ICA-Americas Newsletter

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SEMINAR AND I GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF CICOPA-AMERICAS
The activities were held in the framework of the II Cooperative Summit of the Americas gathering participants from 21 countries of the region.
(page 8)

PARLATINO AND ICA-AMERICAS SIGNED AN AGREEMENT TO PROMOTE COOPERATIVES
The aim is to promote legislative reforms to generate a suitable legal framework for the development of cooperatives.
(page 9)

ICA- AMERICAS LAUNCHED GREEN COOPERATIVE CERTIFICATE SERVICE
With this system, ICA-Americas offers cooperatives of the region a service of certification of the environmental quality of their administrative operations.
(page 14)

Inside

Panama Final Declaration: a Guide for Co-operatives in the Americas p. 3

Co-operation is the best ever, single initiative for reducing poverty that the world has ever seen p.4

Interview to Rebecca Kemble Vice President of CICOPA-Americas p.6

Worker Cooperatives Seminar and I General Assembly of CICOPA-Americas p.8

PARLATINO AND ICA-Americas signed an agreement to promote cooperatives p. 9

Interview to Charles Gould ICA Director General p. 10

Interview to Dame Pauline Green ICA President P.12

ICA- Americas launched Green Cooperative Certificate Service P.14

Resolution of nominating ICA for the Nobel Peace Prize p.15

Rio+20 document affirms that co-operatives are key for sustainable development p.15

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Interview to Dame Pauline Green, ICA President

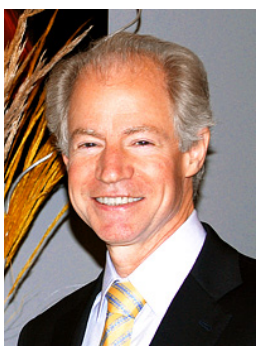
"OUR ROLE IS TO REMAIN A LARGE AND HUGE MASSIVE NETWORK OF LOCAL, AUTONOMOUS, MEMBER-OWNED, SUSTAINABLE ENTERPRISES ACROSS THE WORLD"

(page 12)





PANAMA FINAL DECLARATION: A GUIDE FOR CO-OPERATIVES IN THE AMERICAS



CHARLES GOULD:
"WE ARE BEGINNING TO SEE A MUCH MORE ASSERTIVE VOICE FROM THIS PART OF THE WORLD ON THE ICA ISSUES"

REBECCA KEMBLE:
"IN WORKER COOPERATIVES WE ARE TALKING NOT ABOUT CREATING JOBS BUT CREATING LIVELIHOODS"





Manuel Mariño
ICA-Americas
Regional Director

II Cooperative Summit of the Americas was a success

The success of this Summit could be measured in the number of participants (more than 1.000), the representation of most of the countries in the continent (there were participants from more than 20 countries) or in the academic and human level of the guest speakers and expositors. We could also measure its success in the high level of enthusiasm of the co-operators and their active role in the roundtables and forums and in all the experiences and ideas shared. There is no doubt that the joint work of ICA-Americas with the host organizations in Panamá, IPACOOP and CONALCOOP, had a lot to do with this positive outcome and it shows what can be reached through cooperation.

However, the real success of the Summit will only be measured in the future. That is, the work done in Panama from May 28th and 1st June, did not finish there. The Panama declaration -the document that all the participants agreed upon- does not look back but forward. In this declaration, ICA-Americas as well as the cooperative movement as a whole, establish a number of commitments regarding each and every area of work of cooperatives. Fulfilling these commitments and the work towards this objective will make this summit a success.

One of the commitments assumed in the Declaration demanded urgent attention. From June 20th to 22nd, world leaders gathered in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, for the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development or Río+20. The cooperators in the Americas were called to influence as much as they could to finally include in the Final Document of Río+20 a clear commitment of the contribution of cooperatives to sustainable development. The incidence work carried out by the movement is bearing fruit and the proposed objective was fulfilled.

ICA President Dame Pauline Green, said with regards to this milestone: "Members and supporters of co-operatives have long known - co-ops help lift people out of poverty, advance gender equality, give back to the community and address head on the critical issues of sustainable development. What nations did in Rio today was to state that case in writing."

In this 2012 International Year of Cooperatives is excellent news that the Final Declaration of Rio 20 acknowledges the important role of co-ops. It helps make our message more visible!

