

Director-General's report

The past few months have been difficult for us. Summer, often a quieter time, was particularly so this year, in the absence of Ivano Barberini. It was decided to wait until the General Assembly in November before appointing a new president, so I have had to travel more than normal - but without the good counsel of our late president. Ivano's death has been compounded by the passing of our much-loved colleague, Marie-Claude Baan. Marie-Claude had been with ICA in Geneva for over twenty-five years, serving under several presidents and director-generals. Her knowledge of the ICA was second to none and her loyalty, commitment and support for colleagues, unsurpassed. She is irreplaceable.

Despite these setbacks, the important work of ICA continues – Ivano and Marie-Claude would not have wished it otherwise. In particular, the General Assembly is taking shape, ready for Geneva in November. It is an election year and we already have a

very healthy number of nominations for the Board. In addition, most sectoral organisations and thematic committees will hold one or two events during the Assembly, and I am very grateful to those members who are supporting the GA. I am especially looking forward to the presentation and discussions by the Assembly keynote speaker, Jeremy Rifkin. Rifkin will seek to progress how the co-operative movement can address today's economic challenges, the energy crisis and the threat of climate change. I am positive that all this will encourage a healthy registration of delegates, and the signs are already there.

The ICA Board at its meeting in Norway considered a number of issues, not least, the organisation of the General Assembly. The Board's Governance Committee is making great progress in the remaining restructuring area, that of sectoral organisations and thematic committees. The Board also approved the holding of ICA Expo 2010 in India. Our co-operative colleagues in India have

agreed to support the hosting of Expo 2010. It is very good news to secure a new venue, and I am convinced that this is a venture which has a very promising future.

During October and the first part of November, the United Nations will consider whether to declare an International Year of Co-operatives – probably in 2012. Current signals are very strong, and so we are hopeful that the global movement will soon have a very useful way to seriously raise its profile over the next few years.

It is important to never forget our main objective - to show how co-operative enterprise is not only equal to but better than its investor-owned competitors in terms of good business practice and commercial success. Despite the best attempts of the media to divert attention away from the actions of avaricious bankers and the failings of the current system, we ourselves should continue to insist on the global promotion of our values and principles.

DG's Report



Iain Macdonald
ICA Director-General

Co-operatives a priority in Latin American Common Market

In a strong statement to the MERCOSUR (Southern "Common Market" of the Americas) Parliament, incoming President, Juan José Domínguez (Uruguay), announced that the social economy, with particular emphasis on the role of co-operatives, would be a policy priority.

In his speech made on 18 August, to assume the presidency of the MERCOSUR

Parliament, Domínguez said that his key project was monitoring the passage of the MERCOSUR Co-operatives Statute, and urging the Common Market Council to approve the statute so that national parliaments can proceed to incorporate it.

Domínguez also expressed his strong support at the start of an interagency process that will culminate in

a conference to consider the inclusion of International Labour Organisation (ILO) Recommendation 193 on the promotion of co-operatives.

The Specialised Meeting of Co-operatives of MERCOSUR (RECM) in which ICA Americas participates, also convened to further progress on integration of co-operatives in MERCOSUR's processes.



Juan José Domínguez
presiding over the
MERCOSUR Parliament