

Shifting the balance to membership

ICA Director General, Iain Macdonald, explains how restructuring the ICA will improve the balance of power for members and regions, and attract *new members* to a more transparent and relevant organisation.

Elsewhere in this edition you will find more detail about the restructuring and subscription proposals. Suffice to say however, that we have reached something of a watershed in the history of ICA. Ever since I joined, nearly six years ago, and long before that, there have been endless and often fruitless discussions about how ICA can become more modern, professional and meaningful to our members.

At the root of the problem was a fundamentally unfair structure. The subscription formula was based on economic criteria (and similarly the voting system), quite contrary to Co-operative Principles.

The majority of our members, in fact, did not observe the criteria which says it all! By shifting the emphasis to membership, we are immediately using co-operative criteria and improving the balance of power and influence within ICA by spread-

ing it more evenly around the world. At the same time some of our bigger members will no longer have the burden of keeping ICA afloat.

At the end of our most recent, very intensive board meeting, it was unanimously agreed to recommend the new proposals to the Extraordinary General Assembly in Rome on 5-6 June. There was even some light applause!

I have no doubt that there will be teething problems with its implementation but enough safeguards have been injected to keep this to a minimum.



Iain Macdonald with the Managing Director of KRIBHCO, a fertilizer co-operative in India, and Mr Lee, Regional Director of ICA-AP during the DG's January 2008 visit to India.

Particular thanks must go to Alban D'Amours and his team from Desjardins, who have put so much work into this very complicated task.

It will be a challenge to put this new system into practice but I'm sure it will come to be recognised as fairer and simpler allowing us, not least, to attract new members to a more transparent and relevant organisation.

DG's Report



*Iain Macdonald
Director-General*

“... by shifting the emphasis to membership we are immediately using co-operative criteria and improving the balance of power ...”

Read the DG's previous monthly reports:
www.ica.coop/directorpage/

Photo: ancawonka
<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-sa/2.0/deed.en>

ICA strategy to address climate change

(Cont. from cover ...)

A key initiative of the strategy—the soon to be formed Leadership Council of interested ICA members and experts—will provide advice and guidance, set targets and propose concrete action to be taken by the organisation, members and co-operatives in general.

The council will assist ICA to identify partners to raise awareness on the issue and to increase capacity to ad-

dress the challenges of mitigation and adaptation to climate change. A commitment to sharing information on the issue, and also on good practice in co-operative enterprise, forms an integral part of the strategy.

The **2008 International Day of Co-operatives** (5 July) focuses on climate change. Members and ICA will have the opportunity to promote various initiatives.

The strategy will be available on the ICA website soon.

The 2007 GA resolution calls on the ICA and its members to focus on the issue of climate change. It asserts that ICA members will make a significant and appropriate contribution to the cause of reducing future climate change impacts.