PANAMA FINAL DECLARATION: A GUIDE FOR CO-OPERATIVES IN THE AMERICAS

The second Co-operative Summit of the Americas took place in Panama from 28th May to 1st June, gathering more than 1,000 international and local participants. The event gave greater insight into the co-operative movement in the Americas and all participants agreed upon a Final Declaration to determine the future direction for the sector to take.

The theme of the Summit was 'Sustainable Development with Social Equity in the Co-operative Model' and it focused on four themes: identity and co-operative business management; development paradigms and social equity; social and environmental responsibility; and public policy and advocacy.

The event was opened by ICA President, Dame Pauline Green, with a truly inspirational lecture. She said the Summit was a great opportunity to send the message of the global co-operative movement to a wider audience: "As a global movement, we have to convince those leaders of all nations, who understand the value of the co-operative economy, to help us incorporate this key message in their agendas.

She also highlighted that "our values define our identity".

"For two centuries our values have served to reduce conflict, build social cohesion, give people skills and experience, develop local leadership and support women in their economic activities. Co-operatives have lifted millions out of poverty with dignity, allowing them to build their own businesses and giving them a future. Co-operation is the best initiative in the world to reduce poverty" she said.

During the Summit, Ramón Imperial, President of the International Co-operative Alliance for the Americas, said this Summit was the "most important event in the Americas in 2012 International Year of Cooperatives". Then he discussed one the aspects cooperatives have to work on. "There is an imbalance in cooperatives. We emphasize on the co-operative philosophy but neglect the business side. We must combine good products and good services with good management," he explained.

Manuel Mariño, Regional Director of ICA Americas, focused on the importance of integration. "The issue of integration of co-operatives in Latin America is a serious problem. In many countries, the co-operative movement is fragmented. No integration organizations are truly representative and comply with their duties. We must concentrate on what unites us not what sets us apart."

The event was hosted by IPACOOP, the institute responsible for delivering the state's co-operative policy, and CONALCOOP, which represents and develops the cooperative movement in Panama.

HIGHLIGHTS OF THE FINAL DECLARATION

After a process of deep reflection and debate, cooperators from the Americas participating in the II Cooperative Summit agreed on a final declaration. It contains specific recommendations to ICA-Americas as well as the commitments that the cooperative movement assumes to put into practice within their different organizations.

The Panama Declaration lays emphasis on the distinctive aspects of the present conditions in which the paradigms of free market are being questioned by millions of people, even experts in economy. "The future of human kind is at risk. It is the moment to take action. The co-operatives of our American continent are facing a challenge, an opportunity and a responsibility" says the declaration.

The document highlights the importance of the agreement signed between ICA-Americas and the Latin American Parliament (PARLATINO for its acronym in Spanish).

They agreed on a project regarding the Framework Law for Cooperatives in Latin America, which was approved by the Economic Commission of the PARLATINO. After signing this agreement Manuel Mariño said: "We must be clear that in many countries, co-operatives are not competing with private companies under the same conditions. This Framework Law provides that level playing field. No privileges are being asked, but everyone will be able to act on the market under the same conditions."

ICA-Americas and the PARLATINO also committed to continuing the tough task of protecting the planet from environmental deterioration. To this end, the Declaration of Panama recommends "To welcome and to promote the agreements of Rio+20 to defend the green economy, form the impact of climatic change".

To read the full declaration (in Spanish) go to http://s.coop/pzp3.

"We have a great story to tell"

"CO-OPERATION IS THE BEST EVER, SINGLE INITIATIVE FOR REDUCING POVERTY THAT THE WORLD HAS EVER SEEN"



ICA President Dame Pauline Green urged co-operators to work on the inclusion of the cooperative model in their government agendas. Green highlighted the fact that co-operatives have taken millions of people out of poverty with dignity, by helping them to build their own co-operative enterprises and giving them a future.

Green started her speech during the opening ceremony of the II Cooperative Summit of the Americas, by bringing the participants all the greeting of the International Co-operative Alliance, "but even more importantly of your one billion fellow co-operators across the world".

She presented some statistics regarding cooperatives in nearly two centuries of life:

"Last year's edition of the ICA's Global 300, the list of the largest 300 co-operatives and mutual enterprises in the world showed that our movement is a global force already.

