

**7th**

# Asia-Pacific Co-operative Ministers' Conference

**“Establishing Supportive Cooperative Legislation and Policy for Sustainable Growth of Cooperatives”**

**CONCLUSIONS & RECOMMENDATIONS**



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# 7th Asia-Pacific Co-operative Ministers' Conference

New Delhi, India: February 1-6, 2004

*Theme of the 7<sup>th</sup> Cooperative Ministers' Conference:*

**“Establishing Supportive Cooperative Legislation and  
Policy for Sustainable Growth of Cooperatives”**

## CONCLUSIONS & RECOMMENDATIONS

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***Conclusions and Recommendations***

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# Contents

FOREWORD .....	5
I. Backdrop – Agenda and Processes .....	7
II. Joint Declaration .....	11
III. Action Plan for Implementation of Joint Declaration .....	17
IV. Summary of Country Statements .....	19
V. Agenda and Programme .....	59
VI. List of Participants .....	63



## Foreword

Continuing its earnest efforts for creating an enabling cooperative legislation and policy framework in Asia-Pacific Region, International Co-operative Alliance, Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific (ICA ROAP) convened 7th Asia-Pacific Cooperative Ministers' Conference from February 1–6, 2004. The theme of the conference was “**Establishing Supportive Cooperative Legislation and Policy for Sustainable Growth of Cooperatives**”, as recommended by Regional Consultation of Permanent Secretaries, in-charge of co-operatives in the Governments and Chief Executive Officers of National Co-operative Organisations of Asia-Pacific, that was convened in December, 2003 preceding to the Ministers' Conference.

The Conference adopted an integrated and composite view on the cooperative reform process in the present day world, which is characterized by the globalization and competition. Based on the findings of the Third Critical Study on Cooperative Legislation and Policy, commissioned by ICA ROAP prior to the Ministers' Conference, recommendations of Regional Consultation and ILO Recommendation 193 on promotion of cooperatives, agenda for deliberations of the Conference comprised with four important components, namely important concerns of cooperatives – Best Practices in Cooperatives; Globalisation and Poverty Reduction, and Cooperative Legislation and Policy. The underlined objective of deliberations was to bring out implementable outcomes to translate the theme of the conference into reality.

The most distinctive feature of outcomes of the conference is that it not only brings out a Joint Declaration, adopted by Cooperative Ministers, Government officials, cooperative leaders and Chief Executives of 18 countries of Asia-Pacific, but also presents a con-

crete action plan for implementation of Joint Declaration. We hope the Governments and Co-operative Movements shall take effective steps for implementation of Action Plan to speed up the process of cooperative reforms so as to ensure sustainable growth of cooperatives in this modern competitive world.

**SHIL KWAN LEE**  
Regional Director

# **7<sup>th</sup> Asia-Pacific Co-operative Ministers' Conference**

**New Delhi, India: February 1-6, 2004**

## **I. BACKDROP – AGENDA AND PROCESSES**

### **Backdrop**

In pursuance of Key Result Area of Co-operative Policy Development and Legislation, International Co-operative Alliance (ICA) has been facilitating effective dialogue between cooperative movements and Governments in Asia-Pacific through Co-operative Ministers' Conferences and Regional Consultations of Permanent Secretaries and Chief Executives of National Co-operative organizations since 1990. Till 4th Conference, the focus of dialogue was on formulation of practical action plan for creating and sustaining enabling policy and legislation environment conducive to cooperative development. However, in the context of sustainability of cooperative enterprises in the modern competitive and globalized world, the 5th and 6th conferences emphasized that a conducive cooperative legislation will be more impact-full, if other issues relating to organization, structure, management, imbining cooperative values and principles are also taken care of.

The Beijing Joint Declaration (BJD) adopted by 5th Conference in Beijing (China), therefore, underlined not only importance of enabling legislation, but also emphasized the need to set up new forms of cooperation between the Government and cooperatives. The Conference further spelled out concrete action points to address various areas of concern of cooperatives, such as autonomy and independence, legal existence, recognition, fair-playing field, self-regulation, capitalization and official development assistance.



The 6th Co-operative Ministers' Conference held in Kathmandu (Nepal) attempted to give wider perspective for establishing relevant legislation and policy for cooperatives in the New Millennium. It identified certain contextual issues which were likely to determine the nature and shape of cooperative legislation and policy reforms in Asia-Pacific. Reforms in law in the absence of well defined cooperative policies and/or absence of cooperatives in the broad public policy framework for socio-economic development of various countries of Asia-Pacific may not achieve an enabling environment for cooperatives. The Conference, therefore, recommended that Governments should develop and formulate appropriate national policy on cooperatives and also define positioning of cooperatives in other sectors of economy.

Another important recommendation of the conference was to develop a "Proximity to ICIS Index" and a Gird Model to evaluate Cooperative Legislation in different countries to determine whether a given piece of legislation or policy is enabling (market oriented) and protective of Identity of Cooperatives.

#### **7<sup>th</sup> Asia-Pacific Co-operative Ministers' Conference:**

Recognizing the significance of unique role of cooperatives in global social and economic order, 7th Conference held in New Delhi on 2-6 February 2004, adopted a comprehensive view on growth of cooperative system and its sustainability in a globalized and competitive world. Its main theme was :

"Establishing Supportive Cooperative Legislation and Policy for sustainable growth of cooperatives".

Preceding the conference, ICA ROAP commissioned the Third Critical Study on Cooperative Legislation and Policy Reforms to examine the status of reform process in cooperative legislation and policy development and to assess the impact of resolutions of 6th Cooperative Ministers' Conference. The study, apart from examining Government initiatives for cooperative legislation and policy reforms, highlighted important areas of concern of coops e.g. institutional mechanism for policy implementation, professionalization of management, manpower planning and development, Government support, implementation of Government

sponsored programmes, capitalization, sickness of coops, institutional protection system, technology application and up-gradation, inter-department/inter-Ministry coordination, cooperation among cooperatives.

The Third critical study report was placed before Regional Consultation of Permanent Secretaries, in-charge of cooperatives in the Governments and C.E.Os of National Cooperative Organizations of Asia-Pacific Region, held in Kuwait on 7-9 December 2003. Three day extensive deliberations of Regional Consultation mapped out subject matter/agenda and Draft Joint Declaration for deliberations at 7th Asia-Pacific Cooperative Ministers' Conference. In addition, ILO Recommendation 193 on Promotion of Cooperatives also formed one of the important referral documents in the process of formulation of Agenda and Drafting of Joint Declaration.

## **Agenda**

The agenda adopted by the Conference flows from the perception of the cooperative movement and the Govt. that issue of reformation of cooperative legislation and formulation of public policy for sustainable cooperative growth are interlinked as two facets of cooperative reform process that has been set in motion in Asia-Pacific. The four components of agenda, namely (1) Important concerns of cooperatives; (2) Best practices in cooperatives; (3) Globalization and Poverty reduction, and (4) cooperative legislation and policy, though distinct in themselves, are integrative and complimentary in their nature and scope to translate the theme of the conference in reality.

Details of Agenda/subject matters deliberated by the conference are as follows:

### **I. Important concerns of cooperatives:**

- i) Trends in Global Cooperative Movement
- ii) Building Alliances for Human Development: Collaborative Strategies for coops and Trade Unions.
- iii) Empowering Women through cooperatives.

## **II. Best Practices in Cooperatives:**

- i) Cooperative way to protect consumers: Japanese Experience.
- ii) Enhancing competitive strength of agricultural cooperative sector: NACF of Korea case.
- iii) Preserving Cooperative Identity in an Era of Competition: IFFCO, India case.

## **III. Globalisation and Poverty Reduction:**

- i) Cooperatives and Poverty Reduction.
- ii) Surviving in a Globalised and Competitive World.

## **IV. Cooperative Legislation and Policy:**

- i) Third Critical Study on Cooperative Legislation and Policy.
- ii) Cooperative Legislation: An European Experience.
- iii) National Cooperative Policy of Malaysia.
- iv) Multi-State Cooperative Societies Act, 2002 of India.
- v) ILO Recommendation 193.

## **V. Joint Declaration**

### **Conference Processes:**

Important steps, followed to produce the outputs of the conference i.e. Joint Declaration and Action Plan to implement the Joint Declaration, were:

- (i) Completion of Third Critical study on Cooperative Legislation and Policy.
- (ii) Deliberations of Regional Consultation preceding the Conference to formulate Draft Joint Declaration and other Agenda.
- (iii) Presentation by experts/resource persons on various issues included in agenda.
- (iv) Plenary Discussions on and Adoption of Joint Declaration.
- (v) Break-out Sessions to formulate Action Plan to implement Joint Declaration.

