



Nr 1
Tuesday
October
16

ICA GA Digest

Today's program

- ICACC Executive Committee and Seminar (*Orchard B & C*)
- TICA GA (*Indiana*)
- ICBA Executive Committee (*Hullet*)
- Global Workshop on University - Campus Co-operatives (*Moor & Morrison*)
- ICA Asia-Pacific Regional Women's Committee & Study Tour (*Carlton Hotel, Empress 2*)
- ICA Research Conference (*Enterprise*)
- ICFO Executive Committee (*VIP "B"*)
- ICA SO for Energy Co-operatives (*to be announced*)
- ICA Asia-Pacific Standing Committee (*Indiana*)
- ICFO Plenary (*Orchard B & C*)
- Global 300 - National 100 lists workshop (*VIP "B"*)
- ICBA Members Meeting (*Hullet*)
- CICOPA Executive Committee (*Mercury*)
- ICA Expo Briefing & Cocktail (*Hullet*)

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WELCOME!

This is our first issue of the General Assembly Digest. You are one of the more than 1000 co-operators to converge on Singapore this week for discussion and debate on issues of vital concern for the global co-operative movement.

Seah Kian Peng, Chairman of our host organisation Singapore National Co-operative Federation extends a warm welcome on behalf of the Singapore's Co-operative Movement and urges us to take away "... not only the good memories, but ideas and initiatives conceptualised during the conference that may extend and strengthen the co-operative movement all around the world."

ICA president Ivano Barberini encour-

ages the movement to embrace innovation and start now at the General Assembly. "In the globalised world, where the challenge is economic as much as cultural, the co-operative system must consist of visionary enterprises setting the objectives of achieving excellent business performances and building a stronger distinctive identity..."

(...continues on page 5...)

ICA President Mr. Ivano Barberini:

Co-operatives come together in Singapore

Suzanne Henderson spoke to ICA President Ivano Barberini about his hopes for a positive outcome from the 2007 General Assembly.

Digest: Ivano, What are your desired outcomes from this General Assembly?

“... My desire is that the GA will encourage and support a process of change within the global movement. There are many important developments happening in the global co-operative movement: communications, *Global 300*, innovation and the launch of our restructuring process, which I believe is so important. We may need to hold a special Assembly on this issue alone next year.

The General Assembly in Singapore brings co-operators and co-operatives together for a week to share initiatives, knowledge and common goals, “a process which is in itself important in today’s world.

I’m pleased that well over 1000 delegates from many regions across the world will be attending. It gives us the opportunity to hear reports on a wide range of activities from the regions, sectors and thematic committees.

We must update the movement to meet the demands of a world changing so rapidly, we need to revive our *raison d’être*. Our theme *Innovation in Business* is more important now, than ever. If we believe ideas are our main resource, it means empowerment of



women and young people, it means innovative and radical change in policy, strategies and mission, not only technology and business.

We need to re-define our role, and examine why people should support us. We have to be able to rethink co-operation and co-operatives - the reason why we exist. This is the most important question and I’m sure we can come up with a positive answer.

First of all, change is related to culture. It is human nature to resist change. For co-operatives decisions must be based on consensus, not on an authoritarian approach. It’s not just about business decisions.

Globalisation is destroying local traditions. Global capitalism considers social organisation, including co-operatives, as being rooted in territory - as obstacles to development. Because national governments depend on multinationals for capital investment, what country can refuse such a development opportunity? Though this may be difficult for the co-operative movement, it must consider the risks that growth, without improving living standards, presents.

In Mozambique and China where GDP is increasing at an alarming pace there is no equivalent growth in human development. On the contrary, co-operative development is linked to improvement in living standards. Like the growth of a tree, co-ops must nurture human development.

Co-ops have been enormously successful in small, sustainable, local initiatives. Co-ops work with people. I like to call it associative development, which creates the best environment for true economic development. Co-operatives must affect this through education, resources on the ground, co-operation between co-ops, building a truly democratic way of life.

It’s also important to disseminate information to our valued members, who were not able to attend this General Assembly. Our communications team, together with the GA Online initiative and the GA Digest will keep news flowing and delegates informed throughout the event and get the word out to those co-operators around the globe.”

National 100 Workshops “Building knowledge together”

Regional and national Top 100 lists based on the Global 300 methodology are already making headlines. The US top 100 co-ops recently revealed their 150 billion dollar contribution to the US economy and the role of co-ops in the environment. Don't miss the opportunity to hear the leading thinkers and creators of the Global 300 programme discuss how evidence based research can help your co-operative. Garry Cronan and Iain Macdonald are joined by Barry Silver of the National Co-operative Bank, Paul Hazen of the NCBA (National Co-operative Business Association) and Rainer Shluter of Cooperatives Europe among others to explore the benefits of data gathering and CSR reporting to advance the co-operative business model. “The project is about measuring co-operative success,” explains Garry Cronan, Global 300 Director “both to see how well we are doing as businesses, and to give others a clearer idea of how co-operatives function.”



Global 300 makes headlines

Journalists from the local and international news media will today attend a press conference that unveils the new Global 300 Listings.

Local media experts Buzz Communications were engaged by the hosts SNCF (Singapore National Co-operative Federation) to help spread the co-operative message and attract media interest. News desks and business analysts in particular were tantalised by the global size and scale of the co-operative movement as revealed by the new global 300 turnover figures.

“What this research proves beyond doubt” explains Global 300 Director, Garry Cronan, “is that in any debate on the best business model of the future, co-operatives deserve and will ultimately get far greater visibility.”

This year the list is supplemented by a ranking of the top 100 Developing Co-operatives and by CSR reports from both these lists, underlining how co-operatives add fiscal and social stability to national economies.

Increasingly, where the free market fails in delivering basic services (education, healthcare, social welfare, public transport, affordable energy, water and financial services to the rural poor), co-operatives fill the gap.

In some regions (Emilia Romagna, Italy), 60% of healthcare services are co-operatively run while co-operative manufacturing networks have succeeded in raising the region from the poorest in Italy in the 1970's to the wealthiest in 2005.

Singapore, seen by many to be a good example of the co-operative difference, boasts two enterprises listed in the Global 300. NTUC Income and NTUC



Fairprice, both part of the NTUC group, combine social responsibility with economic profitability, returning 65 million S\$ dollars to their members and the community through sponsorships, rebates and social programmes in 2006

“The success of our social programmes is underpinned by our commercial success,” according to Seah Kian Peng, chair of the SNCF, “But we can only fulfil our social responsibilities by remaining profitable and highly competitive as businesses.

Elsewhere, the success of micro-insurance and in particular Takaful Islamic insurance has enabled mutual insurers to grow their global insurance market share to 25%, while co-operative dairy farms account for 33% of the world market in dairy products.

In addition to their social objectives many co-operatives are leading on key questions of the environment and sustainability. David Cook of The Natural Step, who will be addressing the conference later this week, commented, “Multinationals we work with are just beginning to tackle the concept of sustainable development. Co-operatives have a lot to teach them about community and social sustainability.”



SNCF Chairman Mr. Seah Kian Peng:
"Do well, in order to do good!"

Seah Kian Peng, ICA Board member and Chair of Singapore National Co-operative Federation* is effusive about the future of co-operatives both in the Asia-Pacific region and worldwide.

Speaking during a break at yesterday's ICA Board meeting, Mr Seah said, "As businesses with a social mission at our core, we are unique entities. This 'social' raison d'etre is not only at our core but also gives us our competitive edge. In today's world, when corporate social responsibility in business is a given, the fact that social

responsibility is not new to co-ops, in fact it is fundamental to our existence, gives us a competitive edge in terms of marketing and sustainability."

Singapore, one of the world's most competitive economies is underpinned by a robust co-operative sector.

"Singapore has a very open economy and the government is pro-business whatever form that business takes including co-operatives, so those co-ops that are well run and managed have the opportunity to thrive," said Mr Seah.

"And the co-relation between a country's economy and the co-operative sector's performance, highlighted by the Global 300 listing, shows the huge impact the co-operative movement has made in the world and will continue to make."

"Importantly co-ops have to make the pitch to consumers themselves. In Singapore we have some highly successful co-operatives that are household names. They have made effective use of their unique selling points to become trusted companies with a high social contribution and impact. When co-operatives do this they are a powerful proposition - strong and sustainable organisations that have not forgotten their roots."

"In our quest to be competitive in our respective operating environment, as co-operators let us not forget that we want to do well in order to do good."

**Established in 1980, SNCF is the national apex organisation for Singapore's Co-operative Movement.*

Singapore in the spotlight.

From eWeekly Asia Vol.VII No.41 (15 Oct 2007)

Singapore's National Trades Union Congress (NTUC) has tied up with its insurance cooperative, NTUC Income to develop an affordable medical insurance package for both local and foreign contract workers. The 9 NTUC Co-operatives are formed by the labour movement with the primary purpose to serve workers and their families. Each of them are trail blazers in the industry they excel in.

WELCOME!

(Continued from page 1..)

The General Assembly gives members the opportunity to participate in this process, to shape and determine the future direction of the ICA. "GA 2007 will mark the end of a long process of reflection on our structure, and the functions of each part, allowing us to move forward in a more strategic manner", says Ivano.

"The breadth of the programme gives delegates unprecedented insight and participation in all areas of ICA activity," says ICA Deputy Director, Maria-Elena Chavez.

Let us not forget too, that the co-operative movement is a people's movement and the General Assembly provides a wonderful opportunity to meet other, like-minded people.

"Our biennial Assemblies bring the regions and the people together, face to face to exchange views and learn from each other," says Garry Cronan, ICA Director of Communications. "It's a real way to practice that most important of co-operative principles, co-operation between co-operatives."

