brought before the Preparatory Committee plenary session where it was discussed, ammended and adopted. After that, all the reports were compiled and presented to the Ministerial Conference in a form of a document entitled *Review of and Strategies for Co-operative Development in East, Central and Southern Africa* which was also thoroughly discussed, ammended and adopted by the Ministers and their delegations.

At the end of the conference, the Ministers decided to draft and adopt a *Gaborone Declaration for Co-operative Development Decade — 1985/1995*, for East, Central and Southern Africa. This Declaration confirmed the key role that co-operatives are playing in African countries and committed the governments of this Region to work for strong and self-reliant co-operative movements in their countries, especially in the areas of finance, manpower, training, diversification of services to members and growth.

It was also decided to have future regular Ministerial Conferences for Ministers that are responsible for co-operative development in this Region. They will meet every three years to review the implementation of the Declaration and other decisions.

At this juncture, I wish to thank profusely, the Ministers and all delegates who made it possible to have very good attendance of the first and historical Ministerial Conference in our Region and participated very actively in its deliberations thus making it a successful meeting. Sincere thanks do also go to the members of the Conference Preparatory Technical Committee who worked very hard to produce the initial draft of the documents which are now forming the bulk of this report. There are no sufficient words to express our gratitude to the Government of Botswana, the Co-operative Development Centre of Botswana (CODEC), the Botswana Co-operative Union and all other institutions and individual people of Botswana who contributed so much towards the success of the conference.

Last but not least, I would be failing my duty if I were not to pay great tribute to my colleague, Mr. Charles Haba Gashumba, who performed the bulk of the work, not only in organising the conference, but also in preparing and producing the ICA key note working paper/booklet entitled *The Role of Co-operatives in Economic and Social Development in East, Central and Southern Africa* as well as compiling and editing this report publication. I should equally thank all my colleagues at the Regional Office for their role as members of the Conference Secretariat and their working devotedly, and at times round the clock, so as to have the needed conference documents on time.

E.M. Anangisye.  
REGIONAL DIRECTOR

## 2.

## OPENING SPEECHES

### 2.1 OPENING SPEECH BY HIS EXCELLENCY, THE ACTING PRESIDENT AND VICE-PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF BOTSWANA, MR. P.S. MMUSI

Mr. Chairman, Honourable Ministers, Members of the Diplomatic Corps, Fellow Co-operators.

I feel honoured to have been asked to perform the official opening of your conference, the first of its kind in the country. I am particularly happy that Botswana has been given the privilege to host this historical event.

Let me start with a definition of a Co-operative. "A Co-operative is an association of persons, often of limited means, who have voluntarily joined together to achieve a common economic end through the formation of a democratically controlled business organisation, making equitable contributions to the capital required and accepting a fair share of the risks and benefits of the undertaking."

It is most important that before any co-operative can be registered, members must not only understand what a co-operative is, but must also fully understand how it works and the part that they themselves have to play.

In Botswana, the Co-operative Movement is still in its early stages, as compared to other co-operative movements in this continent. Our movement started in 1964 shortly prior to our Independence. To date we have registered only 131 co-operatives which conduct an annual turnover of just over P40m and have employed about one thousand workers. The membership represents 30% of the country's population in terms of household numbers.

Amongst the activities co-operatives provide is an important service to small cattle owners in rural and remote areas of the country by selling their livestock to the Botswana Meat Commission (B.M.C.), which presently constitutes over 22% of the B.M.C. throughput. The movement is entirely independent and is run by Botswana. It is pleasing to note that, young as it is, the movement is running a printing press of its own and provides insurance services on an agency basis.

My Government sees the co-operatives as a means:

- (a) to raise the standard of living of the poorer strata of the rural and urban population;
- (b) to supply the inputs required to produce sufficient food for our increasing population;
- (c) to provide commodities for export and import substitutions;
- (d) to provide training, promote self-reliance and facilitate the acquisition of new skills;
- (e) to provide the basis for new Botswana owned enterprises; and
- (f) to promote thrift and savings, and mobilise local resources for production and investment.

I am glad, Mr. Chairman, to say the objectives of my Government in initiating the co-operative movement in this country have been partly achieved. There is, however, a lot more to be done if co-operatives in this country are to benefit all the people for whom they were intended. Co-operatives in this country have so far reached and benefitted the most vulnerable sections of the population. Only 4 out of 131 co-operative societies are located in the urban centres. This alone is evidence enough that development funds have mainly been utilised for the benefit of the more vulnerable sections of the population, especially the rural poor. For the sake of a regular supply of essentials, particularly in remote areas where no shop exists, almost all single-purpose marketing co-operatives are being converted into multi-purpose societies. It is our aim to create a strong, viable and self-reliant co-operative movement.

My Government sees co-operative business as an important means for ensuring local ownership by Batswana. Traditionally, many businesses in Botswana have been foreign-owned, with repatriation of substantial profits to other countries. While we have encouraged foreign investment to ensure development, it is clearly more desirable to give first priority to locally-owned businesses, such as co-operatives, which are highly conscious of local needs and objectives, and retain profits within the country, for further investment.

Co-operatives are business organisations and in Botswana, we have deliberately decided to exempt them from paying tax, because we consider their contribution to our economy as vital. However, my Government would be discouraged to support the co-operative movement, which we initiated, if we found it was not run efficiently. I am sure it is the thinking of the movement to say that "co-operative organisations must be efficient and profitable", hence, it is the prime duty of the board of directors or committee members to make profits for share-holders.

A board of directors which fails to provide honest and effective leadership should be replaced by those who are prepared to lead the co-operative movement to its goals. My Government is committed to supporting co-operatives in Botswana, but it can only do so if co-operatives are well-managed and operating in the interests of the members. We will not continue to support co-operatives if the proceeds from these organisations are misdirected for personal gain. My Government will not hesitate to take action to ensure that the interests of the members are safeguarded. I should, however, assure you that we will not interfere in co-operative activities without due cause as we believe the movement should be as independent as possible and benefit from our democratic principles.

The International Co-operative Alliance states in Article No. 1 of its rules that, "In continuance of the work of the Rochdale Pioneers, and in accordance with their principles, it seeks, in complete independence and by its own methods, to substitute the profit-making regimes for a co-operative system organised in the interest of the whole community and based upon mutual self-help". These principles are supported by my Government.

In some parts of the world the co-operative movement has lost its identity and its general support by involvement in party politics. While views may differ elsewhere, we, in Botswana believe that co-operatives will survive and flourish here and make a significant contribution to our economy as long as they adhere to their principle of political neutrality.

Mr. Chairman, I have said earlier that co-operatives are business organisations, hence they need educated management from a business point of view. My Government is committed to providing the means to train the staff of the movement.

Co-operative development in the world has already created a remarkable history of successes. One of the landmarks of this co-operative success was the founding of the International Co-operative Alliance (ICA) in London, in 1895. The ICA is an association of co-operative movements throughout the world, which seeks to promote the co-operative system and encourage international solidarity and to promote mutual aid between co-operatives. The fruits of the existence of ICA in its co-operative endeavour are not only in the developed world, but the ICA continues to provide assistance for the promotion of co-operative movements in developing countries as well.

It is through the process of a growing co-operative spirit that the ICA established a Regional Office for East, Central and Southern Africa in Moshi, Tanzania in 1968. Presently, the Regional Office is able to serve the countries of Botswana, Kenya, Lesotho, Mauritius, Somalia, Sudan, Tanzania, Swaziland, Uganda, and Zambia. The ICA Regional Office has an important task in guiding and fostering co-operative development in these countries. Also, this Office functions as a major means of channelling effectively, technical and financial assistance from ICA member organisations in the developed countries, to the co-operative movements of the East, Central and Southern African Region.

We are pleased that the Regional Co-operative Council — the decision making body of the Regional Office — decided to convene this important African Ministerial Co-operative Conference in Botswana. My Colleague, the Hon. Mr. Meswele, the Minister of Agriculture, was delighted to accept the invitation to host this conference. This is the first occasion for Ministers responsible for co-operatives in this Region to come together to discuss co-operative problems and progress. Clearly, it is desirable to do this periodically and I wish you all, useful and fruitful discussions and I look forward to hearing the results of your meeting.

Mr. Chairman, I have much pleasure in opening the Ministerial Conference.

THANK YOU



## 2.2

### **STATEMENT BY MR. ROGER KERINEC, PRESIDENT OF THE INTERNATIONAL CO-OPERATIVE ALLIANCE**

Your Excellency, The Acting President of the Republic of Botswana, Hon. Ministers, Your Excellencies, Members of the Diplomatic Corps, The Chairman of the Regional Council, Members of the ICA Regional Council, Dear Co-operators and Friends.

The first African Co-operative Ministerial Conference for East, Central and Southern Africa is an event of prominent importance for both African and world co-operative development. I had wished to attend the conference personally in order to convey the World Co-operative Movement's best wishes in support of this historical occasion. However, other commitments prevented me to do so. Therefore, I asked Mr. John Musundi, from Kenya, to speak on behalf of 366 million individual co-operators in 71 countries which constitute the ICA. He is a member of ICA Executive Committee where his wisdom and great awareness of co-operative development issues in Africa are most appreciated.

