

4th Meeting of the ICA Regional Assembly for Asia and the Pacific

Singapore, 29-30 June, 2000

Progress Report
of the ICA Regional Director
ROBBY TULUS



International Co-operative Alliance
Regional Office for Asia & the Pacific
New Delhi - 110065, India.

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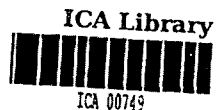
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**To the Fourth Meeting of the ICA Regional
Assembly for Asia and the Pacific
June 29-30, 2000**

INTRODUCTION

This report covers a period of 20 months, which is a relatively short interval between the Third Meeting of the ICA Regional Assembly for Asia and the Pacific held in Seoul in October 1998, and the current one that is taking place here in Singapore. Yet, within this span of 20 months, no less than 44 events and project activities had been undertaken, as could be seen in the narrative account presented in Appendix I.

The Standing Committee of ICA ROAP, representing the Regional Assembly in between its meetings, has been very active and resourceful, and has officially met 4 times since they were elected at the Third Regional Assembly, the first one in Seoul (October 31, 1998), followed by Stockholm (April 11, 1999), Singapore (July 11, 1999), Quebec City (August 30, 1999), and an informal one held in Tel Aviv in April 2000. As well, the Fourth Meeting of the Executive Council was held in Beijing on October 10, 1999.

As an important governing structure of ICA in Asia and the Pacific, the Standing Committee has taken a proactive stance in giving the Regional Office important and timely advice and directions. And by

virtue of many of these members being also members of the ICA global Board, including Mr. Mu Li as the ICA Vice President, they have been instrumental in integrating the ICA global directions into the regional one. Moreover, with frequent and effective communication occurring between Mr. Bruce Thordarson as our Director General, as well as all levels of staff in Geneva and Delhi/Singapore, the system has been functioning very positively.

As shown during the Induction Ceremony on 27th June 2000, we have 5 new members admitted since our last Regional Assembly in Seoul. Two members are from Australia, one from Indonesia, one from Iran, and one from Israel.

CONTINUING OUR FOCUS ON MEMBERS

Focusing on members must be premised on CHANGE, so old moulds can be broken and value addition found. ICA ROAP has initiated and set in motion the engine of change well before the forces of the Economic Crisis unleashed themselves in the mid 1997. As underlined in our previous reports, signs of a financial crisis looming in this region were already detected during the Ministers' Conference in Chiangmai in February 1997, and the pace of change towards greater efficiency was expedited at ICA ROAP with the restructuring and downsizing happening within the Regional office itself in December 1997.

And with the ICA Global Board embarking on its organizational review in 1998 under the leadership of President Roberto Rodrigues, amidst the lingering Asia economic crisis during our Regional Assembly in Seoul, we realized that the time for patchwork is over. Change, reform and member orientation are not mere reference points any longer. They are imperatives, and must be pursued regardless of our limited resources.

Knowing full well that we are member-led, albeit catalytic in nature, ICA ROAP continued to seek ways to increase value-added services to members. Consequently, all of ICA ROAP activities were carried out with "*member service orientation*" in mind first and fore-

most. It is not easy to change this orientation when an organization had been once accustomed to doing business more on the basis of activities (= process based) rather than performance (= results based). In the past, money was "docked" as a block-fund and ready to be used instantly. Since 1997, however, ICA ROAP has to come to grips with a considerably larger mandate albeit with more limited funds and resources. This is where the imperatives of change and reform must be acted on. It was painful when change has to involve restructuring, downsizing, and revamping remunerative scales. Yet it was a challenge that we had to face at ICA ROAP in 1997, in order to maximize efficiency and reach higher performance standards.

Since then we have tried to transform the hitherto "project to project" approach towards a more results-based program approach. Reliance on the sale of the Bonow House was placed at the backburner, lest the culture of "instant funding" will return to haunt ICA ROAP with doing things the old traditional ways. So we strived at capacity building, having our smaller Team feel comfortable with full information access. This refers to actual information available to our ICA employees, not the process by which it is actually shared. By doing so, we are also trying to instill on our ICA **members** that they have equal access to information within ICA ROAP. To actualize it we have, with our limited resources, worked hard on launching our own Website. Thanks to NTUC Income who provided us the needed resources, our own Website <[http:// www.icaroap.org.sg](http://www.icaroap.org.sg)> is now fully operational. In fact, the official launching of our Website took place at the First Asia Pacific Co-operative Forum right in this same building.

To create higher performance standards, we at ICA ROAP changed the way information flows among ourselves and with our members. In particular we began practicing interactive work settings, free flow of information, and other strategies that promote the understanding of others' jobs. Horizontal sharing of information between our units, especially now that we have both the Delhi Regional Office and the Singapore Business Office, must be practiced more frequently and more effectively.

