

Minutes of the ICA Gender Equality Committee Plenary Meeting

14 October 2001, Seoul (Korea)

Present:

Vanda Giuliano	Chairperson, ICA GEC / Legacoop, Italy
MariaElena Chavez,	Secretary, ICA GEC
Junko Ito	JCCU, Japan
Akiko Yamauchi	JCCU, Japan
Stefania Marcone	Legacoop, Italy
Rahaiah Baهران	ANGKASA, Malaysia
Lourdes Orellado	Cooperativa Universitaria Ltd, Paraguay
Barbara Bochen,	National Auditing Union of Workers' Co-operatives, Poland
Joanna Brzozwska	National Auditing Union of Workers' Co-operatives, Poland
Adam Piechowski	National Co-operative Council, Poland
Hanna Wroblewska	National Co-operative Council, Poland
Oleg Boulekov	Centrosojuz, Russia
Galina Frolova	Centrosojuz, Russia
Galina Kissleva	Centrosojuz, Russia
Larisa Kondratyeva	Centrosojuz, Russia
Galina Malakhova	Centrosojuz, Russia
Natasha Prouttskova	Centrosojuz, Russia
Galina Utkina	Centrosojuz, Russia
Ousseynou Dieng	UNCAS, Senegal
Preema Shanthi Suriyarrachichi	National Co-operative Women's Committee, Sri Lanka

Regrets:

Ana Isabel Solano	CRAMC, Costa Rica
Elba Echevarría	COOPACA ; Puerto Rico
Maria Negoita	Centrocoop, Romania

• Opening

The Chair, **Vanda Giuliano**, welcomed members noting the Committee was to discuss on a series of important matters including elections of a new Chairperson and Executive Committee. However it would also allow members to share information on progress in the implementation of the ICA Strategy. She reminded members of that the Committee had changed its name and had adopted a new Constitution that allowed the participation of both women and men in the Committee. Finally she extended a special invitation to all to participate in joint ICA GEC/CCI/ICAO seminar on food security.

• Adoption of the Agenda

The **Secretary** then turned to the agenda. Reports from members was added to the agenda after which **Members** approved the revised agenda.

• Minutes of the Rio Plenary Meeting, December 2001

The **Secretary** presented the draft minutes of the Rio de Janeiro (Brazil) Plenary Meeting. There being no amendments to the text, the minutes were adopted.

- **Financial Report**

The **Secretary** presented the 2001 financial report reminding Members that the Committee received support from the ICA to enable it to carry out its activities. The 2001 allocation was CHF 5,000 which would cover the Committee's statutory activities. This year the Committee would incur low costs due to the fact that ICAO and CCI would be sharing the costs of the joint seminar on food security and food safety in Seoul. **Members** noted their thanks to CCI and ICAO for their contribution to the joint activity.

- **Report of Activities 2001**

The Secretary referred to the document prepared for the Plenary. She reported that the Chairperson had written to each of the ICA regional directors requesting their assistance in moving the gender equality agenda forward by sensitising members. The Committee's activities centred on providing information on gender issues. Contact were taken with ILO to identify areas of joint activity and ICA/ILO Gender training package was made available both on the ICA GEC and the ILO web site. The Secretary noted too the annual joint message of the ICA GEC and the ICA President for International Women's Day (8 March 2001) and the invitation of the Committee to participate in Ibero-American Forum in July where a presentation was made. Also of note was the participation of the Chairperson in the ICA Board Gender Training Session in April. The session assisted Board members understand more fully the meaning of gender and how gender mainstreaming needed to be applied in decision-making.

- **Elections**

The **Secretary** reported that the Executive Committee proposed to the Plenary to re-elect Vanda Giuliano as Chairperson and elect Rahaiah Baهران, Elba Echevarria, Galina Kissleva, Dionysis Mavrogiannis, Marioara Negoita, and Hanna Wroblewska to the Executive Committee.

Members re-elected Vanda Giuliano as Chairperson and elected Rahaiah Baهران, Elba Echevarria, Galina Kissleva, Dionysis Mavrogiannis, Marioara Negoita, and Hanna Wroblewska to the Executive Committee by acclamation.

The **Secretary** distributed ballot papers which listed the name, organisation and country of the nominees to the Committee. She asked if the nominees could be voted into membership by acclamation.

Members agreed.