## II. JOINT DECLARATION

*Theme of the 7<sup>th</sup> Cooperative Ministers' Conference:*

**“Establishing Supportive Cooperative Legislation And Policy For Sustainable Growth of Cooperatives”**

### **JOINT DECLARATION ADOPTED BY THE 7<sup>TH</sup> CO-OPERATIVE MINISTERS' CONFERENCE**

1. ***Recognizing*** that co-operatives, despite all of the challenges and problems posed by reforms in the economy and liberalization of policies, have continued to serve the economic interests of people, hence contributed significantly to the socio-economic growth of the countries in the Asia-Pacific Region;
2. ***Recognizing*** the significance of supportive co-operative legislation and public policies that will harness the full potential of co-operative enterprises for the promotion of the socio-economic well being of the people in general, for the creation of employment, for the alleviation of poverty, and for the development of human resources in particular.
3. ***Taking note*** that enabling legislation and favorable public policies of the government alone will not result in the development of viable co-operatives, unless facilitated by follow-up measures in terms of policy implementation that is matched by supportive measures of the government.
4. ***Appreciating*** ILO Recommendation 193 on the Promotion of Co-operatives, which enunciates the views of the global co-operative movement on co-operative legislation, as well as government role and policies that facilitate the growth of member-centered, community-oriented, autonomous and competitive co-operative enterprises, as well as

ensure equitable distribution of new opportunities and benefits emerging from globalization that is for the good of the community.






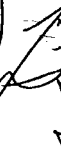



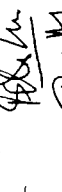
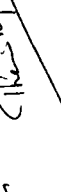
5. **TAKING NOTE** of other resolutions adopted by the UN General Assembly that supports the development of co-operatives, in particular the role of co-operatives in social development;
6. **Realizing** that despite the existence of a more favorable environment for co-operative autonomy, independence and democratic management, there still exist potentially viable co-operative enterprises in developing countries in the region which are over-dependent on government support and patronage, and are found to be weak and dormant in several sectors, with no concrete action plan for revival and revitalization in a time-bound manner;
7. The participants of the 7th Co-operative Ministers' Conference held at New Delhi, India from 2nd to 4th February 2004, **call upon** the Governments and Co-operatives in the Asia-Pacific Region, as well as the ICA-ROAP, to hasten the process of legislative and policy reforms that will guarantee more autonomy and independence of co-operatives, ensure the creation of a conducive environment that will lead towards a more balanced and sustained growth of the co-operatives in all sectors of the economy, and hence ensuring the socio-economic development of the people and the country, particularly in regard to:
  - a. the formulation of specific public policy – in consultation with the co-operative movement – that will facilitate the growth of member-centered, community-oriented, autonomous and competitive co-operative enterprises;
  - b. the harmonization of co-operative policy and legislation;
  - c. the definition of an appropriate role and engagement

of co-operatives in public policies relating to different sectors of economy, e.g. agriculture, credit, banking and insurance, trade and commerce, labor, etc.;







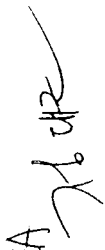
- d. the repositioning and strengthening of the co-operatives by way of: i. augmentation of capital and resources, ii. professionalization of management, iii. adoption of appropriate manpower development strategies, iv. diversification and broad-basing business operations, v. upgrading technologies for enhanced efficiency and effectiveness of services, and vi. learning from experiences, good practices and successful growth models of co-operatives in different sectors in the countries of the Asia-Pacific Region;
  - e. the empowerment of co-operatives in order that they can play an enhanced role in social sector development; and
  - f. the creation of appropriate provisions in Co-operative Legislation that will enhance the role and participation of women in co-operative management and leadership.
8. **RECOGNIZING FURTHER** the depth and significance of presentations made in this Conference pertaining to “Important Concerns of Co-operatives”, “Co-operative Best Practices”, and “Globalization and Poverty”, *call upon* the Governments and Co-operatives in the Asia-Pacific Region, as well as the ICA-ROAP, to:
- a. give special consideration to increasing women’s participation in the Cooperative movement at all levels; the Government together with the co-operative movement in each country must provide the necessary FUNDS for gender disaggregated data base, training and education of women, networking and exposure to success stories, and particularly to those co-operatives where young co-operators can play an active role in

- co-operative activities based on their understanding of the Co-operative Identity;
- b. recognize the important role of co-operatives in a rapidly changing global environment, and for governments to create a favourable environment for the development of co-operatives including, if necessary, to offer those preferences for co-operatives which work for the betterment of the community and for the creation of an information technology in order to help co-operatives to operate more efficiently;
  - c. confirm and advocate to the UN and other relevant Development Agencies the contribution co-operatives can make in the area of Good Governance and Business Development as value-added features in Poverty Reduction Strategies (PRS) being undertaken by governments and Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) in ICA member-countries in Asia and the Pacific;
  - d. seek a new strategy through which co-operatives can become an integral part in the PRS processes being undertaken by the corresponding governments and CSOs in ICA member countries;
  - e. create and bring about effective and enhanced partnerships that have been developed with Trade Unions, Employers' Groups, women's groups and other Civil Society Organizations, and supported by multilateral and bilateral agencies as well as other international partners.

**SIGNED ON THIS FOURTH DAY OF FEBRUARY, 2004,  
IN NEW DELHI, INDIA:**

Sl. No.	Name of the Delegate	Position	Name of Organisation	Country	Signature
	M: Sharif	F. Deputy Minister	Ministry of Agriculture stock of Afghanistan	Afghanistan	
	M: China	vice minister	SMC.	China	
	Currimo Kurumo	Deputy Minister	State Minister of Coop & SMC	INDONESIA	
	Ponipate vanuadara	Director/Registrar	of Co-operatives	FIJI	
	Ali soupi	Minister	Ministry of Co-op	IRAN	
	Michael Rajan	Deputy Minister	Ministry of I.T.L.	ISRAEL	
	Ryubei MATSUMOTO	Director of	Ministry of Agriculture	Japan	
	KASITAH GADDAM	Minister	Land and Cooperative Development	Malaysia	
	Hani AL Rubaiaian	Deputy Minister	Ministry of Agriculture & Co-op	Lebanon	
	Prakash Chandra	Minister	Ministry of Agriculture & Co-op	NEPAL	
	4. Mr. Kyi Thani	Ambassador	Embassy of Myanmar	Myanmar	



Sl. No.	Name of the Delegate	Position	Name of Organisation	Country	Signature
	MAUJOOZ AHMAD	ADVISOR PAK COOP HOUSING SOCIETY. OR LEADER	PAK EXPATS COOP. HOUSING SOCIETY	PAKISTAN	
	Jayampathi P. Hettiarachchi	Additional Secretary & Ministry of Co-operation	Ministry of Co-operation	Sri Lanka	
	Leng Leng Kwei	Chief Executive Singapore National Cooperation Federation		Singapore	
	DR. S. S. SISODIA	PRESIDENT, N.C.U.I.		INDIA	
	VIRAHAI VIRAMETEEKUL	VICE MINISTER	MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE & COOPERATIVES	THAILAND	
	NGUYỄN VĂN BIÊN	VICE PRESIDENT	VCA VIETNAM.		
	CHUNG DAE-KUN	Chairman	NACF	KOREA	

### **III. ACTION PLAN FOR IMPLEMENTATION OF JOINT DECLARATION**

#### **A. Cooperative Policy & Legislation**

##### **The Government:**

1. Should complete the process of legislative revision based on ILO recommendation No. 193 and U.N. guidelines.
2. Should provide support for Cooperative HRD, Education and Training for cooperative managers, leaders and members and Government should also introduce 'Cooperation' as subject in General Education System of the respective countries.
3. Should accept the cooperatives which are based on self-reliant and participatory membership as full partners in development and in the planning of development.
4. Should assist cooperatives in promoting gender equality.
5. Should create supportive conditions for cooperatives while recognizing and maintaining their full autonomy: such support could include:
  - a) Creation of a level playing field in economic life by which cooperatives enjoy any benefit and the privileges granted to other economic formations.
  - b) Initiation of taxation policies which promote cooperative development while preserving cooperative autonomy.
  - c) Support for cooperative start-ups on a limited and temporary basis.
  - d) Support for the entry of cooperatives into down stream economic activities such as storage, transport, processing and marketing of agricultural products.
  - e) Appropriate Government assistance to established cooperatives that undertake to assist cooperatives initiative in countries and in conditions where cooperatives are just beginning or operating under very special difficulties.

**B. Cooperative Concerns, Best Practices and New Initiatives on Poverty Reduction and Globalisation:**

1. Government should:
  - Recognize cooperatives as dependable vehicle of economic upliftment of weaker sections and poverty reduction and extend to them adequate financial policy and legislation support.
  - Create enabling legal and administrative systems to enable micro finance and micro-enterprises and self-help groups to integrate with cooperative system.
  - Create enabling cooperative law, rules and regulation to encourage women participation in cooperative membership and management; and also support and encourage formation of special cooperatives for women.
  - Support cooperatives to enable them to capitalize the gains from disinvestment of public sector.
2. Cooperatives should take initiative to establish strategic alliances with corporate sector in order to take advantage of latest technology professionalism and market access which is the strength of the latter. However, such alliances should be based on members' interests with adequate safeguards to protect cooperative identity.
3. There is a need to evolve specific management ethos for cooperatives having rational blending of cooperative values and principles, professionalism and competitiveness. ICA ROAP, with the support of its member organizations, may document through an in-depth study of the best management practices and convene a Regional Workshop of CEOs and management experts to work-out a blue print for adoption by coops.
4. The Multilateral Agencies e.g. A.D.B. and World Bank should extend support to cooperatives, particularly in the areas of poverty reduction.