Together these 300 co-operatives alone are worth 1.6 trillion US dollars, equivalent to the 9th largest economy, and they operate in some of the most competitive industries in the world, banking, in-

surance, agriculture, retail, health, utilities, housing and others. The 300 list includes co-operatives from 25 different countries.

So we know how to run big multi-billion dollar enterprises.

But of course, that is just the largest 300 and we have hundreds and hundreds of thousands of co-operatives – around the world, in fact one recent estimate puts the number at 1.4 million, but we in this room know that co-ops are not just about the size of the balance sheet. We are about people and communities. So it is no wonder then that today the entire co-operative movement is owned by nearly one billion people across the globe.

And the ICA is proud to have in membership co-operatives that represent approximately 75% of that one billion figure.

Currently, as well over 100 million of the world's citizens are employed within a co-operative".

The ICA President said she is led to wonder why it is that the co-operative model is not more prominent in global discussions on how to revive the economy, and how to change it to become a better balanced and more sustainable economy. "Why is it for instance that the G8, the G20, the World Bank are not out promoting co-operative enterprise?" she asked.

> *"It is our duty to ensure that our co-ops are modern, flexible, innovative and fulfilling their purpose."*

Green expressed that one of challenges is that cooperatives do not have a recognised global brand. "Our co-operative model is sustained because it is a huge and growing network of local, autonomous, sovereign enterprises, in a multitude of different sectors of the economy, that have developed according to local needs, local culture and member demands" she said.

"And we may not have a global brand, but we are united. We are united by a set of principles and values that are globally recognised, and we work together in recognition of just that" she added.

According to Pauline Green, what cooperatives and co-operators need to create, is a greater understanding of the value of member owned, democratic, sustainable enterprises – a different sort of global economy in which people are at the core of economic decision making and no longer at its mercy.

In this sense she referred to the ICA Board decision to use this International Year to run one single public awareness campaign to lift the profile and visibility of co-operative enterprise across the world.

"The Board was sure then and remains of the view that if together we can unite around the UN logo and slogan for the Year, we could bring more focussed attention on our co-operative difference. Our belief is that by so doing we will enhance our influence with decision-makers at national and global level, and that in turn will help us to generate and secure public and private resources to continue to grow our movement in the coming decades" she said.

> *"Our co-operative model is sustained because it is a huge and growing network of local, autonomous, sovereign enterprises, in a multitude of different sectors of the economy, that have developed according to local needs, local culture and member demands."*

She concluded by saying that co-operatives themselves need always to be asking if they are fit for purpose. "Are its rules fit for the 21st century? Does the co-op have an active democratic process? Is the local and national co-operative economy growing? What other, new forms of co-ops do local people need? It is our duty to ensure that our co-ops are modern, flexible, innovative and fulfilling their purpose", she explained.

To read the full version of Dame Pauline Green's speech click here.

WORKER CO-OPS: WE ARE TALKING NOT ABOUT CREATING JOBS BUT CREATING LIVELIHOODS

During her stay in Panama, ICA-Americas Newsletter interview Rebecca Kemble, President of the United States Federation of Worker Co-ops and President of CICOPA North America, Vice President of CICOPA-Americas. Rebecca is a member of Union Cab Cooperative where she works as a taxi driver and mediator. She is also a founding member, writer and editor in the newly formed Wisconsin Citizens Media Cooperative. She lives in Madison, WI, USA.

How do you feel about being part of this kind of international event?

An essential part of moving our worker cooperatives movement forward is international solidarity and not just in words, but solidarity indeed. And building networks of strong alliances is critical to the development of our movement.

Once and again we hear that cooperatives are an answer to unemployment. What is the role worker coops are called to play in the present economy?

The situation we find ourselves in now is a situation in which capital, and in particular finance capital, has ruled our economy and the need to make profit has been the predominant driving force in our economy.



In worker cooperatives the driving force is the needs of the members. So, in the mainstream capital economic model people are there to serve the need for profit. In the worker cooperatives model it´s reversed. Economic institutions are there to serve the needs of people. And, since people have direct democratic control over our own institutions we can decide how much profit we make, we can decide how to share that profit, we can decide how to distribute it, not only among the member owners but also in society. Because, a big idea of cooperatives is autonomy, and autonomy doesn't mean independence to be individual human beings. It means that the human beings in society have the power to decide by themselves. But, implicitly in the concept of autonomy is the understanding of the human being as a social being, so it recog-

nizes our need to build institutions together, democratically, fairly and taking into consideration not just selfish needs but the needs of the community.

