

Political will prevails

As the sun sets on the most recent General Assembly, ICA Director-General, Iain Macdonald, looks forward to a modernised organisation pursuing the strategic aim of promoting co-operative enterprise around the world.

"I confess to a strong feeling of relief at the conclusion of the Extraordinary General Assembly in Rome. Although the Board had unanimously agreed to the proposals of the Restructuring Working Group at its April meeting in Washington, there was still quite a lot of detail to be resolved. Given that this was the culmination of seven years' work by the Task Force, the Governance Working Group, the Regionalisation Working Group and the Restructuring Working Group, it was important that we got it right. It is one thing to agree to general recommendations, but quite another to propose formal rule changes. As in all co-operative organisations, this is always a carefully scrutinised procedure. Finally, despite a few last-minute amendments, all was agreed, and in good cheer.

I am not sure any of us fully appreciate the significance of what has been achieved. Of course, the proof lies with

the implementation, but the ICA now has a global strategic plan, governance and financial guidelines, a modernised and decentralised structure, an up-to-date Rules and Bye-Laws, and fairer and more transparent subscription criteria. Many would admit that these changes have been required for some time but, only now has political will prevailed.

The danger is always that we spend too much time on such issues to the detriment of campaigning on the promotion of co-operative enterprise. I believe both objectives go together and we are now much better placed to implement our Strategic Plan with a real chance of success. This *Digest* highlights just some of these important activities.

Not least is the celebration of this year's International Co-operative Day (and we are also in discussions with the UN concerning the real possibility of declaring an

International Year of Co-operatives) which has the theme 'Confronting Climate Change Through Co-operative Enterprise'. It would be hard to find a more appropriate subject today.

As previously reported, we are about to launch our Leadership Council on Climate Change. Well-known co-operators from the UK, the USA and Canada have already volunteered their services. We are currently seeking council members with an interest and experience in this area from other parts of the world, to complete the membership of this body and to move forward with a plan of action. If interested, please let us know.

A lot is happening, not least, the ICA Global Trade Fair for Co-operatives which will take place in Lisbon on 23-25 October later this year.

I look forward to seeing you there!"

DG's Report



Iain Macdonald
Director-General

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

US research reveals true value of co-ops

The largest research project in US history on the economic impact of co-operatives in the United States was launched on 26 June, at an online seminar hosted jointly by ICA member, the National Co-operative Business Association (NCBA) and University of Wisconsin Center for Cooperatives (UWCC).

Recognising the need for statistics to make the case for co-operatives to the public, NCBA successfully lobbied the US Congress for funding and the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) awarded a grant to the Wisconsin Center to research the number, size and value of co-operative businesses for the project's first phase.

"We're very pleased and excited to share these results among the greater co-operative community," said Paul Hazen, President and CEO of NCBA. "Our members asked us to tell the co-operative story in a very powerful way. This study enables us to do just that."

More on the research:
www.uwcc.wisc.edu/research.html