

## **Minutes and Report – Activities of the ICA HRD Committee at the General Assembly of ICA, held in Singapore in October, 2007**

The ICA HRD Committee organized and carried out three events in conjunction with the General Assembly of the ICA which took place in Singapore in October 2007. They included: a symposium on the theme of "Towards the Future: How Can HRD Best Contribute to Cooperatives Today?" held on Tuesday October 16, 2007; a meeting of the executive of the HRD Committee and a meeting of the HRD Committee, both held on Wednesday October 17, 2007.

The themes and contents of both public events were of significance, not only for the work of the HRD Committee and for that of those concerned directly with HRD in cooperatives, but for the ICA and for the cooperative movement as a whole (see below). Both were well attended (all available places at both events were filled) and provoked extensive discussion which continued after the sessions ended and outside the meeting rooms. In addition to the thematic presentations (again see below), the HRD Committee also elected its officers for the coming period.

The HRD symposium broke new ground in that it brought together, in dialogue, two groups for whom the theme is directly relevant, namely cooperative leaders and cooperative HRD practitioners. We were particularly fortunate in that each of these points of departure was represented by three outstanding persons. Hagen Henry, chief of the ILO Cooperative Branch; Iain Macdonald, director-general of the ICA and Seah Kian Peng, MP and chair-SNCF brought their cooperative leadership expertise to the discussion. Ian MacPherson, director of the British Columbia Institute of Cooperative Studies; Bhagwati Prasad, newly elected co-chairperson of the ICA HRD Committee and chief executive of NCUI and Mervyn Wilson, CEO and principal of the Cooperative College UK made significant contributions which drew on their HRD expertise. Yehudah Paz chaired the symposium.

In addition to the recognition shared by all the speakers of the critical importance of HRD for cooperative innovativeness, indeed for cooperative development in general, a variety of additional issues were raised. All speakers emphasized the need to translate recognition of HRD's significance into concrete support for HRD activity, in particular in terms of financial resources. In this regard, the statement of Hagen Henry regarding the readiness of the ILO Cooperative Branch to include support for the Cooperative Learning Center project launched by the ICA HRD Committee in the Cooperative Branch's development program was of special importance. Other points emphasized included the need to link HRD activities undertaken by the cooperative movements with those initiated by the ICA sectoral organizations and by many major cooperatives, particularly those included in the ICA Global 300 list. The importance of broadening HRD activities so that they furthered leadership development in all its aspects rather than merely focusing on administrative concerns, important as these are, was also pointed out. Other speakers underlined the need to establish functioning frameworks of joint activity among cooperative HRD institutions and frameworks and examples of successful initiatives in this direction were set out. Additional examples of new directions in HRD activity were described and evoked interest. Following the presentations by the speakers, the floor was opened for discussion and the symposium concluded with summation remarks by the speakers and the chairperson.

The meeting of the executive of the HRD was devoted to preparations for the full HRD Committee meeting which took place immediately after it. Reports were submitted on progress being made towards the realization of the CLC, both in Canada and in India and discussion dealt with plans to move forward despite the many and severe problems encountered to date. The composition and activity framework of the new executive committee which was to be elected at the meeting of the full HRD Committee was also discussed.

The meeting of the HRD Committee consisted of two parts. The first included two extensive reports on the development of the Cooperative Learning Center. The first of these was presented by Robin Puga of the British Columbia Institute of Cooperative Studies (BCICS) in Canada which serves as the focal point of the CLC project. The second was presented by Bhagwati Prasad, executive director of the National Cooperative Union of India (NCUI) and focused on the extensive activities undertaken towards the establishment of a global network of HRD institutions. Both reports touched on real achievements to date, but both also set out the difficulties encountered and the problems yet to be overcome. The reports set out a list of major tasks to be undertaken as a central element in the work of the ICA HRD Committee in the coming years. A discussion followed the presentations.

Finally, the HRD Committee meeting elected its officers and executive committee. These elections are held once each four years, and the previous one took place in 2003. The elections held at this meeting introduced a somewhat new framework for the HRD Committee. Two persons were elected as co-chairpersons of the Committee, and this structure will be re-examined at the next meeting of the ICA HRD Committee, which will be held at the time of the next ICA GA to be held in Glasgow, Scotland in 2009. Vice-chairpersons and executive committee members were also elected (a list is appended).

As noted, the activities of the HRD Committee in Singapore were extensive and evoked particular interest. It is to be hoped that the newly elected HRD Committee leadership will be able to utilize the knowledge gained and the enthusiasm expressed in a fruitful and practical manner in the coming years.

(Listing of ICA HRD Committee co-chairpersons, vice-chairpersons and executive committee members is appended.)

## **ICA HRD COMMITTEE**

At the meeting of the ICA global HRD Committee, held on October 17, 2007 in Singapore in conjunction with the ICA General Assembly, the following were elected:

### **Co-Chairpersons**

Yehudah Paz (Israel)

Bhagwati Prasad (India)

### **Vice-Chairpersons**

Galina Dudakalova (Russia)

Elba Echavarria Diaz (Port Rico)

Esther Gitcheru (Kenya)

K.K. Ravindran (India)

### **Members**

A.B.Bulathgani (Sri Lanka)

Chan Ho Choi (Korea)

Chris Cooper (UK)

Jan Eirik Imbsen (Norway, ICA)

Rafi Goldman (Israel)

Fernando Martinho (Portugal)

A. Zainuden (Malaysia)

Ian MacPherson (Canada) – Chairperson, Cooperative Learning Center  
(CLC) Board – ex officio

### **Secretary**

Kim Jin-Kook (Korea, ICA)