

WOMEN TOWARDS THE NEW MILLENNIUM



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Report of the First Regional Women's Forum
26 October, 1999
Seoul, Korea

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WOMEN TOWARDS THE NEW MILLENNIUM

(Report of the First Regional Women's Forum)

26 October, 1999

Seoul, Korea

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FOREWORD

Gender issues have always been a priority within the policy and development thrusts of the ICA and the Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific specifically.

Until early 1980s, the Regional Office used to have a separate section for women's co-operative activities. But in early 1991, the ICA felt the increasing need to integrate women's issues in co-operative development and Gender Integration and these activities were enhanced.

A number of surveys on the situation of gender in co-operatives in the Region were conducted in different countries, and reports of these surveys were published. Therefore, the ICA Regional Office held a regional consultation in Colombo during April- May 1992, a regional conference in Tokyo during March 1993, sub-regional workshops in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia and Pune, India, during 1995-96, as well as a regional consultation meeting in Bangkok, Thailand during September, 1996. I am happy to acknowledge the tremendous support provided by the Japanese Consumers Co-operative Union in particular.

Together with the Asian Women in Co-operative Development Forum (AWCF), the ICA co-sponsored a regional conference on 'Women in Decision-making in Co-operatives' in Tagaytay City, Philippines, during 1997.

After the 2nd Regional Assembly of the ICA in Malaysia, the ICA Regional Office took the initiative to set up a Pro-tem Regional Women's Committee, with the support of ANGKASA, Malaysia.

All these efforts culminated in the formation of a Regional Women's Committee, which held its first meeting in Seoul during October, 1998, followed by the first-ever ICA Regional Women's Forum on 26 October, 1998.

Simultaneously, the ICA Regional Office has also collaborated with other organisations, especially the ILO Coopnet in preparing a Leadership Training Manual for Women in Co-operatives. Though this has taken time due to certain practical difficulties, I am confident that the manual will be completed very soon, after which pilot training

programmes could be organised in one or two countries. This manual, will be instrumental for co-operatives in training women co-operative leaders and potential leaders, which will ultimately result in improving women's participation in co-operative leadership in the Region.

I have noted that there is definitely an improvement in the participation of women in decision-making processes in co-operatives, though I admit that the situation is still far from satisfactory.

I have also noted that a different approach has been used to bring out a report of the First Regional Women's Forum. Instead of just reporting on the proceedings of the Forum, this report gives a ringside view on gender integration/women development activities to-date, which maps out a more tangible route to further development, that brings gender in the category of analysis.

I must commend the un-tiring efforts and enthusiasm of Ms. Rahaiah Baharen, Chairperson of the ICA Regional Women's Committee, in organising the first-ever regional Women's Forum.

I trust this booklet will be of use to the co-operative leaders, both men and women, to create enabling situation in their respective co-operatives for women to take more active leadership roles in the future.

New Delhi,
March 27, 2000

Robby Tulus
Regional Director

TOWARDS THE NEW MILLENNIUM

We are at the beginning of the next millennium. In this report, we have looked back most of our activities, which ICA conducted in order to achieve gender equality in cooperatives. Because of every effort of pioneers together with grassroots activists, we have finally given a birth of the Regional Women's Committee, however, on the other hand, we just arrived a starting point to go further.

I would like to introduce the Vision of ICA-ROAP, here; We, the ICA in Asia and the Pacific, believe in the ICA Co-operative Identity Statement (ICIS) as our guidepost to promote and enhance co-operative development in the region. As you can see, it would not be able to be achieved without women's equal participation

Moreover, I am very happy to inform you that the ICA Regional Women's Committee has already decided to organise the second Regional Women's Forum in Singapore in 2000. It would be held along with the Regional Assembly, could be very good opportunity to unite women co-operators, and related people all together.

Finally I should apologise that it has taken too much time to publish this report, however, still I believe this could be useful and important to come over not only gender and women issues but also every type of them in co-operatives. I really hope in the New Millennium we could reach and develop complete gender-equal society. It would make us happiest ever, and co-operative value would be more brightened in such a society.

Yukiko Yamamoto
(Former) Gender Programme Advisor,, ICA-ROAP

**FIRST PRINCIPLE
OF ICA CO-OPERATIVE IDENTITY STATEMENT**

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.

RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE FIRST REGIONAL WOMEN'S FORUM

For the Enhancement of Women's Participation in Leadership and Decision-making in Co-operatives

Preamble

We, the participants (130 women and men), of the First ICA Regional Women's Forum in Asia and the Pacific, representing 19 co-operative organizations and an international development agency from 12 countries (India, Indonesia, Japan, Korea, Malaysia, Mongolia, Nepal, the Philippines, Singapore, Sri Lanka, Thailand and Finland):

- ◆ Express our concern over the under-representation of women in leadership and decision-making levels in co-operatives at all levels; and,
- ◆ Aware of the benefits that co-operatives derive from increased participation of women in leadership and decision-making;

hereby recommend to the Regional Assembly, the following actions at national and regional levels to achieve a balanced representation of women and men in leadership and decision making in co-operative organizations at all levels:

Proposed actions to be taken at ICAROAP level:

1. To ensure the participation of women in all specialized bodies of ICAROAP;
2. To organize Regional Women's Forum in conjunction with ICA Regional Assembly.

Proposed Actions to be taken at ICAROAP

member-organization level:

Legislation

1. To review and propose amendments to co-operative laws, rules, regulations and by-laws to promote equality between women and men;

Staff

2. To appoint a contact person responsible for coordinating and disseminating information concerning matters and activities related to women in co-ops;

Programs

3. To promote gender awareness among women and men co-op members, leaders and staff;
4. To increase women's opportunities in education and training on:
 - a) leadership,
 - b) co-op principles, co-op management and other technical areas, through seminars, workshops, distance education, exposure programs, etc.;
5. To organize national women's forum once a year;

Funds

6. To allocate funds for programs and activities supportive of women's increased participation in and benefits from co-ops.

For the Regional Women's Forum Participants,

Hj. Rahaiah bt. Baheran
Chairperson

Hatsuko Omori Rameshwari Ramachandra
Vice-Chairpersons

MILESTONES OF GENDER INTEGRATION IN ASIA AND THE PACIFIC

- 1990-1991 ICA Regional Office (ICA ROAP) initiates Gender Integration Activities in the Region by getting a series of Surveys in member countries in the Region and publishes 14 country studies and one Regional Overview.
- Apr-May, 1992 ICA ROAP holds a Gender Consultation in Colombo, Sri Lanka.
- March, 1993 ICA ROAP holds a Gender Conference in Tokyo, Japan.
- August, 1995 ICA holds a Sub—Regional workshop on Gender Integration in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.
- April, 1996 ICA holds a Sub-regional workshop on Gender Integration in Pune, India.
- June, 1996 The 2nd ICA Regional Assembly in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, approves a proposal to set up a Regional Women's Committee.
- Sept., 1996 ICA holds a Regional Consultation Meeting on Gender Integration in Bangkok, Thailand.
- Feb., 1997 A Protem Regional Women's Committee formed.
- May, 1997 ICA/AWCF holds a Conference on Women in Decision Making in Co-operatives in Tagaytay, Philippines.
- Oct., 1998 Regional Women's Committee holds its first meeting in Seoul, Korea.
- Oct., 1998 The first Regional Women's Forum held in Seoul, Korea.

THE COLOMBO CONSULTATION

Regional Consultation on Gender Integration in Co-operatives

Colombo, Sri Lanka

27 April - 02 May, 1992

Gender Consultation held in Colombo in 1992 was an attempt to identify the proper strategies for future plans in gender planning in co-operatives at the national and regional level. A group of carefully selected gender-specialists, researchers, traditional and unconventional co-operative leaders came out with conclusions and strategies for future including some guidelines for a broad based gender planning conference.

Conclusions and Recommendations

- Σ Considering the direct implications of family on gender roles and relations, co-operatives should pursue programmes and activities that will involve all members of the family; bring about new values regarding the roles of men and women through education and other means; demonstrate co-operatives as an institution dedicated to the development of the whole family.
- Σ Considering the fact that in many countries in Asia-Pacific women are not able to become full members of co-operatives due to legal, financial, attitudinal and other constraints, co-operatives must strive, through education, joint lobbying and other means, to break down these constraints and afford equal participation of women in co-operative activities, to avoid the waste of half the labour force.
- Σ Co-operatives have all along been having a 'member approach' to women – i.e. they are members and therefore they are equally served, which is not so. Co-operatives should, therefore, address to gender issues, roles and relations and develop in-house capabilities to handle gender issues and programmes, provide material and financial resources to undertake these tasks and train trainers and other personnel to effectively pursue gender programmes. Gender awareness

training should be given to all leaders, especially male leaders of co-operatives at all levels.

