



International Co-operative Alliance



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Why agricultural co-operatives should join the International Co-operative Alliance

(Supplement to 'Join the ICA')

ICA is 'The' global voice for co-operative agricultural policy.

The International Co-operative Alliance was among the initial handful of organisations recognised by the United Nations when it established a general consultative status shortly after its charter. ICA's US-based policy staff use that status to ensure that member-state missions to the UN understand the co-operative perspective.

In addition, ICA has signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations (FAO), giving us space at FAO Headquarters in Rome and access to member-states during deliberations.

ICA is a founding member of the World Farmers Organisation (WFO) and works closely with them to ensure that the voice of agricultural co-operatives is heard and amplified.

ICA has established a sectoral organisation dedicated to agricultural co-operatives: the International Co-operative Agricultural Organisation (ICAO). Agricultural co-operatives that are members of ICA are eligible to join and to participate in its policy and educational agenda and programme.

ICA serves as the secretariat for the Committee on the Promotion and Advancement of Co-operatives (COPAC), whose members are the UN, FAO, ILO (International Labour Organisation), and ICA. This body allows us to more closely align the co-operative agenda in the member organisations.

ICA's policy efforts most recently led to the inclusion of co-operatives in the Rio Plus 20 Declaration resulting from the UN Conference on Sustainability held in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil in June 2012, resolving 'to sustainably increase agricultural production and productivity, including through... developing strong agricultural cooperatives and value chains...' ICA is now working to leverage this commitment through global soft law and domestic legislation.

ICA works with global governance bodies, such as G8 and G20, to advance the co-operative agenda. As a result, co-operatives were included in the G8's commitment to partnerships for food security in Sub Saharan Africa, announced in April 2012.

ICA works closely with co-operatives in Africa to support their development. In partnership with Co-operative Financial Services (UK), we have established a multi-million dollar Global Development Co-operative fund to provide loans, through proven intermediary co-operative development organisations, to primary co-operatives.