Thus, worker cooperatives provide a structure and an organizational technology to organize the will of autonomous individuals to create something better for society. And we do this through the means of an economic enterprise. So, the aim of worker cooperatives isn´t to reduce unemployment per se, the aim of worker cooperatives is to meet the needs of the people who form it and to meet the needs of the community and we do it through the vehicle of employment.

It´s a subtle distinction I want to make but very important. It's not just about creating jobs. Paul Singer explained that in Brazil there is full employment, but that is not enough, because people who are employed and whose role in the workplace is just to take a salary and go home, they´re not developing as a human beings.

> *The aim of worker cooperatives isn´t to reduce unemployment per se, the aim of worker cooperatives is to meet the needs of the people who form it and to meet the needs of the community and we do it through the vehicle of employment.*

Human needs (emotional, intellectual, creative, etc.) are met with full participation in worker cooperatives. So, getting back to the idea of wage labour or salary labour, you are still treating the human being as a commodity that sells himself in a market. When we are talking about worker cooperatives, we are talking not about creating jobs but creating livelihoods, which is very different because it encompasses more than just the financial aspect of work.

What was the most important thing discussed today at the first CICOPA-Americas Assembly?

The most important thing is the idea of taking cooperation to a larger scale and building alliances at every level of endeavor. At the basic level of our own worker co-ops we have to cooperate with each other to run a business, and then there is the next level of Federations where we need our individual members at the base co-ops to understand the importance of inter co-operation with other co-ops. We have to stop looking inward and start looking outward, at the world around us and look at the different levels of communities in which we exist. CICOPA-Americas is one level of community in which worker cooperatives exist. And now myself, coming from the country whose government has been the biggest imperial, military, economically exploitative power on the planet, is a very poignant concept. Because I don't represent that government here, I represent the people who have been equally victimized by that government and who have been marginalized in the economy by that government. And it's very sensitive for me, as a delegate from the United States, to be sitting at the table with delegates from, let me say, in particular Mexico and Colombia with whom my government has free trade agreements that have been extremely devastating to the people of those countries.

> *Since people have direct democratic control over our own institutions we can decide how much profit we make, we can decide how to share that profit, we can decide how to distribute it, not only among the member owners but also in society.*

Not only the free trade agreements but the so-called war on drugs that has imposed a level of violence on people from those countries that is really unimaginable. And so, what I hope to bring to this table is the beginning of building more human relationships that will eventually result in political power in the hemisphere, so we can slowly transform these relations of violence and exploitation in the Americas.

WORKER COOPERATIVES SEMINAR AND I GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF CICOPA-AMERICAS



On Wednesday 30th May, a Worker Cooperatives Seminar was held in the framework of the II Cooperative Summit of the Americas. It gathered participants from Panama -as the guest country- and from almost 20 other countries in the region.

The seminar had the objective of "Promoting the relationship between the worker cooperatives of the different regions in the Americas to facilitate and speed up the creation of shared plans, the interchange of information and the decision making process". It was a space for interaction among cooperators from the regions of Mercosur, North America, the Andes region, Central America and the Caribbean, to agree on ideas, proposals and actions to be implemented in the short and long term.

The activity started with a panel on the reorganization process of CICOPA-Americas and the panorama of worker cooperatives in other regions of the world. The panelists were Arildo Mota, president of CICOPA-Americas and Manuel Mariscal, president of CICOPA.

Aware of the challenges posed by the global situation, there was also an academic lecture on the economic situation at continental level and its impact on the cooperative sector.

In addition, a panel integrated by cooperators from different countries addressed the regional situation of these cooperative organizations, their ambitions and obstacles to development and expansion.

Each participant had the opportunity to contribute to the discussion, in the workshop that was focused on the planning of CICOPA -Americas.

Once the seminar finished, the I General Assembly of CICOPA-Americas took place. This was the first official Assembly after the constitution of CICOPA-Americas in November, 2011. Since then, CICOPA Americas-Board has carried out various sessions using virtual platforms.

The I General Assembly included:

- A proposal of governance of CICOPA-Americas
- The ratification of its strategic and operation plan
- A motion supporting the proposal for the modification of the 7th Cooperative Principle
- A proposal regarding the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (Earth Summit Rio+20).