Clearly, we hold the view that technical excellence is the primary means for achieving our co-operative business success. Now that ICA ROAP has its business office in full operation in Singapore, thanks to the generous support of SNCF – our active and strong member – we must acquire technical excellence as our means for achieving higher levels of performance.

DEVELOPMENT PARTNERSHIPS WITH OUR RICH NETWORK

Concurrent with our focus to provide the best possible services to members we must also advocate our members' needs to the rich network that we have. They include national and international organizations, with which ICA ROAP must continue to strengthen its ties and strategic alliances. These international partners include our ongoing and longstanding partners such as CCA, DID, MAFF, and ILO, in addition to our own ICA member-based development partners such as JCCU, ACFSMC, JA-ZENCHU & IDACA, SNCF, NCUI, and NACF. In addition, ICA ROAP continues to augment its collaboration with the more newly established partners such as the RABO Bank Foundation, ADB, DFID (UK), CICOPA, AARRO, AGRITERRA, AWCF, the Ministry of Textiles in India, and a number of UN organizations. Dialogue continues with previous partners such as SCC and CCD. Work with FAO - by way of NEDAC - and UNIFEM are going on well, and work with UN ESCAP, WHO, and UNDP is gaining momentum.

Soon after the conclusion of the Third Regional Assembly, a Round Table Meeting was conducted as a joint effort between CCA-CIDA-DID-ICA, to strengthen partnerships between co-operatives in Canada and in Asia. It was attended by a number of policy makers of ICA ROAP, as well as co-operative leaders and some NGOs from Asia and Canada. It was preceded by a research activity conducted by ICA ROAP, and followed by consultations with co-operative leaders in Canada, and a Round Table Meeting in Montreal, Canada. A policy document resulting from the RTMs has been submitted to CIDA for further action.

In addition to facilitating business cooperation among economically strong members in the various sub-regions of Asia, ICA ROAP is also heedful of the need for those member organizations that are still struggling to survive the odds arising from non-conducive policy and legislative environments, as well as those whose members are facing modern-day exploitation that adds to the burden of poverty. As indicated in our Annual Report of 1999, the resilience of so many ICA members in facing the challenges imposed on them by the economic crisis is indeed spectacular. Inspired by such resilience and determination, ICA ROAP made a point to intensify its efforts to keep this positive momentum by creating forums where members can share, learn and act together. The realization of the First Asia Pacific Co-operative Forum 2000, that just concluded yesterday, is one example. The Regional Consultation, followed by the 5th Co-operative Ministers' Conference organized in collaboration with Singapore National Co-operative Federation (SNCF) and All China Federation of Supply and Marketing Co-operatives (ACFSMC) respectively in 1999, is another one. Worth reminding is the fact that The 5th Co-operative Ministers Conference formulated practical guidelines to create a more enabling environment for co-operatives as they aspire for greater sustainability.

The Joint Declaration adopted by the Ministers' Conference focused on two imperatives - first, the need to create and sustain an enabling policy and legal environment conducive to cooperative development, and secondly, the need to establish new forms of cooperation between governments and cooperatives. Encouraged by our member organizations, we have resolved to give the imperatives a more concrete shape. Our Strategic Development Plan for the year 2000-2004 reflects it.

All our ICA staff in Delhi and in Singapore are hardworking, committed, and resourceful. Mr. Guo Yong Kang, Deputy Regional Director, left ICA on his own request to take up a long-term sabbatical, hence it leaves us only with Messrs. B.D. Sharma, Romy Villamin, and Juku Ozawa as small contingent of professional team, supported by our experienced staff in New Delhi.

Other key result areas of ICA ROAP in 1999, which were critical to strengthening co-operative movements in the region, pertain to poverty reduction. First we made special efforts to focus on Central Asia, as well as countries in transition, by way of creating empowering instruments such as training tools and self-help capital formation, to help reduce poverty in these countries. Together with staff from Head Office, ICA ROAP designated Mr. B.D. Sharma to visit Kazakhstan and Kyrgystan. The mission studied the possibilities of establishing a ROAP regional support program for the Central Asian region. A special Symposium on co-operative legislation for economies in transition was organized in Hanoi, Vietnam, which included participants from other countries with transitional or restructured economies such as China, Cambodia, Mongolia, Myanmar, and a number of ASEAN countries. A joint endeavor with ILO was staged in Fiji for the Pacific Island Nations in an effort to understand their socio-economic and cultural realities, and how Co-operatives could play a role in strengthening their development efforts.

We continue to seek ways to strengthen financial cooperatives, for which a special Seminar on the "Positioning of Co-operative Financial Intermediation in post-crisis capital markets and Financial Sector in the Region". We conducted a number of activities in promoting the role of women and youth, and their involvement in decision-making levels in cooperative leadership. We are also seeking ways to reposition co-operatives in the social sector, and formulate HRD strategies by employing hi-tech – but with a "hi-touch" – as we enter the new world filled with information and communication technology (ICT). Cooperatives cannot be left behind in their attempt to provide business and service excellence in the face of new challenges in the 21st century. Our efforts in the year 2000 will, therefore, be further enhanced and directed to pursue new synergies among with our members and international development partners.

