



INTERNATIONAL COOPERATIVE ALLIANCE

DECLARATION ON POSITIVE PEACE THROUGH COOPERATIVES

▪ APPROVED BY THE ICA GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF 17 OCTOBER 2019, IN KIGALI (RWANDA) ▪

PREAMBLE

In view of the many protracted violent conflicts and high levels of inequality in much of the world, and the impact of natural and other types of disasters;

In view of the many challenges which we are all facing in today's world, particularly as regards peace;

Whereas the concept of positive peace, according to peace scholar Johan Galtung, is related to the good contributions in the community, particularly cooperation and integration, reconciliation and equality, to be differentiated from negative peace which related to the absence of violence whether personal, structural or collective;

Whereas the ICA, since its inception, has expressed a continued commitment to peace, well-being and prosperity for all, including through:

- ICA Resolutions, among which:
 - The 1901 ICA Resolution on Peace at the Manchester Congress, a congress dedicated to social peace as well as international peace, when it also decided to partner with the Peace Bureau.
 - The 1913 ICA Resolution in Glasgow, in which the ICA declared that when each country's social and economic life becomes organized according to cooperative principles, international conflicts may cease; and supported any action by which every cooperator in the world could participate or start.
- ICA Declarations, among which:
 - The 1939 ICA Declaration titled "*Peace, Freedom and Cooperation are indivisible*";
 - the XVIII Declaration calling for human rights to be restored;
 - the 1942 Declaration claiming ICA's interest in the social and economic reconstruction after war;
 - the 1980 ICA Declaration asserting that peace is necessary in order to achieve social and economic progress;
 - and the 2006 ICA Declaration stating that "*Cooperatives are based in a group of values and principles conceived to promote the cause of Peace, the sustainable human development and promote social and economic progress of people through the model of cooperative enterprise that will contribute to peace...*".

- ICA Presidents' Declarations:

In 2007, former ICA President Ivano Barberini wrote *"Peace means a great deal more than the mere absence of armed conflicts, and it is much more complex than war, because it is based on a social order considered to be fair by the majority of people"*... adding that educating for peace *"means providing space for local projects, valuing and strengthening the experiences in all corners of the planet, and helping those who are trying to take control of their own future. Reconciling the micro and the macro dimensions, and also theory with practice, are important so as not to lose sight of the objective of making peace and co-operation between people an alternative that is both possible and feasible"*

Whereas the ICA was one of the very first non-governmental organizations to be granted UN consultative status, with A category

Whereas the United Nations General Assembly has declared 2012 as the International Year of Cooperatives, highlighting the contribution of cooperatives to socio-economic development, particularly their impact on poverty reduction, employment generation and social integration.

Whereas, on that occasion, UN Secretary General Ban Ki Moon declared that *"Through their distinctive focus on values, cooperatives have proven themselves a resilient and viable business model that can prosper even during difficult times. This success has helped prevent many families and communities from sliding into poverty."*

ICA CONSIDERS APPROPRIATE AND TIMELY THE FOLLOWING DECLARATION ON POSITIVE PEACE THROUGH COOPERATIVES

The cooperative movement, with its cooperatives, cooperators, support and representative organizations, beyond creeds and political traditions, has sustained since its origins its commitment to positive peace, as the goal and means to build a society founded on the values of democracy, equality, solidarity, participation and concern for the community. Conflicts derive from unmet human needs and aspirations, whereas cooperatives have the mission to respond to human needs and aspirations, including aspirations for a better future, more inclusive, more sustainable, more participative and more prosperous for all.

Cooperatives are already well recognized for their role after crises, be they financial or economic crises, natural disasters or violent conflicts. However, cooperatives do much more for positive peace: creating jobs and enterprises that are rooted in the territories, dynamic and long-lasting; providing affordable housing and access to credit and savings, insurance and markets; ensuring the survival, recovery, prosperity and preparedness of individual and family livelihoods, communities and local communities, and this whether at sea, on the coast, mountains, urban or rural areas; responding with success to social needs in care, education, health, as well as to sustainability concerns in the areas of energy and patterns of consumption production and distribution. Cooperatives provide new opportunities and long-term paths to create wealth and capital that are not purely financial nor for a reduced number of people.

The cooperative movement cooperates to find equitable and just ways to solve problems in a sustainable and democratic manner, thus contributing to prevent violence and hatred. Education of all members to participate fully, voluntarily and respectfully in their cooperatives and communities is an essential part of a culture of peace. Cooperatives are an active part of a culture of and for peace.

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Cooperatives build a future for people to own and geared towards the long term. Cooperative entrepreneurship allows for the potential of collective action to solve common problems, promoting an inclusive economy for sustainable development, based on social and solidarity values, which implied to continuously empower women, youth, and vulnerable populations, and to cooperate with others beyond the cooperative movement. In such a way, cooperatives engage in positive peace as a path that promotes equality and empathy, inclusion and opportunity for decent work, entrepreneurship and development.

The International Cooperative Alliance (ICA), as the organised global expression of the cooperative movement, can amply demonstrate its contributions to positive peace over its 125 years of existence [in 2020], putting the cooperative identity into practice and actively promoting positive peace. We call on to uphold and deepen our commitment to positive peace and call on all our members to strengthen their action to build positive peace based on our Agenda of Cooperative Action for Positive Peace [to be defined].

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This declaration is based on conversations between ICA President Ariel Guarco and ICA Board Member Martin Lowery, and on inputs by Petar Stefanov, President of CCW and ICA Board Member and Claudia Sanchez Bajo, Representative for Latin America on the ICA Committee on Cooperative Research (ICA-CCR) and

Sources:

- Barberini, Ivano (2007) Building new paths to Peace, in Co-operatives and the pursuit of peace, Emmanuel & Ian MacPherson (eds).
- Carrizo, Juan Jose (2013) La Paz es un valor cooperativo, National South University, Bahia Blanca, Argentina.
- Galtung, Johan Vincent (1969) Violence, Peace and Peace Research. Journal of Peace Research 6(3), pages 167-191.