Your Hon. Ministers, your presence at this conference emphasizes the importance which African Governments in general, and your respective countries more especially, tend to increasingly attach to the development process. Therefore, I wish your deliberations to reach positive conclusions on the various important topics listed in the agenda of the conference. The International Co-operative Alliance is convinced that governments should play a key role in facilitating co-operative development while respecting their democratic character as peoples' institutions. It is the role of governments to formulate such policies which take into account the true essence of co-operatives, without burdening them with such functions which is not possible for them to fulfil. Co-operatives are the best answer.

Your Excellency, it is important that legal provisions exist which will provide for favourable development of co-operatives and for supporting co-operators in their efforts to become increasingly capable to understand their economic environment and to manage their enterprises on both self-help and mutual aid basis, benefiting from proper advice, guidance, and, whenever desirable, resources. In this latter case, we like to refer to the advisability that co-operatives be associated in the implementation of co-operative development programmes which are supported by institutions of the UN family, through government channels. It is essential that a consistent co-operative policy exists at national level and that all development efforts, from whatever origin, should have the same final goal which is the establishment and growth of independent democratic viable co-operative organisations in which men and women participate on equal terms.

Your Excellency, the International Co-operative Alliance firmly hopes that this conference will provide a valuable opportunity for defining ways and means by which this role could be enhanced by the governments represented here today.

We would welcome any new ideas whose consideration might lead the ICA to further strengthen its work in the Region through the Regional Office so as to have greater impact through jointly supporting co-operative development in the Region. We feel that this conference may represent a major step forward in our efforts for more inter-co-operation within the Region. The ICA recently laid down its objectives and priorities in the field of co-operative development. These are presented in a statement entitled *An ICA Policy for Co-operative Development* which was widely circulated throughout the world. The ICA pledges for a better knowledge of actual co-operative potentialities for greater support to co-operative efforts, especially by developing movement to movement aid. We are deeply convinced that this support will become meaningful if there is a will and a commitment by co-operative members, leaders of co-operative institutions and governments.

Hon. Minister, I wish you success in your deliberations during this conference and I feel confident that conclusions will aim at strengthening the part played by co-operators in the development of their own countries.

THANK YOU

### **2.3 SPEECH DELIVERED TO THE DELEGATES BY MR. E.M. ANANGISYE, REGIONAL DIRECTOR, ICA REGIONAL OFFICE FOR EAST, CENTRAL AND SOUTHERN AFRICA, AFTER THE FORMAL OPENING OF THE CONFERENCE**

Mr. Chairman, Hon. Ministers, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Since after the formal opening of the conference, this is the first session for the delegates and observers to this first African Ministerial Co-operative Conference, let me once more, on behalf of the International Co-operative Alliance, welcome you all to this August gathering. Your presence here does amply demonstrate the seriousness with which your respective nations are taking about the co-operative movements.

This being the first time ever, in this part of the world, to hold a conference at ministerial level, admittedly, we were not sure whether you, Hon. Ministers, would at all attend the conference.

This is because we did not know how your governments would react to the idea of a conference that would discuss about the role of the co-operatives in the economic and social development of our countries. So you can imagine how ICA feels satisfied that its efforts could lead to your being present here today.

Besides the attitudes towards co-operatives, there is the additional point that you, Honourable Ministers and distinguished delegates, are having so much work to do at home. We sincerely appreciate very much, your decision to spare some time to come and attend this conference.

There is also the point that several of you had to go through political ministerial reshuffles only recently in your own respective countries. Therefore, we feared that such a situation could bar you from coming here as it has happened to a few of your colleagues. We are glad that you are here and do wish to seize this opportunity to congratulate you for having made it successfully. We also wish to congratulate those delegates who were only recently appointed Ministers in their own governments.

As for the rest of the delegates, we know there is so much demand on your time and efforts in working for co-operative development in your countries. We are therefore, indeed thankful, that you found time to come and attend this conference.

We cannot forget you observers who decided to come to enrich this conference with your vast knowledge and experiences that are possessed by you, personally, and the organisations that you represent in the field of co-operatives.

You are already familiar with the background to this conference which has been called by our organisation, the International Co-operative Alliance Regional Office for East, Central and Southern Africa. The International Co-operative Alliance, ICA, is a non-governmental world organisation which federates 160

co-operative organisations from 71 countries with a total membership of 366 million individual co-operators. It is spread to all continents embracing Western and Eastern countries, as well as developed and developing countries. ICA's major aims are to promote co-operatives in the world; support and defend the existing co-operatives and organise exchange of experiences among the member countries.

ICA has its head office in Geneva, Switzerland. It also has regional offices in South-East Asia, Western Africa and the other office is here in East, Central and Southern Africa. The regional offices do group together the ICA member countries that are located in the respective Regions. They have their own organisational set up which include the Regional Councils which are the policy-making bodies under which the regional offices operate.

It was the Regional Council of our Regional Office for East, Central and Southern Africa which decided that this first African Ministerial Co-operative Conference should be called. There are several reasons that led to the Regional Council deciding to make that decision. It was found that the governments from this Region were increasingly coming forward to promote and support the co-operatives, especially from the time our African countries got independence. The colonial governments backed the co-operatives as instruments for their own colonial objectives. But after independence, the new African governments saw the co-operatives as instruments for transforming the economic and social well-being of the African masses, especially the farming peasants and urban population. The co-operatives were to be the means for working for the self-reliance of the African farming and working people. The co-operatives were to enable their members to maximise their contributions to the overall national economies.

Of late, during the economic crisis which the African continent, as well as the entire world are going through, the African nations are found to be increasingly turning towards the co-operatives as one of the most effective means for tackling this economic crisis. Co-operatives are being more and more relied upon to increase production of food to meet the threat of hunger that is engulfing the African continent. Co-operatives are being asked to mobilise African peasant farmers to produce more cash crops that could help in earning the precious foreign exchange. Co-operatives are being asked to set up reliable networks for distributing the essential commodities, especially where shortages do exist. Co-operatives are helping in mobilising the scarce financial resources from the individual small farmers and workers. The co-operative movement is called upon to create employment opportunities on basis of self-reliance and also to let people construct their houses on a self-help basis.

The objectives of the conference is to create an opportunity for the countries represented here to exchange experiences and knowledge on how effectively they have been able to promote the co-operatives and what successes and problems they have been meeting.

At the end of the conference, we should come up with a very clear stand, on the role of co-operatives in our Region, based on the rich experiences and knowledge that have been accumulated from the countries represented here. When they leave, the delegates should be clearer as to what are co-operatives and what they achieve and under what conditions. It should be clearer from here as to how co-operatives can be used to achieve maximum results in our efforts for economic and social transformations of our nations.

As a basis for discussions, the conference delegates are being presented with two papers in front of them; First there is the paper that is titled *The role of co-operatives in economic and social development in East, Central and Southern Africa* that was prepared by the ICA Regional Office in Moshi, Tanzania. This paper formed the basis for the discussions of the conference Preparatory Technical Committee meeting which produced its report of which its document forms the second paper that is with the delegates. The document is titled *Review of and Strategies for Co-operative Development in East, Central and Southern Africa*. The conference Preparatory Technical Committee meeting was composed of the commissioners and directors of the co-operative departments who worked with the secretary generals and general managers of the national co-operative apex organisations. Almost all the observers joined in these discussions.

The Preparatory Committee, apart from using the ICA produced document, used the country papers which are containing vast and valuable information about what each conference participating country was doing about its own co-operatives. There were also several other useful documents from ICA including the one titled *An ICA Policy on co-operative Development*. We also used documents from the UN agencies and other sources.

In order to have thorough and detailed discussions, the conference Preparatory Technical Committee broke into four discussion groups of which each covered one of the major areas of interest. The areas included:

- Group I : "The impact and successes co-operatives have scored in the Region, problems and constraints that hinder co-operative development and possible solutions and remedies."
- Group II : "Co-operative principles in context of African conditions and review of how they can best be implemented in order to boost democratic participation in and promotion of co-operatives in the Region."
- Group III : "The role of governments in fostering co-operative development – achievements and constraints."
- Group IV : "Future strategies that can bring about accelerated co-operative development in the Region."

Each discussion group ended up with its own report. Then there was a plenary session of the entire Preparatory Committee which discussed all the group reports. After that, a full report was prepared. It is this report which will be presented before the Ministerial Conference which would deliberate on it together with ICA Regional Office working paper. Both the report and the working paper are being tabled before the conference for the distinguished delegates to debate on them.

The discussions on these two documents would take the rest of the first day. Tomorrow morning, the conference Preparatory Committee would be reconvened to work and summarise all the comments and views of the Honourable Ministers on the two papers as well as the objectives of the conference as a whole. They would also be working on preparing the conference declaration. For it has been suggested that instead of ending up with a communique, the conference should come out with a firm declaration which would commit our governments and countries to taking strong measures of promoting and supporting co-operatives.