CONCLUSION

ICA ROAP remains optimistic that we can break old moulds. Co-operatives have shown that they are remarkably adept in the art of

surviving various odds over more than one century. Technology has changed, economic assumptions have shifted, expectations have soared, and lifestyles have altered. To keep up with this rapid change, we have to continue to build on our collective strength and competence, so new ideas will flow towards the direction of change and generate our collective will to effect this change. We must not only be realistic, but also be bold enough to demand the impossible. And audacity usually pays.

ROBBYTULUS
Regional Director

ICA ROAP ACTIVITIES COVERING THE PERIOD OF NOVEMBER 1998 – JUNE 2000

The **3rd ICA Regional Assembly** for Asia and the Pacific was held in Seoul, Korea, on 28th and 29th October 1998. Mr. Churll-Hee Won, Chairman and President of NACF was elected Chairman of the Regional Assembly, replacing Royal Prof. Ungku A. Aziz from ANGKASA, Malaysia. In addition, the Assembly elected four Vice Chairpersons, namely Mr. H. Kohno, Dr. Yehudah Paz, Prof. Ungku Aziz, and Ms. Teresita de Leon. Mr. B.S. Vishwanathan continues as Chairperson of the ICA Executive Council. As a result of these elections, the **Standing Committee** of ICA ROAP has been restructured and is currently composed of the ICA Vice President (Asia Pacific), the Chairperson of ICA Executive Council, and those office bearers of the Regional Assembly.

There were no less than 17 organizational events of ICA ROAP held in conjunction with the 3rd Regional Assembly, and each and every important event was held successfully with no organizational glitch whatsoever. In addition, a Global Forum was also organized following the Assembly by the ICA Head Office.

ICA ROAP owes its gratitude to the NACF for their generous support and organizational skills. In teamwork with the ICA ROAP staff, the whole event has now become a watershed that will hopefully evolve into new heights.

The following are highlights of the “**SEOUL EVENTS**”:

- 1) The **3rd ICA Regional Assembly** for Asia and the Pacific was held at the Westin Chosun Hotel, Seoul, Korea, on 28th and 29th October 1998. Unlike previous Assemblies, this third one was

highlighted by the inclusion of a Cooperative Forum with the theme "***The Role of Cooperatives in the Face of the Asian Economic Crisis***". Also unique to this 3rd Assembly was the fact that no less than 17 other meetings were held prior and after the Assembly proper, including the ICA Global Forum, Meetings of Specialised Committees, and a Regional Women's Forum, were held on 25th and 26th October, followed by a Special Workshop on "Food Security and Fair Trading", jointly designated and implemented by the Agriculture, Consumers and Fisheries Committees for Asia and the Pacific on 27th October. The latter was an attempt to promote integration through strategic alliances among relevant sectors within the region. The ICA office in Geneva organised the "Global Forum" which took place right after the closing of the Regional Assembly. With 166 delegates/observers registered for the Regional Assembly, and no less than 220 other cooperators attending various other meetings/events, the entire membership-focussed exercise had the largest attendance ever in this region. The host organisation, the National Agricultural Cooperative Federation, in collaboration with the ICA ROAP, managed to weave the complicated organizational threads into a successful ensemble.

- 2) The **1st Meeting of the ICA Regional Women's Committee** for Asia and the Pacific was held in Seoul on 25th October 1998. Eleven members from nine countries; 1 delegate from AWCF; and over 30 observers attended the Meeting. AWCF has been approved has a member of RWC on merit basis (Article 5). The Committee discussed the two-year plan and passed the Constitution. Ms. Rahaiah Baharen has been unanimously elected as the Chairperson of the Committee. The Committee also unanimously elected Ms. Hatsuko Omori, Japan, and Ms. Rameshwari Ramchandra, Singapore, as Vice-chairpersons.
- 3) The **1st ever ICA Regional Women's Forum** for Asia and the Pacific was held on 26th October 1998 at the Agricultural Cooperative College of NACF in Seoul, Korea. A total of 130 women and men representing 19 cooperative organizations and an in-

ternational development agency from 12 countries participated in this landmark and historic event. The Forum recommended to the Regional Assembly that ROAP should take necessary action to: (a) ensure the participation of women in all Specialised Bodies, (b) organise Regional Women's Forum in conjunction with the RA; (c) assist the MOs in different countries to lobby for positive amendments to coop laws and bye-laws to enable more participation of women in decision-making in cooperatives.