ICA Director General, Iain MacDonald, says the theme of the general assembly, *Innovation in Co-operative Business*, suggests a new and vibrant approach to addressing a number of serious challenges affecting co-operatives. "Our destiny is to constantly renew," says Iain, and as we go about our weeks activities, we have the unique chance together to take stock of our achievements as a collective movement, and to define the path ahead.



ICA Board news: From the Director General

"I took the opportunity to present the draft of a Four-year Strategic Plan. The Board agreed that the plan was in the style and scope they wanted, but given that we will now be organising a special General Assembly in 2008, the plan, once approved, will be introduced in 2009.

Next year is a transition year before the new structure is approved and implemented. My role in preparing the 2009-2013 Global Plans will include consultation with the four regions and their directors on how they would like the plan to be presented in a collective fashion to the Board. Our aim is for the plan to eventually include the nine sectoral organisations. This is subject to GA approval of the report, the proposal for a special General Assembly next year, following consultation with all those involved. Consultation will also be sought on the rules for Global ICA and a new subscription formula.

Garry Cronan's preview of the Global 300 list and new communication initiatives were applauded by the

Board. The December 2007 meeting of the Board will consider funding for the *Global 300* programme among other priority areas.

In regard to the positive proposal for restructuring of the African region, the Board requested the ICA secretariat to set up a meeting with all donors and partners in Africa along with the Vice President and executive members, to develop a new co-operative strategy for Africa."

ICA Board member Gun-Britt Mårtensson spoke in glowing terms about collective decision making and consensus among Board members: "It was a very successful and inclusive Board meeting today, I believe largely because it encouraged close scrutiny of issues, in-depth discussion and consensus. One of the most important issues was the decision to finally put down a footing for the Restructuring Working Group and all recommendations were accepted. One of the most important outcomes is that we now regard the ICA as *one ICA*."

Movement looks to the future through young innovators

The 2007 General Assembly kicked off on Sunday 14 October with the voice of young co-operators. More than 150 young delegates from 18 countries around the world came together at the Global Youth Conference at the Raffles City Convention Centre, Singapore.

Seah Kian Peng, Chairman of SNCF welcomed the delegates and ICA President, Ivano Barberini gave the opening address.

"Young leaders can help innovate and they need encouragement and opportunities," says Ivano Barberini. "If younger people have an innovative spirit and older people have experience, it's about mutual advantage."

Dr Hagen Henry, Head of Co-operative

Department of ILO spoke on the theme "Co-operative Innovation through Youth" followed by Dr Phu Huynh of ILO Asia-Pacific Regional Office, on "Youth Employment Challenge" and Ms Elim Chew, Managing Director of 77th Street Singapore on the topic of "Social Entrepreneurship".

Ms Chew told the delegates that, "Co-operative leaders are ordinary people who chose to do things differently with extra-determination...they read the word 'impossible' as 'I'm possible'".

Young people shared their thoughts and ideas with the speakers at the Q&A session. LEGA Co-op delegates gave presentations in the afternoon with the Youth Member on the ICA Board, Juan Carlos Meija Cuartas, giving his views and ideas on 'Active Youth Involvement for Co-operative Sustainability'.



Delegates at the Conference



Elim Chew giving an inspirational speech

Teo Say Hong, ICA Asia-Pacific Youth Committee Chair has been elected as the new Youth Representative on the ICA Board replacing Juan Carlos. In thanking delegates for electing him, Teo



Ivano addressing the youth



Ivano, Teo Say Hong and Seah Kian Peng

Dr. Dongre with Dr. Kokichi Shoji and Mr. Wada of NFUCA

said he looked forward to working with youth from all regions around the world.

This week ICA youth delegates will participate in the General Assembly as observers.



ICA Sectoral Organisations

• International Co-operative Agricultural Organisation (ICAO)

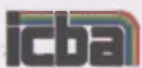


The ICAO, founded in 1951, is a sectoral organisation of the ICA. This organisation represents 47 agricultural co-operative organisations from over 38 countries. Agricultural co-operatives account for 36% of the total number of co-operative societies represented by ICA member organisations. These figures clearly indicate the significance of this sectoral organisation.

The ICAO works closely with the Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations (FAO), World Trade Organisation of the United Nations (WTO), the General Committee for Agricultural Co-operation in the EU (COGECA), the International Federation of Agricultural Producers (IFAP), European Confederation and other professional groups in the agricultural sector.

Chairperson: CHUNG, Dae-kun (NACF, Korea)

• International Co-operative Banking Association (ICBA)



The ICBA was set up in 1922 by national co-operative banks and financial organisations. The ICBA mission is to contribute to the sound development, growth and competitiveness of co-operative banks in the marketplace by defending their interests and by promoting worldwide their important contribution to the economic and social well-being of the population and their communities.

The ICBA Central Executive maintains

close contact with the World Council of Credit Unions (USA), the European Association of Co-operative Banks (Brussels) and the International Raffeisen Union (Bonn).

ICBA promotes:

- exchange information among its members
- co-operation among co-operative banks,
- the development of new co-operative banks through advice and assistance,
- and undertakes research on issues of common interest.

Chairperson: Mr Jean-Louis Bancel (Crédit Coopératif, France)

• Consumer Co-operatives Worldwide (CCW)



CCW has the basic philosophy that the consumer has a right to a reasonable standard of nutrition, clothing and housing; adequate standards of safety and a healthy environment, unadulterated merchandise at fair prices with reasonable variety and choice, access to information on goods and to education on consumer topics, and an influence in economy through democratic participation.

CCW strives to disseminate information among its members and provide a forum for the discussion and exchange of valuable experiences. It also promotes business between its members.

Chairperson: Bob Burlton, Co-operatives UK

• International Co-operative Fisheries Organisation (ICFO)

The International Co-operative Fisheries Organisation (ICFO) was originally founded in 1966, as a sub-committee of the ICA's Agricultural Committee. It became an independent body in 1976 and was known as the ICA Fisheries Committee. Today, ICFO has 27 member organisations from 23 countries.

ICFO objectives include the :

- creation of new co-operative fisheries organisations;
- promotion of co-operative training and education, including the production of educational material;
- exchange of technical information movements on a global basis;
- promotion of trade.

Chairperson: Mr. S. Uemura, Zengyoren, Japan

• International Health Co-operative Organisation (IHCO)



The International Health Co-operative Organisation (IHCO) brings together co-operatives that provide health care to their members or self-employment for health professionals (doctors, nurses, etc.), or integrate consumers' and producers' co-operatives. It was founded in 1996.

Its objectives are to :

- provide a forum for the discussion and exchange of issues of relevance to its member organisation's;
- provide information to United Nations organisations, national governments, the media and the public about the nature and role of health co-operatives;

- promote the development of health co-operatives;
- collaborate with other sectoral organisations and thematic committees of the ICA.

Chairperson: *Dr. José Carlos Guisado (Fundación Espriu, Spain)*

• International Co-operative Housing Organisation (ICA Housing)



ICA Housing is the apex body of the worldwide co-operative housing movement. Its mission is to unite, represent and serve the international movement for co-operative and mutual self-help housing. Its members have come together to advance their common interest in developing sustainable human communities founded on co-operative principles and values. Through its efforts, ICA Housing strives for co-operative and mutual self-help housing to win recognition and respect throughout the world for its unlimited potential and practical achievement in providing secure, affordable shelter controlled by those who call it home.

Chairperson: *Michael Doyle (CHF, USA)*

• International Co-operative and Mutual Insurance Federation (ICMIF)



Established in 1922 the International Cooperative and Mutual Insurance Federation (ICMIF) was originally known as the International Cooperative Insurance Federation (ICIF). Subsequent years saw the

organisation develop a significant reinsurance operation and it also started to look at development issues for members.

In recent years ICMIF has seen a constantly increasing membership, rising from 75 members in 1993 to 184 in 2007 and helping it to become a unique global organisation representing co-operative and mutual insurers from around the world.

With 184 members (making up more than 400 distinct organisations) in 70 countries it is the voice of the sector. Through the delivery of a distinct range of dedicated member services the Federation aims to be actively involved with members and key external influencers, thereby creating a sustainable environment for the co-operative and mutual insurance industry ensuring its growth and prosperity.

Chairperson: *Kathy Bardswick (The Co-operators, Canada)*

• International Organisation of Industrial, Artisanal and Service Producers' Co-operatives (CICOPA)

CICOPA The full members of

The International Organisation of Industrial, Artisanal and Service Producers' Co-operatives, or CICOPA, are representative organisations of producers' co-operatives from different sectors: construction, industrial production, general services, transport, intellectual skills, artisanal activities, health, social care, etc. Its associated members are support organisations promoting co-operatives in those sectors.

Many of those co-operatives are worker co-operatives, namely co-operatives where the members are the staff of the enterprise, i.e. worker-members. Because of this, those enterprises are characterised by a distinctive type of labour relations, called "worker ownership", different from the one experienced by conventional employees or by self-employed.

CICOPA has 57 member organisations from 39 countries, and new national organisations of such co-operatives are continuously being established, e.g., in 2002 in Slovenia, in 2003 in South Korea, in 2004 in the USA.

Chairperson: *Javier Salaberría (Confederación de Cooperativas de Euskadi, Spain)*

• International Association of Tourism (TICA)

TICA TICA (International Association of Tourism Co-operatives) operates as an international network regrouping tourism co-operatives or companies owned by co-operatives. TICA works closely with Bureau International de Tourisme (BITS). The benefits of TICA membership include:

- Information: TICA provides a variety of information via email including the BITS monthly electronic newsletter.
- Exchange of experience: TICA members are invited to all activities in which TICA associates itself.
- Use of the TICA name and logo
- Possibility of reciprocal invitation and promotion of products and services among members.