In the meantime, during the morning of May 12th, the Ministers would be taken on sight-seeing which would include visiting the Botswana Meat Commission factory which is exporting a lot of cattle meat to Europe and other parts of the world. In the afternoon of same day, according to our programme, there would be the reconvening of a full plenary session of the conference which would deliberate on the final report of the Preparatory Technical Committee as well as the conference declaration.

THANK YOU

### **3. OBSERVATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

#### **3.1 Women and Youth**

The role of women in economic development in our Region is significant. However, the participation of women in decision-making and in training programmes to increase their skills is negligible. While noting that existing legislation generally caters for all, including women, it is recommended that in countries where women participation is difficult, measures should be taken to encourage their participation in co-operative activities. Further, youths are the co-operators of tomorrow. Unless introduced to co-operative ideals and practices early in life, the continuity of co-operative membership will be endangered. It is recommended that co-operative education should not only be taught in schools of co-operation, but should also be introduced in colleges and other specialised centres such as:

- Universities
- Teacher Training Colleges
- Agricultural Schools and other vocational establishments
- Secondary Schools
- Primary Schools.

#### **3.2 Research, Education and Training**

Efforts by member countries to conduct national induction programmes for the high level manpower recruited into the co-operative sector have invariably proved inadequate, while training abroad has not fully addressed itself to the needs of the Region.

Secondly, the demand for specialised high level manpower is growing at a geometric progression outpacing supply because of the expansion of the co-operative movement. In order to meet these demands, it is recommended that a Graduate Course in Co-operative Development Policy be started and be administered by the ICA Regional Office in Moshi. Furthermore, it is recommended that there should be a Regional Co-operative Research Institute which will develop research, consultancy and project planning capacities and other managerial skills in the co-operative movement of the Region.

#### **3.3 Manpower**

The high turnover of qualified officers in the Co-operative Movement and Departments or Ministries responsible for Co-operative Development has led to the loss of expertise due to poor terms and conditions of service. In order to attract and retain qualified and experienced personnel, it is recommended that competitive terms and conditions of service and salary structure be offered as it is the case with other institutions and ministries of comparable status.

### 3.4 **Trade**

To achieve inter-co-operative collaboration within the Region, it is recommended that the ICA Regional Office be represented on SADCC and PTA in order to protect co-operative interests. To this end, it is further recommended that a Co-operative Technical Committee be established within these bodies to consider matters affecting co-operative development within the Region.

### 3.5 **Foreign Exchange**

It has been noted that co-operatives are incapable of servicing the members properly because of insufficient foreign exchange made available to co-operatives to procure some of their requirements from abroad. It is recommended that respective governments should give co-operatives priority in allocation of foreign exchange so as to enable them to purchase necessary requirements from other countries. This will also promote inter-co-operative trade among countries of the Region.

### 3.6 **Taxation**

It is a well known fact that co-operative organisations do pay heavy taxes. Based on merit, tax exemption could be granted by governments to enable co-operative organisations to take off, but after achieving the increased strength and capability, they would be expected to pay tax like other business organisations.

### 3.7 **Pricing Policies**

Pricing Policies pose major constraints. In some cases, farmers get 30-40% of the world market prices. Farmers should get fairer prices so that increased surplus can go to the members. In view of this, it is recommended that apex co-operative organisations be represented in forums that determine pricing policies.

### 3.8 **Legislation**

The co-operative movement should recommend the required enactment or changes in legislation geared to co-operative development to relevant authorities as need arises.

### 3.9 **Interest on Capital and Disposal of Surplus**

At a time of high inflation whereby the value of money goes down, there is a need to keep constant watch over the private commercial interest rates and review rates payable to co-operative members otherwise they may be persuaded to invest their money outside the co-operative movement. In order to attract more members and consequently more share capital, the patronage should be attractive and rewarding.



#### **4.0 Movement to Movement Assistance**

Movement to movement assistance is welcome and should be encouraged, but government should have a say on who assists who, for what purpose and under what conditions.

#### **4.1 Government Supervision and Control**

Government is willing to help co-operatives attain increased strength and capability. But co-operatives must strive on their own to achieve self-reliance so as to reduce government supervision and control. If government injects financial resources in the co-operative movement, it will be interested in finding out and ensuring that these public funds are being utilised for purposes for which they were intended.

#### **4.2 Parastatal Organisations**

Parastatals should not be created to compete with co-operatives. Where co-operatives are capable of handling the activities of parastatal organisations, these activities should be taken over by co-operatives.

#### **4.3 Future Ministerial Conference**

It is recommended that such conferences of ministers responsible for co-operative development should be organised periodically to review progress in the field of co-operative development.

### **4. APPLICABILITY OF CO-OPERATIVE PRINCIPLES IN THE CONTEXT OF AFRICAN SOCIO-ECONOMIC CONDITIONS**

#### **4.1 Open and Voluntary Membership**

Membership of a co-operative society should be voluntary and available without artificial restriction or any social, political, racial or religious discrimination, to all persons who can make use of its services and are willing to accept the responsibilities of membership.

All people with common needs which can be supplied by a co-operative society are eligible by right, to membership. It is these shared needs which provide the common bond among members and which override all other considerations of race, colour, religion or political affiliation, for such considerations are not relevant to the society's economic and social purpose. The decision to join, therefore, should rest on the individual. He decides out of his own free will and should not be coerced, either directly by legal or administrative compulsion, or indirectly, under social or possibly political pressure. The voluntary nature of membership has also a deeper implication. Since co-operatives' main objective is the improvement of the economic and social conditions of their members, it means that the members themselves have to decide to do something to help them-

selves through self-help and self-reliance as the cardinal tenet of co-operation. What is of equal importance is that members have to decide to stand on their own, relieving governments of a load of responsibility. Members join co-operatives to acquire strength but they should be willing to shoulder a fair share of society responsibilities i.e. provide adequate finance, devote the necessary time to manage the co-operative, exercise appropriate control over paid personnel, safeguard the assets, etc.

However, it is a mistake to interpret "open membership" as meaning that a co-operative is obliged to enroll all persons who apply for membership. In practice, however, there are restrictions. For example, in a workers co-operative society, membership is restricted to those working in the same trade or industry. Sometimes, economic or operational constraints intervene. Housing co-operatives offer a product, that is houses, which are limited in supply and therefore, can only cater for a limited number of persons. A co-operative society has the duty to refuse admittance to known bad characters, irresponsible individuals or trouble makers. Their influence would be too disruptive.

Sometimes also, both women and minors are debarred from joining a co-operative society, the former because of social and cultural customs. Only time and the effects of general education can overcome this hurdle. As for minors, certain countries of the Region have, by law, lowered the age of joining or involvement in particular co-operative activities. For example in Tanzania, they can join co-operatives at fifteen. In Mauritius, there is special allowance for school children to join co-operative school savings banks from five onwards.

In some countries where governments have given co-operatives monopoly in marketing certain crops, people have no choice but to join such co-operatives. Though the intention is to protect the weak producers, which is highly desirable, great care must be taken to prevent such monopolies being inefficient, bureaucratic and wasteful.

Lastly, a tendency exists in the Region to give membership to influential people even if they have no common bond with the other members, on the misguided belief that they can help the co-operatives. This practice is objectionable as members might end up being manipulated by such people.

#### **4.2 Democratic Control**

Co-operative societies are democratic organisations. Their affairs should be administered by persons elected or appointed in a manner agreed by the members and accountable to them. Members of primary societies should enjoy equal rights of voting (one member, one vote) and

participation in decisions affecting their societies. In other than primary societies the administration should be conducted on a democratic basis in a suitable form.

The primary purpose of a co-operative society is to promote the interests of its members. It is these members who know best what their interests are. A co-operative society will therefore not work well and prosper without agreed and efficient methods of consulting members so that they express their wishes. This is necessary particularly because it is the members who bring the co-operative into existence and whose constant adherence and support keeps it alive. For this reason, those who administer the affairs of the co-operatives and, in particular, its day-to-day business must be chosen directly or indirectly by members and enjoy their confidence. Further, members must have the authority and power to criticise, object and, where necessary, dismiss and replace their management committees and employees.

What is of great significance is that in a co-operative society, unlike a joint stock company, each member, irrespective of his share holdings, has only one vote in the decision-making process. As a co-operative is an association of persons and not of capital, it is considered that the dignity of every individual should be respected, hence the equality of all members as exemplified in the one member, one vote principle. One other practice which derives from this insistence on democracy in co-operatives is the emphasis placed on the participation of members in running their societies. To that effect, proxy voting is not allowed. Members themselves must be present to take decisions. However, for members to participate and take right decisions they must be aware of all the facts. Yet there is a lack of information to members in many co-operatives. This is a lacuna which needs to be rectified by both the elected leaders and the authorities. At times, the notion of apathy is the result of the absence of a sense of belonging — particularly in those societies which have been organised from the top, whether in response to the government policy or otherwise. Though at times necessary, the organisers of such co-operatives must ensure that the people are fully involved from the beginning, that they are consulted at every stage and that such societies are also responsive to members' felt needs. Ignorance of their rights can also lead co-operators playing a passive role. To exercise their rights, they must first of all know what these rights are. In this respect, the education of members of their rights is of paramount importance.