- Σ Co-operatives should set aside a percentage of their own funds for programmes and activities for women-in-development and to prepare/train women to develop leadership competencies and capabilities. Co-operatives should change the direction of gender programmes from 'poverty alleviation and income generation' to 'empowerment of women'.

THE TOKYO CONCLUSIONS

Asia Pacific Conference on Gender Planning in Co-operatives
Tokyo, Japan
01 - 06 March, 1993

The regional Conference in Gender Planning in Co-operatives, held in Tokyo, during the spring of 1993 was a landmark on the regional co-operative gender programme. The event culminated the research programme on gender issues in co-operatives in the Region, initiated in 1991. It was also beginning of a new phase of gender planning in Co-operatives in the Region. There were 43 participants (31 were women, and 12 were men) from 14 countries.

Statement on Gender Integration in Co-operatives and Call for Action

THE CONFERENCE:

- Realising that women have a vital role to play in all socio-economic spheres of life; in the family, the community, the nation and the world, and therefore, women's skills, energy and values must be utilised,
- Understanding that while sex is a biological fact or determined at birth, gender describes a social relationship between women and men, which can be changed,
- Recognising that women constitute half of the population of the world, they should become equal partners in social and economic development to achieve a better quality of life,
- Taking into account the UN Declaration on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women, and that discrimination against women is incompatible with human dignity, preventing women's participation on equal terms with men in co-operatives is a negation of the spirit of the declaration as well as belief of the principle of democracy of co-operatives,
- Acknowledging that customs, traditions, legislation as well as lack of education and training can be obstacles for women to develop and utilise their potential,

- Understanding that a growing number of women are suffering from poverty, starvation and war, and recognising the obligations on the part of the co-operatives to meet the needs of such groups of women in accordance with the basic co-operative values,

THE CONFERENCE CONCLUDES:

- It is imperative that co-operatives at all levels formulate policies of gender integration for sound co-operative development, thus contributing to peace, social justice and a sustainable Earth. It is vital that co-operatives in every country promote affirmative actions to achieve gender integration.

CALL FOR ACTION:

- Set up an information system to collect and disseminate gender statistics and other related information.
- Make women and men aware of practical and strategic needs.
- Provide informal and formal vocational training, which widens the choice of women and men.
- Create and utilise networks among segregated and mixed co-operatives in primary, secondary, national and global levels.
- Organise national and international co-operative markets for co-operatives' products and handicrafts, especially among co-operatives.
- Encourage entrepreneurship by providing access to other services through co-operatives.
- Mobilise international support for technical and financial resources for achieving gender integration.
- Each co-operative develops a co-operative Master Plan for Gender Integration within a certain time frame to reach a realistic and measurable goal.
- Introduce better-living programmes such as health awareness, childcare, and nutrition, to help women become active participants in co-operative development.
- Expose co-operative leaders to values such as concern for

eradication of poverty, work for peace and sustainable environment.

- Establish a regional human resource pool of volunteers and officials for providing experiences and training.
- Set up committees committed to gender issues at all levels – vertical and horizontal.
- Organise segregated women co-operatives in the instances of customs, traditions and religious constraint.
- Undertake affirmative actions to ensure and support women's active and effective participation in the decision-making of their co-operatives.

THE KUALA LUMPUR AND PUNE SUMMARIES

ICA-ROAP Sub-Regional Workshop
on Gender Integration in Co-operatives
1)18-22 August, 1995 - Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia
2)15-20 April, 1996 - Pune, India

The two Sub-Regional Workshops on Gender Integration in Co-operatives were organised in accordance with the 'Statement and Call for action' of the Regional Conference on Gender Planning in Co-operatives in Tokyo, in 1993.

The Sub-Regional Workshops had two objectives, one was to test the training modules drafted by the staff of ICA-ROAP; and the other was to sensitize Co-operative leaders on gender issues in Co-operatives and to train them on Gender Analysis and Planning and to draw action plans for their respective countries.

Executive Summary

Two Sub-Regional Workshops on Gender Integration in Co-operatives were held in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, from 18 to 22 August, 1995, and in Pune, India, from 15 to 20 April, 1996.