Chairperson: *Maurizio Davolio (Lega Coop ANCST, Italy)*

Help us Spread the News!

At this year's Assembly you will notice more ICA communications team members than before. This is because the new ICA is keener than ever to broadcast our co-operative message to our members, to the media and to the wider public. This year we don't just want to tell everyone how well co-operatives are serving their members, we want to show them.

So you may find yourself staring into the lens of a camera or at a microphone while one of the ICA communications team asks your views about the key themes of the 2007 GA, or quizzes you about what is innovative or different about your co-op.

Interviews may appear in the conference newsletter, the ICA Digest, or on the ICA news websites - some may even reach other media outlets as part of our strategy to make our members co-operative success more visible.



Question: "What do you expect from this GA?"



"... I hope that the months of preparations will bring the desired results!"
Zulkifh Mohammed - SNCF Chair of Organising Committee



"... I hope that we all get inspired to do more for the Coop Movement and do good business for our members"
Steinar Dvergsdal - Board Member



"... I am looking forward to meeting many friends from different countries."
Karen Lim - SNCF

ICA GA Digest

Four issues of the General Assembly Digest will be produced and distributed 16-19 of October.

If you have information, comments or suggestions for any of the GA Digest issues, you will find us in the Blundell room in the Executive Conference Centre.

Liaison editor: P. Nair, phone +91-98 1050 7944, e-mail: pnair910@gmail.com.

Global Business

ICA Expo World Co-operatives Exhibition

23-25 October 2008
Lisbon, Portugal

The ICA together with FENACOOB Trade Fairs is organising its first official global exhibition and trade fair to promote co-operative business and to create a greater visibility for co-operatives.

"A unique business opportunity for all co-operatives worldwide to interact and to do business to increase and develop new customers and suppliers." Luiz Branco, President, Fenacoop Trade Fairs.

"The fair is an extraordinary tool for developing a relationship network,



valuing the co-operative movement and commercial interchange. It effectively presents co-operation as a modern business system with a progressive culture open to the world." - *Ivano Barberini - ICA President.*

Exhibition space will be exclusively available to ICA members from all sectors with the fair open to the general public and buyers to spread the co-operative ideals and to showcase the scale and relevance of our business model. The Expo will be divided into 5 major sections: the World Pavilion, which will feature the exhibition of the co-operative movement and 4 continental pavilions allowing members to promote busi-

nesses with the main co-operatives of each country.

In addition to the exhibitions there will be a 'Business Forum' with workshops, roundtables and a Bio-energy Congress focussing on the technologies, investments, markets and the commercial policies of Co-operatives in the bio-energy and ethanol market.

For further information, visit the ICA Expo organisers - FENACOOB - in the Registration area and pick up an invitation to tonight's Briefing and Cocktail at 1830 in the Hullet Room (RCC) and Checkout the Expo website at <http://www.icaexpo.coop>

New on-line Service for the General Assembly

During the ICA General Assembly, 14-19 October, 2007, in Singapore, we will be introducing a new feature to [ica.coop](http://www.ica.coop) - GA Online. For the first time since the establishment of [ica.coop](http://www.ica.coop), there will be daily online reports on what is happening at the GA in Singapore - including comments from GA participants.

There will be reports on presentations, proceedings and proposals - articles, pictures, audio and video clips. It will be the next best thing to actually attending! Participants at the GA and visitors to

[ica.coop](http://www.ica.coop) will also be able to contribute to GA Online - by submitting comments online. Comments will be moderated.

All the GA online content will also be fed to [icanews.coop](http://www.icanews.coop)

Find GA Online here:

The GA Programme <http://www.ica.coop/calendar/ga2007/index.html>

Meeting Documentation <http://www.ica.coop/calendar/ga2007/docs.html>

Speaker Biographies <http://www.ica.coop/calendar/ga2007/bios.html>

ICA Singapore page: <http://www.icasingapore.coop/>

ICA Thematic Committees

ICA has four Thematic Committees which enable ICA members to focus on the issues of co-operative research, communications, human resource development and gender equality. Each Committee is democratically governed by its members and supported by the ICA.

Committee on Co-operative Research

The ICA Committee on Co-operative Research is a bridge between academic research and the co-operative world.

The ICACCR aims at strengthening activities and making the work of researchers more visible, particularly to managers and co-operators so that research results can be applied to current co-operatives issues. For example, questions concerning social audit, co-operative principles, innovation, globalisation and the local dimensions of co-operatives, developing co-operative advantage and the emergence of new wave co-operatives have all been reviewed from both a practical and theoretical stance. The ICACCR organises annual research conferences at the global and regional levels.

Chairperson:

*Ms Lou Hammond Ketilson
(University of Saskatchewan, Canada)*

Communications Committee

The ICA Communications Committee (ICACC) believes that the role of communication is critical to the promotion of co-operatives. The ICA has long recognised this and provided for its further development through such mechanisms as the ICACC. Its objectives include:

- improving the effectiveness and understanding of the people with responsibility for co-operative information, media and information centres in the organisations affiliated to the ICA
- contributing to the development of the co-operative media and information resources; as well as fostering contacts among co-operative communicators in order to encourage the exchange of experience and co-operation

Chairperson: *Caroline Naett
(GNC, France)*

Human Resource Development Committee

The ICA Global HRD Committee makes available knowledge, information and guidance on co-operative education and training issues to the HRD practitioner, the co-operative leader and the co-operative manager. It also provides a forum for the exchange of ideas, aspirations and practical experiences to enhance the social and economic effectiveness of co-operatives.

The Global HRD Network For Co-operatives has been established by the National Co-operative Union of India and the Vaikunth Mehta National Institute of Co-operative Management in collaboration with ICA HRD Committee.

The aim of the Committee is to promote and support the initiation and

furtherance of HRD programmes within co-operatives and co-operative organisations at global, regional, national and local levels, so as to enhance their social and economic effectiveness.

Chairperson: *Yehudah Paz*

(AilinPeace, Israel)

Gender Equality Committee

The Gender Equality Committee (ICA GEC) is a thematic committee that promotes equality between women and men and gender integration in the co-operative movement and society. It was formerly known as the ICA Global Women's Committee.

The Committee has been particularly active in shaping ICA priorities. It proposed an ICA Strategy for Promoting Gender Equality (2000) and an ICA Strategy for Co-operatives Fighting HIV/AIDS (2004), both of which were adopted by the ICA Board. It works with ICA structures at the global, regional and sectoral levels to implement the ICA Gender Strategy and activities that have a gender component.

The Committee has also been active in collecting gender disaggregate statistics to map the situation of women in the Co-operative Movement.

The ICA Gender Equality Committee is a thematic committee of the International Co-operative Alliance (ICA) which promotes equality between women and men and gender integration in the co-operative movement and society. It was formerly known as the ICA Global Women's Committee. The Committee in changing its name, now seeks membership from both women and men.

Chairperson: *Stefania Marcone*

(Lega Nazionale delle Cooperative e Mutue, Italy)



Nr 2
Wednesday
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ICA GA Digest

Today's program

- ICA Asia-Pacific Consumer Committee (*Sophia*)
- ICA HRD Executive Committee (*Minto*)
- ICA GEC Executive Committee (*Orchard C*)
- ICA Housing Board (*Clark*)
- CICOPA General Assembly (*Olivia*)
- ICBA Seminar (*Orchard A & B*)
- IHCO General Assembly (*Indiana*)
- ICAO Seminar & General Assembly (*Morrison*)
- ICA HDR Plenary (*Minto*)
- CCI/CCW Plenary & Executive Committee (*Sophia*)
- ICA GEC Plenary (*Moor*)
- ICA Housing Plenary (*VIP A*)
- IAS Working Group Members Meeting (*Mercury*)
- CICOPA Seminar (*Olivia*)
- ICA GEC Conference (*Hullet*)
- ICA Housing Seminar (*Minto*)
- ICC/ICA Asia-Pacific Consumer Committee Seminar (*Sophia*)
- IAS Working Group (Open Meeting) (*Mercury*)
- ICA General Assembly Welcome Reception (by invitation only) (*Canning & Padang*)

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2007 Global 300 reveals 1 trillion US dollar turnover

Yesterday's launch of the 2007 Global 300 list, which unveiled 9 trillion US dollar assets and a 1 trillion turnover was recorded by local and international press including the Asia News TV channel.

GARRY Cronan, ICA Global 300 Director commented,

" Co-operatives are a major economic force in the world economy. Many are over 100 years old and have long time horizons. They have been serving their members needs and interests for all this time and although they are

locally based they are globally competitive. Co-operatives have been demonstrating Corporate social responsibility from the day they started"

IVANO Barberini, ICA President

"To develop such an important comparative database as the Global 300 in such a short time is amazing. I would like to thank the ICA staff, especially Garry Cronan, for their tireless efforts, their passion and commitment to the project, which is a work in process".

(..continues on page 2 ...)

(... continued from page 1...)

IAIN MacDonald, ICA Director-General

"The Global 300 confirms what we knew all along about co-ops. We are tired of hearing from Governments that co-operatives are only useful for the poor. Globally we provide 100 million jobs - 20% more than all the multi-nationals put together. Ownership is the key. We are not investor owned but membership owned. This list establishes co-operatives as a serious part of the world economy, equivalent to the economy of Canada. We have answers and solutions to many of the problems facing the world".

ALBAN D'Amours, CEO Desjardins Group, Canada

I was very proud to learn that we (The Desjardins Group) were 13th in the world this year. Today's customers value businesses that have ethical and social values and this is where we excel. The Global 300 is a powerful model to show governments that an efficient alternative exists, and this must be protected. Economic and social issues are part of the DNA of co-operatives. Because we respond to the needs of members and are not profit led, we expect to be here in another 100 years".