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**SUMMARY OF  
COUNTRY STATEMENTS**

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## AFGHANISTAN

The formation of cooperatives in Afghanistan started in the 20th century, 1955 onwards. Thirteen cooperatives of Qaraqul (sheep-skin) and silkworm were formed which got dismantled due to:

- lack of education and training for the cooperative members;
- absence of law for cooperatives and
- the absence of a proper administration

However from 1963 till 1969 with the help of International Labour Organisation (ILO) a few consumer cooperatives were established and they were cared by the department of rural development. Subsequently in 1969 SIDA and FAO supported a Project of Credit and Agricultural Cooperatives (PACCA). The first agricultural cooperative got registered in 1973 under the law of company. The government then executed the first cooperative law consisting 13 chapters and 51 articles, dated qawa 1353 (1974). Till the end of 1977 around 135 agricultural cooperatives got registered through the provinces.

Later in 1978 the draft regulation about the cooperatives for the agricultural services got issued and it covered all areas of the country. As a result, the number of these cooperatives increased upto 1210 throughout the country, which was later, dissolved for certain reasons. Therefore in 1980 a congress for cooperatives was held in Afghanistan where the concerned matters were discussed to make a draft about the laws of cooperatives.

This law brought about considerable improvement in regard to loans, marketing, research, taxation for the benefit of agricultural and consumers cooperatives.

The emergence of the Taliban led to destruction of cooperatives.

With the establishment of the Transitional Islamic State of Afghanistan, the department of the agricultural cooperatives has been started

again in the center and provinces. Now there are 204 agricultural cooperatives having 25669 members with a share of 4237730 Afghanis and 6708 acres of land. Some other cooperatives have been reactivated as well.

The unification of the villagers in groups, unions and cooperatives are of great use in planning and reconstruction of the country and also agricultural development and spread of technology. But this unification should only represent the needs and problems of the villagers. Thereupon, the ministry of agriculture and animal husbandry support such developments.

The Ministry insists that the cooperatives must not be imposed and should grow spontaneously. Afghan cooperatives are very keen to grow and develop with the support of ICA and its member organizations particularly in the areas of education and training and consultancy services.

# CHINA

Cooperative Movement has a history of slightly over 80 years in China. Before 1949 cooperatives developed very slowly because of poor national strength. Since 1949 cooperatives have begun to boom in China and helped greatly in the reconstruction and economic recovery. In the late 1970s China began to carry out the reform and opening up policy. This helped cooperatives to eventually break away from the past shackles and usher in a new era of all round development.

Among other things, supply and marketing cooperatives (SMCs) have evolved rapidly into the most integrated form of all Chinese cooperative economic organizations. The SMCs boast the largest service delivery system, the soundest economic strength, the most far reaching social status and impact. In addition to SMCs, cooperative economic organizations of other forms have also grown fast e.g. plant and animal production cooperatives and other types of speciality cooperative organizations as well as housing and consumer cooperatives, community service centers and other service cooperatives.

At present All China Federation of Supply and Marketing Cooperatives have altogether 160 million household members, 2.976 employees. The federation consists of 25,942 primary cooperatives, 2,376 county federations, 335 prefecture federations, 31 provincial federations and national headquarters. Altogether there are 53,272 cooperative enterprises. As a major player and representative of the Chinese cooperative economy, SMCs are playing a dominant role in promoting cooperative movement in China and doing a good job under the guidance and encouragement of the governments in finding effective ways to maintain cooperative identity on the one hand and answer to the requirements of the laws of market economy on the other. Currently the turnover of the agricultural material trading arm of the ACFSMC accounts for 60 percent of the domestic market, the cotton purchase amount accounts for 50 percent of the national total. Other businesses of the ACFSMC are developing soundly.



In the last few years government has been making efforts in creating an enabling policy environment for the reform and development of the SMCs. A number of supportive and concessionary measures have been adopted by the Government with regard to fund raising, taxation and land use. To clarify the legal status of the SMCs and to effectively guarantee the legitimate rights of the member cooperatives and cooperative members, the standing committee of the National People's Congress (top legislative body) has included in its legislative plan to draft the "Law of the People's Republic of China Concerning Farmers' Specialty Cooperative Economic Organization". Now a steering and drafting panel has been set up and the actual drafting has also been started.

By now local regulations have been promulgated in Jilin Province and Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region. Besides, in making other laws and regulations, the Government has taken into full account the unique features of the cooperatives and incorporated into these laws and regulations cooperative related inputs by following advice of the cooperatives. For instance, suggestions from ACFSMC have been incorporated into the amendments to the 1993 Agricultural Law effective as of March 1st 2003, which provides that farmers are encouraged to voluntarily form specialty cooperative economic organization on the basis of the household contract responsibility system.

# FIJI

Cooperatives have played crucial role in the Fiji economy and presently about 24,000 families are involved in the cooperative movement, representing four per cent of the national population. Cooperative membership include mostly rural dwellers operating cooperative business of various types. Because of scarcity of trading in rural areas, cooperative type of business remain the only cheapest means of providing services at all times, aiming at improving the living standards of the people, both socially and economically. In absence of a national cooperative apex organization, the government is looking at ways of revamping the cooperative movement as a vehicle for promoting business and industrial ventures.

The current Cooperative Act came into force in 1998 and replaced its predecessor the Cooperative Societies Act of 1947. The current Act addresses a large variety of issues fundamental to the development and organization of cooperatives in Fiji. Some of the important issues addressed are as follows:

- The law provides formation of secondary cooperatives and apex organizations and visualizes the transfer of developmental functions of the government to such cooperatives.
- The law includes a clear definition of “cooperative” and an elaboration of internationally recognized cooperative principles.
- On internal and external audit, the law provides for the mandatory establishment of the Supervisory Committee accountable to the General Body of members.
- The law also provides for the possibility of conducting audit by private auditors or audit institutions.
- The law also provides for the establishment of a cooperative tribunal to settle disputes and grievances amongst cooperatives and cooperative members.
- As regards capitalization of cooperatives the new law does not impose any restrictions on how and where a cooperative can raise external funding.

The Income Tax Act of Fiji provides for an exemption of income tax for eight years from the date of registration of cooperative. Thereafter annual profit transferred to the reserve fund only is exempted from tax.

# INDIA

The Indian rural economy has been traditionally woven around agriculture as the prime occupation supporting millions of people with employment and food security, with the cooperative system as one of the main pillar providing vital support services. Over the years, the cooperative movement has expanded considerably to all parts of the country with more than half a million cooperative societies ranging from village level to national level organizations. The total membership of the cooperative societies in the country is about 236 million covering almost hundred percent of the villages of the country. Cooperatives have entered by and large in every field of business including banking, input production and distribution like fertilizers, seeds, pesticides, agro-processing, storage and warehousing, dairy, fishery, housing, etc. It is because of a large network of Cooperatives, India ranks first in the production of milk and sugar in the world.

The Government of India has embarked upon reforms in the cooperative sector to provide enabling environment to cooperative institutions to enable them to face new challenges and avail new opportunities. The Central Government has taken a lead in providing required autonomy to the cooperatives by enacting a Multi-State Cooperative Societies Act, 2002. The new Act aims at providing full functional autonomy and democratic management to the societies. The Act provides for reflection of the Government's policy based on internationally recognized cooperative principles, simplification of the registration process and amendments to the bye-laws of the societies. Government's powers to give directions and super session of a Board have been restricted to such societies in which the Government holds 51% or more equity. Societies will be free to raise resources by receiving deposits, raising loans and grants. The federal cooperatives would have more responsibilities and the disputes would be settled through arbitration at the choice of the society. Auditors would be appointed by the society itself. The provincial governments have also initiated or are contemplating to amend the existing cooperative Acts to provide functional and financial autonomy to the cooperatives.

The Union Government has also formulated a National Policy on Cooperatives in consultation with the State Governments. This has been the felt need for quite some time. The National Policy is a part of the concerted efforts of the Government of India to provide enabling legislation and policy environment for the development of cooperatives and to enable them work as self-reliant and democratically managed institutions based on the cooperatives principles and accountable to their members. A Task Force under the Chairmanship of Minister of State for Agriculture has formulated the Action Plan for time bound implementation of the National Policy on Cooperatives.

One of the major factors affecting cooperatives to function as member-driven organizations is the lack of democratic management. As cooperative is essentially a peoples' movement, there is a need to restore the democratic character of cooperatives both in management and in business process. It is a matter of serious concern that a substantial number of cooperative institutions in each tier are deprived of the guidance and direction of democratically elected boards. Therefore it is essential to ensure democratic management with the involvement of the elected members with full authority and freedom.