- 4) The **31st Meeting of the ICA Committee on Agriculture** for Asia and the Pacific was held in the NACF office, Seoul (Republic of Korea) on 26th October 1998. Sixteen participants from six countries attended the meeting. Dr. V. Kumar (India) and Mr. D.P. Baskota (Nepal) were unanimously elected as Chairperson and Vice-Chairperson respectively. The meeting unanimously adopted the Resolution of Agricultural Cooperatives in Achieving Food Security moved by the JA-Zenchu (Central Union of Agricultural Co-ops of Japan) and decided to forward the Resolution to the ICA Regional Assembly for its approval. The next meeting of the Committee will be held in Kathmandu, Nepal some time in 1999.
- 5) The **31st Meeting of the ICA Committee on Consumer Cooperation** for Asia and the Pacific was held on the 26th October 1998 at the NLCF premises in Seoul. 26 members and observers from 11 countries attended the meeting. Mr. H. Tanaka of Japan was re-elected unanimously as Chairperson of the Committee for the second time, while Mr. K. Okayasu from Japan was elected Vice-Chairperson, which post was lying vacant since last meeting.
- 6) The **23rd Meeting of the Fisheries Committee** was held in Seoul, Republic of Korea on 26th October 1998 in conjunction with the Executive Meeting and Plenary Meeting of the International Cooperative Fisheries Organization (ICFO). In view of a duly approved modified Constitution, it was decided that the priority should be given to secure a formal approval of the ICA Regional Assembly of the revised constitution of the Committee. The re-

vised constitution was later approved unanimously by the 3rd meeting of the ICA Regional Assembly held on 28th of October 1998. The Committee also adopted a resolution on Contribution of Fisheries Co-operators to Food Security. The Resolution was subsequently unanimously adopted by the 3rd meeting of the ICA Regional Assembly at Seoul on 28th October 1998.

- 7) A special workshop on “**Agriculture-Consumers-Fisheries Strategic Alliance**” was held on 27th of October 1998 at the Agricultural Co-operative College of NACF in Seoul, Korea. The workshop was attended by 50 participants, which also included two international organizations. It was the first time in ICA’s history in this region that three committees joined together to discuss important issues. The participants felt that it is necessary to establish goals for the sectors to be effective and to bring economic benefits to the producers and consumers.

Economic goal is the assured supply of quality goods through contract farming and have an assured market for the products to be sold. Business strategies between agricultural producers and consumers are essential to achieve this goal. The workshop recommended: a) to organize more activities to exchange information between consumer, agriculture and fishery; b) to identify and formulate strategies directions for strategic alliances in the future; c) to select and promote successful experiences in this region from the consumer sector, agricultural sector and fishery sector; and d) to promote ventures, international trade and technology transfer.

- 8) The **4th Meeting of the ICA Consumer Sub-committee on University/ College Cooperatives** was held on 25th October at NACF, Seoul. 21 participants from 10 countries attended the meeting. Mr. K. Okayasu was unanimously re-elected as Chairperson. Mr. Mohammed Iqbal from Indonesia was unanimously elected as Vice-chairperson. Mrs. M. Climaco from the Philippines was unanimously elected as 2nd Vice Chairperson.
- 9) The **Regional Co-operative Banking Association (RCBA)** met

for the first time in Seoul on 26th October 1998. From the situations presented, it emerged that only a very small percentage of financial co-operatives have been impacted by the financial crisis as they were member-based and member-controlled. This reflected resistance of co-operative system during crisis. Mr. B.S. Vishwanathan was unanimously elected as Chairperson and Mr. P.A. Kiriwandeniya as Vice-Chairperson.

- 10) The **ICA Committee on Human Resource Development and Research** met at the office of National Credit Union Federation of Korea on 26th October 1998. The Committee felt that in future programmes on Information Technology and Distance Learning should be taken up. The chairman also suggested that CEMAS material must be updated and used. The Global HRD Committee also met at the same day and venue.
- 11) A **Cooperative Research Consultation** was held on 25th October 1998 at the NACF Headquarters in Seoul, Korea. Based on the suggestions of the participants and after extensive discussions, the Consultation decided to constitute a group consisting of Mr. Kurimoto (Japan) as chairperson, Mr. M.V. Madane (India), Prof. Won-Seok Chang (Korea), and a few nominees of the HRD and Research committee. Mr. B.D. Sharma, Director, ICAROAP, will be the secretary. This group will work on format of research register; the theme of the Asian Research Conference; and terms of reference of the conference. It was decided that an independent Asian Research Forum be constituted, within the framework of Regional HRD and Research Committee.

In addition to the above policy-related meetings and governance issues, the following development activities were also undertaken:

- 1) **Study on Strengthening Partnerships between Co-operatives in Asia and Canada:** Based on secondary data and documents available in ICA ROAP, a comprehensive study of status of Asian co-operatives completed. Round Table Meetings for Asian Co-operatives convened on 1-2 November 1998 in Seoul, Korea and 16th to 20th November 1998 in Montreal/Ottawa in

Canada. Study along with recommendations of Round Table Meetings is under consideration of CIDA. It is expected that some projects may flow to ICA ROAP.