Democracy is often stifled in co-operatives because of the undue control exercised by government officials. Though the intention is commendable, such practice over the years has in many cases squashed local initiative and developed an excessive reliance on official wisdom. The role of

government officers should be mostly confined to providing advice, facts, figures and encourage members to take their own decisions. It is common knowledge that even if mistakes are made (though within acceptable limits) people learn from such mistakes. It should be government policy to review regularly the legal apparatus governing co-operatives with a view of relaxing control gradually so as to promote real democracy and the spirit of self-reliance.

A development which has assisted democratic administration in many countries of the Region is the rotation of members elected to the managing committee. Members serve for three or more years with one third of the number retiring every year. The idea is to provide change with continuity.

Lastly, it must be recognised that the democratic process can be and has, in some instances, been abused by the elected members to further their own ends. Only a well educated membership taking an active part in the society's affairs can put a stop to such abuses.

#### 4.3 **Limited Interest on Capital**

Share capital should only receive a strictly limited rate of interest, if any.

The basis for the emergency of this principle was ideological; a revolt against the excesses of the owners of capital in the 19th Century. While recognising the need for capital to start any business, the Rochdale Pioneers made sure that such capital did not become the master but the servant of co-operatives. The capital subscribed and paid by members is considered merely as a means to achieve the stated objectives of the co-operatives, i.e. service to members. It is not to be taken as an investment for earning high returns. Since members make use of the capital, it has been considered fair and reasonable that a service charge be paid for it, but at a limited rate.

This principle is applicable to all countries of the Region. Though it is a sound principle which must be maintained to avoid co-operatives being taken over by investors, it must be recognised that it is a limiting factor in capital formation because members might be tempted to invest their surplus revenue outside the co-operative fold. At a time of high inflation when the value of money goes down there is need to keep a constant watch over the private commercial rates and thus review the rates payable in co-operatives in order to reconcile the interests of members and the co-operatives. What has definitely to be avoided is the non-payment of interest on capital as is now the practice in many co-operatives. There is no justification whatsoever to aggravate the situation. Payment of interest on capital, therefore, should be made.

#### 4.4 Disposal of Surplus

The economic results arising out of the operations of a society belong to the members of that society and should be distributed in such a manner as would avoid one member gaining at the expense of others.

This may be done by decision of the members as follows:

- a) By provision for development of the business of the co-operative;
- b) By provision of common services; or
- c) By distribution among the members in proportion to their transactions with the society.

When it is considered that in co-operatives both the owners and the users are the same people, there should normally be no surplus at all. Sometimes, the cost of operation cannot be estimated precisely, so the practice has developed of charging at current market prices. In cases where the members have temporarily paid in excess, the surplus is then rebated to them in proportion to their transactions (which, incidentally, generates the surplus). This is the reason for asserting that co-operatives can reduce exploitation. In the process, they prevent a handful of rich from getting richer, thereby preventing the spread of wealth over a large number of people, which would otherwise bring a fairer economic social order. Where such an order exists on a large scale, social tensions tend to diminish, and there is more harmony and peace.

The rebates of surplus need not necessarily occur every year. Some co-operatives have retained surplus and created revolving funds (normally operating over a five-year period) to look after the need of capital for development and expansion. The members are then paid what was due to them in the first year of operation of the fund. Others have converted the bonus payable into shares. In this way, both the members and their societies are served.

The creation of surplus in co-operatives, which actually is an over-charge on members to be rebated to them by right, has, unfortunately, in some countries attracted the attention of the tax authorities. In some other countries, both the surplus is taxed at source and so is the bonus eventually received by members. Yet in some other countries, co-operatives are rightly and completely exempted from such depredations. As a co-operative is not trading in the normal sense of the word, but only distributing goods and services to its members, who are also the owners, it does not make sense to consider surplus as profit, liable to tax. This implies member-users making a profit over their own heads, which is patently absorbed. In fact, the bonus is not an additional revenue to members. Rather, it is only that part of his expenses which he has managed to save.

Such savings cannot possibly attract taxes. This question of taxation of co-operatives, which is a matter of vital importance to co-operative development, deserves serious consideration of the governments in the Region with a view to exempting co-operatives from this unjust burden.

#### 4.5 Co-operative Education

All co-operative societies should make provision for the education of their members, officers and employees and the general public, in the principles and techniques of co-operation, both economic and democratic.

Education and training has to be intensified for the above target groups embracing the principles and techniques of co-operation, both economic and democratic. The knowledge and skills should include not only the special forms of co-operation in which the target groups are engaged, but also the economic, social and political environment in which the co-operatives operate.

Furthermore, it is important that the responsibility for member, committee, staff and general public, co-operative education must be shouldered by the Co-operative Movement itself. This should be realised through providing adequate supportive resources in the form of funds and personnel in the co-operative budgets.

In order to enhance implementation of this principle, it is necessary that resources should also be allocated for the following areas:

- Research Programmes
- Literacy Programmes
- Youth and Women Programmes
- High Government Officials' Programmes
- High-Level Manpower Development Programmes.

Special care should be given to the use of the most effective methods appropriate for each target groups, including Audio Visual Aids and the mass media.

#### 4.6 Co-operation among Co-operatives

All co-operative organisations, in order to best serve the interests of their members and their communities, should actively co-operate in every practical way with other co-operatives at local, national and international levels.

Since co-operatives cater for both producers (agricultural, industrial, service etc.) and consumers, it is not difficult to envisage that conflicts of interest might develop between them. Sometimes such conflicts arise between two or more co-operatives because of divergent views regarding operations, types of services offered, etc. At times also, conflicts arise

from different ideological backgrounds which have presided over the history of such co-operatives. What needs to be said is that such differences should be frankly recognised and that the necessary instruments should be set up to reconcile them in a spirit of understanding and friendship.

Co-operation among co-operatives is quite advantageous in that, it leads to sharing of experience, knowledge, skills, both at the national or international level. Such co-operation might also be used between countries for the practical solution of common problems, common requirements for higher education and training and areas of common interest beyond the resources of any one country.

Lastly, such co-operation is becoming increasingly urgent in the field of trade for third world countries battered by the inequities of international trade. Co-operators in countries of the Region should make maximum use of the opportunities offered by such agencies as the Southern African Development Co-ordinating Conference (SADCC) and the Preferential Treaty Area (PTA) to boost inter-co-operative trade for the benefit of the countries of the Region and indeed the member co-operators.

## **5. REVIEW OF SUCCESSES AND CONSTRAINTS OF CO-OPERATIVES IN THE REGION**

### **5.1 Successes**

By and large, co-operatives have made a tremendous impact in social and economic development in the Region as a result of which most governments have regarded co-operatives as a useful and effective tool for accelerating rural development. As the economies of most of the countries in the Region depend largely on agriculture, the earlier co-operatives were mainly involved with production and marketing of agricultural produce. Most of the success stories, therefore, are associated with agricultural co-operatives. For instance in Kenya, co-operatives are used for channeling credit for production purposes to the farmers, and co-operatives contribute 40% of the Gross National Product (GNP). Besides, co-operatives have created an awareness among members and the general public of their advantages and, in particular, economic strength.

Co-operatives have created employment opportunities for many people. These, on the one hand, are members who are engaged in production, marketing and processing, and on the other hand are the employees who operate as technicians and who manage the co-operative enterprises at various levels. For example, it is estimated that nearly 30,000 people are employed as salaried workers by co-operatives in Kenya.

In most countries of the Region, it is reckoned that at least 85% of the people who live in the rural areas are served by co-operatives. Through co-operative efforts, agricultural extension services have been intensified and production of both food and cash crops has been enhanced. Co-operatives have also proved to be a countervailing power in reducing the evils of exploitation by the middlemen and money lenders. This has been the case in cotton marketing in Swaziland, livestock marketing in Botswana and in marketing of cashew nuts in the Coast Province in Kenya.

As the need for credit increased, it became necessary for co-operatives to establish their own financial institutions namely: co-operative banks, in order to provide the much needed credit as is the case in Kenya and Uganda where co-operative banks are wholly owned by the co-operatives. Similarly, through felt need, co-operatives developed and established co-operative insurance organisations or agencies as is the case in Uganda, Kenya, Tanzania and Zambia respectively.

Thus partly, as a result of their successes, co-operatives have increased in numbers. For instance, in Uganda the number of active co-operative societies increased from 3201 in 1980 to 4240 in 1983, with a membership of 1.2 million co-operators and share capital worth U.Shs. 174.0 million.

## **5.2 Problems, Constraints and Possible Solutions**

In its history, the Co-operative Movement in the Region has encountered a number of problems and constraints which have inhibited a faster development. The following are some of the problems and possible solutions:

### **5.2.1 Lack of adequate training**

As already mentioned above, co-operative education and training is fundamental when planning for a successful co-operative movement. Though basic, a survey of the Region indicates that the amount of education and training available to the co-operative movement is significantly inadequate. This in turn has retarded the democratic and managerial capacities of co-operative institutions. This lack of adequate education and training is manifested in several forms. Uninformed membership is responsible for apathy and passivity amongst members of co-operatives, hence the low rate of member participation in making decisions affecting their co-operative organisation. Inadequate training of staff members results in poor managerial performance. This, in turn, together with uninformed management committee, results in poor committee staff relations which is detrimental to the smooth running of any co-operative society.