PARLATINO AND ICA-AMERICAS SIGNED AN AGREEMENT TO PROMOTE COOPERATIVES

The Latin American Parliament (PARLATINO for its acronym in Spanish) and the International Cooperative Alliance for the Americas, signed an agreement of cooperation to work together, keep informed and support one another in the pursuit of institutional objectives to benefit cooperatives in this region of the world. The agreement was signed in Panama, during the opening ceremony of the Cooperative Summit of the Americas.



The agreement was signed by the president of the PARLATINO, the Panamanian parliamentarian Elías Castillo, and the Regional Director of ICA-Americas, Manuel Mariño.

Through this initiative both parties agreed to promote legislative reforms to generate a suitable legal framework for the development of cooperatives in Latin America. The main objective of the Framework Law for Cooperatives in Latin America is to serve as a guide for cooperative legislation, so as to regulate all cooperatives regardless of their particular social objective.

Parliamentarian Elías Castillo, as the PARLATINO president, said it was a pleasure to subscribe this cooperation agreement "in a world which is increasingly characterized by individualism and which promotes competition instead of cooperation".

"It's really encouraging to see that the cooperative movement is developing with vigor, thanks to an organization as ICA, which firmly serves and represents cooperatives worldwide" he added.

The PARLATINO and ICA-Americas also committed to supporting the proposal for the creation of a Network of Parliamentarians in the Americas to strengthen relationships among the national parliaments of the continent and the international cooperative movement.

VII PARLIAMENTARIAN MEETING

More than 50 parliamentarians from the whole continent participated in the VII Parliamentarian Meeting which was held on 30th May in the II Cooperative Summit of the Americas organized by ICA-Americas, IPACOOP and CONALCOOP.

This meeting focused on the importance of public policies and cooperative legislation to create a favorable environment for the development of cooperatives, which enables them to be competitive in relation to mainstream enterprises. Another issue address by the meeting was the control of cooperatives observing its particular nature, autonomy and independence.

A shift to the south

"WE ARE BEGINNING TO SEE A MUCH MORE ASSERTIVE VOICE FROM THIS PART OF THE WORLD ON THE ICA ISSUES"



ICA Director General, Charles Gould, travelled to Panama to take part in the II Cooperative Summit of the Americas and the X ICA General Assembly. In an interview with ICA-Americas, he highlighted that this continent is showing leadership worldwide, particularly in cooperative issues.

How do you feel about being here in the II Cooperative Summit of the Americas since this is your first summit in this region?

It's my first time in Panama and my first time in one of the Americas summits and it's very impressive. It's great to be part of welcoming new members and the themes addressed are excellent.

What do you think about the main topic of the Summit: Sustainable Development with social equity?

It's such an important topic and it's one that is getting more recognition. I was just looking at The Global Trends 2030 Report that the European Union has put together.

It is an exhaustive study and it had participants from around the world. They are looking at the big trends that are coming in the next twenty or thirty years. And sustainable development is one of the top three.

This is the result of a number of things; one of them is the raising middle classes around the world which create growing expectations and a growing demand for products. That growing demand for products is putting more pressure on sustainable development. We realize we can't develop, we can't produce at the rate we have, in the same way. It is finally getting the kind of attention is always should have got.

Cooperatives are so well positioned to be a solution to that. Because sustainable development has been a core principle since the earliest times of co-ops. We have an honest position on this, we have an authentic position. Because of the nature of our membership, people who care about their community, care about how services are delivered and how the resources are used. It's great to see the rest of the world has a real interest on this.

How do you see the cooperative movement in this continent?

It's really interesting to watch because America is one of those regions that has seen a lot of shift of influence inside the region. We've seen this globally. In general we keep hearing that there is a shift of influence to the East. But the truth is we have seen a shift to the south as well as a shift to the East.

> *"We have an honest position on sustainable development because of the nature of our membership, people who care about their community, care about how services are delivered and how the resources are used."*

From a cooperative perspective this is great. You feel it when you travel to this part of the world. It's blooming; there is promise. Even when there are problems there's a sense of hope.

We are beginning to see a much more assertive voice from this part of the world on the ICA issues. I think about the resolution that came forward at our last assembly in Cancun on the modification of the seventh cooperative principle. It shows this region is providing leaderships on issues that are important for all cooperatives.