- 2) A Sub-regional Workshop on “**Co-operative Policy Reforms**” for the sub-region of South, West and Central Asia was organised from 13th to 16th January 1999 at Kathmandu (Nepal) in collaboration with the Ministry of Agriculture of His Majesty Government of Nepal; and National Co-operative Federation of Nepal. The workshop was a pre-cursor of Regional Consultation scheduled to be convened in Singapore in July 1999 in order to prepare for the 5th Co-operative Ministers' Conference in Beijing (China) in October 1999. 19 representatives of Co-operatives and Governments from Bangladesh, India, Iran, Israel, Nepal, Sri Lanka and two international organisations participated in the workshop. The workshop was inaugurated by His Excellency Hon'ble Girija Prasad Koirala, Prime Minister of Nepal. The workshop reviewed trends in co-operative policy since 4th Co-operative Ministers Conference held in Chiangmai in 1997. The participating countries' representatives prepared country action plans in regard to advancement of legislative and co-operative policy reforms.
- 3) The 13th ICA/Japan International Training Course on “**Strengthening Management of Agricultural Co-operatives in Asia**” commenced in India on 15th January 1999. The course was attended by 15 managers of agricultural co-operatives representing 11 Asian countries. The participants arrived in India to follow the India part of the programme after having completed their 50-day home country assignments during which they produced their draft proposals on agricultural co-operative projects. The participants attended two important segments of the 5-month long training course – review of agricultural co-operative situation in the region and development project design and appraisals including field study visits. The India part of the programme was conducted at the IFFCO's Fertiliser Management Development Institute (FMDI) at Gurgaon and the project design module at the Institute of Rural Management at Anand. The India part of the

programme concluded on 27th of February. Before proceeding to Japan on 5th March to participate in the Japan part of the programme at IDACA for a period of two months, the participants visited Nepal to participate in a comparative study visits programme. The course will conclude on the 24th of April 1999 in Japan.

- 4) The **3rd Board Meeting of APHCO** (Asia-Pacific Health Co-operative Organisation) was held on 24th January 1999 at Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. Nine participants attended the meeting. Detailed discussions were held on "Organizational Development of APHCO" and "Impact of Economic Crisis to the Health Coops". It was agreed that the 2nd General Assembly of APHCO would be held in Malaysia in October 1999. A regional seminar on "Community-based Hospital and Role of Health Coops" will also be held in conjunction with the General Assembly.
- 5) The **Office-Bearers Meeting of the ICA RWC** (Regional Women's Committee) for Asia and the Pacific was held in Bangkok, Thailand, on 22nd February 1999. The meeting discussed the activity plan of the Women's Committee and the Gender Integration Project for the years 1999 and 2000 and chalked out a strategy to promote the women's participation in decision-making in coops.

The meeting also decided to start preparations for the Regional Women's Forum to be held in Singapore during 2000 and issue a newsletter every month pointing out the achievements and exhorting MOs to promote women's participation in the board of management of co-operatives.

- 6) A Sub-Regional Workshop on the "**Advancement of Legislative and Coop Policy Reforms**" was held in Bangkok, Thailand, from 23rd to 26th February 1999. The workshop was attended by 41 participants from ten countries and seven international organisations. The workshop was inaugurated by His Excellency Hon'ble Pongpol Adireksarn, Minister of Agriculture and Co-operatives, Government of Thailand. The workshop was

hosted by the Co-operative Promotion Department (CPD) of Royal Government of Thailand; and Co-operative League of Thailand (CLT). The workshop critically examined legal diversity in Asia and Pacific region and formulated guide points for advancement of legislative and co-operative policy reforms. The participants also outlined the Action Plans for their respective countries in the areas of legislative and co-operative policy reforms and development of state and co-operative relationships in the spirit of partnership.

- 7) The **2nd Meeting of Regional Co-operative Banking Association** (RCBA) was convened on 25th February 1999 in Bangkok. The meeting discussed strategy for enhancing membership of RCBA and reviewed trends in co-operative banking in the region. The RCBA decided to convene Asia-Pacific Seminar on "Role of Co-operative Banks in the Liberalised and Globalised Financial Sector" in conjunction with the Regional Consultation scheduled to be held in July in Singapore.
- 8) A **Steering Committee Meeting** for the Co-operative Leadership Development Manual for Women was held in Bangkok, Thailand, on 27th February 1999. Both the ICA and the ILO felt that the "Manual" prepared by the Consultant has not covered several areas and the coverage on co-operatives is insufficient. Hence it was decided that the Manual be redone by ICA/ILO which will be ready by July 1999.
- 9) Mr. Roberto Rodrigues, ICA President, visited New Delhi from 18 to 20 April to inaugurate the new cooperative complex of the NCUI on 19th April. Accompanied by the Regional Director, the ICA President also inaugurated a National Seminar on "Women and Youth" at the same venue. Speaking at the function, Mr. Rodrigues stated that strategic alliances among various sectors of cooperatives, as well as with the private sector, are very essential in order to generate effective partners of productive chains. The ICA President also visited the Regional Office and its Cooperative Information and Research Center.