In order to overcome this major bottleneck, efforts must be made to step up co-operative education and training at various levels. Members and committee members should be educated so that they understand the



Co-operative Societies Act, the Rules and Society By-laws. In addition, members should adequately be informed of their rights and obligations. In order to facilitate this noble goal, the members should be encouraged to participate in adult education or functional literacy programmes.

As much as possible, the staff of the co-operative movement should be trained so that they acquire the necessary management and accounting skills. Similarly, the staff of the Ministries and/or Departments responsible for co-operative development should be adequately trained in order to enable them to supervise and advise co-operatives. In order to build up an effective top management cadre in the co-operative movement, such personnel should be at least college or university graduates or equivalent and they should have avenues for further training. Post graduate courses in Co-operative Development should be encouraged as well as training in Research Methods and Project Planning and Management. The same applies to personnel of the Ministries/Departments responsible for co-operative development.

In addition, efforts should be intensified to introduce co-operative education to non-members and institutions of learning such as primary and secondary schools, training colleges and universities, as this would spread the knowledge of co-operation to important target groups.

In order for co-operative education and training programmes to be embarked upon successfully, resources and training facilities have to be available. It is therefore, an urgent necessity that countries which do not have co-operative colleges should make efforts to establish them. In countries where resources pose a major constraint, they should seek for such training facilities in other countries of the Region as one aspect of inter-co-operative collaboration. Training of members and committee members could also be conducted under the auspices of co-operative unions and Departments for Co-operative Development at Co-operative Wings (where they exist), Farmers Training Centres, Co-operative Education Centres, District Development Centres and Community Centres or any other suitable venues.

### 5.2.2 *Lack of Capital*

Lack of capital is a major but common constraint in the co-operative movements in the Region, which in turn causes several problems. It is, for example, common to come across several small uneconomic co-operatives whose membership is too small to raise a reasonable amount of share capital. As a result of the low capital base, such societies lack, among others, basic infrastructure, storage facilities, office accommodation and equipment, vehicles and transport votes.

In order to minimise such cases, the criteria to register co-operatives should be their potential economic viability. Members should be encouraged to increase their share capital and as much as possible co-operative banks should be formed in order to augment funds raised through share capital and otherwise.

Co-operatives should be given support so that they establish income-generating activities. The surplus earned from such ventures would serve a good purpose if it were re-invested in business ventures such as agro-based industries and housing projects. In so doing, co-operatives would build up their own assets which would be pledged as security for obtaining credit from financiers as need arose. In cases where internally-generated funds were not forthcoming, the government would be expected to step in and provide funds for co-operative development as an integral part of the development policy. Where foreign co-operative movements are willing to help, this should be encouraged but with the knowledge of the government.

The co-operatives, however, would be expected to prepare comprehensive development plans, realistic budgets and exercise stringent financial control so as to have funds readily available for re-investment.

#### 5.2.3 *Lack of adequate services*

Some of the basic services required by co-operatives, such as accounting, auditing and insurance, are in many cases currently being provided by commercial organisations at exorbitant fees. This further depletes the already weak finances of the co-operatives. The banking facilities from commercial banks take a very long procedure and are also very costly.

It would, therefore, be realistic for co-operatives to target at being able to provide such expensive but crucial services so as to reduce the exorbitant charges they incur when they get the services from commercial organisations. It is, therefore, prudent for apex co-operative organisations to provide audit, insurance, and other such services that would save the co-operatives from exorbitant charges by commercial organisations.

#### 5.2.4 *Lack of skilled manpower*

There has been a tendency for the co-operative movements not to attract the cream of the personnel resources available. This is partly due to poor terms and conditions of service, job insecurity of the personnel and lack of career development programmes.

In order to attract capable personnel in co-operatives, terms and conditions of service should be streamlined so that they are competitive with similar organisations and prospects and programmes for career development should be designed so as to create incentive.

### 5.2.5 *Government Legislation and Policies*

Government legislation should be sympathetic to co-operative development. There has been inconsistency in government policies, for instance, in creating competition between co-operatives and parastatal organisations. Government policy on co-operatives should have deliberate provisions of ultimately transferring the functions of marketing boards to co-operative organisations.

The pricing structure leaves co-operatives without adequate operational margins as is the case with the marketing of agricultural produce and distribution of fertilizers in Kenya and Zambia. In order to reach a compromise, it is fair that co-operatives are represented in the organs which determine prices of agricultural produce and other relevant commodities.

In some cases, management commissions have been appointed by government to replace democratically elected management committees. This is the case when, in the opinion of the commissioner for Co-operatives/Registrar, a management committee has mismanaged the affairs of a society. In such a situation, he should remove the incumbent committee, but with the approval of the apex organisation and thereafter allow members to elect a new committee as soon as possible.

Co-operatives are taxed in various forms such as income tax on surplus, development levy and county council cess. In some countries, the aggregate of these taxes is higher than the tax incurred by business organisations, and this is even more strenuous on a newly formed co-operative organisation.

Based on merit, tax exemption should be granted to such young co-operative organisations so as to enable them to take off. After take-off such co-operative organisations would be expected to pay taxes like other business organisations and not higher.

## **6. THE ROLE OF GOVERNMENT IN FOSTERING CO-OPERATIVE DEVELOPMENT**

### **6.1 Methods of approach to fostering Co-operative Development**

It is acknowledged that the governments in each of the countries of the Region are committed to co-operative development. This official recognition is demonstrated by the fact that from the attainment of political independence, each country's government has enacted legislation geared to co-operative development. Co-operative movements are sponsored and promoted by governments through either Ministries of Co-operative Development or Co-operative Departments within Ministries whose overall portfolio has some direct relevance to co-operative development. In

some countries, the recognition of co-operatives as an effective means of achieving active participation of the majority of the population in the economic and social development of the countries has been demonstrated by the formulation of bodies to represent co-operative interests at the highest echelons of levels of government. For example, in the Democratic Republic of Somalia, a special bureau which represents co-operatives was set up within the Central Committee of the Party in the Government and as such, the interests of co-operatives are communicated directly to the highest levels of government.

In order to ensure the smooth development of co-operatives as economic business units, governments have assumed statutory and development functions.

The statutory functions include:

- Administration of the Co-operative Act
- Registration and/or liquidation of societies
- Settlement of disputes
- Arbitration.

On the other hand, development functions include:

- Promotion of co-operative growth and development
- Audit and supervision
- Inspection
- Education and training of members and employed staff.

Since promotion of co-operatives calls for financial and technical assistance, governments have continued to provide such assistance through grants-in-aid, soft loans and guarantees. This assistance has necessitated that governments control and supervise co-operatives since they deal with public funds. It becomes the responsibility of governments to ensure the management and control of the use of such funds.

Governments have set up training institutions for training co-operative management staff and committees in order to better develop co-operatives. Research and training units have been established within the Co-operative Departments and Ministries where such services are not provided for by the co-operative movement.

In some countries of the Region, governments have, in addition to the Co-operative Societies Acts, issued clear statements of policy for co-operative development. These policy statements have enabled implementing agencies to clearly follow and understand the role that co-operatives should play within the overall national development programme. Co-operative development policies in all countries emphasise the role of co-operatives in fostering rural development. As co-operative movements become

strong viable economic units, governments are willing to release some commercial functions initially operated by parastatal organisations so that they are operated by co-operatives. The readiness to assume such functions will be demonstrated by strong managerial skills and an enlightened membership. It is believed that such transfer of services to the movement will encourage the development of co-operatives as economic units.

## 6.2 Shortfalls in fostering Co-operative Development

The role played by governments in fostering co-operative development has been hindered by several constraints arising from lack of adequately trained personnel and also the shortage of manpower within the Ministries or Departments for Co-operative Development, as already indicated. In most Ministries, therefore, a lot of functions have been left undone due to shortage of manpower, and, in some instances due to inadequately trained and inexperienced officials. Such government functions include supervision and control. This is so because governments regard co-operatives as bodies which operate on public funds and also because they provide financial and material aid to the movement. Such supervision and control is therefore inevitable. While co-operators need government assistance and control, in some countries, there is a feeling that there is too much control of co-operatives even to the extent that the traditional co-operative democratic control by the membership is lessened. It is, however, necessary for governments to help co-operatives, so that they operate as viable economic units so that they require less control by the government as they develop viability and self-sustenance.

Although many governments within the Region have seen co-operatives as tools for accelerating rural development, very few have issued clear policies on the development of such organisations, as already indicated.

Integrated rural development has been widely spoken about but not very many countries have addressed themselves to the question of promotion of co-operatives as socio-economic organisations with diversified functions within the overall plan of rural development.