SEAH Kian Peng, Chair SNCF

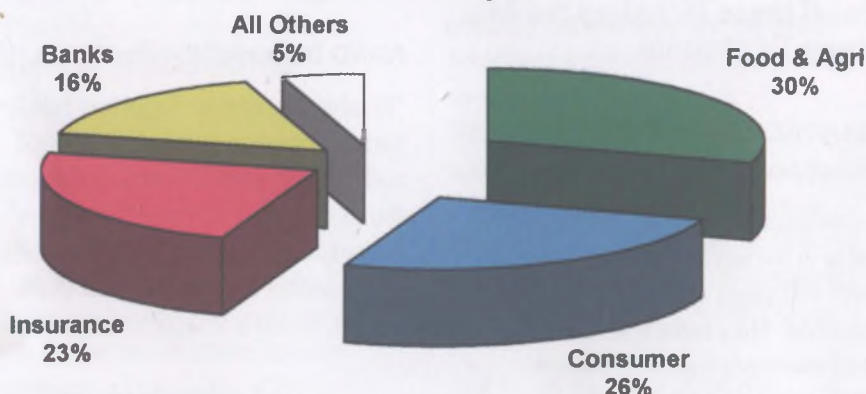
"CSR is a part of all co-operatives. I am delighted that there are two Singaporean enterprises on the list this year (NTUC Income and NTUC Fairprice). As the results were based on figures for 2005 I know we are growing stronger and hope to have gone up several positions next year.

"This year the NTUC group showed a turnover of 1.6 billion S Dollars (US Dollars 1.075 billion) and of the 132 million S dollar profits almost one third (S Dollars 41 million) was re-distributed back to members and the local community".

JEAN LUIS Bancel, Chair ICBA, International Co-operative Banking Association

"The Global 300 is very important because it establishes that you can be big and still be a co-op. It also reveals how many large household name organisations are in fact co-operatives. This raises the profile of the movement as a whole. Instead of splitting the movement into large and small co-operatives I think it will make the big co-operatives proud of their co-operative status and encourage them to interact more closely with other co-operatives".

Global 300 By Sector



NCB Reveal contribution of top 100 US Co-operatives

Sustainability... empowerment... concern for community. These are among today's most popular business values.

But these values are nothing new to the US nation's 20,000-plus co-operatives. Co-operatives - businesses owned by their customers, rather than Wall Street investors - have been living by these values for decades. Co-operatives welcome the efforts of investor-owned companies to protect the environment and become more involved in their communities. But that doesn't mean investor-owned companies have the long-term commitment to these concepts that characterise co-operatives. The 100 top-earning co-operative businesses in America contributed more than \$150 billion in combined revenues to the U.S. economy in 2006, according to an annual report released by NCB this month. That is \$11 billion more than reported in 2005, indicating a steady growth in the sector.

"As co-operatives apply their considerable power to eco-friendly programs, they're also generating impressive revenues," said Charles E. Snyder, President and CEO of NCB. "Nine new co-operatives made their debut on our list this year and the combined revenues of these top 100 cooperatives grew by \$11 billion since 2005. Even at a time when many industries face financial challenges, cooperatives continue to have an immense impact on the U.S. economy, as well as the environment."

Tsunami reconstruction project

An historic MOU was signed yesterday between Seah Kian Peng of SNCF and Christopher Chua, Secretary of the Singapore Red Cross Society, acknowledging the grant of over US(\$) 400,000 towards Tsunami reconstruction in Aceh & Nias in Indonesia.

Zulfiki Mohammed, CEO of SNCF secured this grant, 80% of which is paid by Singaporean donations to the Tidal Waves Asia Fund, by working in partnership with Adi Sasano of DEKOPIN ((Dewan Koperasi) the apex Indonesian Co-operative organisation who will co-fund the remaining 20% of the half a million dollar project.

The funding will replace fishing boats, rice mills, hand tractors and trucks lost by members.

Christopher Chua of the Red Cross congratulated Zulfiki Mohammed for his persistence and determination in meeting the stringent criteria for funding which would not have been forthcoming without close collaboration between the two co-operatives.

Lee Shil Kwan, Regional Director of ICA Asia-Pacific listed this as an excellent example of co-operation between co-operatives, mirroring other Tsunami reconstruction projects funded by ICA members in the UK, Israel and China following the first ICA appeal.

Adi Sasano added that the existing friendships between individuals were the starting point for the collaboration and that one unforeseen positive outcome of the devastating 2004 Tsunami and subsequent earthquakes was that it ended separatist conflict.



Human Resources vital to co-op future

The centrality of human resource development to the continued development and sustainability of the global co-operative movement was confirmed at the ICA HRD symposium held yesterday. The workshop titled *"Towards the Future: How Can HRD Best Contribute to Co-operatives Today"* examined the significance of education within co-operatives at a member, management and leadership level.

The Chair of ICA HRD Committee, Yehudah Paz, said the standard of discussion and debate at the workshop was "first class" and demonstrated that recognition of the importance of HRD in co-operative development was now unassailable.

"The exceptional representation from co-operative leaders and HRD experts at today's workshop indicates the

significance of the role of HRD practice to our movement. Our outstanding panel included some of the GA's busiest speakers, ICA Director General, Iain McDonald and Seah Kian Peng, Chair, Singapore National Co-operative Federation. Hagen Henry, Chief ILO Co-operative Branch gave his one presentation at the GA at our workshop."

Paz said that there was universal consensus at the meeting for promoting HRD at a regional, national and international level backed by goodwill, mutual understanding understanding and, importantly, financial support.

The meeting noted that it was crucial to promote the Co-operative Learning Centre (CLC) and the ILO indicates that, within the context of its development programmes, it would offer support for CLC.



A good read 1

Co-operatives and the Pursuit of Peace - Edited by Joy Emmanuel & Ian MacPherson

"Co-operatives and the Pursuit of Peace" features articles by co-op studies experts and practitioners from around the world. Contributors share their experience, knowledge and insights on the challenges co-operatives must meet in addressing an array of conflict situations, and how the co-ops and regional co-operative movements are responding and contributing to peace-making and sustainable development.

You can order a copy online through www.bcics.org.

...

A good read 2

A Co-operative Dilemma - Converting organisational form.
Edited by Jorge Sousa and Roger Herman

Pubs: The Centre for Co-operative Studies

With insights from both academics and practitioners, this book focuses on an issue of paramount importance to co-operative organisations, nonprofits, development specialists, and policy makers. Twelve case studies from Canada, Australia, Ireland and the United States explore and analyse the processes and factors leading to conversions of organisational form, including mutualisation, demutualisation and remutualisation.



University Co-ops do the Business

On the occasion of the 13th meeting of the ICA Consumer Sub-Committee on University/College Co-operatives for Asia and the Pacific, the Sub-Committee held a study visit to National University of Singapore (NUS) Multi-Purpose Co-operative Society.

32 young co-operators from 7 countries visited a bookstore and IT Co-op shop and took part in a lively question and answer session. It was a good opportunity for the participants to get a better knowledge of the working of a university co-op.





Co-operative fishers promote solidarity

Masaaki Sato, Secretary, International Co-operative Fisheries Organisation, spoke to GA Digest about the important outcomes from yesterday's ICFO plenary. "Firstly we adopted and signed two resolutions. The first resolution relates to measures to counter the adverse effects of fuel oil price increases. The cost of trawl fishing has increased by 40% as a result of price increase with a concomitant loss of profit to the fishers, so it's a crucial issue," said Sato.

The other resolution relates to NAMA (Non-Agricultural Market Access) of WTO. "Although the WTO has not yet concluded on NAMA, we resolved that as long as WTO rules on fishery products should be made such that they would contribute to the improvement of the socio-economic status of small scale fishers. The meeting adopted these resolutions to request member organisations to act in support of the fishery co-operative sector, in order to help fishers overcome problems of management," said Sato.

Of the 27 ICFO member organisations from 24 countries there were 10 member organisations from 10 countries represented and able to sign the resolutions. ICA President Ivano Barberini and ICA Director General Iain MacDonald took part in the plenary.

The recommendation that two representatives from all Specialised Organisations should be nominated and take part in ICA Board meetings was adopted. Two candidates, Javier Salaberria, Director Mondragon Cooperative and Jean Louis Bancel, ICBA, were recommended.

Sato said future priorities for ICFO include action on resource management and promoting solidarity among member fishers. The meeting agreed to strengthen co-operative relationships through ICA. Next year the annual meeting of ICFO will be held in Hanoi to coincide with the Asia-Pacific Regional Assembly. Ikuhiro Hattori was elected to the Chair of ICFO replacing Shoji Uemura who retired.

Research shows social transformation in co-ops

A symposium presented by The International Research Committee of the ICA showed innovation in co-operatives can be understood in so many ways.

Lou Hammond Kettilson, Chair of the Committee said the presentations reinforced how important it was to set an agenda for researchers of co-operative innovation which reinforces and reflects co-operative identity. "What's unique about innovation in co-operatives is that it's socially transformative, not just technically but also in relation to the balance of power. Because research is vital to support the assertions of the co-operative movement it is important for co-operative researchers to hone their methodology so research is rigorous and can't be challenged."

Lou also said that there was a need for comparative studies to demonstrate the global reach of the co-operative phenomenon.

Ian MacPherson, Director, British Columbia Institute for Co-operative Studies at University of Victoria said the presentations clearly demonstrated the importance of research as a strategic tool for co-operative development generally.

"Hopefully we have begun the process of integration between the various research communities and ICA. It is also important to think about developing a research agenda that is directly useful to the co-op movement whilst allowing researchers to retain some autonomy over the areas they choose to examine."