- 10) The ICA Regional Director (Asia Pacific), attended a workshop on “Financial Systems for Sustainable Resource Mobilization in less Advanced Developing Countries”, organized by the DAC/OECD together with the World Bank, held at the OECD headquarters in Paris. He presented a paper entitled “South-South Cooperation for Cooperative Development”, with reference to financial sector development.
- 11) The ICA ROAP organised the 2nd Regional Campus/Youth Cooperative Seminar for Asia and the Pacific at Quezon City, Philippines, from 15th to 18th April. The main theme of the seminar was “Future Leaders Leading Now”. More than 150 delegates and observers from Indonesia, Japan, Philippines, Singapore, Thailand and Canada participated at the seminar.
- 12) The 2nd part of the 13th ICA/Japan International Training Course on “**Strengthening Management of Agricultural Co-operatives in Asia**” was held at IDACA (Japan) with study visits in and around Tokyo and in Kochi and Gunma prefectures from 6th March to 24th April. 15 managers representing agricultural co-operatives from 11 Asian countries took part in the Training Course. The training course received financial support from the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries (MAFF), Government of Japan. As well, the MAFF has agreed to finance the 14th Training Course.
- 13) The ICA Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific organised a Symposium on “Cooperative Legislation in Economies in Transition” from 25th to 28th May in collaboration with the Vietnam Cooperative Alliance in Hanoi, Vietnam. More than 40 delegates from cooperative movements in the developing and transitional economies in the region, as well as international organizations (UN-ESCAP, ILO, CCA, DID), including resource persons from ASEAN countries, participated in this important Symposium. The event was organized as a precursor to the ICA Regional Consultation to be held in Singapore from 6th to 9th July in order to prepare for the 5th Cooperative Ministers Conference in Beijing in October.

- 14) The ICA ROAP in collaboration with the Singapore National Co-operative Federation held a Regional Consultation in Singapore from 6th to 9th July which was attended by 88 participants from 19 countries, including six international organizations. The overall aim was to assist member organizations and their governments to foster an enabling environment for cooperatives through proper laws and regulations. The Regional Consultation was preceded by three sub-regional workshops organised for the purpose of getting issues that were relevant and close to the broad constituency of cooperatives across the region. The Consultation, after lengthy and in-depth discussions, proposed a number of relevant recommendations to the 5th Cooperative Ministers Conference to be held in Beijing from 11th to 16th October 1999.
- 15) The ICA ROAP Business Office was officially opened on 10th July by His Excellency Abdullah Tarmugi, Minister for Community Development, Government of Singapore in the presence of ICA President, Mr. Robert Rodrigues. About 120 participants from different countries and international organizations representing cooperative movements and governments attended the opening ceremony. The ROAP hopes to serve its member organizations in the region from this Business Office, particularly in areas of inter-cooperative trade and business. ICA ROAP is also planning to organize an international trade exhibition in Singapore in the year 2002 to serve the interests of ICA members both regionally and globally.
- 16) The **32nd Meeting of the ICA Committee on Agriculture** for Asia and the Pacific was held at Grand Plaza Park Royal on 11th July. Twenty participants from eleven countries and one international organization (FAO NEDAC) attended the meeting. The meeting was conducted by Dr. V. Kumar, Chairman of the Committee. The meeting recognized that agriculture is the mainstay of national economies of the Asia-Pacific region. However, present trends ushered in by globalization and liberalization have far reaching impact on the majority of the population comprising of farmers and small laborers. ICA Agriculture Committee and NEDAC

agreed to undertake a joint collaborative action plan to strengthen agricultural cooperatives in order to enable them to meet the emerging challenges for the benefit of farming community. After detailed discussions the meeting approved the "ICA Agriculture Committee-NEDAC Joint Statement on Food Security and Sustainable Agricultural Development through Cooperatives". As an action plan, six countries agreed to conduct a "Study on Food Security and Sustainable Agricultural and Rural Development through Cooperatives". The next meeting of the Committee will be held in Singapore in conjunction with the Regional Assembly meeting in September/October 2000.