These workshops were organised by the ICA ROAP in collaboration with the National Co-operative Organisation of Malaysia (ANGKASA), the National Co-operative Union of India, and the Vaikunth Mehta National Institute of Co-operative Management, Pune, India.

The workshops were aimed at sensitizing participants on gender issues in co-operatives and imparting the skills of gender Analysis and Planning through training sessions, so that the participants could analyse gender issues in their respective countries and draft action plans to solve the problems. Besides this, the workshops were also aimed at deepening understanding of gender situations in participating countries through exchange of experiences.

The workshop participants were decision-makers and co-operative leaders from national level organisations. In Kuala Lumpur, 23 participants, including 7 males and 16 females from 8 countries (Fiji, Indonesia, South Korea, Malaysia, Myanmar, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand and Vietnam) attended the workshop. In Pune, 13

persons, including 4 males and 9 females, from national co-operative organisations in 4 countries (India, Nepal, Israel and Sri Lanka) participated. Totally, there were 36 participants – 11 males and 25 females. In both these workshops, the participants had training sessions on gender sensitization. Through the sensitivity training, participants discussed the differences between gender and sex, how gender is constructed, and how gender roles adversely influence on women's status and situations. Participants agreed that if women's potential are fully recognized and utilised, women could contribute to develop societies and nations as well as men. As democratic, people-oriented organisations, co-operatives should realise the problems caused by gender relationships and should take necessary actions to eliminate gender imbalances in the co-operative movement. Almost all the participants enjoyed discussions, even though they had different cultural backgrounds and experiences.

The participants presented the current situation of women's participation in their respective countries. It showed that the percentage of women's participation in co-operatives differ from country to country. For example, even among the agricultural co-operatives, the Philippines shows the highest percentage of women members of around 60%, Sri Lanka had 30 to 40%, Thailand 22%, while Korea had only 10.7%. The smallest may be Nepal, which has just 4%. In terms of sectors in general, consumer co-operatives and credit co-operatives show larger participation of women (more than 50 to 70%). Compared with this, women's participation as leaders (in management committees or board of directors) is very low in every country.

It was the general opinion among the participants that the reasons of low participation of women in co-operatives are as follows:

- Women have to bear multiple burdens, so that they do not have enough time to participate in co-operative activities. (Ms. Uma Karki, Nepal explained the fact that Nepalese women farmers have to work on an average of 16 to 20 hours a day).
- Women lack experience or knowledge as leaders and therefore they have little self-confidence to become leaders.
- Social values hinder women from participating in co-operative activities.

The participants have also realised that women could have little ac-

cess to co-operative services such as loans and credit, training, etc. since they do not qualify to become members.

Through discussions and presentations, the participants had come to a common understanding that co-operatives should solve these problems to develop sustainable co-operative and human development.

As national co-operative organisations, three countries provided their experiences and their efforts in trying to overcome problems relating to gender issues. Thailand presented their country action plan and its contents. A Malaysian delegate talked about women's initiatives to make their contributions visible in co-operatives, and the Sri Lankan participant narrated their experiences in setting up policies and conducting gender sensitivity training.

After the training sessions on gender Analysis and Planning, all the participants drafted action plans for gender integration in their respective countries. These action plans brought out many ideas for gender integration in co-operatives, such as a research on women's participation in co-operatives, conducting seminars/workshops on gender sensitivity, creation of leadership training programmes for women, lobbying and campaigning for strengthening women's participation, amendment of by-laws for providing reservations for women, establishment of women's committees, etc. to bring women's views to the mainstream.

As a result of the efforts by the member organisations, gender agenda has become more visible than before in the region as a whole. We at the ICA ROAP hope that the participants of the two workshops, who were exposed to gender issues, would practice what they have learned and planned in the workshops, in their respective countries. This, we believe, would promote gender equality in the co-operative movement in the Region.

THE BANGKOK CONCLUSIONS

ICA Regional Consultation Meeting
on Gender Integration in Co-operatives
Bangkok, Thailand
17-20 September, 1996

This meeting aimed to enable participants to review what had been done for achieving gender equality in Co-operatives in the region since the ICA-ROAP Gender Planning Conference was held in Tokyo, Japan, in 1993, where participated countries drafted their respective action plan for Gender Integration. This meeting also intended to discuss further actions of Co-operatives at national and regional levels to make co-operatives in the region more women-friendly and gender responsive, which would lead co-operatives more democratic, equitable and sustainable. There were 27 participants (20 females and 7 males). Out of 27, 20 were delegates of national co-operative organisations from 10 countries and two were from co-operative promoting organisations, while the rest five were guest speakers and staff from ICA.