- **Work Plan 2002**

The **Chairperson** reported on the discussions of the Executive Committee. She stressed that joint activities with the specialised bodies were an effective means of increasing gender awareness and promoting gender mainstreaming within the ICA structures. For this reason that ExCo proposed that that a joint seminar with ICA Housing be held in 2002. This seminar would focus on the quality of housing, ensuring that the housing proposed responds to the needs of women and families. The ExCo approved also proposed to the Plenary to approve its modest workplan of statutory meetings, preparation of messages for International Women's Day and World Rural Women's Day as well as the maintenance of the Committee's web pages.

Members agreed.

- **Report from members**

The **Chairperson** invited first reports from the regions followed by reports from individual member organisations.

Rahaiah Baheran, Chair of the ICA Regional Women's Committee for Asia/Pacific distributed the Report of the Activities of the Committee for 2000-2001 and the newsletter of the Committee. She introduced the Vice-Chair of the Committee, Preema Shanthi Suriyarrachichi and the 1st Vice-President, Junko Ito of the Japanese Consumer Co-operative Union thanking them for their contribution to the successful work of the regional committee. She noted that they the Committee aim was for women to be "seen and heard" and for this reason the committee focused its work on providing gender training. She reported briefly on the joint activity with ILO to publish a Co-operative Leadership Manual for Women. Also noted were the training of trainers activities. She encouraged all members to read in detail the documents distributed.

Junko Ito of the Japanese Consumer Co-operative Union commented on the report that had been distributed to members with the meeting documentation. She noted that Japan had enacted a law on gender equality in 1996 and made gender equality a top priority for the country. JCCU similarly had started work in 1995 when it adopted its first medium-term plan which was forward looking and aimed at promoting a positive attitude towards gender equality. The recently adopted 2001 second medium-term action plan focuses on top management. Ms. Ito reported on the progress made to date referring to the statistical information included in her written report.

Stefania Marcone of Legacoop (Italy) informed members that Legacoop regrouped 10,000 co-operatives with 5 million members. She reported on the joint Legacoop - ILO activities to address the issue of women and entrepreneurship and the workshop that was organised in Rome to look at a number of case studies from Norway, Philippines and Italy. She also reported that Legacoop had undertaken a survey that found that women made up 51% of its membership and 48% of its employees. In the 300 co-operative surveyed women occupied only 23% of the top management positions. She concluded saying that the results of the survey would be examined to determine what actions could be taken to improve the participation of women in decision-making positions in co-operatives.

Galina Kissleva of Centrosojuz (Russia) noted briefly that Centrosojuz was committed to improving the participation of youth and women in the co-operative movement. As a sign of their commitment to gender equality, she reported that the delegation of the Centrosojuz was made of 30 persons – 15 men and 15 women of which 10 were representatives to the General Assembly. She stressed the importance of gender balanced delegations and providing women the opportunity to participate as decision-makers within the ICA.

Hanna Wroblewska of the National Co-operative Council of Poland reported briefly on women's situation in Polish co-operatives noting that the difficult economic and legal situation of co-operatives was more severely affecting women than men as women constitute a large percentage of co-operative employees. This was putting a severe financial burden on women who were losing jobs. She noted too that women were still earning on an average 30% than their male counterparts in the same job. She reported however progress at the national level where women were being voted into Parliament and a new pension system that will apply to women. However, a new bill on equality between men and women had still not been passed that would ensure the legal protection against gender discrimination.

Ada Kibora, Director of ICA Regional Office in West Africa also reported on the regional women's forum which addressed the role of women in the development of Africa. He hoped that in 2002 a regional women's committee would be formally set up. For the moment women's activities such as fora and conferences are organised which had created a network.

Lourdes Orellado of the Cooperativa Universitaria of Paraguay reported on a training activities jointly undertaken with Développement International Desjardins (Canada). She noted the high participation of women -- 70% of the participants -- and underlined the importance of training in enabling women to more fully participate in the co-operative movement.

The **Chairperson** thanked the presenters of the reports for sharing their experience and providing us with updates on progress made in achieving gender equality. She commended Centrosojuz for the gender balanced delegation, but sadly noted that within the co-operative movement there were still a number of challenges that needed to be overcome if women were to be able to fully and effectively participate in the co-operative movement.

- **Closing**

There being no further comments or questions, the **Chair** thanked all members for their participation. She reminded members that the joint seminar with CCI and ICAO on food safety and security would be held the following day and invited each to actively participate. The Chairperson then closed the meeting.