- 17) The **11th Meeting of the ICA Committee on Human Resource Development and Research** was held at Hotel Grand Plaza Park Royal on 11th July. 28 participants attended the meeting. Professor Ungku A Aziz chaired the Committee meeting. The meeting reviewed the MATCOM materials for updating, and sought to strengthen the network among co-operative colleges and co-operative "minded" universities.
- 18) A **Meeting of Asian Cooperative Research Forum** was held on 11th July at Hotel Grand Plaza Park Royal. 12 participants attended the meeting and they decided to form a "core group" that will organize the first Co-operative Research Conference in the year 2000 in conjunction with the ICA ROAP Regional Assembly.
- 19) The ICA Regional Office organized a Seminar on "Positioning of Cooperative Financial Intermediation in Post-Crisis Capital Markets and Financial Sector in the Region" in Singapore from 12th to 15th July under the sponsorship of DID and Rabo Bank. 63 participants from 12 countries attended the seminar. The objectives of the seminar were mainly to: (a) critically examine and review the status, role and positioning of cooperative credit and banking institutions in the liberalized and globalized financial sector; and (b) recommend measures for strengthening competitiveness of cooperative banking institutions.

- 20) A University Coop Seminar was held on 27-28 July at the Danang University, Vietnam. The seminar was the second to be conducted by ICA and NFUCA in Vietnam to promote university coops in the country. The seminar was a general orientation on university coops to enable teachers and students to appreciate the idea of university coops, how they operate, and how they can organise one in the school system.
- 21) The Coop College of Malaysia organised a seminar on 2-3 August at the College premises in Petaling Jaya. More than 200 cooperative leaders from all over the country participated in the seminar. Mr. Robby Tulus, ICA Regional Director, made a presentation on "Cooperatives Doing Business Around the Globe: A Challenge or Opportunity" which was highly appreciated by the participants.
- 22) The 9th ICA/Japan Training Course for Rural Women Leaders of Agricultural Cooperatives was held at IDACA, Japan, and attended by six participants from three countries (Myanmar, Philippines, and Thailand) from 23rd August to 11th September.
- 23) The 4th International Conference on Women in Agricultural Coops in Asia and Africa, jointly held by ICA/JA-Zenchu/AARRO/IDACA at Tokyo from 24th to 29th August, was attended by 32 delegates representing 16 Asian and African countries and three international organisations. The Conference centered on defining and building more concrete measures on food security issues and women-farmer equality and ensuring a better Institutional support for them.
- 24) Mr. Bruce Thordarson, Director General, and Mr. Robby Tulus, Regional Director met the President and officials of the Asian Development Bank in Manila in early October 1999 and discussed potential coop development activities in collaboration with ADB. They shared the activities of the ICA in the Asia Pacific region, and those globally, and explored the possibilities of making coops in the Asia region viable models for micro-finance and poverty alleviation strategies being pursued by the Bank.

- 25) The 2nd APHCO Board Meeting was held in Kuala Lumpur on 8th October. Seven members from Japan, Nepal, Sri Lanka and India attending the meeting.
- 26) The regional seminar on "Cooperative Healthcare in the new Millennium" was held in Kuala Lumpur on 9th October. 80 participants attended the seminar from seven countries.
- 27) The 2nd General Assembly of APHCO was held on 10th October 1999 at Armada Hotel in Kuala Lumpur. 22 participants from six countries attended the meeting.
- 28) The ICA Regional Executive Council Meeting was held in Beijing on 11th October. 13 members, six representatives from partner organisations, the President/ DG/DDG of ICA and four observers attended the meeting. The meeting decided that in view of broadening of the Standing Committee of the RA, which will serve as a coordinating body for the region, the Executive Council would no longer be in existence.
- 29) The 5th Asia-Pacific Cooperative Ministers' Conference was convened by ROAP in Beijing from 11th to 16th October. The Conference was hosted by the Government of People's Republic of China and the ACFSMC. 163 participants from 24 countries and 8 international organisations participated in the Conference. The Conference was the culmination of the long efforts by the ICA ROAP, which conducted issue-based workshops in Kathmandu, Bangkok, and Hanoi, and a Regional Consultation in Singapore during July. Based on the recommendations of the Regional Consultation, the 5th Conference deliberated and formulated specific recommendations on the following issues: (i) Autonomy and independence; (ii) Recognition; (iii) Fair playing field; (iv) Legal existence; (v) Self-regulation; (vi) Capitalisation; and (vii) Official development assistance. Deliberations of the Conference culminated into a Joint Declaration highlighting a new approach to coop development. The Conference constituted a Steering Committee that will monitor the progress of implementation and report to the next Ministers' Conference to be held in Nepal.