Conclusions and Recommendations

The Regional Consultation Meeting came up with the following recommendations:

- Set up a Gender-disaggregated data base.
- Increase the number and participation of women in co-operatives by organising women's groups, recruiting from the youth, and sensitivity training to be made part of all youth programmes at national and international levels.
- Increase the number of women leaders by implementing existing gender policies, focussing on the importance of women's participation, conducting leadership training for women, changing legislative policies, and promoting participatory / non-hierarchical approach in leadership process.
- Conduct gender sensitivity training for co-operative leaders, staff and members, by holding trainers' training at regional and national levels, organising trainers' conference to exchange experiences, institutionalising programmes to be sustained by mobiliz-

ing budget for gender training from internal and external sources, and establishing linkages with women NGO groups to strengthen gender related activities.

- Hold follow-up programmes and monitor and coordinate progress at national and regional levels in co-operatives.
- Modify restrictive co-operative legislation and by-laws, after a thorough review of co-operative laws in each country.
- Create more awareness of gender issues in the region.
- Produce more materials and publications on gender activities and women's contributions to co-operatives.
- Increase women's representation at the regional assembly of the ICA ROAP.
- Raise funds for women/gender-related programmes and activities.

THE TAGAYTAY DECLARATION

Preamble

We, women and men leaders, staff and members of co-operative organisations and non-governmental organisations, promoting co-operatives from Asia and Pacific (specifically Australia, India, Indonesia, Japan, Malaysia, Nepal, Pakistan, Philippines, Singapore, Sri Lanka, Thailand and Vietnam), Europe (specifically, Denmark, Finland, Sweden) and North America (specifically, Canada) participating in and contributing to the successful reflection and deliberation in the regional conference on 'Women in Decision Making in Co-operatives' organised by the Asian Women in Co-operative Development Forum and the International Co-operative Alliance-Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific, held in Tagaytay City, Philippines, on May 8-9, 1997,

Aware of the gross marginalisation of women in the leadership and decision-making structures and processes in co-operatives at all levels: primary, national, regional and global,

Determined to increase the number and level of participation of women in the leadership and decision-making structures and processes in co-operatives at all levels,

Acknowledging the voices and concerns of our other sisters and brothers in the co-operative movement in the Asia and the Pacific, and other regions in the world, who share our concern and commitment for increased participation by women in the leadership and decision-making structures and processes in co-operatives,

Dedicate ourselves unreservedly to promote and advocate the increased participation of women in the leadership and decision-making in co-operatives, agreeing that such goal requires the co-operation and solidarity of all co-operators: leaders, staff- women and men – as we strive to create a more caring and effective leadership in co-operatives in to the 21st Century.

We reaffirm our beliefs:

‡ In the co-operative principles of democratic member control, voluntary and open membership, member economic participation, autonomy and independence, education, training and informa-

tion, co-operation among co-operatives, and concern for community,

- ‡ In the co-operative values of democracy, equality, equity, solidarity, self-help, and self-responsibility,
- ‡ In the ethical values of honesty, openness, social responsibility, and caring for others, on which co-operatives all over the world were and are organised on these bases.

We are convinced that:

- Women and men have different needs, interests, priorities and styles of leadership and decision-making arising from their specific roles and situations, and that both women's and men's needs can only be adequately and appropriately addressed if women and men are equally represented in the decision-making processes in all structures, including in co-operatives; and that, addressing these needs will result to the progress of these structures;
- The exclusion of women and the failure to incorporate women's concerns in decision-making and leadership levels and processes in all structures, represents a major loss to society as a whole; and to co-operatives in particular, translates into a loss of half the potential, talent and experience pool that can contribute to the growth and progress of co-operatives;
- All co-operative members and leaders, women and men, are bound and at the same time, have a role to play in increasing the number and participation of women in decision-making and leadership in co-operatives in all levels: primary, national, regional, and global.