It is equally important to develop local leadership which would evince keen interest in the affairs of the cooperatives leading ultimately to democratization of cooperative institutions. For tapping new sources of leadership, specific programmes in cooperative development should be organized. The leadership development programme should form an integral part of HRD strategy. A responsive and participative membership is essential for leadership growth and development.

# INDONESIA

Until November 2002 total number of cooperative societies in Indonesia accounted for 115,356 units with total membership of 28,402,166 persons. However number of active cooperatives has increased from 46,420 units in 1998 to 94,799 units in 2002 or incremental percentage from 78.09 percent in 1998 to 82.18 percent in 2002.

Indonesian constitution 1945 has laid down a strong foundation of the development of cooperatives. Article 33 of the Constitution states that the Indonesian economy shall be organized as a joint endeavor based upon the principle of brotherhood. In order to materialize this constitutional vision, a number of policy measures and legislations had been issued such as

- i. People Consultative Assembly Decree Number XVI/MPR/1998 on Political Economy within the framework of Economic Democracy
- ii. People Consultative Assembly Decree Number IV/MPR/1999 on the Guideline of State Policy
- iii. Law number 25 year 1992 on Cooperatives ; Law Number 22 years 1999 on Regional Government ; and Law Number 25 years 2000 on National Development Program.

Under this legal framework the development of cooperative sector becomes an integral part of the national economic development especially the empowerment of grass root economy.

Due to adverse impact of crisis and globalization the Indonesian government is now focusing on the economic recovery programs particularly for farmers, fishermen, artisans and petty traders. The cooperatives are given the pivotal role in the economic recovery programs to sustain the economic activity of the peoples. To illustrate, such a significant role has been demonstrated by saving and loan cooperatives in providing access to credit to micro enterprises.

With regard to the cooperative policy development and legislation reforms, the final draft amendment of Law Number 25 years 1992 on cooperatives has been submitted by the Ministry of Coopera-

tives and SMEs to the Secretariat of Cabinet for consideration to submit the draft law to the Parliament for further discussion and approval.

International Cooperative Identity Statement (ICIS) has imbued in the draft amendment of cooperative law as the basis for cooperative undertaking. Additionally in the process of registration for obtaining legal status as a full fledged cooperative entity, it is required that the ICIS should be definitely regulated in the provision of cooperative bye-law.

The government has so far not fulfilled its commitment to draw a specific policy for cooperatives. We will continue our effort to develop understanding and determination for ensuring more commitment among the stakeholders at all levels in this regard. However, government is committed to prepare the national policy for the cooperative sector in consultation with the cooperative movement. However due to the structural adjustment in relation to the enactment of Law Number 22 Year 1999 on Regional Government that puts into effect the decentralization with full autonomy at Kabupaten (district) and Kota (city) level, the issue of cooperative policy may have to be considered in that context. To catalyse the process, ICA Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific and ICA Headquarters could bridge and facilitate a dialogue between the government and cooperative movement in establishing cooperative policy in Indonesia.

Meanwhile in response to the adoption of ILO Recommendation No. 193 on Promotion of Cooperatives, the Ministry of Cooperatives and Small and Medium Enterprises of the Republic of Indonesia has initiated to disseminate this matter to the cooperative movement, labour associations, and relevant institutions.

Furthermore, the Government of Indonesia has been preparing the Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP) through several meetings and discussions. The Indonesian Cooperative Council (DEKOPIN) are also invited to participate in this process from the bottom up to the national level. Other efforts to implement the ILO Recommendations 193 are encouraging private companies to facilitate their employees to set up cooperatives and improve access of labor force to employment opportunities through workers cooperatives.

# IRAN

After establishment of the Islamic Republic in Iran, “Cooperative Sector” was instituted and stipulated as one of the economic pillars in the Constitutional Law. Presently the Islamic Republic of Iran with more than 60,000 active cooperatives in urban and rural areas in various economic sectors, with 15,000,000 cooperative members, with up to \$ 1 billion capital investment per annum and with an annual growth of more than 20% plays a significant role in dissemination of cooperative culture, and its intellectual and material values.

However some restrictions exist on cooperative activities including the limited scope of activity in the field of banking and insurance as compared with other corporations and companies. Therefore, the Islamic Republic of Iran has taken serious measures towards promotion of a supportive atmosphere for cooperatives since 2002. At the end of last year and the start of new year, “The policies of the fourth national development plan of Iran” was drafted by Government and the “Bill” was brought in the Islamic Consultative Parliament. The bill reads : The Government is duty bound to “draw up and implement cooperative sector development plan” with an approach towards “effective exploitation of cooperative sector’s capabilities in establishment of social justice, more equitable distribution of incomes, provision of required resources for investments through amassing small capitals, ensuring employment conditions and facilities, increasing competitive ability and empowering SMEs, decentralization and decreasing government domination, development of grass-root ownership and economic participation. The Bill is founded on the following basis :

1. To empower younger adults, university graduates and other individuals seeking a decent job to form a cooperative unit.
2. To enhance productivity and to upgrade cooperative management.
3. To promote cooperative culture based on cooperative identity and to amend legislative status to further develop cooperative sector and to draft effective bills.



4. To prioritize cooperative sector in transferring economic activities and enterprises from public to cooperative sector.
5. To incorporate cooperative activities into all economic fields including banking and insurance.
6. To incorporate cooperative activities access to resources, feasibilities, modern technologies, markets and to ameliorate their business environment.
7. To develop technical, economic and financial links between all types of cooperatives at national and international level.

Another fundamental move was formation of Plan for Business Process Re-Engineering of Cooperative Sector Controlling Authority” in which amendment of existing policies and legislation has been introduced as a major part.

The focal point and proposed strategies of this plan have been tailored for cooperative structural management of country whereby the role played by Apex organization, Ministry of Cooperatives and other action groups in macro development process of cooperative sector has been revised. The new process characterizes the mission of Cooperative Ministry as follows : “To support realization of social justice by developing countries sector economy through strengthening competitive abilities at national and international level.

# ISRAEL

Cooperatives were a leading factor in Israel's genesis and development from the earliest years of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century. They were pioneers in the development of agriculture, transport, financial institutions and more, indeed they even played a major role in establishing many of our social services such as health care and care of the aged. Although Israel has today developed into a modern, free market oriented, high-tech focused economy, the cooperatives continue to play an important role. Israel takes pride in its efficient, sophisticated and successful agricultural sector. It has to overcome the difficulties of arid, rain poor location and our marginal soils and made us into world leaders in many branches such as milk production, fruit and vegetable production, horticulture and more.

Cooperatives make up a large majority of almost all agricultural branches, and have even given birth to significant agriculture related industries. For example, three of the world's five largest producers of drip irrigation equipment, including the leading firm, are Israeli cooperative industries. Israel's hundreds of rural cooperative villages which are of two kinds, the kibbutz and the moshav are to be found everywhere in the country from north to south. Similarly cooperatives are of major importance in passenger and goods transport and in other areas as well.

The government of Israel has supported the two important decisions taken in recent years by the major international agencies in regard to cooperatives. The first of these was the adoption by the General Assembly of the United Nations in December 2001 of the UN Guidelines aimed at creating a supportive environment for the development of cooperatives.

The second was the adoption by the ILO, the International Labour Organisation, in June 2002 of Recommendation 193 on Cooperatives. Both of these are important expressions of the world's regard for cooperatives, and the adoption of both of them without opposition gives them additional weight as expressions of unanimous will of the world's nation.

Cooperatives are of course, business enterprises and must be prepared to compete with others in the free market. Governments can promote conditions which make that competition a basis for the maximum benefit to the nation. It is our responsibility to do so.

# JAPAN

Japanese Agricultural Cooperatives were founded in 1947 in conformity with the Agricultural Cooperative Act as non-profit organizations, whose goal is to encourage mutual assistance among farmers. And some of their principal missions for encouraging farming operation are :

1. collective shipment of agricultural products;
2. collective purchase of production materials; and
3. farm financing in order to increase agricultural productivity and the socio-economic status of farmers.

In addition, Agricultural Cooperatives have conducted the important activities for the life of farmers, for instance :

1. Provision of some materials and finance for daily life.
2. provision of medical and welfare services mainly for the rural people. These activities vitalize rural community, improve its living standard and maintain its traditional culture.

In recent years, however, our agriculture and rural areas as well as Agricultural Cooperatives themselves are facing a mountain of problems including :

1. Urbanisation and increasing non-farming households in rural areas
2. A lack of successors for farming
3. Increase in abandoned farms
4. Increase in imported agricultural and livestock products
5. Decrease in the consumption of rice and other traditional products due to changing diet patterns and
6. Stagnated agricultural income

Furthermore, internationally, negotiations in the WTO are going on to decide common agricultural trade rules for the 21st Century. And in order to complement the WTO, some bilateral trade negotiations called "Economic Partnership Agreement" have also started.

Given the drastic socio-economic changes occurring in Japan, it is essential for the Agricultural Cooperatives, as autonomous mutual assistance organizations of farmers, to maintain their sound management and to improve efficiency in their operations, in order to support farming and the farmers livelihood.