What is your evaluation of the 2012 International Year of Cooperatives so far?

The core message for us is: the year is huge. This is very important. It's an opportunity to build a platform to begin to give our message out. We are doing a lot of foundational work this year. Both in the area of public awareness and media relations and in the area of public policies and advocacy, I can see that the relationships that we are establishing with the media will have a long term effect.

The year gets attention. It gets people say: "Why did the UN declare an International Year of Cooperatives? What are you doing? What are your aspirations? And once they hear that, they realize it's a very compelling story. And people say: "I had no idea. I had no idea there were so many co-operators. I had no idea the reach was so large. I had no idea it was in so many countries. I didn´t know that organization was a cooperative". And that's what we want, because then we can go back and give more information.

AWARENESS CAMPAIGNS ON CO-OPERATIVES

Charles Gould emphasized on the need to remember the three main objectives of the International Year, for any awareness campaign.

Increase awareness

Increase public awareness about cooperatives and their contributions to socio-economic development and the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals.

Promote growth

Promote the formation and growth of co-operatives among individuals and institutions to address common economic needs and for socio -economic empowerment.

Establish appropriate policies

Encourage Governments and regulatory bodies to establish policies, laws and regulation conducive to co-operative formation and growth.

By raising awareness about cooperatives – what they are, and what they do – the IYC 2012 will help to encourage support and development of cooperative enterprises by individuals and their communities.

"OUR ROLE IS TO REMAIN A LARGE AND HUGE MASSIVE NETWORK OF LOCAL, AUTONOMOUS, MEMBER-OWNED, SUSTAINABLE ENTERPRISES ACROSS THE WORLD"



Dame Pauline Green has been part of the Cooperative Movement for more than three decades. In November 2009, she was elected President of the ICA for a four-year period, being the first ever woman president of this organization. In this role, she has travelled the world working on the promotion and defense of cooperatives.

From Panama, where she is attending the II Cooperative Summit of the Americas, she gave an exclusive interview to aciamericas.coop. During the interview, we could discover Pauline Green is a very strong and inspiring woman, willing to continue learning about the power of cooperation.

How do you feel about being here in Panama, taking part in the II Cooperative Summit of the Americas?

This has been a great event actually. The programme is really innovative. What I love about this II Summit is that the cooperators who came are so full of energy and enthusiasm and interested I've found it very invigorating. The debates have been great and I think that it´s a really stimulating environment.

Have you identified the key areas where there is still more work to do?

I think the world is in a very fast moving changing environment. If you think about what's happening around the world; if you think about the difficulties in the economy, the real destruction amongst many of the young people whose lives have been devastated by recession and the financial collapse; if you think about the fast moving technology which is changing the world as we know it and then this old issue of climate change. It is a very strange and confusing time in which the world is going through. So, It´s vital that we keep ahead of the game and one of the things that I think the co-op movement needs to concentrate on is that this is the moment in our history where we have a wonderful opportunity to try to demonstrate the value of the cooperative difference. That we are people-centred businesses and we put people at the heart of decision making.

This is a good message and a good time to give it out. One of the problems is that we are not very good at using yet well enough the social media and networking so we can get that core message out to the people who need to hear it. The people who are demonstrating in the Occupy Movement, the youngsters that are out on the streets in North Africa and Middle East arguing for a fairer society, a freer society; a society that will allow them to engage and have some impact.

And the way they communicate is through twitting, blogs, Facebook,

all of those social media and networks at what a lot of us older people are not so good at. So we need to activate young people and say "Get out there and put your hundred and forty characters about what´s good about the coop movement out on your twit, let´s do it, and make sure that our message is spreading across the world virally through social media". And we need to do it because this is 2012, the International Year of Co-operatives, and if ever there was a time to be ambitious and believe that what we can do really makes a difference in the world, this is it, the moment is right. The situation economically and politically is right, the situation in terms of technology is right and young people is in the right mood to listen to us, to our message, we´ve just got to let it out.

Yesterday during you key speech in the opening of the II Cooperative Summit you talked about the importance of being global. Do you think that regional and cultural differences are a hindrance or strength to the co-op movement?