We are aware and recognize that:

- The gross marginalisation of women in decision-making and leadership levels and processes in structures in society, including in co-operatives is due to:
 - cultural beliefs and socialization processes that result to women's subordinate position compared to men and restrict women from being more involved in public life,
 - discrimination (explicit and covert) against women in access to education and training,

- institutional settings that are governed by male norms, and thus, reflect men's needs and situation more than women's different needs and experience, and,
- in the limited number of women in co-operative membership;
- Women's number and participation in decision-making and leadership structures and processes in co-operatives must be increased for the following reasons:
 - ‡ women are more critical of the traditional definition of politics and of the use of power: too centralized, too hierarchical and too autocratic; women leaders will bring in a different kind of leadership in co-ops;
 - ‡ if there are more women decision-makers in co-operatives, co-operatives' focus can be enlarged in such a way that women-specific needs will be included; women can influence co-ops to use resources that will help correct gender inequality and inequity not only in co-ops but also in society at large;
- Efforts have been made to increase the number and participation of women in decision-making and leadership in co-operatives, but these efforts are inadequate, and in some cases, ineffective in achieving this goal as evidence in the:
 - still marginal number of women in decision-making and leadership positions in co-operatives, especially in the national, regional and global levels,
 - in the barriers that continue to keep women from these positions such as co-op practices, standards, and processes in selecting leaders,
 - in the exercise of leadership duties and in the recognition of contributions as leaders;

We are determined to:

- Amend laws, revise, and where necessary, create structures to increase the membership of women in all types of co-operatives.
- Create an environment that is conducive to partnership between women and men and supportive of increased participation by women in leadership and decision-making in co-operatives at all levels, primary, national, regional and global, and other structures in society: family, community and law;

- Continue our advocacy on gender equality, gender equity, and the empowerment of women in co-operatives by transforming our co-operatives to be sensitive and responsive to the needs of both women and men members;
- Set up systems and take immediate steps to provide women with the necessary education, training and experience in order to be effective as leaders;

We commit ourselves to:

Bring co-operative practice in line with co-operative theory and values by pursuing and creating a kind of leadership in co-operatives that is:

- consistent with co-operative principles;
- democratic, participatory, collaborative, consultative and accountable to members;
- gender responsive where women and men work together for the betterment of family, workplace and society; and
- responsive to the needs and situation of the disadvantaged.

We hereby adopt and commit ourselves as leaders, members, staff, volunteer promoters and organisers of co-operatives to implement the Platform of Action* prepared. We call on the International Co-operative Alliance and its members, other co-operative movements, the Asian Women in Co-operative Development Forum and other networks of gender and co-operatives, non-government organisations and women's organisations promoting co-operatives to fully commit themselves and contribute to the implementation of the Platform of Action.

* *Copies of Platform of Action are available from Asian Women in Co-operative Development Forum (AWCF), 227, J.P. Rizal Street, Project 4, Quezon City, 1109, Philippines – Telefax: (63-2)437-4420; E-mail: awcfmnl@wtouch.net.*

THE PROCEEDINGS OF THE FIRST REGIONAL WOMEN'S FORUM

26 October, 1998

Opening

The First ICA Regional Women's Forum, with over 130 participants from co-operative and non-governmental organisations from Asia-Pacific and Europe, started at 9:40 in the morning of 26 October, 1998. Ms. Yukiko Yamamoto, Secretary of the ICA Regional Women's Committee for Asia and the Pacific, played Emcee and explained the time schedule of the Forum briefly.

Royal Professor Ungku A. Aziz, Chair of Asia and Pacific regional Assembly made his opening remarks by stating that the Forum would be the culminated climax of the movement toward the gender equality in Co-operatives. He mentioned the cultural aspects in Asian region and the importance of education for women under such a circumstance. Also he focused on the necessity of the practical programme for grassroots women in co-operatives to increase women leaders. Prof. Aziz lastly thanked all the effort from National Agriculture Co-operative Federation of Korea (NACF) and the Agricultural Co-operative College, which kindly provided its premise for the Forum.

Mr. Chung Dae-Kum, Standing Auditor of NACF expressed heartfelt appreciation for all participants from home and abroad. He mentioned about women's heavy burden generally and universally, and their great contribution to families and societies. He stressed that we have to remove the gender-biased convention and develop the potential women in order to overcome various social problems, such as poverty, hunger, and food security. He showed his expectation to the Regional Women's Committee, which could provide good opportunities to deeply discuss women's issues.