For that reason, the Agricultural Cooperatives Group has strongly been streamlining its organization through mergers in order to obtain the benefit of scale of economy. As a result the number of the Agricultural Cooperatives has decreased from 3,073 in March 1993 to 929 in January 2004).

In October 2003, the Agricultural Cooperatives Group held “the 23rd National Congress of the Japan Agricultural Cooperatives” where they resolved the desirable direction of their activities with the theme of “Never fail to carry out the reform of the Agricultural Cooperatives Group”. This encompasses :

1. Providing safe and reliable agricultural products.
2. vitalizing farming in each rural community.
3. reform of cooperatives economic activities in response to the the needs of their members.
4. accelerated efforts for sound and efficient management.

To realize this resolution, they are actively undergoing a thorough re-examination of their activities and organizations. This resolution also refers to enhancing more participation of women in management of the cooperatives.

The MAFF Japan in planning to revise the Agricultural Cooperative Act this year, to support these Agricultural Cooperatives' voluntary reforms so that they can achieve sound management smoothly, taking into consideration the maximizing of farmers' income as top priority.

This year 2004 is “International Year of Rice”. It goes without saying that rice is staple food in Japan. In addition, rice farming with paddy field has some cultural and environment functions, and also is part of beautiful nature and landscape itself. We call these special characteristics “Multi-functionally of Paddy farming or Agriculture”. Therefore cooperatives should celebrate the event

in a befitting manner so as to sensitise the people to re-recognize the importance of rice and rice farming.

Another important issue that may impact agricultural cooperatives in future is WTO agricultural negotiations. Notwithstanding the unfortunate result of the 5 WTO Ministerial Conference in Cancun,” the result of the ongoing WTO negotiations will have large impact on food security and agricultural development in the world. The trade rules emerging from these negotiations should enable farmers and agricultural cooperatives in the world to co-exist, while competing with each other and also ensure that multifunctionally of agriculture in each country is fully realized. Our basic concept of agricultural negotiations is “Co-existence of a diversified agriculture not only now but also in the future.” Therefore in these negotiations Japan will continue to make efforts to well reflect the nontrade concerns including food security in the new trade rules, bearing in mind Doha Ministerial Declaration.

## KOREA

The Korean Agricultural Cooperatives are multifunctional as they are involved in extension services, agricultural marketing and banking. Currently, Korean agricultural cooperatives have roughly two million member farmers and 1,355 member cooperatives. Since they were established in 1961, Korean agricultural cooperatives have made considerable contributions to development of the national economy as well as rural communities.

As for the agricultural marketing business, the NACF and member cooperatives have about a 35% share of the domestic agricultural market. In particular, we have become a leader in agricultural marketing both in rural and urban areas by operating 11 large scale agricultural marketing complexes in the metropolitan area.

In banking, total deposits in our organizations reached about 200 trillion Korean won (160 billion US dollars) last year, ranking top among Korean banks. The NACF received the highest credit ratings in Korea from the international credit rating institutions, Standard & Poor's and Moody's. Plus our organization is providing 85% of farmers' loan.

The success of the Korean agricultural cooperatives comes first from the synergy effect of the multifunctional system. Korean farmers who are typical small scale hybrid type farmers are able to get service for their farming and daily needs with one stop visit to cooperatives.

In addition, we have successfully linked our banking and agricultural marketing businesses, thereby creating a very positive synergy effect in a competitive Korean market.

Mutual cooperation between the Korean government and agricultural cooperatives has been another factor in the development of the agricultural cooperatives. For the last forty years when "Food Self Sufficiency Policy" is implemented by government, the agricultural cooperatives supported the policy by providing the necessary financial support and farm supplies, and by purchasing agri products from farmers.

Recently the Korean government has given its support for the NACF in building and operating modernized agricultural marketing facilities.

Meanwhile global changes in the agricultural and financial environment have forced the Korean agricultural cooperatives to deal with many existing problems. We are working on many strategies to strengthen our competitiveness to cope with these challenges.

Firstly, the Korean agricultural cooperatives are developing efficient cooperatives group through specialization of its businesses. We plan to strengthen our competitiveness in certain sectors which face strong competition from other corporations by introducing market oriented business management policies.

We are looking to increase the market share of our businesses by providing high quality, safe agriproducts for consumers, by strengthening brand power, and by extending large scale agricultural marketing facilities.

In the banking business we are focussed on adopting cutting edge financial tools and investing further in information technology such as cyber banking to cope with new market environment.

Secondly, in order to make the most of its multifunctional structure of our organization, we plan to enhance the synergy effect among business sectors, and build a closer relationship between the NACF and its member cooperatives. We are intensifying the connection among business sectors of our organization and promotional activities to attract bank customers to also become users of agricultural marketing centers.

Thirdly, considering the characteristics of our organization that have a range of interested parties, it is becoming more important to gain favourable public opinion concerning Korean agricultural cooperatives.

The Korean agricultural cooperatives, to keep the trust and confidence of our customers and to develop a national understanding about our role in the public good, we are running our many businesses transparently and pursuing co-existence with nature, consumers and communities in sound competition.

The role of government may be different at each stage of develop-



ment of cooperatives, but the full support of government and close relationships with government is a very important for the development of the cooperatives.

# KUWAIT

Over the years, Kuwait has turned into a highly industrialised and modern state. The discovery of oil in 1938 created tremendous opportunities of economic growth and prosperity. The country with 17818 sq k.m is today an important business and Trade Centre as also is of great tourist attraction with its 290 km coast line of which  $\frac{3}{4}$  is sand. The capital Kuwait City which dates back to 1760 is a modern city with excellent roads, gardens and parks, luxury hotels, high rise office buildings, numerous shopping complexes and recreation centers.

In Kuwait, consumer cooperatives are the backbone of the cooperative movement. Though earliest attempts to organize consumer cooperatives dates back in 1941, its real beginning in an organized form took place by the enactment of law no 12 in 1962. This law provided for establishment of cooperatives, membership, management, supervision, dissolution and liquidation. Consumer cooperative societies activities have grown substantially and 47 societies serve the people throughout the country. Their strength can be gauged from the fact that cooperatives accounts for almost 85% of the market share of retail trade in the country. Cooperative stores are most modern, products well displayed for convenient shopping managed efficiently by the elected members of the Board.

47 consumer cooperative have a total membership of 246,325 with subscribed capital base of KD 2,785,082 and turnover of KD 337,776,320 (Year 2000)

There are also other cooperatives in Kuwait like agricultural cooperatives, handicraft cooperatives, employees credit societies etc. Scope for cooperatives in some other social and economic sectors like housing, banking and health care is extremely limited mainly because medical facility, housing, education, etc are provided by the Government free to its citizens.

Union of Consumer Cooperative Societies (UCCS) formed by Consumer Cooperatives is the apex body and is the official spokesman of the consumer cooperative movement in the country. Apart from playing the role as the spokesman for the sector and representing

the sector at the non-official, Arab and international levels, it undertakes business activities of local and external purchases, funds the construction of productive endeavours to reduce costs and improve service level. Yet another major responsibility is controlling prices of consumer commodities, unify prices in the cooperative societies and protect the interest of the consumers.

Article XXIII of the constitution of Kuwait states that the government should accord attention to cooperative and encourage related activities . The responsible Ministry in the Government for Cooperatives is the Ministry of Social Welfare and Labour which is also the authority for registering the cooperatives under the Law, which was promulgated in 1962 (law no 20). In 1971 Cooperate Controlate was made a full fledged Cooperative Department in the Ministry of Social Welfare and Labour. In 1985, the Ministry constituted a High Consultative Committee for Cooperative Affairs for the purpose of proposing the general policy for Kuwait Cooperative Movement.

It is a known fact that the Government is playing a significant supportive role in the development of cooperatives in the Kuwait.

Development of Cooperatives and particularly Consumer Cooperatives is an integral part of the Government Development plan. When new residential areas are developed by the government, special care is taken to allocate adequate land space for construction of cooperative societies and their branches.

Another important decision of the Government to support cooperatives is exemption granted from custom changes/duties. Such exemption enables cooperatives in importing/procuring goods at reduced prices and control prices in the market.

Cooperatives in Kuwait are governed by the Cooperative Law. The first Cooperative Societies Act No. 20 was promulgated in 1979 covering :

- Definition and Provision Governing Cooperatives
- Establishment of Cooperatives
- Management of Cooperatives
- Cooperative Associations and Federations
- Winding up, dissolution and liquidation of societies

- Penalties
- General Provisions.

No doubt the present law of 1979 has stood the test of time as cooperatives are able to establish and function smoothly. The cooperative movement has also grown and the consumer cooperatives have a strong presence of retailing food products and other consumer goods to the public throughout the country. They are supported by the Government and managed by democratically elected boards. They enjoy autonomy.

- Increase in age for membership of cooperatives as also for Board members from 21 to 30.
- Term of elected members of Board to be raised from 3 years to 4 years and Board to be reconstituted every 2 years.
- Penalties to be more stricter.
- Reducing governmental interference as Government is presently trying to control the market.