Question: "Why are you at the GA?"



"We want to respond to global co-operative solidarity and it is a big opportunity for Nigeria to meet, share and exchange ideas for a positive impact back at home."

Tom Tar, Co-operative Federation of Nigeria



"In the Philippines co-operatives are developing but they need to be stronger. We want to learn about the co-operative movement in order to adapt strategies to our own needs at home."

"It's a great opportunity to apply new knowledge to co-operatives in the Philippines."

Ayeth Combreis and Karen Guevarra, CELI Consumers Cooperative Philippines

"We are here to persuade coops to actively use the .COOP web domain name".

Carolyn Hoover, Director of Operations
- Dot COOP



● ICA GA Digest

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Find GA Online here:

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Meeting Documentation <http://www.ica.coop/calendar/ga2007/docs.html>

Speaker Biographiess <http://www.ica.coop/calendar/ga2007/bios.html>

ICA Singapore page: <http://www.icasingapore.coop/>



University co-operators study strategies

More than 80 young delegates from 18 countries met together at a workshop exchanged ideas and views and expressed their apprehensions and difficulties in organizing and running university co-operatives in their countries.

Prof. Poo Gee Swee from the National University of Singapore welcomed the delegates, while Dr. K. Shoji, Prof. Hamada, Prof. Ali Hassan, and Patrice Blais from Quebec, Canada, addressed the delegates. Shil Kwan Lee, Regional Director gave an inspirational address to the delegates.

Several delegates from India, Nepal, Indonesia, Canada, Russia, Philippines and Thailand presented country reports. Pravin Joseph made a presentation on the scope and possibilities of setting up university co-operatives in the United Arab Emirates and details the kind of colleges and schools which are operating in the UAE.

The group also had a Q&A session. The delegates were particular happy to learn about the innovative services provided by the Japanese university co-operatives.



Tom Pierson,
Executive
Director,
NASCO

"North American Students of Cooperation (NASCO) are here to share best practice and discuss the role youth co-operatives play. It's also an opportunity to network with other student co-ops. Our federation has been providing student co-operative housing for 60 years and I can say it's a growing sector. We are very sustainable and stable - we have not been affected by the sub-prime mortgage crisis at all."



Paphat Paricharn
Secretary
Director,
Thailand
Consumer
Cooperative
Federation in
University

"We must look to the future, not only because young people are the future of the movement, but also because of the advantages to the world that organisations that care about societies offer. Co-operatives are the future. The General Assembly is useful because it's a chance to share problems, techniques and best practice."

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Or go mobile with WiFi access in the Registration area

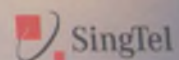
The WiFi password: icaga2007

Happy co-operative surfing!



Broadband access
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Women co-operators discuss effective leadership

The issue of effective and innovative leadership development of women in co-operatives was discussed at yesterday's GA. About 50 participants from 10 countries came together for the 6th meeting of ICA Regional Women's Committee for Asia-Pacific. Dr Lou Guat Tin, Assistant Professor

at National Institute of Education, Singapore gave the keynote address. Savitri Singh, Gender Programme Advisor of ICA-AP convened the meeting, also attended by Shil Kwan Lee, Regional Director ICA-AP and Stefania Marcone, Chairperson, ICA Gender Equality Committee.

The progress of gender integration programmes in the 9 countries represented by the 13 committee members was discussed. A study tour to NTUC Income Insurance Co-operative was enjoyed by the participants.

GA gains momentum

Zulkifli Mohammed, Chief Executive, Singapore National Co-operative Federation and Chair of the GA takes a break to reflect on how things are going in the early days of the 2007 GA.

"I'm very pleased to see 69 countries represented so far. We knew that the global co-operative world is like a mini United Nations. So far 1050 delegates have registered

exceeding our expectations with many more to arrive over the next two days.

"Delegates have arrived from Tanzania and other parts of Africa, the middle East and Iran, from the former Russian states, Kazakstane, Belaruse, Ukraine, Australia, a large contingent from Europe, both Finland and Italy. Even from far-flung countries in the Pacific. Can you imagine, there is one delegate from Haiti, so far away? The

only way to get here is via Australia.

"In terms of outcomes, we want to tell the world that the co-operative movement is important. Global 300 statistics show how co-operatives impact on peoples lives in business and in social ways. We want to be able to ask young people in Singapore what is a co-operative and to spread the word."



Nr 3
Wednesday
October
18

ICA GA Digest

Today's program

- **Opening Ceremony**
- **Keynote Speeches**
Michael Henriques on behalf
of Jose Manuel Salazar
Xirinachs
Lim Boon Heng
David King
- **Session I:**
Business and
Sustainable Development
- **Session II:**
Through the 300 to Business
Innovation
- **Session III:**
Business and Sustainable
Development
- **Session IV:**
Through the 300 to Business
Innovation



Investing in women is smart economics

“Gender equality as a driving force of economic and social innovation” was the message at yesterday’s ICA Gender Equality Conference. Stefania Marcone, Chair of ICA Gender Equality Committee said the GEC decided to tackle the GA theme from the gender equality perspective. “Innovation is an important factor to give greater impetus to equality, but we need to develop the pathways to fill the existing gender gaps,” said Stefania.

“Global studies and actual experience have shown that a country can boost its economic productivity by giving women access to education, work opportunities, and society’s decision-making processes... Investing in gender equality and empowerment of women is smart economics; it helps to create a fair society and raises economic productivity.”

Stefania said the key question for the conference was whether there is a link between gender equality and co-op innovation. “Gender mainstreaming is in itself an innovation oriented to the

process for producing substantial change. As underlined by *Global 300*, co-ops consisting of women and men are competitive and innovative businesses at local, national and international levels.”

Esther Gicheru, Chair of the Interim Gender Committee for Africa said, “I’d like to see more equal opportunities for both men and women, however women have been left behind especially in African co-ops where leadership roles have been dominated by men.”

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• Housing Co-ops and climate ...	5
• Climate leaders	6
• Business of Sustainable Dev...	7
• What is important at GA.....	8
• We are only second best ...	8



Investing in women is smart economics... continued

"If co-operatives embrace their true values and principles there should be no discrimination. This will allow women inside the co-operative movement to have a voice and identity so that they can articulate their needs. This is especially important since co-operatives are democratic organisations. They can listen to women. This is one of the things lacking in co-ops in Africa.

"Women have a problem accessing credit which holds them back because they don't have collateral. But this can



Stefania Marcone

change because co-operatives have a system where members guarantee one another. Women also lack business skills. We must set aside the funds to train women in these important skills."

Mdm. Halimah Yacob, Assistant Secretary General, Singapore National Trades Union Congress gave the Keynote Address. "Gender equality is a topic close to my heart. Women should be able to contribute to social and economic development in every country. If you educate a woman you educate the whole family," she said.

Wim Polman, from the Rural Development Office, Bangkok presenting a video on women's co-ops said, "What I have seen in Nepal are excellent coffee production businesses managed in all facets by women, including production and marketing. The women train each other so the projects are building capacity. Women have solidarity and share their knowledge but the key to it is finance - you need savings and

credit and there is a missing link. The essential ingredient is co-operation between co-operatives and this is a fantastic challenge for savings and credit co-operatives that require training in business and risk management. The producers must also be trained in marketing and accounting. This is the necessary synergy. The model once implemented could be applied in any developing countries."



Ester Gicheru, Chair, Interim Gender Committee for Africa.

CICOPA part of the future

"My objective this week is to secure more ICA recognition that CICOPA (International Organisation of Industrial, Artisanal and Service Producers) is a fast growing and dynamic sector within the co-operative movement. We are very much part of the future of the co-operative movement."

Many of these co-operatives are worker co-operatives characterized by a distinctive type of worker ownership model. New national organizations of such co-operatives have most recently been established in the US, South Korea and Slovenia. CICOPA now has 57 organisations from 39 countries.





Climate change resolution

"...the founders of the movement would approve..."
 Bob Burlton, Co-operative Group (UK)/Consumer Co-operatives Worldwide.

Digest: What prompted you to draft the resolution going before the GA?

BB: On a personal level I have been concerned about this issue since I went to a screening of the Al Gore documentary "An Inconvenient Truth". I realized that something could and *should* be done by co-operatives. At the root of what co-operatives are about is social responsibility. Climate change is a growing global problem that affects people in different ways and we must act together now.

Digest: What can co-operatives do ?

BB: I think there are three steps. The first is individual action – how can we each act to reduce our carbon emissions? The second step is what co-operatives can do uniquely – that is to inform their members about the problem and encourage them to act responsibly. The third step is absolutely crucial - to lobby government. This is something the co-operative movement has already done in the UK resulting in a climate change bill.

I truly believe that the issue of climate change and social responsibility is exactly the same as the 'chalk in the flour' and 'rocks in the coal' issues that led to the development of the earliest co-operative organisations. I can't think of any other issue which has the capacity to unite co-operatives throughout the world and to galvanize us to action. This GA is a worldwide



Bob Burlton - Chairman of the Co-operative Group and President of Consumer Co-operatives Worldwide.

meeting and we must take the opportunity to address this issue and make commitments to do what we can as a movement.



Show your support - Commit to fight climate change
<http://www.actiononco2.coop>

Regional reactions



This is probably the most important issue facing us at the moment. Our members are agricultural co-operatives and climate change is leading to declining productivity. This year we suffered un-seasonal droughts and unexpected floods that have destroyed everything, not only all the crops but homes as well. We want to help our members but at the moment it is beyond our means.