Right after the welcome remark of Mr. Chung, Mr. Shim Kyou-Bo, Dean of Agricultural Co-operative College (ACC) also gave participants warm greetings from ACC. He quoted from some statistics, which show women work longer than men in the world except North America, and it can be seen in agricultural co-operatives in Korea. In this regard, he introduced the policy of NACF, which has been trying

to have more female Board of Directors in all member organisations in order to reflect women's voice to the movement. He also briefed the historical background of ACC and its activities like Development Programme in rural area or International Trading Programmes.

Mr. Robby Tulus, Regional Director of ICA-ROAP followed it with his small presentation about ICA structure and the activities. It was revealed that ICA was founded in 1895 in London, and now is one of the largest NGO, which has over 750 million individual members in more than 90 countries; Although there are five regions two third of the individual members are in Asia and the Pacific Region; ICA has instituted the Regional Assembly once in two years since 1992 in order to implement more democratic decision-making. He introduced the achievement of Tagaytay Conference, which was taken place in 1997 as a milestone of the movement toward the gender-equality in Co-operatives, and the Platform of Action can develop women leadership through their empowerment. He also stated on the economic turmoil in Asian countries. It has given more burdens to women, and we have to analyze very carefully the situation we are in. He emphasized that women rights must not be subjected to negative aspects, but women have equal power to overcome this crisis. In this regard he mentioned the importance of awareness, which leads positive behavior to achieve the goal of gender equality. He lastly expected all participants to create encouraging recommendation or conclusion, which can be raised to the Regional Assembly as resolution.

Ms. Rahaiah Baهران took over Mr. Tulus to explain the Overall aim and the Direction of the Forum. Firstly she reminded all participants the Consultation Meeting in Colombo, Sri Lanka held in 1992. She mentioned that since then the continuous activities have been going on in both many countries and ICA, and especially a lot of efforts have been paid to establish the network among women co-operators in the Region. She reported the ICA Regional Women's Committee was formally set up, and its first meeting was held just one day prior to the Forum with 12 members and 30 observers. She said 'The Committee is our success, our fruit, our new-born baby.' She expressed her appreciation to ANGKASA, the Global Women's Committee, Japanese Consumers' Co-operative Union and all friends, who made the Forum possible. Also she introduced some activities, which were implemented to form the Committee and to organise this Forum in last two years. She lastly suggested to all participants to create very

concrete message to enhance women's participation at all levels to the General Assembly, which was held soon after the Forum in order to show women's voice, views, and opinions to the delegates, who are almost consisted by men.

Ms. Yamamoto delivered the vote of thanks on behalf of participants at the end of the opening session.

Panel Discussion on Women Leadership in Society and in co-operatives from various perspectives

The panel discussion opened at 10:45 after the short break. The first resource person, Ms. Lorraine Corner, Regional Programme Advisor, UNIFEM Asia and Pacific delivered her presentation on the global situation of the women leadership. Her presentation had mainly 4 parts, 'what is women's current situation?', 'why women should be in leadership?', 'why women leaders marginalised?', and 'What can be done?'.

She outlined the current women's status in government, in the labour Force, in United Nations, in the private sector. Roughly and generally women's participation is getting increased at junior level, however, still there are few women in higher positions. She importantly figured out the positive impacts of women managers and leaders in the private sector, who can meet needs and demands of women consumers.

Ms. Lorraine then revealed why women should share leadership; there are two major arguments; one is human rights, and the other is practical and efficiency. She pointed out the dangerous possibility of lack of women's participation, which can be biased against women. Also she emphasized the fact, that women improve decision-making, because women have different roles, needs, and priorities, and meeting women's needs benefits children and families including men. However, women tend to lack experience or training, and institutional setting reflects men's need and situation; that is why women are marginalised in leadership.

She lastly mentioned what should we do from her rich experience at UNIFEM, to bring women's voice together, to put resources into entry points, to develop advocate to men and to unit each other, not to be divided. Further more, she strongly recommended to spread the positive message whenever and wherever. She showed her great ex-

pectation to have much more women at the next Regional Assembly at ICA-ROAP.

Ms. Raija Itkonen, from Finland, presented her paper on 'Women Leadership among Co-operatives from the Global Perspective'. Firstly she expressed her delight to organising the Regional Women's Forum as a standing member of the ICA Global Women's Committee. She added some more points to Ms. Corner, which revealed that still women's share of management positions does not exceed 20 percent; In many countries women's unemployment rate is higher than men's; and women are often excluded from the formal and informal networks. Also she pointed out that equal pay and equal opportunities legislation has not been working properly, therefore women are usually paid about 20-30 percent less than men.

