

**First Co-operative Forum for Enhancing the Cooperative Work
12 & 13 June, 2007 in Dubai**

Press Release

The first Co-operative Forum for Enhancing the Co-operative Work was held at Dubai, UAE, on 12-13 June 2007. More than 100 delegates from GCC countries (Gulf Co-operation Council) – United Arab Emirates, State of Bahrain, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, Sultanate of Oman, State of Qatar and State of Kuwait, attended the Forum. Ministry of Social Affairs, Govt. of UAE in collaboration with International Co-operative Alliance, hosted the Forum.

H.E. Mariam Mohammed Khalfan Al Roomi, Hon'ble Minister of Social Affairs, Govt. of UAE, inaugurated the Forum and H.E. Mr. Ivano Barberini, President of ICA presided over the inaugural function.



Following resource persons/speakers were invited by ICA-AP to speak at the Forum:

1. Mr. Shil Kwan Lee, Regional Director, ICA-AP
2. Mr. Hans Muenkner, Professor, Germany
3. Mr. Kim Yook Kon, NACF Korea
4. Mr. Bhagwati Prasad, NCUI, India
5. Mr. Zulkfli Mohd., SNCF, Singapore
6. Mr. Tsubasa Nakamura, Japan, ICA-AP
7. Mr. Rajiv I.D. Mehta, ICA-AP
8. Mr. S.C. Mishra, Professor, India

On the basis of the interaction between co-operative leaders and Govt. officials, following action plan was proposed at the end of the Forum:

01. There is a need of a more comprehensive dialogue between the cooperative movements and the Governments in GCC region to ameliorate the prospects of cooperatives in this potential region.

02. The general development policy environment in the Gulf region reflects inequalities between the corporate and cooperative sectors. As we all know, cooperatives belong to the economically vulnerable user members to get their needs served through the cooperative institution created by them.

Cooperatives as a matter of fact are the most legitimate value driven peoples/community based organizations/enterprises and thus require a fair and preferential treatment over other forms of business organizations. This aspect needs to be incorporated in the national development policy and be reflected clearly for visible impact domestically & internationally.

03. There is a dire need to build the capacity of the cooperatives at primary and secondary levels by the dissemination of right knowledge cum information on cooperatives and the businesses they are in along with the development of managerial and operational skills for optimum utilization of capital and human resources for an assured success of the cooperatives. ICA Asia Pacific will be more than willing to provide necessary technical support in the process of capacity building.

04. Dialogue between government and cooperatives and also at different levels of cooperatives is essential and to yearn for successful sustainable cooperative economy, governments and cooperatives together must strategize exposure cum exchange programs to successful cooperatives in the Asian region. ICA Asia Pacific will be happy to facilitate the visit of cooperative fraternity from the Gulf region to other parts of Asia.