There is also the problem of establishing clear criteria for assessing viability and maturity of co-operatives and when a government should cease its control of these organisations. By their nature, co-operatives are open organisations whose mistakes are easily spoken about in public. However, this should not be used as a "yard-stick" to gauge actual performance of co-operatives. Experience from some countries shows that a number of co-operatives perform better than some parastatal organisations but the public has not got easy access to their records. Co-operatives must be allowed to operate as autonomous units with minimal

control from the government if it can be ascertained that they have attained maturity and self-sustenance. Adverse government interference into the day-to-day operations of the co-operatives can have serious effects in the smooth development of co-operatives and should therefore be guarded against.

In certain cases, even the existing co-operative legislation leaves a lot to be desired and in some instances, member countries are using Co-operative Acts which were promulgated a long time ago and may not relate to present needs of co-operatives in these countries. In other instances existing legislation is very limited in its scope of coverage of the areas of the co-operatives. The co-operative movement should recommend the required enactment or changes in legislation which they consider necessary and timely to relevant authorities so as to promote co-operative development.

### **6.3 Expectation for the future**

As already highlighted, co-operative development calls for the initial technical and financial support from governments, which therefore calls for active state supervision and control. However, governments must aim at creating a viable, self-reliant, and democratically run co-operative movement within the shortest possible time, and to do this, it is expected that:

- 6.3.1 Governments formulate a clear co-operative development policy under which co-operatives receive aid and encouragement in economic, agricultural, technical, legislative and publicity matters, without adverse effect on their independence. The involvement of co-operatives in the formulation of such policy should be taken as an indispensable necessity.
- 6.3.2 Governments devise a system whereby co-operative knowledge could be disseminated within government circles so as to ensure support of the co-operative development within government ministries.
- 6.3.3 State support must be of a temporary nature and must be designed in such a manner that it steadily declines over a period of time to encourage co-operatives to be responsible organisations and work towards self-reliance. Only in times of emergency should state support be expected after self-reliance.
- 6.3.4 There should be periodic review of both the co-operative policy and the legislation to ensure relevance of such documents to the current needs of co-operatives and their members.
- 6.3.5 Decisions in co-operatives should be controlled by their own members. State supervision and control should supplement but not replace membership control. Support from governments either financially, technically or legislatively must be in the form that does not cushion co-operatives from competition. Government support should prepare co-operatives for survival in a competitive world even after the era of state support.

- 6.3.6 Governments should emphasise on manpower development for co-operatives in order to ensure continuous sound management from within the movements themselves.
- 6.3.7 It is recognised that governments in the Region have identified co-operatives as instruments for accelerated rural development. And in their wish to "step up" development, they have in certain cases placed the responsibility of co-operatives under several ministries or lumped up with another department because they believe that specialist guidance in specific fields is required. This should not be encouraged as it does not augur well for rapid co-operative development as in some cases the other department overshadows the co-operative department. It would be a better option if a whole ministry is charged with responsibility for co-operative development. At movement level, the structural set-up should take account of the economic functions of co-operative societies and the co-operative structure should be such that it promotes the economic welfare of the members. Member education and committee member training should be the central concern of government ministries responsible for co-operative development.
- 6.3.8 As the co-operative movement becomes mature in its operations, the governments should be prepared to relinquish those functions which have direct bearing on co-operatives so that they are undertaken by the movement. Such functions could include inspection, auditing etc. In addition, the governments should be willing to release those income-generating activities presently being run by parastatal bodies to be undertaken by co-operatives so as to help them in attaining self-reliance.

## **7. FUTURE STRATEGIES FOR CO-OPERATIVE DEVELOPMENT IN THE REGION**

### **7.1 Policy**

There must be a clear statement of policy regarding the development of co-operatives in each country of the Region. This policy statement must contain the economic, social and political objectives to be attained. It is important that the co-operative movement should identify itself with the policy and politics, otherwise the movement can find itself very irrelevant with the peoples' aspirations.

More often than not, policy statements on co-operatives focus attention on matters that affect the nation rather than the individual co-operator. This individual co-operator needs protection against economic injustice.

### **7.2 Strategies**

#### **7.2.1 Education and Training**

As already indicated, education and training should be stepped up to reach every spectrum of the society, including government executives and policy

makers. Curricula should be developed which are specifically oriented to fit the different categories so that:

- Education and training is technically oriented i.e. it should contain or carry a technical package to a co-operator e.g. agricultural package.
- Concurrently, it teaches the co-operative ideology — principles and practice.
- It develops teaching aids that facilitate the learning process.
- Professional training can be at Co-operative Colleges, and other Co-operative Training Centres.
- Training should be aimed at problem solving.
- Involve and encourage women participation in co-operative activities.
- In view of the fact that the youth will be the co-operators of tomorrow, it is necessary to provide co-operative education and training skills to them. In this regard, co-operative education should also be extended to school leavers.

### 7.2.2 Finance

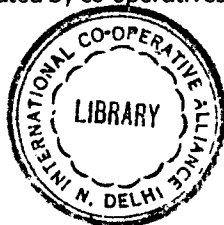
It is generally recognised that the co-operative movements in African, and particularly those of the East, Central and Southern Africa, countries are financially very weak. The reasons for this paucity include the following:

- (a) Paternalistic government policy which tends to restrict the development of financial independence.
- (b) Lack of income-generating activities.
- (c) Poor agricultural pricing policies which result in:
  - (i) Low margins
  - (ii) Low borrowing capabilities
  - (iii) Over-dependency on subsidies.
- (d) Low productivity due to lack of technical knowhow.

To remedy the situation it is recommended that:

- (i) Agro-processing industries be developed and managed by the co-operative movement.
- (ii) Apex co-operative organisations be allowed to sit on the pricing commissions or bodies which review pricing policies.
- (iii) Establish co-operative banks which will provide for savings and credit facilities to co-operative organisations.
- (iv) Credit facilities be extended to co-operatives on preferential basis.
- (v) Encourage the establishment of co-operative insurance societies whose funds could be ploughed back in rural development projects initiated by co-operatives.

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- (vi) Establish building and housing co-operative banks to facilitate the acquisition of housing property by co-operatives and their members.
- (vii) Financial assistance by donors should be given directly to co-operative movements instead of national governments in order to avoid misapplication of aid funds intended for co-operative development.

### 7.2.3 *Co-operative Legislation*

The existence of legislation for the development of co-operatives is recognised. However, it has been discovered by researchers that in certain instances, co-operative legislation has tended to inhibit co-operative development. For example, the supervision and control powers are excessive, such that co-operatives cannot develop their own independence and the autonomy they need. Co-operatives must be controlled and supervised first and foremost by their own members. State supervision and control ought to supplement but not replace member control. If state surveillance is necessary when public funds are committed to co-operatives, such surveillance must be lifted as the flow of funds is reduced. This ensures that the attainment of self-reliance is accompanied by the achievement of autonomy.

In this connection too, state supervision and control should be exercised by a single organ of government. This spares the co-operative movement the difficulties created by conflicts of policies and interests.

Co-operative legislation must allow for the development of internal inspection and auditing services within the movement. Zambia can be cited as a good example where this function is gradually being handed over to the Zambia Co-operative Federation Ltd. (ZCF). The government has also allowed ZCF to plan for the movement so that the government merely gives a supporting hand.

### 7.2.4 *Inter-Co-operative Collaboration*

Whereas collaboration exists between governments in the Region, this appears to be non-existent among the co-operative movement in the Region. This is due to the fact that member countries of the Region do not have sufficient information about each other and this has led to lack of trade amongst themselves. The existence of SADCC and PTA should be an encouragement to the promotion of trade between and among the co-operative organisations in the Region.

To achieve inter-co-operative collaboration, it is urgent that the ICA Regional Office establishes a data bank which would provide and disseminate information of economic nature which would facilitate the development of trade. In this connection, the example of co-operative trade between Botswana and Swaziland can be cited as positive action in this respect.

It is also recommended that ICA Regional Office be represented in SADCC and PTA in order that co-operative interests could be given a forum for the benefit of the co-operative movement of the Region. To this end, a Co-operative Technical Committee should be established within SADCC. Joint Ventures should be encouraged. Again Zambia could be cited where the Zambia Co-operative Movement and the Swedish Co-operative Movement are participating in the Zambia Seed Company as share-holders. This Development is healthy and should augur well for the future. There are many areas where collaboration would be necessary and beneficial to co-operatives. The establishment and running of a co-operative Institution of Higher Learning would be jointly or collectively sponsored to provide for the post graduate studies on the lines of East and Southern African Management Institute in Arusha (Tanzania).

#### 7.2.5 *Targets in Co-operative Development*

It is noted that Co-operative Development Plans have been drawn up, in various member countries of the Region. However, most of these plans do not set targets to be achieved and the time frame is not specified within which to accomplish the "nebulous" target. It is important, therefore, that these plans be articulated in such a manner as to clearly set the target and specify time-within which to accomplish these targets. .