After she mentioned the equality between women and men is a basic principle of democracy and fundamental human right affirmed by international meetings, she turned to the situation in co-operatives. She figured out that from the very beginning women have played a significant but rather invisible role in co-operatives, however, most co-operatives still continue to conduct policies that exclude half of the human resources and talents from leadership undervaluing the capital represented by women's knowledge and experience.

Obviously, women and men have different values, perspectives and ways of thinking, she added. According to her experience, women communicate more openly and directly, and are better in finding and implementing practical solutions. In this regard, she emphasised proper representation of women in decision-making could meet the needs of members and families, and in order to remain competitive co-operatives should also be aware of the changing challenges in management style. In other words, she mentioned organisations are evolving towards flat, flexible form of management which value diversity and a mix of characteristics of both women and men.

She also explained the actual situation in ICA, though there is no up-to-date reliable global data about women in leadership positions in co-operatives, the information provided to the ICA by a limited number of co-operative organisations shows that development is very uneven. So she underlined the importance and urgent need for the more accurate data for systematic work. She also introduced the new ICA rules adopted in 1997 contain revisions aiming at improved gender representation.

Concluding, she stated that gender equality is for women and men, and it is a win-win, concrete and everyday issue. She suggested strengthening networks linking women co-operators together at local, national, regional and global level, which are needed to address institutional structures, organisational cultures and work places.

She expressed her firm belief that capitalizing on women's full potential could be a re-energising force and a source of competitive advantage to co-operatives enabling them to fulfil their mission as democratic, practical, need-oriented organisations.

THE PANELISTS AT THE FORUM

Ms. Lorraine Corner is currently the Regional Programme Advisor for East and South-east Asia of UNIFEM, the United Nations Development Fund for Women. She has also done a lot of consultancies on gender/women in development in various countries.

Ms. Raija Itokonen is former ICA Global Board. She held the position from 1984 to 1997. She started her co-operative career in 1956 in the then Co-operative Union KK. Now she is responsible for international relations of the Finnish Consumer Co-operative Association.

Ms. Caridad Arquila Maadil is an Elected Chairperson of VICTO (Visayas Co-operative Development Centre), the Philippines. She chairs the Perpetual Help Credit Co-operative (PHCCI) which is the largest co-operatives in the NATTCO (National Confederation of Co-operatives) network. She is also one of members of Association of Gender Advocates in Co-operatives, which is sponsored by NATCCO.

Ms. Hatsuko Omori is a member of the Board of Directors of Tokyo Consumer Co-op and the JCCU (Japanese Consumers' Co-operative Union). She was an active member of JCCU women's Council which was established in 1991 and made sufficient input to JCCU and Japanese Consumers' Co-operatives movement from gender perspective.

Ms. Anita Manchanda is a Director of NCUI (National Co-operative Union of India). She has been working on gender/women issues for years, and made great contribution to Indian Co-operatives as well as the gender activities in ICA Asia and the Pacific region.

THE PROGRAMME OF THE FORUM

- 09.30 **Start**
1. Opening Remarks by Royal Prof. Ungku A. Aziz,
 Chair of Asia and Pacific Regional Assembly
 2. Welcome Remarks from NACF, Korea
 3. Greetings from Agriculture Cooperative College,
 NACF, Korea
 4. ICA structure and its activities by Mr. Robby Tulus,
 Regional Director of ICA-ROAP
 5. Overall Aim and Direction of the Forum by Senator
 Rahaiah Baهران, Chair of (pro-tem) Regional Women's
 Committee
- 10.30-10.45 **Break**
6. Panel Discussion on Women Leadership in Society
 and in Cooperatives from various perspectives *
- 13.00-14.00 Lunch Break, cultural show-traditional dancing
7. Group Discussion on Strategies and Key Areas to
 increase the Participation of Women in Leadership in
 Co-operatives
 8. Presentation and Open Discussion on Strategies and
 Key Areas to increase the Participation of Women in
 Leadership in Co-operatives
- 16.00-16.15 **Break**
9. Review of Actions Taken vis-^--vis Platform of Action
 on the Enhancement of Women's Leadership in Co-
 operatives (from the Tagaytay conference); Issues for
 Future Action
 10. Declaration of the Regional Women's Forum
 11. Closing (18.00)