The cultural, linguistic and religious differences are strengths to us and not a weakness. We have to persuade those in power that the economy that has become the dominant economy has let us all down. And it´s not just a matter of working until we can get it back to like it used to be, because we know it cannot work. It will fail again and will shock even more lives. What we need to do is to persuade people that there is another way to run the economy, there is another way to put people right at the center of decision making. Actually, the economy is there to serve humankind. It´s not the other way round and we´ve lost that understanding about what's the economy for, what we make money for.

We are making money to try to make people's lives easier and better, and to give children opportunities. So, I think our role is to remain a large and huge massive network of local, autonomous, member-owned, sustainable enterprises across the world. The impact we have already on the world is absolutely massive with the largest 300 co-operatives, alone, turnover some 1.6 trillion US dollars, equivalent to the GDP of the world's 9th largest economy, a movement owned by a billion people across the globe and employing 100 million people, which is more than all the multinationals put together, that makes us big now. The trouble is that people don´t perceive us as big, they see as us as some little sort business in the corner somewhere. But, in fact, we are massive and that´s the message that needs to go out.

> *"What we need to do is to persuade people that there is another way to run the economy, there is another way to put people right at the center of decision making."*

> *"We are making money to try to make people's lives easier and better, and to give children opportunities. I think our role is to remain a large and huge massive network of local, autonomous, member-owned, sustainable enterprises across the world."*

What are the highlights of the IYC, which things are you proud of that have happened during the first half of the year?

This first six months are characterized by the brilliant way that the movement across the world is coming together to celebrate this International Year of Cooperatives. Everywhere I´ve been in (and I´ve been in all the continents) they are celebrating the IYC as we wanted them to do it. Because the one thing that ICA asked is that members should have as many events as they like but using the IYC slogan and logo, making it very visible so people can see the rich of the movement all across the world, and that's really working well.

ICA- AMERICAS LAUNCHED GREEN COOPERATIVE CERTIFICATE SERVICE

From 2012, ICA-Americas has a new certification system called Green Cooperative Office. With this system, ICA-Americas offers cooperatives of the American region a service of certification of the environmental quality of their administrative operations.



The certification provides cooperatives with a tool that allows them, in the administrative areas of operation, to manage their performance in the most possible sustainable manner, implementing a culture of management and environmental quality.

This certification is offered to cooperatives aiming to make their environmental commitment more visible. It is designed for offices within any cooperative, no matter which sector they belong to.

This certification encourages practices of eco-efficiency, in order to do the same activity with less pressure on natural resources. As an added value it reinforces public recognition of the environmental efforts of cooperatives.

ICA-AMERICAS REGIONAL OFFICE CERTIFIED AS GREEN OFFICE AND CARBON NEUTRAL OFFICE

The Green Cooperative Certificate is based on the experience of ICA-Americas itself. ICA-Americas Regional Office received in 2011 two certifications concerning its commitment to the environment. After being recognized for its environmentally-friendly practices, ICA-Americas Regional Office worked on the creation of the Green Cooperative Certificate that was launched earlier in 2012.

The Carbon Neutral and Green Office certifications were granted after examining the emission of pollutant gases and after the office assumed a commitment to reduce them.

Both certifications were the result of the annual inventory of greenhouse gas emissions in its daily operation. The inventory was carried out by independent auditors following the scientific method and the principles of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change. Also, the guidelines established by the Costa Rica government were followed.

Jorge Polimeni, Executive delegate of the Bandera Ecológica Foundation and responsible for the inventory of emissions carried out at ICA -Americas, pointed out that the added value of these certifications is that they show the willingness of the organization to make its processes greener. This can pave the way towards eco-efficiency.

As part of the process, ICA-Americas committed to mitigate its emissions of pollutant gases by means of specific measures and additional financial contributions. Manuel Mariño, ICA-Americas Regional Director, said that the organization opted to make this effort to be consistent with the Declaration of Guadalajara and the Cooperative Green Pact. " ICA-Americas wants to set an example" he stressed.

X ICA-AMERICAS REGIONAL ASSEMBLY APPROVED THE RESOLUTION OF NOMINATING ICA AS A CANDIDATE FOR THE NOBEL PEACE PRIZE

The X ICA-Americas Regional Assembly supported an initiative presented by the Canadian cooperative members, to nominate the International Co-operative Alliance (ICA), which represents the co-operative movement worldwide, as a candidate for the Nobel Peace Prize.