To this end, it is recommended that the Region adopts a ten-year long Co-operative Development Plan (1985-1995) with the following priority objectives:

- (a) Attainment of financial capability by 1995, thereby reducing co-operative reliance on government support.
- (b) Provision of co-operative education and training to all segments of co-operative membership including the general public.
- (c) Provision of sufficient Research and Consultancy Services within the Region.
- (d) Promote and upgrade the involvement of Women and Youth in co-operative activities.
- (e) Develop co-operative insurance services in the Region.
- (f) Encourage Inter-Co-operative Trade between various countries of the Region.
- (g) Promote all types of co-operatives in various sectors of the economy including agriculture, consumer, industrial, banking, housing, savings and credit, fisheries, etc.
- (h) Monitoring and evaluation: these are management tools of increasing performance. Hence each co-operative movement should have clear set objectives against which their performance should be measured.

ICA and its member apex organisations, in association with bilateral and multilateral institutions, should assist the co-operative movement in developing the necessary monitoring and evaluation mechanism. Specific targets set in the Co-operative Development Plans in the following fields should be monitored and evaluated:

- Income generating activities
- Health
- Manpower development (education and training, management skills, etc).

Countries should submit regularly such evaluation reports to ICA Regional Office for circulation and exchange among the countries of the Region.

#### 7.2.6 *Financial Package*

Considerable amount of funds will be needed to develop co-operative movements in the respective countries of the Region. In the initial stages of co-operative development, governments will need to provide funds for the promotion of the movements but as the movements get stronger, government financial assistance will correspondingly be reduced. However, since even government funding is constrained by the economic recession at present, it will be necessary that measures be undertaken to mobilise financial resources both internally and externally.

In this respect, it is necessary for governments to solicit, on behalf of the co-operative movements, funds from other countries, particularly those countries with developed economies. And in doing so, governments should allow such aid to flow directly to the respective movements. The movement to movement approach, as now obtains in Zambia between ZCF and SCC, is a good development. Such an approach appears ideal since funds do not get appropriated to other sectors of government other than to co-operative development. In addition, the arrangement enhances speed of execution of co-operative projects which would under normal government procedures take long to execute because of the bureaucratic nature of administration.

### **8. GABORONE DECLARATION FOR REGIONAL CO-OPERATIVE DEVELOPMENT DECADE**

We, Ministers responsible for Co-operative Development in East, Central and Southern Africa,

BEING AWARE that the development of our countries in the Region is dependent on rural development where at least 85% of the population live;

NOTING that co-operatives can bring accelerated development in rural and urban based co-operatives such as industrial, housing, consumers, savings and credit;

- AFFIRMING** that given the prevailing conditions of the rural and urban masses in our Region and convinced that meaningful development must embrace needs expressed by members, co-operatives offer the best alternative for the improvement of the living standards of the people and enhancement of human welfare and dignity;
- ACKNOWLEDGING** that necessary steps should be taken to enact appropriate legislation and co-operative development policies designed to create conditions conducive to accelerated co-operative development;
- CONSIDERING** that the co-operative movement should play a great role in enhancing collaboration, particularly trade among member countries and therefore be represented in Preferential Trade Area (PTA) and Southern African Development co-ordinating Conference (SADCC);
- PLEDGE** that due assistance be given to co-operative movements in the field of manpower development, women and youth programmes, finance, establishment of national and or regional co-operative institutions, such as co-operative banks, colleges, insurance, and agro-based industries;
- DECLARE** on this 12th day of May, 1984, here in Gaborone, that the decade 1985 to 1995 be DEDICATED to Co-operative Development for the Region during which efforts shall be made to increase levels of self-reliance in manpower, finance, food and enhance peace and security.
- RESOLVE** to meet every third year to review and appraise progress made.

In approval of the Declaration, we, the Ministers and leaders of delegations present here in Gaborone, do hereby append our signatures:

Hon. W.R. Meswele

Ministry of Agriculture, BOTSWANA

Rev. Hon. Archbishop S. Ondiek

Ministry of Co-operative Development, KENYA

Hon. L. Jonathan

Ministry of Co-operatives and Rural Development, LESOTHO

Mr. K. Joory

Mauritius Co-operative Union, MAURITIUS

Dr. Warsame Abdullah Ali

Union of Somali Co-operative Movement, SOMALI

Mr. B. Majak

National Co-operative Union, SUDAN

Mr. A. Kunene  
Ministry of Agriculture and Co-operatives, SWAZILAND  
Hon. K. Ngombale Mwiru  
Prime Minister's Office, TANZANIA  
Hon. Y. Kanyomozi  
Ministry of Co-operatives and Marketing, UGANDA  
Hon. J.J. Mukando  
Ministry of Co-operatives, ZAMBIA  
Hon. M.E. Mahachi  
Ministry of Lands, Resettlement and Rural Development, ZIMBABWE

## 9. CLOSING REMARKS

### 9.1 **Closing Remarks by Hon. W.R. MESWELE, Ministry of Agriculture, Republic of Botswana**

The Honourable Minister thanked the delegates for their active participation and having fruitful discussions and deliberations during the conference. He hoped that the delegates had a comfortable stay in Botswana and requested to be excused where the hosts fell short.

He noted that all the delegates gathered in Gaborone for the Ministerial Conference were believers and supporters of co-operative principles who wished to achieve a well managed co-operative movement which would in turn raise the standards of living of the majority of the people. Efforts should be marshalled to achieve this noble goal.

He extended his thanks to the International Co-operative Alliance for organising such a historic conference. He was confident that the ICA would continue to support the co-operative movements in the Region and also continue to co-ordinate the affairs of the Ministerial Conference.

The Honourable Minister gave a challenge to the countries represented at the conference in particular, and to Africa generally. He pointed out that although Africa has 1/3 of the UN votes, is endowed with vast natural resources, including vast empty arable land, Africa was right now plunged into famine and starvation which would be exacerbated by population explosion. In other words, there is starvation amongst plenty. He further noted that although there had been instances of devastating drought, which was a natural phenomenon, not all starvation was due to this factor. He observed that unless we create ideal socio-economic conditions, increase food production, our political independence would be useless. It was, therefore, of paramount importance to formulate good policies and good planning which would give sufficient incentive for the masses to increase production otherwise turmoil would ensue. At this juncture, he cited Dr. Aggrey's teaching — Let my people be educated in head, hand and heart.

On behalf of Botswana Government, the Minister extended profound thanks to the neighbouring countries who have kindly agreed to train the Botswana students, particularly in the field of co-operation. He pointed out that training is vital to success of every institution because the ability to carry across a message effectively was a result of acquiring the appropriate skills and techniques.

He expressed thanks to all the support staff who had assisted the Secretariat so as to make the conference a resounding success.

Finally, the Honourable Minister thanked all the delegates for visiting Botswana and he hoped that after three years, the delegates would meet much more revitalised and more ready to face the several challenges in the Region.

**9.2 Vote of Thanks by Hon. K. Ngombale Mwiru, Minister of State, Prime Minister's Office, United Republic of Tanzania.**

Mr. Chairman, Honourable Ministers, Distinguished Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen.

Let me in the first place thank the chairman for according me the chance to move a vote of thanks to the guest of honour. On behalf of the Honourable Ministers and Distinguished Delegates, I want to record our gratitude to the government and people of Botswana for their hospitality and particularly for hosting this First African Ministerial Co-operative Conference.

Mr. Chairman, for two days, we have critically examined the performance of our co-operative movements. The evaluation has enabled us to draw up strategies which will enhance the socio-political and economic position of the various co-operatives and that of our countries at large. We have produced a policy document, a very important initial step. There are many more steps to follow in the direction of commitment, dedication, seriousness, in a nut shell, action.

We appreciate the importance attached to government in stimulating and strengthening the co-operative sector. However, we know the saying: "the strength of something is found from within". The development of a strong co-operative movement depends on the movement itself.

At this juncture, honourable guest, the movement in each respective country will need to study its socio-political and economic environment from which to draw strategic and operational plans. Each movement will be required to articulate its course to the government organ in order to record and establish understanding, harmony and relevance. If this sociologic is accepted between the two parties, the government, in the one hand and the movement in the other, it should be easy to foster co-operative development.

Honourable guest, it is my great hope that these important resolutions will be implemented. The ball must be kept rolling, for otherwise, this policy document will regrettably be shelved. There is need, therefore, for a timetable co-ordinated by ICA, to monitor progress of implementation of the decade for co-operative development commencing next year in 1985.

Having said this, I crown off, on behalf of the Honourable Ministers and Distinguished guests, by thanking the Chairman for his good administration of the meeting and also his sense of humour which enriched and harnessed maximum participation of the Honourable Delegates. I want also to extend our appreciation for the commendable preparatory work of the Technical Committee. You will agree with me that the paper prepared was so broad in scope and incisive in nature, that it facilitated perception and participation. With this good beginning, maintaining the same spirit and vigour, it is possible to develop a sound co-operative movement in the Region.

Further on, I would also want to pass a word of sincere gratitude and felicitation to the ICA Regional Director and his staff, for conceiving and successfully mounting this First African Ministerial Co-operative Conference. Again convey to the Government and people of Botswana our heartfelt gratitude and thanks for the hospitality and brotherly welcome they have accorded us during our stay in their beautiful country.

