



---

## ICA GENERAL ASSEMBLY

"Co-operation and Peace in the Era of Globalisation"

15 - 17 October, Seoul - Korea

---

### **Co-operation and Peace in the Era of Globalisation**

**Pancho Ivanov, President CCU Bulgaria**

Right from the beginning, I will allow myself to emphasize the fact that the Bulgarian cooperatives have always put the topic of peace high on the agenda of their development, as an expression of their solidarity with the whole international cooperative movement.

This topic becomes even more relevant in the present age, when the world is forming itself under the strong influence of the irreversible tendency to an increasingly accelerating globalization.

That is why I cordially welcome and without any reservation share the idea that that preservation of the world peace and the role of the cooperative movement in this process was chosen to be the central topic for the ICA General Assembly in Seoul. This is a topic that the International Cooperative Alliance has actively initiated, when performing its important cooperative forums.

In this way the ICA is manifesting the united strong care and will of all national cooperative movements for strengthening the international solidarity and peace all over the world.

To me, this concern is quite naturally because exactly the cooperatives are the organizations whose objectives are to work for the people and their welfare. Their activity is subject to the interests and demands of the farms and households of millions of cooperators all over the world.

We can see the creative character of a cooperative in its social and economic nature. The cooperative has never in its history been and will never be a threat to peace.

On the contrary, all things a cooperative is doing are directed to ensure the people's survival and development, as well as their security, stability and peaceful life.

The people all over the world look at the cooperative as their pacific means to achieve a better life. This is the pacific tool they use to meet the huge challenges of modern globalization.

Peace on the planet is making the calm environment in which the cooperatives express most fully their objectives, principles and values whose main feature is their deep humanism.

In each country the cooperative has its human aims and values which it achieves through developing its human activity based on its human principles. If we take any cooperative principle, we will find out that it is related to all other principles and also to the cooperative's values and objectives. We will find that there is something very strong uniting them, which I can call humanity.

Humanity is running through the complete activity of a cooperative because it is created by the people, it is expressed through the people, in order to satisfy their interests.

That is why we can call cooperative an activity which is orientated towards the necessities of people, which is supporting their farms and households, the development of human resources and communities, and the development of local economies. The cooperatives shall support and protect the environment in which the individual members of society and the communities are living. This exactly is attaching to the cooperative a high degree of social responsibility for the members, for the people and their way of living.

With its activity the cooperative is participating in and contributing to the economic growth. It is involving people in the management in a democratic way, enabling their control over its development.

So, the cooperative makes challenges better bearable by the economically weak strata in society and prevents generation of social tension. The cooperative has its definite contribution to the cause of peace. So, the cooperative has for this cause a real social and economic capacity because it is soaked through by a genuine humanism. The cooperative is helping to form, and is not leading to destruction of human communities. The cooperative will kill nobody; will not deprive anybody of life. It will not bring casualties; will not lead to economic and military ruin, because it is the alternative of anti-humanism and destruction.

The international cooperative movement has its contribution to a more equitable social-political and economic order in the world, led by its inherent humanistic aims. In this way, it is permanently proving its strong adherence to the faith of the present and future generations and its non-transient peace-bringing role.

At the end, as a conclusive thought, I would like to cite the English cooperative functionary Alexander Ludlow who wrote, "Even if the world is moving towards madness, the cooperative movement must know how to be an island of common sense".

Thank you for your attention!