

August 2007

Members of the Executive Committee,

ICA HRD Committee

Dear Colleagues,

Some time has passed since we have been in contact. Let me therefore begin with an explanation, an apology and some plans for the future.

To my regret, I have not been in the best of health in recent months. I have been diagnosed as having a heart condition known as aortic stenosis, which is a narrowing of the aortic heart valve due to calcification etc. Typical patients with this problem are (like me) people in the middle or late 70's. The only effective treatment is the repair/replacement of the valve through open-heart surgery. At first, it appeared as if I would have to undergo immediate surgery; but I have been fortunate in that other treatments and regimes have made it possible to delay this most complex operation at least for some period of time. Nonetheless, I had to curtail my work schedule very severely, and only now am I able to return to work, although on a clearly limited basis. As a result, the activity of our HRD Committee has slowed down very considerably indeed, and it is in view of this that I offer all of you my most sincere apologies.

Let me now turn to some thoughts and proposals for the future. As you all know, we are fast approaching the date of the ICA General Assembly to be held in Singapore. At that time, we will hold **an executive committee meeting, a full HRD committee meeting and an HRD workshop**. I should like to set out before you a suggested program for each of these. Your comments, suggestions and critique are welcome and are requisite; based on these we will go ahead with our work at Singapore.

Turning first to the **executive committee**: in essence, this meeting would, I suggest, be a preparatory session for the full committee meeting which will follow it. The agenda would consist of two items: first, a brief report on the future of the Cooperative Learning Center (CLC) which we have been working on for some time. Regrettably, we have not been able to move forward with

this project as we had hoped to, essentially because we could not find (despite intensive efforts) a source of funding. However, we are now very close indeed to achieving positive results in this regard, and we hope that when we meet in Singapore it will be possible to make a formal announcement of the availability of funding for the CLC project. We have also been extremely fortunate in that our Indian colleagues of NCUI have maintained their commitment to initiate, to operate and to finance the global listing and network of cooperative training institutions as one of the websites on the CLC portal. The executive committee will then hear from Professor Ian MacPherson, chairman of the British Columbia Institute of Cooperative Studies (BCICS) which is the CLC focal point, and from Mr. Bhagwati Prasad, Chief Executive of the NCUI on plans for the future of CLC in view of these new and hopeful circumstances. As noted, their remarks will be the introductions to their more extensive reports to the full HRD committee.

The second item on the **executive committee** agenda is organizational: we must now hold elections for our chair, vice-chairman and executive committee members. I myself will not be standing for re-election as chair (particularly in view of the health and age issues mentioned above). I therefore invite you to submit nominations for all these positions – and I will extend a similar invitation to the ICA members. I am certain that it will be possible to put together an appropriate list of nominees to be presented to the HRD committee for election. I will ask all concerned to submit nominations no later than September 28, 2007 so as to insure that we can fill all positions in Singapore. I hope that each of you will agree to continue to participate in the leadership of the ICA HRD Committee in the future and look forward to hearing from you in this regard. I am also pleased to inform you that Dr. Kim Jin-Kook, who is a member of ICA headquarters staff in Geneva, will continue to fill the position of secretary of the ICA HRD Committee.

The full **HRD Committee meeting** will take place immediately following the executive committee meeting. As is customary, we will invite all ICA member organizations to send a representative to this meeting and we hope that many of them will do so. The first part of the meeting will be devoted to the presentations by Ian MacPherson and Bhagwati Prasad on the CLC followed by a discussion. The second item on the agenda will be the elections and

other organizational matters. The two meetings: executive committee and full HRD committee will make up one half-day session.

We will also be conducting an **HRD workshop** at Singapore. My proposal is that we conduct a panel discussion on the theme: Towards the Future: How Can HRD Best Contribute to Cooperatives Today? I suggest that the panel, which discusses this theme, consist of two groups: one made up of three leading cooperative HRD practitioners and the other of three important cooperative leaders. I am pleased to be able to report that both Iain Macdonald, Director General of the ICA and Hagen Henry, Chief of the Cooperative Branch of the ILO have agreed to take part, and I am expecting the receipt of positive responses from a major cooperative national and business leader and from three colleagues from the HRD sector in the immediate future. This dialogue - interchange of views and ideas about HRD and its role in the cooperative future, between those who are HRD practitioners and those who lead and manage the world's cooperatives, can be of great interest and major importance for all participants and for the work in the future. Hopefully, it will give us clear indications of how we are perceived, what is expected from us, in what ways we are needed and how we should best proceed in developing our activities. We will be inviting the participants in the GA to join us in this half-day workshop program; we hope that many will choose to do so.

The exact dates and times of our HRD events have not yet been finalized with the directorate of the GA, but I hope to be able to give you full information within the next few days.

Colleagues, as you can see we plan for a significant HRD program in Singapore, in which I hope that all of you will take part. Please let me hear from you at your earliest convenience about all matters touched on in this letter, both those related to the suggested program and those connected with our elections.

Again, my apologies – and my hopes for a successful program of activity for the ICA HRD Committee, at the GA assembly and in the future.

With cooperative greetings,

Yehudah Paz – chair, ICA HRD Committee