THANK YOU

## PROGRAMME

08 - 10 May, 1984	:	Preparatory Technical Committee meeting.
11 May, 1984		
09.00	:	Official Opening of the Ministerial Conference.
10.00	:	Tea/Coffee Break.
10.30	:	Presentation of a paper on <i>Review of and Strategies for Co-operative Development in East, Central and Southern Africa</i> by the Preparatory Technical Committee.
10.45	:	Presentation of the paper by the Conference Preparatory Technical Committee (continued).
11.15	:	Ministerial Statements/Comments on the Technical Committee Paper by the Honourable Ministers.
12.30	:	Lunch Break.
14.30	:	Ministerial Statements/Comments (continued).
18.00	:	Conference adjourns.
19.00	:	Reception hosted by the Republic of Botswana.
12 May, 1984		
08.00	:	Preparatory Technical Committee meets to prepare the Final Document and draft a Declaration.
09.00	:	Study Tour and Sightseeing by the Honourable Ministers.
12.30	:	Lunch Break.
15.00	:	Ministerial Plenary Session to discuss the Final Document and issue a Declaration.
16.00	:	Official Closing of the Ministerial Conference.
20.00	:	Dinner by ICA.



## WORKING GROUPS

*GROUP 1*

*Subject:* The Impact and Successes Co-operatives have scored in the Region, Problems and Constraints that hinder Co-operative Development and possible solutions and remedies.

*Members:* Mr. J. J. Musundi — Secretary  
 Mr. B. Majak  
 Mr. F.M. Tuniga  
 Mr. J. Kabuubi  
 Mr. N.I. Albinson  
 Mr. T. Nyeoe  
 Mr. C.H. Gashumba

*GROUP 2*

*Subject:* Co-operative Principles in context of African conditions and review on how they can best be implemented in order to boost democratic participation in and promotion of co-operatives in the Region.

*Members:* Mr. P. Mauremootoo — Secretary  
 Mr. J.L. Mbingo  
 Mr. C.W. Ngibbombi  
 Mr. J.C. Mukule  
 Mr. V. Opio  
 Mr. F. Albinson  
 Mr. Charles Kabuga

*GROUP 3*

*Subject:* The Role of Governments in Fostering Co-operative Development — Achievements and Constraints.

*Members:* Mr. Solomon Dlamini — Secretary  
 Mr. Sharif Sidi Hagi  
 Mr. V. Lubasi  
 Mr. J. Rasetshwane  
 Mr. G. Talejane  
 Mr. A. Abubakar  
 Mr. Ken Gordon  
 Mr. Zakia Meghji

**GROUP 4**

**Subject:** Future Strategies that can bring about accelerated Co-operative Development in the Region.

**Members:** Mr. M. Lungu – Secretary  
Mr. Mohamed Ali Ahmed  
Mr. N. Mussa Nda  
Mr. P. Batarinyebwa  
Mr. K.R. Majome  
Mr. T.J. Mahuwi  
Mr. A.A. Fayossewo  
Mr. J. Shaffer

## LIST OF DELEGATES

## BOTSWANA

- |                       |   |   |
|-----------------------|---|---|
| 1. Hon. W.R. Meswele  | — | Minister of Agriculture                         |
| 2. Mr. J. Gaetsaloe   | — | Commissioner for Co-operative Development.      |
| 3. Mr. W.L. Marobela  | — | Chairman, Botswana Co-operative Union.          |
| 4. Mr. J. Rasetshwane | — | Secretary General, Botswana Co-operative Union. |

## KENYA

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|-----------------------------------|---|--|
| 5. Rev. Hon. Archbishop S. Ondiek | — | Assistant Minister for Co-operative Development.             |
| 6. Mr. Mureithi                   | — | Deputy Commissioner for Co-operative Development.            |
| 7. Mr. T. King'asia               | — | Chairman, Kenya National Federation of Co-operatives.        |
| 8. Mr. J.J. Musundi               | — | General Manager, Kenya National Federation of Co-operatives. |

## LESOTHO

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|---------------------|---|---|
| 9. Hon. L. Jonathan | — | Acting Minister of Co-operatives and Rural Development. |
| 10. Mr. G. Talejane | — | Commissioner for Co-operative Development.              |
| 11. Mr. M. Kobeli   | — | Chairman, Co-op Lesotho.                                |
| 12. Mr. T. Nyeoe    | — | General Manager, Co-op Lesotho.                         |

## MAURITIUS

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|------------------------|---|--|
| 13. Mr. K. Joory       | — | Chairman, Mauritius Co-operative Union.          |
| 14. Mr. P. Mauremootoo | — | Secretary General, Mauritius Co-operative Union. |

## SOMALIA

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| 15. Dr. Warsame Abdullahi Ali | — | Chairman, Union of Somali Co-operative Movement. |
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| 16. | Mānjit Iqbal Singh    | — | Legal Adviser, Union of Somali Co-operative Movement.                           |
| 17. | Mr. Mohamed Ali Ahmed | — | Director of Planning Department, Union of Somali Co-operative Movement.         |
| 18. | Mr. Sharif Sidi Hagi  | — | Assistant Secretary, Foreign Department, Union of Somali Co-operative Movement. |
| 19. | Mr. Abdullah Ashkor   | — | National Livestock Union of Co-operatives.                                      |

#### SUDAN

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|-----|------------------------|---|--|
| 20. | Mr. B. Majak           | — | Secretary General, National Co-operative Union.        |
| 21. | Mr. Zakki Eldeen Bilal | — | Deputy Secretary General, National Co-operative Union. |

#### SWAZILAND

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|-----|------------------|---|---|
| 22. | Mr. A. Kunena    | — | Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Agriculture and Co-operatives. |
| 23. | J.L. Mbingo      | — | Commissioner for Co-operative Development.                      |
| 24. | Mr. T. Gina      | — | President, Central Co-operative Union.                          |
| 25. | Mr. S.M. Dlamini | — | General Manager, Central Co-operative Union.                    |

#### TANZANIA

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|-----|---------------------|---|---|
| 26. | Hon. Ngombale Mwiru | — | Minister of State, Prime Minister's Office.                   |
| 27. | Mr. F.M. Tuniga     | — | Commissioner for Co-operative Development, Tanzania Mainland. |
| 28. | Mr. P. Ndaki        | — | Chairman, Union of Co-operative Societies.                    |
| 29. | Mr. C.W. Ngibbombi  | — | Deputy Secretary General, Union of Co-operative Societies.    |

## UGANDA

30. Hon. Y. Kanyomozi — Minister of Co-operatives and Marketing.
31. Mr. P. Batarinyebwa — Commissioner for Co-operative Development.
32. Mr. G. Hirome — Chairman, Uganda Co-operative Alliance.
33. Mr. J. Kabuubi — General Manager, Bunyoro Growers Co-operative Union (representing General Secretary, Uganda Co-operative Alliance).

## ZAMBIA

34. Hon. J.J. Mukando — Minister of Co-operatives.
35. Mr. M. Lungu — Director of Co-operatives and Marketing.
36. Chief L.B. Nalubamba — Chairman, Zambia Co-operative Federation.
37. Mr. N.I. Albinson — Acting Managing Director, Zambia Co-operative Federation.

## ZIMBABWE

38. Hon. M.E. Mahachi — Minister of Lands, Resettlement and Rural Development.
39. K.R. Majome — Director, Department of Co-operative Development.
40. Mr. Cephas Muropa — Chairman, Organisation of Collective Co-operatives of Zimbabwe.
41. Mr. H.M. Mano — Chairman, Central Association of Co-operative Unions.

## CO-OPERATIVE COLLEGES

42. Mr. J.C. Mukule — Principal, Co-operative College of Kenya.
43. Mr. T.J. Mahuwi — Principal, Co-operative College of Tanzania.
44. Mr. V. Opio — Acting Principal, Co-operative College, Uganda.

ICA HEAD OFFICE, GENEVA

45. Mr. J.J. Musundi — Member, ICA Executive Committee (representing the President of ICA).

SCC STOCKHOLM

46. Mr. F. Albinson — Swedish Co-operative Centre, Stockholm.

FAO

47. Mr. A.A. Fayossewo — Regional Institutions Officer, FAO Regional Office, Accra.

COPAC

48. Mr. J. Shaffer — COPAC Secretariat, Rome, Italy.

ILO

49. Mr. Ken Gordon — Co-operative Branch, ILO, Geneva.

CIRDAFRICA

50. Mr. A. Abubakar — Deputy Director.

51. Mr. N. Mussa Nda — Senior Programme Officer.

ACOSCA

52. Mr. V. Lubasi — Executive Secretary.

ICA REGIONAL OFFICE, MOSHI

53. Mr. E.M. Anangisye — Regional Director.

54. Mr. C. Kabuga — Consultant, Education and Training.

55. Mr. C.H. Gashumba — Research and Planning Officer.

56. Mrs. Z. Meghji — Programme Officer, Women and Youth.

57. Mr. P. Makikumbu — Accountant.

58. Mrs. M. Mallya — Secretary.