Leonard Msemakweli, Ugandan Co-operative Alliance



Climate change is not yet up there in the top 5 issues in Israel. It still comes way behind war and peace and demutualisation. Awareness of it within the movement would be lower than other countries but its impact on natural resources is very important. Three of the world largest water irrigation companies are Israeli co-operatives, not because we are smart but because we have no water!

Rafi Goldman, Kibbutz Movement.



Call for action on energy



"Co-ops have been developing innovative solutions to energy issues for years in their own fields and businesses. For example, there are 900 consumer owned electricity co-operatives in the US with 36 million members - this is huge. Now, with climate change a critical issue for us all, it is time for co-operatives to co-operate on energy solutions.

We are starting to compile a list of existing energy co-operatives."

Paul Hazen, CEO, NCBA

On some debates where there is chronic confusion, such as energy and the question of biofuels, co-operatives could act together and give leadership. The potential for innovation and technology transfer is enormous, and for the small co-ops, the economies of scale in investing together in alternative technologies.

We call on all those with an interest in being involved in the action on energy to contact Iain MacDonald at ICA.



Tomorrow the General Assembly will consider a resolution submitted by Co-operatives UK and the National Co-operative Business Association addressing the challenges for .COOP. The resolution calls for the co-operative community to promote greater uptake of the .COOP domain.

"COOP is one simple but effective way by which each ICA member organisation can promote co-operative identity and build an understanding of coops throughout the world" says Carolyn Hoover, Operations Director of Dot COOP.

The support for .COOP is continuing within the ICA with new programmes to provide support and registration of the name by the ACI Americas and Co-operatives Europe.

The use of .COOP makes the job of identifying co-ops easier for consumers and businesses looking for a co-op business partner.

The GA Digest interviewed the Chair of DotCoop Board, Walden Swanson about the rationale for the ICA GA resolution on .COOP.

Digest: Why is it important to promote a greater uptake of the .COOP domain name?

WS: It's the same reason that co-operation is important. If you believe in the 7 co-operative principles then this is one tool to promote those values.

Digest: What strategies are there to promote .COOP?

WS: We are trying to move from a 'push' to a 'pull' strategy. Instead of saying you should have a .COOP domain, we want you to want a .COOP domain. We are trying to create some strategies for branding co-operatives that people really want to join in on.

An example is a pilot project that we are conducting at the moment. Five



large co-operatives have come together to buy advertising on national public radio for the month of October. Eleven times a day we are running ads that say a little about each of the participating co-ops and at the end of the commercial there's a mention of a URL that is a portal for the .COOP domain. The site is called www.go.coop.

Digest: What's the next step to improve the uptake of .COOP?

WS: We have two major projects. The first is aimed at spreading the ownership of DotCoop to big co-operatives around the world. The second is a strategy of branding co-operatives so that any co-op manager will want .COOP as a branding tool.

Digest: How will the GA resolution help these objectives?

WS: The resolution is aimed at strengthening recognition of the synergy between .COOP and co-operation. The understanding is that it is just one small but vital tool to build a particular identity. I urge all members to support this resolution.



Housing Co-ops combating climate change

A ICA Housing seminar yesterday addressed the role that the co-operative housing sector can play in combating climate change with the sharing of experience and knowledge from all regions of the world.

The sustainability principle of 'meeting present needs whilst not forgetting the future generations's needs' was reiterated and expressed through a circular sustainability circle of Design -> Construction -> Maintenance. In this way active systems of energy sources, construction methods, safety of the builders and construction materials can be included in new buildings and the renovation of existing properties to ensure the quality of accommodation whilst preserving a community space.



Sylvie Moreau



Dr. Johnny Wong Liang Heng

The examples of good practice were discussed from the HSB Housing Co-operative in Sweden; the SHE (Sustainable Housing in Europe) project co-ordinated by Italy's Confcooperative in which social housing co-operatives demonstrate the feasibility of sustainable housing and communities and an overview of Singapore's public housing portfolio administered by the Housing and Development Board.



Shil Kwan Lee

Regional Reaction

"Climate Change is certainly an issue that will influence the Asia region and have a significant impact on agricultural co-operatives. We need to raise this issue and educate our members, particularly those in the remoter areas. We have certainly promoted the opportunity for biofuels and biotechnology but the primary problem facing the smallholdings and family farms that comprise most of the agricultural co-operatives in Asia is their own economic sustainability. How can they compete? The only way to increase their competitiveness is to expand their marketing capacity through the co-operative movement"

The National Agricultural Co-operative Federation of Korea whose 1000 member co-operatives consist of 1-2 hectare smallholdings face the same risks if the WTO Trade Liberalisation and the bi-lateral free trade agreements open the Korean market to foreign imports. Although some environmental solutions such as the introduction of organic farming are on the increase, there is simply no space to divert crops needed to feed the population into biofuel production. Climate change adaptation strategies for small farmers will not happen until there is an effective campaign to raise awareness.



Climate leaders

DESJARDINS

Desjardins, Canada have already taken action on climate change and were signatories of a letter to the Canadian Prime Minister in 2005 urging him, among other things, to launch a process and working plan that would support development by 2008-2009 of a climate friendly post Kyoto (after 2012) regime that includes both developed and developing countries. "We held internal Forums on energy efficiency and Life Cycle processes; we also encouraged our members to switch their paper financial statements for online statements; for each switch to an online statement we promised to plant a tree. Our objective was 100 000 online statements/trees in 3 years, we reached it in 5 months! Our AGM is now a zero-carbon, zero-waste event (in 2006 we planted 500 trees to compensate green house gases produced by the travel of our delegates). Many of our buildings have been certified « Green Buildings »; we also encouraged our employees to save paper: our Paper Challenge called for a 15% reduction in the consumption of printer and photocopier paper and an increase in its use of recycled paper by the same proportion.

We attained and even surpassed that objective. We also wrote to all our suppliers to inform them of our Sustainable Development Policy and introduced criteria pertaining to SD in our call for tenders. All of this to say that in our view, innovation can go along with sustainable development. Economical and Social issues are part of the DNA of co-ops. Adding Environmental concerns, the third element of SD, can easily be achieved by co-ops and we strongly encourage them to do so."

DesJardins Group

FOLKSAM GROUP

The Folksam Group spurred environmental awareness in Sweden as early as 1968 by launching a youth nationwide campaign "Fight the Destruction of the Environment". The campaign had a great impact in the media and political decision makers. In 1972 the then Swedish Prime Minister invited to the first global UN conference on the Environment, which led to a decision to set up the UN Environmental Agency. Folksam was the first insurer in the world to incorporate its environmental commitment into its insurance terms and conditions. Consequently Folksam was among the first in the global insurance industry to sign the UN Statement of Environmental Commitment.



Hans Dahlberg, former CEO of the Folksam Group and chair of ICMIF



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ICA Singapore page: <http://www.icasingapore.coop/>



The business of sustainable development

Once Al Gore told us all about climate change, leaders in business started to “come-out” and declare a deeper truth about what they could see as important, with an honesty that shocked the world. Wal-Mart startled us all, and Nike told the truth about what they could not fix. Now sustainable development is a hot topic in Business Schools. It is part of business language in Boardrooms around the world. If you have not spoken about sustainable development at a senior management level within your business in the past month, then you are probably missing something very important. So how can you get to grips with all this? And how well placed is the Co-operative Business sector to give some leadership to the rest of us on sustainable development? What would a SWOT analysis look like on that question? How do you change a corporate or co-operative culture towards a true and realistic

sustainable development goal, without it being just another initiative? What is the business case for sustainability and how can you get to grips with it whilst doing good business too? These are the issues I will address in my presentation together with an explanation of The Natural Step’s approach.”

David Cook, The Natural Step



“Since 1998 all Co-op Group UK’s businesses have progressively recognised and are actively managing the responsibilities, threats and opportunities arising from climate change. Whether it is food retail commitments to stopping selling tungsten filament light bulbs by 2010, or the development of large scale wind turbines on our farm land or the cladding of the CIS tower with 7000 solar photovoltaic panels.

As for costs, it is not a simple answer. Some commitments are cost positive, like wind turbines, some are cost neutral, like the solar CIS tower which was paid for by grants and some cost us, like stopping the sale of tungsten filament light bulbs that customers might want. On the bigger scale, I think our priority as co-operatives working or lobbying together is to tackle these issues in countries where the political elite are failing to tackle them, e.g. the USA and Australia. I think it is wrong to be putting pressure on Africa and Asia to reduce their carbon footprints. If coops are true to their values and principles they absolutely should be taking a progressive stance on these issues – besides which, it offers a differentiation stance to their Plc competitors.

Paul Monaghan, Co-op Bank UK



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Happy co-operative surfing!



Question: "What is the most important issue for you at the GA?"



"I have come here to network with other co-operatives in the Asia-Pacific region. The most important issue for me is to access best practice to improve management strategies for our own co-operatives. We want strategies to make members understand better what the benefits of co-operatives are."

Irbar Masri, Dewan Koperasi Indonesia (DEKOPIN) Indonesian Co-operative Council



"The most important thing is innovation in business of the co-operative movement. I want all co-ops to link and network more. In Vietnam, prior to 1996, the government interfered with co-operative management by choosing the managers. Since then, with changes in the law, co-operatives have had far more autonomy."

Dzung Vu Van, DG International Relations, Vietnam Cooperative alliance (VCA)

"We are only second best!"



Vice President Dr. Almir Adir Gentil from Unimed, Brazil, IHCO President Dr. José Carlos Guisado from Espiru Foundation, Spain, and Vice President Dr. Yusuyuki Takahasi from ACC-JCCU, Japan.

At the International Health Co-operative Organisation's (IHCO) General Assembly yesterday, special attention was given to the vast work the organisation has done over the past year in matters regarding the structure of ICA. The world's largest health co-op, Unimed of Brazil, also reported on how their slogan "we are only second best" is a winning concept, both in terms of business and of public recognition.

