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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

‘2012 must be the year that the co-operative message goes viral’

Obama Blogger-in-chief Sam Graham-Felson tells ICA General Assembly that the opportunities to spread the message of co-operatives using social media are there for the taking.

Cancun, Mexico, November 17, 2011 — Sam Graham-Felson, Obama’s Chief Campaigner Blogger today encouraged the global co-operative movement to embrace new technology and to use the launch of the UN’s International Year of Co-operatives to spread the word about co-operatives online.

Graham-Felson highlighted at the outset of the International Year of Co-operatives, the opportunities for the co-operative movement to harness the passion of young people calling for change and looking for a different way, especially in light of the recent Occupy movement demonstrations around the world. He added *‘This is your moment – go with it and make the most of it’*.

Graham-Felson worked on Barack Obama’s 2008 presidential campaign and ran the main campaign blog. The BBC declared that ‘internet was key to Obama victories’ in the presidential race. The Obama new media team recognised the power of ordinary people and used technology to help them to organise. \$500 million dollars was raised online for Obama’s campaign in mostly small donations, two thirds of all campaign funds raised. By the end of the campaign Obama’s team had 13 million people on their email list, by far the largest list in political history.



The opening session on the second day of the ICA's General Assembly also saw Director-General Charles Gould launch the ICA's new website for the International Year - www.2012.coop. 2012.coop is a dynamic website which allows people to find out more about the International Year of Co-operatives as well as about the International Co-operative Alliance in an interactive environment.

On 31st October 2011 the UN launched 2012 as the International Year of Co-operatives. With a theme of "Co-operative Enterprises Build a Better World," the International Year of Co-operatives offers the global co-operative community a platform to demonstrate that co-operatives offer a diverse, values-based business model to provide a sustainable source of revenue for communities and individuals.

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INTERVIEW OPPORTUNITIES

Interviews can be arranged with some of the world's leading authorities on co-operatives including:

- **Dame Pauline Green, President, ICA**
- **Charles Gould, Director-General, ICA**

To arrange interviews, please contact the ICA's Communications Team:

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Notes to editor:

1. The International Co-operative Alliance is the global voice for the values-based business model of the cooperative, uniting co-operatives worldwide and providing a forum for knowledge and concerted action. ICA was established by co-operatives in 1895. It has members in almost 100 countries representing one billion people worldwide.

2. Co-operatives are successful, values-based businesses owned by their members. Whether they are customers, employees or residents, the members get an equal say in the business and a share of the profits. The Cooperative principles were first established in 1844 by the Rochdale Pioneers.

Employing 100 million people, co-operatives are significant economic actors in many different sectors: agriculture/forestry, banking/credit unions, consumer, health, insurance, workers, fisheries, housing, transport and tourism

3. The United Nations has declared 2012 the International Year of Co-operatives. With its theme of 'co-operative enterprises build a better world', the Year is an opportunity to raise



awareness of how co-operatives are successful values based businesses owned by their members.

4. Further information available at www.2012.coop.