Cooperative movements from the region of the Americas are invited to find ways to inform and convince "qualified nominators" as politicians, university professors and previous Nobel Prize laureates in their countries, through letters and other initiatives, about the importance of the ICA nomination for such a prestigious award.

The Assembly also voted a proposal to change some points in the ICA-Americas Regulations to be discussed at the General Assembly that will take place in Manchester in October, 2012.



RIO+20 DOCUMENT AFFIRMS THAT CO-OPERATIVES ARE KEY FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

On 22nd June the co-operative movement made history with nations' signing the Rio+20 document which included a strong affirmation that co-operatives are important for agricultural development, jobs and for social development and poverty reduction.

Rio+20 was attended by 190 countries in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, from June 20-22, 2012. The focus of the conference was to advance a "green economy" and also focus attention on creating a framework for moving forward on sustainable development.

Commenting on this important milestone, Dame Pauline Green, President of the International Co-operative Alliance (the international organization that represents co-operatives in 100 countries around the world) said: "Members and supporters of co-operatives have long known - co-ops help lift people out of poverty, advance gender equality, give back to the community and address head on the critical issues of sustainable development. What nations did in Rio today was to state that case in writing."

Betsy Dribben is the ICA Director of Policy. Having participated in the UN Rio negotiations since January 2012, Dribben noted time and again ministers and ambassadors told her that in their countries - rich or poor - cooperatives were important. She added that while negotiations were often slow and sometimes punctuated by frustration on every side, at the end of the day they could all agree 'that co-operatives build a better world'. "Just as we've been saying over and over again in this UN International Year of Co-operatives - this values based business model can really make good things happen. Now country leaders at the Rio signing have made it clear 'they finally get it.'"

SHORT ica NEWS

1 The **Global Fund for the International Year of Co-operatives** has almost reached **half a million Swiss Francs**. The appeal helps the ICA raise awareness of the International Year and ensure the co-operative message reaches a global audience - not just a co-operative one. In the US, the National Cooperative Business Association donated US$ 50,000 that helped raise the current total to **CHF 473,527**. A further **42 co-operatives** have also sent donations from different ICA regions. To find out how to support the **ICA's appeal** to raise public awareness of the International Year of Co-operatives visit: www.2012.coop/en/iyc-appeal.

2 **Take part in the World Co-operative Monitor**. Co-operatives are being invited to take part in a global research project to build upon the International Co-operative Alliance's Global300 report. The **World Co-operative Monitor** was launched by the ICA with the **European Research Institute on Cooperative and Social Enterprises (Euricse)** as a better way to determine the **top 300 co-operatives in the world**. Though, the survey also extends beyond finding the top 300 and co-operatives of all sizes are invited to take part in the project. To take part, click here.

3 **Over 10,000 co-operators are set to take part in a global event to celebrate the end of the International Year of Co-operatives.** Booking is set to go live early this month for **Co-operatives United** in **Manchester, UK**, which will bring co-operatives from around the world together in a festival of events and exhibitions to mark the culmination of the International Year of Co-operatives. The three-day event (**31 October-2 November**), organised by the **ICA** with co-hosts the **Co-operative Group** and **Co-operatives UK**, will host the ICA **Extraordinary General Assembly**, the **ICAEXPO** and a number of other conferences, workshops and exhibitions. Over 150 **workshops** will focus sessions on a variety of topics from ethics in business to best practices. The interactive and speaker-led seminars aim to cater for all areas of the co-operative movement. A fringe festival will bring together films, food, theatre, music, art and competitions. For more details about the **General Assembly** visit www.2012.coop/en/ga and to book your place at **Co-operatives United**, visit the official website: www.manchester2012.coop/book-now.

4 **ICA Housing** President, **David Rodgers**, has announced his retirement from the sectoral organisation at the end of his term in 2013. Mr Rodgers, also Chair of the **ICA Housing Board**, started his career in 1971 as a founder member of **Sanford Housing Co-operative**, London, which today maintains a successful sustainable community and recently made a contribution to the International Year of Co-operatives fund.

5 The **International Co-operative Alliance** continues growing globally. Nowadays ICA has **272 member organizations** (234 full members and 38 associate members) from **97 countries** representing approximately **1 billion** individuals members worldwide.

All of your suggestions and proposals regarding the newsletter's contents are very important for us, since our primary goal is to provide a publication enriched by your opinions.

Please send your comments to: communications@aciamericas.coop

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