- 30) The ICA Regional Director, Robby Tulus, participated at a Global Conference organised by the ICA Global Women's Committee in Quebec City on 29th August and presented a paper on "Some Experiences in Goal-oriented Training and Education within the context of mainstreaming Gender".
- 31) He also participated in the International Cooperation Days 1999 organized by the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) in Ottawa, Canada, on 16-17 November 1999, and presented a paper on 'Toward Local Ownership' at a panel discussion on 'Micro Finance: The Impact of Alliances'.
- 32) A National Conference on Local Governance and Coop Development was held on 8-10 November in the Philippines. Organised by the Philippine Cooperative Center, the Conference brought together around 300 participants from the government and coop sectors. Among the issues discussed were the role of the State in the coop development and the various possibilities by which local government units can enter into joint undertaking with coops. Mr. Romy Villamin presented a paper on "Cooperatives and the Changing Role of the State" at the Conference.
- 33) The 5th Meeting of the ICA Consumer Sub-committee on University/College Coops was held in Bali, Indonesia, on 29th November. 22 members/observers attended the meeting. In addition, 30 students from different parts of Indonesia also attended the meeting as observers.
- 34) The Regional Director and the Coordinator of ILO, Ms. Teresita de Leon, facilitated a Workshop on Co-operative Development in Nadi, Fiji, organized by the ILO Office for the Pacific. It was attended by 40 participants from a number of Island countries in the Pacific, as well as delegates from Australia and Japan.
- 35) The Regional Director, Robby Tulus, and the ICA Director (Membership), Mats Ahnlund, visited Australia and New Zealand to introduce the services ICA can offer if co-operatives from Australia and New Zealand are to join the ICA.

- 36) The 32nd meeting of the ICA Committee on Consumer Cooperation was held in Bali, Indonesia, on 30th November. 31 members/observers attended the meeting. The Committee finalised the work plan for 2000-2001.
- 37) The Consumer Coop Forum was held in Bali, Indonesia, on 1st December. The theme of the Forum was "What is value of the consumer coop in Asia". 30 participants from nine countries attended the Forum.
- 38) A seminar on University Coops was held in Thai Nguyen, Vietnam, from 6th to 7th December. About 40 participants attended the seminar. Mr. Juku Ozawa presented a paper on the situation of University Coops in Asia.
- 39) The 14th ICA-Japan Training Course on Strengthening Management of Agricultural Cooperatives in Asia commenced on 12th November, 1999. 15 participants from nine countries attended the Training Course. The Home Country Assignments component was held in respective countries during 12th November to 2nd January. Part-I of the programme commenced on 3rd January at IFFCO-FMDI. The component on Management Leadership development was held at IRMA during 16th January to 19th February. Study visits in Thailand were held during 23rd to 29th February. Part-II of the programme is held at IDACA in Japan during 1st March to 22nd April.
- 40) The ICA ROAP Planning Meeting was held in New Delhi on 28th and 29th January. In addition to ROAP staff, the Dy. Director General and Head of Development, ICA Geneva attended the meeting. The work plan and budget for the year 2000 were finalised at this meeting.
- 41) The 12th Meeting of the ICA Committee on HRD and Research was held in Bangkok on 24th February. 18 members from seven countries and 3 international organisations attended the meeting. A seminar on Information Technology was also held on 25th February. About 35 participants attended the seminar. The objectives of the seminar were: Appreciation of the value of informa-

tion technology and its uses in cooperative education and training; and Decision on next steps to take towards networking among cooperative training institutions in Asia and the Pacific. Resource persons were drawn from the Asian Institute of Technology, UNDP and CISCO Systems.

- 42) Mrs Rahaiah Baheran and Mr. Robby Tulus participated at the AWCF Regional Conference on "Gender impact of globalization of the economy: Challenges to Co-operatives in the new Millennium", held in Bangkok from March 6 to 8, 2000. Mrs. Rahaiah Baheran sent a solidarity message to an audience of no less than 170 participants, composed of women and men co-operators, as well as UN and NGO representatives, and Mr. Robby Tulus presented his paper on "Visioning of Co-operatives in the new Millennium", in a joint session with Remedios Rikken, Chairperson of "Filipina" a national NGO in the Philippines addressing issues on Women in politics.
- 43) The APHCO Board Meeting was held in Kerala, India, from 27 – 28 March, attended by 12 delegates. Dr. Shoji Kato presided over the meeting and stressed on the need for NGO members to link up with the ICA. The next meeting will be held in Colombo, Sri Lanka, during March 2001.
- 44) The ICA, in collaboration with the National Co-operative Development Corporation (NCDC) and the Canadian Co-operative Association held a Regional Workshop on Co-operative Data Bank in Gurgaon, India, from April 3 to 7, 2000. Data bank professionals/practitioners from Malaysia, Philippines, Sri Lanka, Thailand, India and the ICA Head Office in Geneva participated in the Workshop, which was inaugurated by the Regional Director of ICA (Asia Pacific) and presided over by Mr. P.K. Mishra, Managing Director of NCDC. Presentations were made by well-known E-Professionals, elaborating on the finer points on e-commerce and how electronic trade could revolutionize the way the world do business.

We anticipate a large number of participants at the First Research Conference for Asia and the Pacific on 24-25 June, 2000, and also for the Second Women's Forum on 26th June, and the First Asia Pacific Co-operative Forum (CO-OP FORUM 2000) on 27-28 June 2000. By the time this report is read at the Regional Assembly, we would know the exact numbers, as well as the outcome of these events.

Robby Tulus

June 20, 2000