IHCO has been active in the Sectoral Organisations work group to discuss the proposed new structure of the ICA. Some key issues have been the strategic position of SO's within the ICA, and also more specific demands like the use of SWOT methods to define strategies for all SO's.

In the report from Dr. Almir Adir Gentil, President of Brazilian Unimed Foundation, the strategy of this vast organisation was presented.

"Co-operatives in general, and health co-operatives in particular, have a great advantage", says Dr. Gentil. "Along with our core business, we can also be a decisive actor in the processes of social transformation in our countries."

Unimed, with 14 million users, 103,000 physicians, and over 50 million patients attended annually, have recently implemented a social outlook on their own work. They co-ordinate, manage

or participate in over 1,000 internal and community projects in Brazil, and in 2006 spent around 300 million US\$ on such projects alone.

"Our company slogan is: 'A good life is the best health plan – Unimed is the second best', Dr. Gentil says. "And in order to honour that outlook on health we have to start thinking about health in a wider sense, taking into account also factors like employment, nutrition, housing, fresh water, education, the environment, and many others."

"It all comes down to a basic question: what kind of world do we want? The world that we, as co-operators, want is one where we all contribute to the improvement of conditions in all sectors. That is what motivates us to spend a substantial amount of money on social and educational projects", he concluded.

"We are only second best!"



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ICA GA Digest



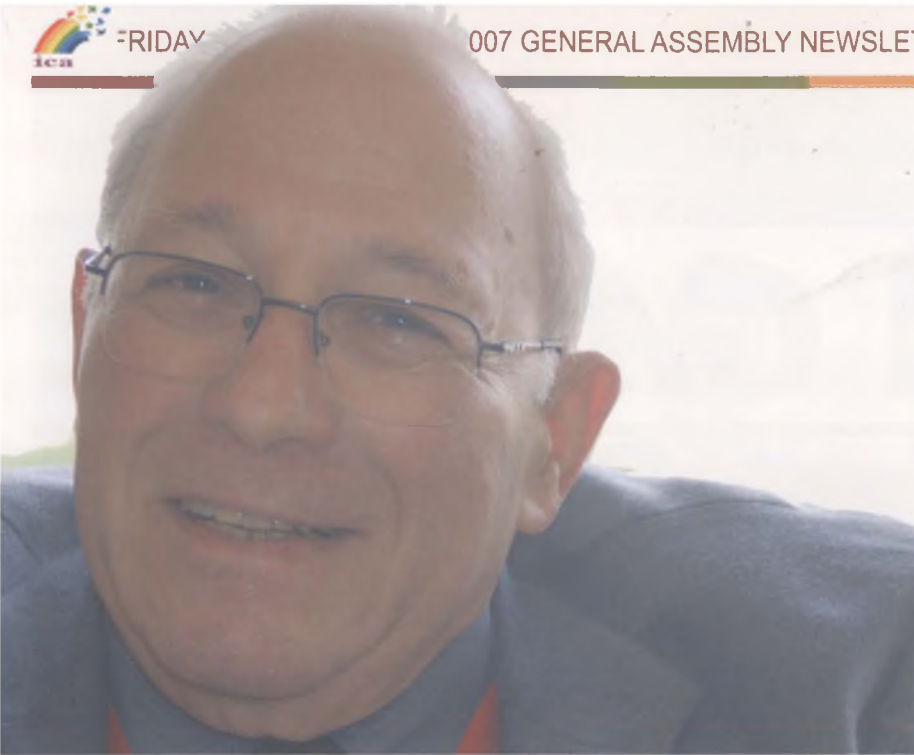
Today's programme

- 9.00-10.00
Panel session:
Conclusion from Sessions I-IV
(Pandang & Canning)
- 10.30-12.30
International Accounting Standards
(Pandang & Canning)
- 12.45-15.00
Distribution of voting cards and ballot
papers
(ICA Registration Desk)
- 13.30-18.00
ICA Statutory Business
(Pandang & Canning)
- 19.30-23.00
ICA Farewell Dinner
(For registered ICA GA delegates
only, RCC, Raffles Ballroom)

GA opens with big bang!

2007 General Assembly delegates packed the ballroom at Raffles Convention Centre to officially open the event. Lights, pyrotechnics, dancing and 'magic brushes' painted an exciting backdrop to the two-day programme ahead.

Mr Seah Kian Peng, Chairman SNCF thanked Guest of Honour Dr. Vivian Balakrishnan, Singapore Minister for Community Development, Youth and Sports. ICA President Ivano Barberini said Singapore provided an ideal context for the GA theme; Innovation in co-operative business.



Birthing Together: steps on the road from conflict to peace

On the western edge of the Negev desert facing the Gaza strip and straddling the Israel Palestine border, Kissufim - the kibbutz Yehudah Paz helped establish in 1950 - has donated 10 hectares of land for a new 120 bed maternity hospital that will be jointly owned and run by Israelis and Palestinians.

When the idea was first announced following a grant from Co-ops UK, co-operators in the audience immediately came forward to pledge more funds. Doctors from around the world have volunteered to take part, and when the first stone is laid, hopefully on International Women's Day next year, the potential for peace is inspiring. "This isn't talking peace, it's making peace" comments Paz. "Peace is political but rests on the people to people interaction. This is the way to build understanding and move away from conflict. From enemies

to neighbours, from neighbours to partners and from partners to friends. You don't have to look very deeply into this to see how co-operatives can play a central role in the peace process in this way."

Another project, funded by the EU, looks to promote the role of women in rural development. It is a partnership between a Palestinian NGO - YED, the Israeli NISPED and the Italian LEGACOOOP and offered 80 places to Palestinian women. "There were 1200 applicants for those 80 places," said Yehudah Paz. "Imagine what happens when these women tell their families and extended families about this partnership project and when they pack their first products for sale and export?" The various aspects, practical, ideological and historical of co-operatives and peace form the subject matter of a new book that Yehudah Paz and Dr. Ian MacPherson are writing.

Growing peace...

"Co-operative Produce for Peace" is a proposed joint venture of the Israeli and Palestinian vegetable growers in the Gaza strip. The aim is to jointly grow and market produce for peace, in the hope that consumers willing to pay an extra penny for Fair Trade coffee, would consider paying a penny more for "peaceful" cherry tomatoes. For growers on both sides of the border, peace is an essential precondition for growing anything."

The project plan is to set up a co-operative that embraces the co-operative notion of conflict resolution.

"We believe that joint business partnerships require a minimum amount of trust, especially if partners are on opposing sides. The idea here is that if the growers - who share the same ecosystems to grow potatoes, strawberries and sweet peppers - are willing to enter into a businesses partnership together then they must also be ready to end the conflict," says Ravi Goldman of the Centre for Co-operatives Studies at the Negev Institute, whose own kibbutz URIM is a partner in the project.

Protecting our children against violence

Today's resolution submitted by the National Co-operative Union of Turkey identifies some of the dangers that the children across the world are increasingly exposed to. It acknowledges that whilst it is governments who should take on board more social responsibility within their actions to solve this problem, Co-operatives also have a role to play within their own activities and in partnership with government and other organisations.

The other Resolutions for consideration by the General Assembly are: Climate Change: Our Co-operative Commitment and DotCOOP



Survival ...

"When you explain what you mean by climate change to small farmers in Asia, they will certainly confirm that over the last 10-15 years there has been more havoc caused by weather patterns affecting their crops and threatening food security. Sustainable farming practice is the key to survival."

Wim Polman

Natural Resources Management and Environment Dept. FAO



Steinar Dversdal, ICA Board member and Chair of the co-operative Fellowship Supply of Marketing Co-ops (centre left) and Paul Hazen, CEO NCBA, National Co-operative Business Association, USA (centre right).

3.6 m US\$ dollars for new co-operative project in Mozambique

Collaboration between the Norwegian Government and Federation of Co-ops in Norway and the NCBA (National Co-operative Business Association) to facilitate a programme to produce Soya Beans by co-operative farmers in Mozambique has been awarded 3.6 million US Dollars of funding. The announcement was made at the GA. This project began as the idea of Steinar Dversdal, ICA Board member and Chair of the Norwegian Co-operative Fellowship of Supply of Marketing Co-ops who was aware of the expertise in Africa of NCBA's CLUSA programme. "The Norwegian Government have been encouraging us to import more agricultural products from developing countries - and we investigated the desperate situation for co-operative farmers in Mozambique following the civil war and realised this was an

opportunity to stimulate 3000 small co-operative farmers to produce Soya beans for us for the first time." Paul Hazen commented "This is a good example of an innovative collaboration between co-operatives in Norway and the United States We want to work with organisations that share the same principles and values. This is the message that we want to go out to the ICA."

Steinar anticipated concern from his members if the arrangement to purchase Soya bean from the farmers at a fixed price turned out to be uncommercial.

" But when we showed a short film of the Mozambique farmers we will support, our members all applauded and came up to us to beg us to go through with this project even if it was non-commercial for us."

"Stay true to values and prosper" - minister challenges co-ops



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Trustworthiness and social worthiness have a place in today's world. Co-operatives demonstrate these characteristics...”

Mr. Seah, Chairman SNCF, Board Member ICA and MP Republic of Singapore.

In his address to the GA at yesterday's opening ceremony, **Dr. Vivian Balakrishnan** issued a heartfelt challenge to the global co-operative movement to succeed in commercial terms but stay true to its core values and principles. Dr. Balakrishnan, put aside his prepared notes to deliver an impassioned speech about the role co-operatives can play in today's context of unprecedented economic opportunities but growing socio-economic disadvantage.