The present Cooperative Societies Law of 1979 needs changes consistent with the revised cooperative principles, changes in the economic scenario, member's aspirations, practical experience and difficulties experienced by the cooperatives in their working and need to ensure autonomy of the cooperatives with least Government control and interference in the affairs of the cooperatives.

# MALAYSIA

Historically in Malaysia, cooperatives were formed to overcome the problem of widespread indebtedness among the rural population and lower income groups. It has attracted a diverse spectrum of membership comprising of government servants, farmers, fishermen, private sector workers and students. It has penetrated different sectors of the economy, both in rural and urban areas. Aside from the credit cooperatives, which still form the backbone of the cooperative movement, it has also engaged in various economic activities such as banking, consumer, transport, housing, land development, handicrafts, agriculture and fisheries.

The cooperative movement has recorded an average growth rate of 3.2% in terms of number of cooperatives 4.4% in terms of membership, 10.6% in terms of share capital/subscription and 12.2% in terms of assets for the period of 1990-2000.

The National Cooperative Policy has outlined specific implementation strategies for the promotion and development of cooperatives in Malaysia. Important features are as follows :

- i. Cooperative Identity to be strengthened
- ii. Besides playing the role of a regulator, the government also to promote the formation and development of cooperatives in certain sectors of the economy
- iii. No differentiation in terms of ethnicity, religion, politics and gender in developing the cooperative institution
- iv. Capital requirement to be raised through mobilization of member's savings and shares/subscription, borrowings and financial assistance from the government and other organizations
- v. Cooperation amongst cooperatives and between cooperatives and other organizations to be increasingly promoted
- vi. Active participation of women especially in cooperative management and leadership to be encouraged
- vii. Cooperative Movement be encouraged to take advantage of the present government policy with regards to K-economy and e-commerce and

viii. The apex body of the cooperative movement to provide services effectively for the overall development of cooperatives.

In the line with NCP, a corresponding action to review the cooperative Societies Act 1993 is in progress. Amendments of the Act will focus on several key areas :

- A broader interpretation of the sources of financing (business financing).
- Inclusion of definition of cooperatives and cooperative principles in line with ICA Statement on Cooperative Identity 1995. To realize this objective, all newly elected Board of Directors and Internal Audit Committee have to undergo a compulsory education programme within ten months of their appointment.
- The government's role to be defined to regulate and enforce the law while, at the same time, providing a conducive and friendly environment for cooperative growth and development.
- Bye laws of cooperatives are encouraged to provide a quota for women on the Board of Directors and cooperatives to have a compulsory induction course for would be members.

Establishment of a National Consultative Cooperative Council chaired by the Minister of Cooperatives and representatives from both the public and cooperative sectors and coordination committees at State level for discussion and for creation of consensus on cooperative development

# MYANMAR

Cooperatives were introduced to Myanmar in the early part of the twentieth century, and by the end of 2004 i.e. on the 3<sup>rd</sup> of January 2005 Myanmar Cooperative will be hundred years old. It has become a significant force in civil society, both in terms of membership and impact. In Myanmar the total number of cooperatives is 17,979. A separate ministry, which is the Ministry of Cooperatives has responsibility for the development of cooperatives and is striving it's utmost for the development of the cooperatives.

The majority of cooperatives are established in rural areas and are involved in providing means for the poor, to uplift their social and economic conditions.

In accordance with the market economy, a new law was enacted in 1992 known as "1992 Cooperative Law". The law recognizes the importance of cooperatives in job creation, generating investment and their contribution to the economy and are active in economic and social development.

1992 Cooperative Law is tailored to be supportive and whenever the need arises the cooperatives receive maximum assistance from the government. ILO Recommendation 193 on Promotion of Cooperatives is a clear enunciation of views of global cooperative movement which aims to have favourable impact on cooperatives globally and will promote equitable distribution of new opportunities and benefits emerging from globalization for the good of the community to which Myanmar gives full appreciation.

A separate policy for cooperative is still to be evolved. This policy will enhance the growth of cooperative in sectors like agriculture, savings, and credit and in cottage industries. The government is encouraging the cooperatives to strengthen their competitiveness at market. Towards this end cooperatives are systematically developing man power planning, which in the near future will assist the process of professionalism. Importance to training and its adequate budgetary support is a priority of the government.

The capitalization of cooperatives is a serious problem and a matter of serious concern. Although there exists three cooperative

banks, inadequacy of working capital is still a problem for our cooperatives. Favourable disposition towards NGOs with technical and funding support is a must.



# NEPAL

The restoration of multiparty democratic system in the country in 1990 paved way for new changes in the cooperative movement. Consequently a new Cooperative Act was promulgated in 1992 recognizing cooperatives as people's organization with autonomy body. The Act among others purports to provide for constant development of cooperatives, recognizes their democratic character in matters of organization and management, and ensure their operational autonomy.

With the promulgation of the new legislation, the number of cooperatives boomed to 7450 primary societies in the various sectors by the end of July 2003 as against of 830 agricultural cooperatives in 1992. Likewise, there are more than 121 District Unions, 3 Central Unions and 1 National Federation. Similarly in the various new areas cooperatives have been organized.

Since 1990s, Nepal has adopted a liberalized market policy initiating a strong economic reform program. Though the trend of development of cooperatives in context of market liberalization and globalisation is quite positive, cooperatives also face a competitive environment and are under pressure to prove as competent, business oriented and member based rural development institutions. The multifarious role of cooperatives has thus acquired a new dimension.

His Majesty's Government of Nepal is very much supportive to create conducive environment for proper and smooth development of the various types of the cooperatives, by providing legal, financial, promotional, technical and policy back up. Government considers that state partnership is needed in the initial period so that the cooperative sector could be strong vehicle in eradicating poverty. Towards this end, the government has attempted to evolve a national cooperative policy and long term cooperative perspective plan, modifying the legal framework to make it conducive for cooperative growth and development, redefine the role of federal cooperatives so that they act spokesman, friend and philosopher and guide of their constituent primaries and encourage individual ini-

tiative for mobilizing local resources to harness the economic potential in the country.

Moreover, His Majesty's Government of Nepal is very much conscious about the human resource development in the cooperative sector, and therefore the government has initiated various education and training programs for the cooperative leaders and the employees.

The 9th plan had recognized cooperatives as a powerful instrument for the development and expansion of economic sectors such as agriculture, industry trade etc. Similarly, the 10<sup>th</sup> plan which is under implementation envisages the policy of emphasizing social mobilization through people based organisations as an approach to poverty alleviation. Among others, the plan concentrates on the adoption of cooperative farming and strengthening of cooperative organizations for better service delivery.

The real challenge faced by the cooperatives today is to build and/ to retain their competitive advantages and establish their relevance. Cooperatives can only survive and retain their competitive advantages and establish their relevance. Cooperatives can only survive and retain usefulness if they concentrate on the capability building of their members and attract professional managers and employees.

# SINGAPORE

Cooperatives were introduced in Singapore as early as 1925. In the early years, cooperatives were focused only on thrift and loan facilities and membership was confined mainly to employees in the public sector.

The turning point in the development of the cooperative movement in Singapore was a launching of cooperative ventures in 1970 by the Singapore National Trade Union Congress and its affiliated unions.

These cooperative ventures are set up as an important component of Singapore's economic structure to provide a range of quality products and services to members and the general public. This help to set a benchmark in their economic sectors and has helped to keep inflation at a very low level in Singapore.

The Singapore National Cooperative Federation (SNCF) was established on 18 September 1980 as the apex body representing the cooperative movement in Singapore. Seventy One cooperatives in Singapore are currently affiliated to SNCF. These affiliated have a individual membership of more than 1.4 million.. They are engaged in various areas of business which include insurance, super-market, childcare, elderly care, healthcare, property development, broadcasting, thrift and loan, travel, training, campus and environmental services etc.

The First cooperative legislation Cooperative Societies Ordinance was introduced in 1924 by the British Government. This was replaced in 1979 by the Cooperative Societies Act. Amongst other features, the Act established the SNCF and Central Cooperative Fund. The current legislation is operating smoothly and minor updates and amendments are made from time to time on the legislation.

The Government's policy is to take a balanced approach in extending a reasonable level of assistance and advice to the cooperative movement without infringing on its autonomy an independence. The government ensures that this assistance does not stifle the initiative and enterprise which are essential for the future develop-

ment of the movement. SNCF maintains a close working relationship with the Government in the promotion of good corporate governance and growth of the cooperative movement in Singapore.

As the apex body of the cooperative movement in Singapore, the key challenge and focus of SNCF in the coming years will be the promotion of good cooperative governance among its affiliates. To highlight the importance of good governance, SNCF organized a Conference for the cooperative leaders and managers of its affiliates last year to deliberate and discuss the theme “Promoting Good Cooperative Governance”.

In addition, the Registrar of Cooperative Societies, in consultation with SNCF, commissioned an auditing firm to embark on a series of operational audits on the credit cooperatives with the objective of identifying best practices and strengthening governance and internal controls. Upon completion of the whole exercise, a benchmark of policies and procedures will be established for adoption by all credit cooperatives with the aim of raising the operating standards of the credit cooperatives as a whole. SNCF is also currently running a series of training programs to equip the Board members of cooperatives with the knowledge and understanding of their roles and responsibilities and the key elements of good governance.

