



## **ICA Gender Equality Committee Statement on the situation in Afghanistan**

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**The Gender Equality Committee of the International Cooperative Alliance** (ICA GEC) condemns the acts of violence perpetrated against civilians in the country of Afghanistan, especially the atrocities against women and urgently calls the global community for actions to protect and ensure no further violation of women human rights. With the adoption of the Agenda 2030, the international community agreed to make common efforts towards leaving no one behind, and now we should all act on this front.

Despite every crisis being unique, gender-based violence and discrimination as well as violation of the freedom of expression and opinion within the community and the working place, are some of the common results of how crises amplify gender inequalities across the globe. In Afghanistan, women and girls are experiencing already the above. “All the time, women are the victims of men’s wars,” said Raihana Azad, a member of Afghanistan’s Parliament. “But they will be the victims of their peace, too.” (NY Times)

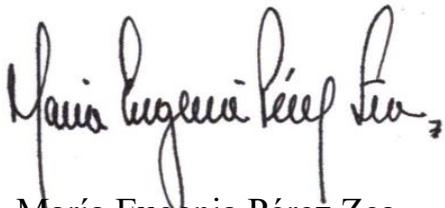
**As women representatives of people-centered businesses**, we express our great concern for the future of women and girls in Afghanistan. Remaining committed to the internationally agreed values of the cooperative model, including self-help, equality, solidarity and democracy and its operational principles of voluntary and open membership, democratic member control, and concern for community, while also sharing the Agenda for Sustainable Development 2030 vision of a world comprising “peaceful, just and inclusive societies which are free from fear and violence”, we call the global community to stand by the women of Afghanistan through collective action.

**We urge the United Nations and the global community to take concrete actions and mobilize resources to support women and girls from Afghanistan**, addressing the gender specific vulnerabilities and challenges they experience. A multi-stakeholder human-centered global strategy should be implemented in this emergency to support our peers in overcoming those shocking human rights violations.

In this regard, the Gender Equality Committee of the International Cooperative Alliance **is standing in solidarity with the Afghanistan people, and particularly with the Afghan women and girls** and commits to lead the Cooperative Movement in playing a key role, as a global actor, empowering women in this forced displacement to gain back their economic emancipation, to improve their livelihoods and gender dynamics at household and community level.

**NOTES TO THE EDITOR:** The Gender Equality Committee (GEC) is a Thematic Committee of the International Cooperative Alliance. It is a catalyst for change to make gender equality a reality in all cooperatives and serves as a forum for the discussion and exchange of experiences and ideas on issues related to gender equality.

The GEC's vision is of a cooperative movement led by women and men and based upon equity, solidarity, democracy, and development. In this vision, women's and men's values, skills, and contributions are valued equally and the organisation of work and decision-making structures are based on all people's needs and views.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "María Eugenia Pérez Zea". The signature is written in a cursive style with a small flourish at the end.

María Eugenia Pérez Zea  
Chair of the ICA Gender Equality Committee