Balakrishnan thanked ICA for providing Singapore the opportunity to host the meeting, a high level co-operative event in South-East Asia and

”
True human development can only occur when economic development is placed at the service of current and future social needs.”

Ivano Barberini, ICA President



make money or to do something else? Finally co-operatives should examine how they will maintain trust and integrity with clients, members and the community.

Balakrishnan said the world had entered an era of unprecedented economic growth, which had raised the human global capacity for job creation and generating profits. It was also an era of disproportional return on capital to the owners of capitalistic enterprises over their workers. "In this context I believe co-operatives are more important than ever...the situation cries out for a further expansion of the co-operative movement," he said.





"Co-operatives must be more than viable businesses...Ask yourself each day, 'are you true to your cause' be it empowerment of women, sustainability or elimination of poverty..."

To ensure trustworthiness co-operatives must insist on transparency; "Do what you say and say what you do"; and they must maintain competence in the business they carry out, in governance and accountability. Balakrishnan said that in the last two years, his Ministry had been working with SNCF to review the legislation governing co-operatives to ensure long-term relevance and viability. "In Singapore we have been blessed because there has been strong political leadership that has recognised the special role co-operatives play."

Speaking again from the heart, Balakrishnan concluded by saying, "I believe, in my heart of hearts that the co-operative movement is alive and well and must triumph in the decades to come."

Opening the GA, Mr. Seah focused his comments on the importance of the ICA restructuring and governance process. "Good governance is needed to strengthen the good work of co-operatives...This process marks a new point in ICA history and prepares the way for the future."

Mr. Seah said that Singapore was very proud to have two co-operatives represented in the Global 300, NTUC Fairprice and NTUC Income. "Co-operatives have a wide profile in Singapore and provide a model for co-ops in the region." The GA



would provide a forum to discuss ways to strengthen the mind-share of co-ops he concluded.

Ivano Barberini spoke strongly of the threat posed by unchecked capitalistic endeavour to environmental sustainability and socio-economic development for all people. "The mere goal of profit making can only lead to destruction of the environment...Economic development must meet today's needs without compromising the future," said Mr. Barberini.

Barberini said the co-operative movement is committed to fulfilling the Millennium Goals, but lasting economic development and lasting social transformation can only occur with a change in the present approach to economic development. "The great ideas behind co-operation have found new reasons to be pursued," he said.





Profile: **Teo Say Hong**,
Global Youth Representative on
ICA Board:

"Succession planning is vital"

The incoming Global Youth Representative Teo Say Hong, has put succession planning at the top of his list of priorities for his two year term on the ICA Board.

"We must provide a structure and a framework to ensure the next generation of young people come through and there is no loss of momentum," said Teo.

Teo was instrumental in establishing the Asia-Pacific Youth Committee in response to the need for a formal structure around youth involvement in the region. He would like to pass on the lessons from this process to help develop formal structures for youth development at global level.

"I am also looking forward to the opportunity to contribute to Board discussion on all aspects of ICA activity."

Teo said he had first-hand experience of co-operation between co-operatives helping the global peace-building process. "By co-operating we are able to let go of some historical conflicts and realise out common humanity. Co-operatives build bridges between people and nations."

Teo Say Hong is also Chair of ICA AP Youth Committee and Chair of SNCF Youth Committee.

Opportunities for collaboration

One of the benefits of membership of ICA is that it provides an opportunity for co-operatives to meet and discuss common interests and strategies to address some of the challenges for the movement globally. GA Digest spoke to Trent Bartlett, CEO Capricorn Society about a meeting between co-operators from Canada, Australia, NZ, US and UK to discuss issues of common concern and opportunities for collaboration.

"It is important that apex organisations consider how we generate fees for service ... For co-operatives that operate in a global environment, one of the key issues is how to levy membership fees in an equitable way. An arrangement for an adjustment of fees based on local currency can be made. This allows the maintenance of equitable distribution of services for all members."

"There was general consensus that all countries want to promote the co-operative way as a 'better' way of doing business, and for a commitment to developing local co-operatives such as suppliers of services in developing areas. Some of the larger co-ops, with



ICA support, can encourage investment in co-op development, but when it comes to individual countries, there is an urgent need for leadership".

"To help it along there's a push from the US for a socially-responsible investor class for economic development. The question is for co-ops to lay claim to their call for commitment to sustainability, if they want to appeal to these investors. The point wasn't lost that many co-operatives form out of adversity, or to address something that is unjust in commercial or social terms. For example, the adverse affects of International Accounting Standards on co-operatives has united people. The importance of apex organisations and federations in the co-operative movement has been reignited around this particular issue".

ICA GA Digest

Four issues of the General Assembly Digest will be produced and distributed 16-19 of October.

If you have information, comments or suggestions for any of the GA Digest issues, you will find us in the Blundell room in the Executive Conference Centre.

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Find GA Online here:

The GA Programme <http://www.ica.coop/calendar/ga2007/index.html>

Meeting Documentation <http://www.ica.coop/calendar/ga2007/docs.html>

Speaker Biographiess <http://www.ica.coop/calendar/ga2007/bios.html>

ICA Singapore page: <http://www.icasingapore.coop/>

"We all started out small"

Jean Luis Bancel, Credit Cooperatif and Chair of the ICBA (International co-operative Banking Association) sees the Global 300 lists, as well as the meetings devoted to discussing accounting standards, as a critical step in the direction of a global ICA that offers essential services to its members.

"I cannot stress how important this accounting standards issue is, and how we need a global lobby to ensure that co-operatives can retain their historical diversity and remain coherent. The Global 300 is not just about figures. We need to look behind the figures at real people who want to retain their freedom. On my return I shall be publishing a National 100 list for France and a ICBA top 100 list as part of the global data gathering exercise. This is not about being "big" - co-ops all began small once."



Lim Boon Heng:

Remember the spirit of co-operation

Lim Boon Heng, Minister in the Prime Minister's Office, Government of Singapore and Chair Social Enterprise Development Council, Singapore National Trades Union Congress (SNTUC) spoke yesterday about the need for co-operatives to reflect on why they came about.

"Whilst globalisation has helped growth it has brought about social imbalances. The model (to increase the wealth of its stakeholders) is immoral, especially when it also said that the most important asset of any company is its employees...Businesses must look beyond profits as their raison d'etre. They must exist for their communities.

"It is our obligation to work together in the spirit of co-operation. Our real value is in keeping the social contract with communities alive, to improve the living standard of working people and ensure they get a fair return for their hard work.

"The co-operative movement acts as a counterweight to the excesses of profit driven businesses. In order to do this the movement must grow to a size where it can be a significant force with status throughout the world. Co-operatives need to share best practice with each other to develop co-operatively and to make this world a better place. This is my wish."

Question:

"What is the most important issue at the GA?"



"It's very important that we prepare the future employees of the movement by promoting the development of young co-operators. We need to build the youth movement."

Bubung Lukman Hakim, DEKOPIN



"The GA should be concerned with reviewing and correcting old conceptions about co-ops."

PH Suroto, Youth delegate, Indonesia

Italian backing on energy response

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Felice Scalvini, Italian member of ICA Board will lead the push to find solutions to the global energy crisis. "We are very interested in creating a new energy group within ICA, and I am pleased to have the opportunity to lead that group."

"Historically in my own country we had a large co-operative energy sector mainly in hydro-electricity production. The development of the public sector and nationalisation of energy by the government has led to the closing of many of these sites. Now with the looming energy crisis we need to look at opportunities to explore alternative facilities such as wind and solar power, and identify ways co-operatives can be involved in distribution and provision of services to consumers."

"We are committed to examining joint solutions with people like Paul Hazen (NCBA) and others interested in this subject. In the meantime we will begin to compile a database of co-operatives in the energy field worldwide."

Strategic thinking

Innovation is great but it needs to be sustainable says keynote speaker, David Cook, CEO "The Natural Step". "Co-ops at the highest level need to be much more strategic in addressing the global bio-fuel issue. There many solutions and huge debate about the sustainability of ethanol and other energy options. Huge ethical issues confront us and I suggest that the co-operative movement must get down to detail and start funding serious research into the alternatives. We need independent, neutral and sustainable development. All the co-operative principles and values fit under the banner of sustainability but we are not portraying this successfully. The co-operative movement has real 'power' to be able to sponsor analysis of what is going to work.

Global 300 in Israel

The Negev Institute run courses and study missions on using co-operative values to gain competitive advantage to persuade co-operative business

managers that members are an asset rather than a liability.

"The Global 300 is a very important exercise, but how conscious are the management teams of the listed enterprises about their responsibility to promote co-operative values?" Goldman asks. "Some co-operative enterprises have become world class businesses. Here in Israel we are successful at the business side but less good at promoting co-op values. We want to introduce these ideas to our own management teams and share the best practice models that CEC the Global 300 can share with us.



Sorry, Dzung!

Yesterday's GA Digest incorrectly ran a photo of GA delegate Budi Lukman Hakim with a quote from Dzung Vu Van of Vietnam. This is the real Dzung!

Thanks...

On behalf of the delegates and visitors to the General Assembly, the GA Digest team expresses thanks to Zulkifh Mohammed, the Organising Committee Chair of SNCF and to Marie Elena Chavez Hertig, deputy Director General of ICA and their teams for the smooth organisation of this week in Singapore and of course, special thanks to the staff of the Raffles City Convention Centre. And a big 'thank you' to Madame Vivianne Vaucher and her team of interpreters and to the Japanese team for helping many of us to understand the General Assembly proceedings.

Your GA News Digest team also thank all of you, our readers, for your patience and understanding when we have stopped you for an interview or picture - your eagerness to tell us your story has made our job easier. Lastly, we must ask for a smile from our printers - we did our best to meet your deadlines, we just need more practice!