Cooperatives are driven by the mission of providing the best value for goods and services for their members and the community. To help measure how cooperatives are performing their social roles, a set of social indicators has been established for the major cooperatives. For example, NTUC Fair price and NTUC Healthcare have established benchmark pricing and are committed to maintain the lowest priced basket of essential goods as a whole. NTUC Income aims to distribute about 98% of its surpluses to its policy holders as compared to an average of 90% for private insurers. Credit cooperatives can offer savings, fixed deposits and loan interests rates which are competitive in comparison with the major financial institutions. These social objectives help moderate the cost of living in Singapore thus ensuring members and the general public of a better standard of living.

## SRI LANKA

The Cooperative Movement of Sri Lanka was started in 1906 and now we are about to celebrate its centennial year. The enactment of Cooperative Credit Societies Ordinance No 7 of 1911, marks the beginning of government's recognition, control and intervention in the Cooperative Movement. Beginning with the above, new legislation has been introduced and the existing laws have been revised several times, in keeping with socio-economic environments and prevailing policies of successive governments. The Cooperative Law was revised for the last time in 1992.

In 1988 radical changes effected to the Constitution especially as a solution to ethnic problem prevailing in the country. Under the 13<sup>th</sup> Amendment to the Constitution, Provincial Councils were created and the subject of Cooperative which was under the Central Government was devolved on the Provincial Councils. Along with that, the Provincial Councils were given the authority to enact their own statutes and accordingly, a number of Provincial Councils have passed their own statutes regarding the Cooperative Movement.

Although the Provincial Councils have adopted their own statutes still the basis of these legislation is the Act No 5 of 1972. During that time country was following a closed economic policy and Act No 5 of 1972 had been prepared to suit the closed economic policy, under which cooperatives societies enjoyed government patronage and monopoly in the trade.

Although a few ad hoc changes have been made, the legal framework of the Cooperative Law remains unchanged up to date,

The open economic policy was introduced in 1977 and all successive governments have been following this policy without any radical changes.

The present situation is that, under the globalised economic conditions pride of place has been given to the private sector which has been considered as the engine of the growth.

As a result, the private sector is forging ahead in all socio-economic activities. The situation has posed one of the biggest challenges to the Cooperative Movement of Sri Lanka.

In the recent past, successive governments have created a separate Cabinet Portfolio for the subject of cooperatives but it has not been considered as a priority subject in the government's development agenda.

On the other hand, under the devolved administrative structure opportunities for the Minister of the Central Government to intervene in the affairs of the Provincial Cooperatives have been curbed.

Against this scenario, The Cooperative Movement of Sri Lanka in the recent past has not shown the anticipated progress. Nevertheless, there had been some innovative bold steps taken to diversify the movement. It is worthy of mention that Thrift and Credit Cooperative Movement has established SANASA Development Bank which is gradually progressing to be a worthy cause. Similarly the Cooperative Insurance Company and All Ceylon Mutual Assurance Organisation are both making steady progress in the highly competitive insurance business.

In order to take remedial measures, a Presidential Commission was appointed in the year 2000 and the Commission, having obtained the view of all those concerned throughout the country has submitted its report to the government.

Subsequently, a Cabinet Sub Committee has been appointed to implement the recommendations made by the Commission. The Committee is now in process of identifying strategies and thrust areas towards implementing the recommendations.

In addition a Special Task Force has been appointed to draft a new Cooperative Law. This Committee is in final stage of drafting the new law in accordance with the new trends and recommendations of the International Cooperative Alliance, The International Labour Organisation and UN Guidelines.

Along with that structural changes have been effected in Cooperative Support Institutions. In addition, action has been taken to develop physical resources of Cooperative Supporting Institutions of the government such as the National Institute of Cooperative Development.

It must be emphasized that the government of Sri Lanka is providing all necessary assistance and support for the development of

the Cooperative Movement of the country. As a peoples movement, which is committed to preserve the cooperative identity, the movement is being developed as an active partner of the development process creating social justice.

# THAILAND

The history of cooperatives in Thailand dates back over 80 years. Over the decades the numbers have grown to be over 6,000 cooperatives operating under the umbrella of the Cooperative League of Thailand, which is the apex organization. These cooperatives are classified into 6 categories, with a total membership of nearly 8 million and a business volume of approximately 500 billion Baht.

The road map for the development of the Cooperative Movement is laid out by the Cooperatives Development Plan 2003-2006. This document, widely regarded as the first Master Plan of the cooperative sector, is the outcome of joint efforts of those in the Cooperative Movement and the general public. As a result of the six strategies clearly outlined within the master plan, significant progress has already been noted. It is indeed a promising sign that some 37% of the total cooperatives being evaluated have exceeded performance standards. Furthermore, the master plan is used to help make amendment to the cooperative act, now in the process of being reviewed and approved by parliament to allow for greater flexibility.

For strengthening competitiveness of cooperatives efforts have been made to provide alternative market outlets for cooperative members to sell their produces in the retail as well as wholesale channels. The government have provided support for the establishment of central markets for agricultural product in 870 villages throughout the country as well as 20 bigger product distribution centers. The Federation of Cooperatives is also investing approximately 300 million Baht to construct an additional major logistic center for Agricultural products in the Northern Region of Thailand.

Recognizing the importance of efficient human resources a Mini MBA program to target the management staff of the cooperatives throughout the country has been launched.

The women and the younger generation in the rural communities has been encouraged to organize themselves into production groups to produce handicraft products utilizing local materials combined with traditional knowledge. Throughout the country, altogether



1,300 groups have been formed with more than 100 quality certified products now marketed under the One Village One Product Program.

According to Cooperative Act, a fund of 3.3 billion Baht has been set up for the purpose of providing low interest rate credits to cooperatives.

There is also a proposal to establish a Cooperative Bank. Initially the Cooperative Bank will operate within the umbrella of the Bank of Agriculture and Agricultural Cooperatives (or BAAC).

A national agenda to eradicate poverty has been declared by Prime Minister, Dr Thaksin Shinawatra. The Cooperatives are expected to participate to achieve this national agenda effectively particularly to eradicate rural poverty in following ways:

Providing access to capital at low interest rates with sources of funding within the Cooperatives. There is revolving fund of over 500 billion Baht and ways must be explored to put this into better use for their members.

Readjusting land in cooperatives settlement for members who have insufficient land for agricultural production. To date over 700,000 hectares have been made available. More must be done

Expanding the projects under His Majesty the King integrating the local knowledge into successful agricultural techniques such as the concept of “Self Sufficiency”.

# VIETNAM

In early 90s the cooperatives got out of the centrally planned and subsidized economy. A new law on cooperative was enacted to transform old type coops into the new type coops and re-registered under the law 5,700 new cooperatives have been set up since 1997.

Presently there are 14,207 cooperatives which include 8,340 agricultural cooperatives, 570 consumer cooperatives, 927 credit cooperatives, 2,069 industrial cooperatives, 1072 transportation cooperatives, 481 construction cooperatives, 583 fisheries cooperatives and 156 other cooperatives (school coops, water supply coops etc).

These cooperatives have 7.5 million members and 1 million staff and officers. Average growth rate in the coop sector is 11% since 2000, particularly 13.5% in 2003. Business and production income of cooperatives amounted to 50,000 billion VND accounting for 8.6% GDP.

Important features of national cooperative policy of Vietnam are :

- Revised law on cooperative enacted in November 2003 and approved by the National Assembly of the SRV. The revised law has following features:
  - ◆ Define clearly the concepts of the cooperatives.
  - ◆ Extend the scope of membership to enable the state officers and civil servants, legal entitles to join coops.
  - ◆ Financial credit policy: clear the debts, exempt corporation income tax for the newly established coops or the restructured coops in the first two years. Coops can borrow capital from credit institutions, banks and national projects etc.
  - ◆ Scientific technology assistance policy: encourage the scientific technology research agencies collaborate with the coops and transfer the new advanced techniques to coops. The state support the collective economy to adopt the new scientific technology techniques.
  - ◆ Policy on marketing support and market expansion; pro-

mote trade and provide information, seek the markets for members and coops in domestic and oversea, introduce and display the products in the exhibitions and trade fairs.

Revised law on coop and formulation of policies have create the favourable conditions for the development of coops. Thousands of new cooperatives have been set up. The share capital of coops increased 2 times higher compared to the previous year.

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# Agenda & Programme

FEBRUARY 1-6, 2004

## Sunday, February 1

- Arrival
- 09.00 – 13.00 & - Registration at Hotel Ashok (Lobby)
- 14.00 – 22.00

## Monday, February 2

- 07.00 – 09.00 - Registration at Hotel Ashok (Lobby)
- 09.00 - Departure for Vigyan Bhawan from Hotel Ashok
- 10.00 - Delegates to occupy seats at Vigyan Bhawan
- 10.40 – 10.50 - Briefing about Conference Agenda & Methodology
- 11.00 – 11.48 - Opening Ceremony – Venue: Vigyan Bhawan
- 11.48 – 12.15 - Tea Break
- 12.15 – 12.30 - Group Photo Session
- 12.30 – 12.45 - Presentation of Draft of Joint Declaration by Hon'ble Minister of Agriculture, Government of India.
- I. Presentation on Important Concerns of Coops:**
- 12.45 – 13.15 i) Trends in Global Cooperative Movement – Mr. Iain MacDonald, Director General, ICA Geneva.
- 13.15 – 14.15 - Lunch Break
- 14.15 – 14.45 ii) Building Alliances for Human Develop-

ment: Collaborative Strategies for Coops and Trade Unions – Dr. Yehudah Paz, Chairman, Department of International Relations, Central Union of Cooperative Societies, Israel, and Member of ICA Board.

14.45 – 15.15

- iii) Empowering Women Through Cooperatives – Mdm. Rahaiah Baهران, Vice President, ANGKASA and ICA Board Member.

**II. Presentation of Best Practices in Coops:**

15.15 – 15.45

- i) Cooperative Way to protect consumers: Japanese Experience – Mr. Seishou Higuchi, Director, General Affairs Division, Ministry of Health, Labor & Welfare, Government of Japan.

15.45 – 16.15

Tea Break

16.15 – 16.45

- ii) Enhancing Competitive Strength of Agriculture Sector - NACF case by Mr. Dae-Kun Chung, President, NACF.

16.45 – 17.15

- iii) Preserving Cooperative Identity in an Era of Competition: IFFCO, India case by Mr. U.S. Awasthi, Managing Director, IFFCO.

17.15 – 17.45

- Interventions of Hon'ble Ministers & Delegates on Joint Declaration.

19.30 hrs.

- Welcome Dinner hosted by Hon'ble Agriculture Minister, Government of India – Venue: Hotel Ashok

**Tuesday, February 3**

**Venue: Hotel Ashok, Banquet Hall**

**III. Presentation on Globalisation & Poverty Reduction.**

09.30 – 10.00

- i) Cooperatives and Poverty Reduction – Mr. Robby Tulus, Former Regional Director, ICA ROAP

- 10.00 – 10.30 ii) Surviving in a Globalised and Competitive World: Co-operative Experience – Mr. Tan Kin Lian, CEO of NTUC Income, Singapore.
- 10.30 – 11.00 - Tea Break
- IV. Presentations on Co-operative Legislation & Policy.**
- 11.00 – 12.00 - Presentation of Third Critical Study on Cooperative Legislation & Policy – Mr. P.V. Prabhu, Consultant, ICA ROAP.
- 12.00 – 12.30 - Cooperative Legislation: A European Experience – Mr. Jan Eirik Imbsen, Director of Development, ICA, Geneva.
- 12.30 – 13.00 - National Co-operative Policy of Malaysia – Representative of Government of Malaysia.
- 13.00 – 14.00 - Lunch Break
- 14.00 – 14.30 - Presentation on Multi State Cooperative Societies Act 2002: A significant step to prepare cooperatives to face new challenge – Representative of Government of India.
- 14.30 – 15.00 - ILO Recommendation 193 – Mr. Jurgen Schwettmann, Chief of Cooperative Division, ILO, Geneva.
- 15.00 – 16.00 - Statements by Hon'ble Ministers
- 16.00 – 16.30 - Tea Break
- 16.30 – 17.30 - Statements by Hon'ble Ministers (contd....)
- 19.30 hrs. - Dinner hosted by National Co-operative Development Corporation (NCDC), New Delhi, India.
- Venue: Hotel Taj Palace

### **Wednesday, February 4**

**Venue: Hotel Ashok, Banquet Hall**

- 09.30 – 10.00 - Signing of Joint Declaration by Hon'ble Ministers.
  - 10.00 – 11.00 - Statements by Hon'ble Ministers (contd...).
  - 11.00 – 11.30 - Tea Break
  - 11.30 – 12.30 - Statements by International Organisations
  - 12.30 – 13.00 - Briefing about methodology and logistic arrangements for breakout sessions.
  - 13.00 – 14.00 - Lunch Break
  - 14.00 – 16.00 - Breakout Session – Discussions – Formulation of Report.
  - 16.00 – 16.30 - Tea Break
  - 16.30 – 17.30 - Presentation of Breakout Session Reports & Adoption of Conference Recommendations.
  - 17.30 – 18.00 - Closing Ceremony
  - 19.30 hrs. - Dinner hosted by Indian Farmers Fertiliser Co-operative Ltd. (IFFCO), New Delhi, India
- Venue: Hotel Oberoi

### **Thursday, February 5**

- Study Visits to a few Co-operatives and visit to Agra (Taj Mahal), hosted by NAFED, New Delhi, India.

### **Friday, February 6**

- Departure.
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# Participants

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- 01 H.E. Mohamad Sharief  
First Deputy Minister  
Ministry of Agriculture and Animal  
Husbandry  
Kabul, Afghanistan.
- 02 Mr. Habibullah  
Head of Agricultural Cooperatives  
Ministry of Agriculture and Animal  
Husbandry  
Kabul, Afghanistan.
- 03 Mr. Alah Mohmad Hajizada  
Head of Agricultural Cooperatives  
Ministry of Agriculture and Animal  
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- 05 Mr. Chen Wenbao  
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- 06 Mr. Yang Xiaoping  
Dy. Director of Personnel Department,  
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07 Mr. Zhang Wangshu  
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10 H.E. Hukumdev Narayan Yadav  
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Government of India, Krishi Bhavan  
New Delhi-110001, India.

11 Mr. R.C.A. Jain  
Secretary (Agriculture)  
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Krishi Bhavan, New Delhi-110001. India

12 Mr. A.K. Singh  
Additional Secretary (Cooperation)  
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13 Mrs. Anjali Prasad  
Joint Secretary (Cooperation)  
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14 Mr. S.S. Prasad  
Chief Director (Cooperation)  
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- 15 Mr. Prabhat Kumar  
P.S to Hon'ble Union Minister of  
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Ministry of Agriculture  
Krishi Bhavan, New Delhi-110001, India.
- 16 Mr. Tejpal Singh  
P.S to Hon'ble Minister of State for  
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Chairman, U.P State Coop Union &  
Governing Council Member, NCUI
- 38 Mr. V.P. Singh  
President, Delhi State Coop Union &  
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- 39 Mr. Jagjit Singh  
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- 41 Mr. Mahendra Singh Kalukheda  
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- 42 Mr. H.K. Patil  
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- 64 H.E. Manouchehr Yazdani  
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- 65 Mr. Mohammad-Reza Ramezani  
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# ICA CO-OPERATIVE IDENTITY STATEMENT

## DEFINITION

A Co-operative is an autonomous association of persons united voluntarily to meet their common economic, social and cultural needs and aspirations through a jointly-owned and democratically-controlled enterprise.

## VALUES

Co-operatives are based on the values of self-help, self-responsibility, democracy, equality, equity and solidarity. In the tradition of their founders, Co-operative members believe in the ethical values of honesty, openness, social responsibility and caring for others.

## PRINCIPLES

The Principles of Co-operation are guidelines by which Co-operatives put their values into practice.

**First Principle: Voluntary and Open Membership:** Co-operatives are voluntary organisations, open to all persons able to use their services and willing to accept the responsibilities of membership, without gender, social, racial, political or religious discrimination.

**Second Principle: Democratic Member Control:** Co-operatives are democratic organisations controlled by their members, who actively participate in setting their policies and making decisions. Men and women, serving as elected representatives, are accountable to the membership. In primary Co-operatives, members have equal voting rights [one member one vote], and Co-operatives at other levels are also organised in a democratic manner.

**Third Principle: Member Economic Participation:** Members contribute equitably to, and democratically control, the capital of their Co-operative. At least part of that capital is usually the common property of the Co-operative. Members usually receive limited compensation, if any, on capital subscribed as a condition of membership. Members allocate surpluses for any or all of the following purposes: developing their Co-operative, possibly by setting up reserves, part of which at least would be indivisible; benefiting members in proportion to their transactions with the Co-operative; and supporting other activities approved by the membership.

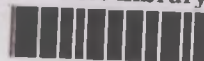
**Fourth Principle: Autonomy and Independence:** Co-operatives are autonomous, self-help organisations controlled by their members. If they enter into agreements with other organisations, including governments, or raise capital from external sources, they do so on terms that ensure democratic control by their members and maintain their Co-operative autonomy.

**Fifth Principle: Education, Training and Information:** Co-operative provide education and training for their members, elected representatives, managers, and employees, so that they can contribute effectively to the development of their Co-operatives. They inform the general public – particularly young people and opinion leaders – about the nature and benefits of Co-operation.

**Sixth Principle: Co-operation among Co-operatives:** Co-operatives serve their members most effectively and strengthen the Co-operative Movement by working together through local, national, regional and international structures.

**Seventh Principle: Concern for the Community:** Co-operatives development of their communities through policies approved by their members.

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