



INTERNATIONAL CO-OPERATIVE ALLIANCE General Assembly – Oslo – 4 September 2003

Draft Minutes

1. Opening

The ICA President, Mr. Ivano Barberini wished all a warm welcome to the General Assembly 2003 and called the General Assembly to order.

Before turning to the business at hand, the President asked the Assembly to stand and observe a minute of silence in recognition of the following co-operators who had passed away: Mr. Masao Ohya, Mr. Erlender Einarsson, Yashitada Nakaoka, Mr. Alexandr Krasheninnikov.

The ICA President announced that this Assembly was well attended with a total of 609 made up of 238 Representatives, 14.7% of which being women; 273 observers, with 12.8% women; 40 guests, 10 members of the press and 28 personal interpreters and 20 staff members.

2. Adoption of the Agenda

The President reminded the Assembly that the draft Agenda had been circulated to members as part of the Review of International Co-operation.

There being no proposed changes the General Assembly approved the agenda by acclamation.

3. Draft Minutes of the General Assembly in Seoul 2001

The draft minutes were approved by acclamation.

4. Report of the ICA President

The President reported on his activities over the last year.

5. Report of the Director-General

The Director-General reported that it had been a productive year and that staff deserved credit as they had responded to the past problems in the best way – with a strong resolve and commitment.

His dealings with the President and the Board has also been positive and productive. The Board clearly wanted to promote the principles and values of global cooperation rather than dwell endlessly on financial problems. The DG said that the President was very able and that he was determined to see the world co-operative movement recognized for the great philosophy and business enterprise which it is.

The Seoul General Assembly decided to set up a Task Force to undertake a root and branch review of ICA. Its members were, Ivano Barberini, Paulne Green, Ousseynou Dieng, Glen Tully and Yehudah Paz. It met several times and its recommendations were reported to the Board earlier in the year. The Restructuring Report would show the end result of this, presented by Pauline Green.

The Director General went on to report that Recommendation 193 had been adopted. This called on all Governments to actively promote cooperative enterprise. He said that Recommendation 193 had become a clarion call for co-operators all over the world and was an extremely important milestone in cooperative history – not least in persuading governments of the need for good co-operative legislation and good co-operative governance.

Reporting on the progress of dotCoop, he said that cooperative organizations are recognizing its importance as emphasis of their special identity as a cooperative enterprise. He encouraged those member organizations who were not yet using .coop to do so and encourage their members also.

Reporting on the Regions, the Director-General said that 2002 was used to consolidate and build.

In Africa we recognized that we must work with the UN and others in tackling the resurgence of HIV/Aids and look beyond that to better times. Successful events and training programmes on agriculture, gender and human resource development were carried out as well as an excellent Regional Conference in Mauritius which was his first official function as ICA Director-General.

In the Americas work also continued with development partners and initiatives were taken in regard to credit and savings cooperatives, forestry and gender.

The Director-General reported that he had attended the Regional Conference in Ascuncion, Paraguay which was a success and his first visit to South America.

In Asia and the Pacific a very successful Ministerial Conference was held in Nepal attended by our President and Jan Eirik Imbsen and during the year, and many events had been held with farmers, researchers, and bankers amongst others.

Reporting on the European region, Lisbon in October showed what great support we have throughout their country and also emphasizes that coops are not just for poor people. A lot of work was done in 2002 helping coops in Central and Eastern Europe re-establishing their positions. Several meetings took place with the European Union and an excellent housing conference held in Turkey.

The DG ended his report on a positive note saying that Regions and Head Office function with the minimum of resources, however a lot is being done and that he could commend that co-operation is on the move. He reported that co-operatives provided 100 million jobs throughout the world – much more than all multi-national corporations put together. In all this travels he has encountered tremendous enthusiasm for the philosophy of cooperation and its influence in business enterprise. He stated that we must use that for our advantage as well as for the people we represent.

The Director-General presented his report on the activities of the ICA based on the Annual Reports for 2001 and 2002 which had been distributed.

6. Report of the Independent Auditor

The Auditor in charge of Ernst & Young, Mr. Mark Hawkins commented upon the financial statements for the years 2001 and 2002. The consolidated statements for the two years present fairly, in all material respects, the financial position of the International Co-operative Alliance as of December 31, 2002 and the results of its operations and its cash flows for the year then ended in accordance with International Accounting Standards.

7. Report of the Audit & Control Committee

The Chairman of the Audit & Control Committee, Mrs. Gun-Britt Mårtensson, commented upon the way the Audit & Control Committee had worked. She said that the financial affairs had improved since the General Assembly in Seoul and it was a good that ICA had been able to start rebuilding its reserves. She thanked the membership, the new leadership at ICA Head office and the staff. For a good future, she said, we needed to have a much better discipline among us, the membership fees must be paid, be paid on time and be paid in accordance with the formula. For ICA, the base for a sound economy is the membership fee. She went on to say that financial stability is especially important today when the co-operative movement can and must play an important role in all kinds of societies, not least the developing ones.

Finally, Mrs. Mårtensson, on behalf of the Audit & Control Committee, submitted the recommendation to the General Assembly to approve the audited accounts for the years 2001 and 2002.

The General Assembly approved the ICA annual accounts for the years 2001 and 2002 and the report of the Audit and Control Committee.

8. Elections (Board and Audit & Control Committee)

The President said that two additional nominations had been received for the Board. These nominations had been reviewed by the Elections Committee and had been added to the ballot sheet. He also announced to the Assembly that in the case that Gun-Britt Martensson and Pal Bartus were elected to the Board they would stand down from the Audit & Control Committee. The candidates for both the Board and Audit & Control Committee presented themselves briefly, after which the Director-General explained the voting procedure as proposed and agreed by the Elections Committee.

The President told the assembly that the three Regional Assemblies had elected their Vice-Presidents as follows: Stanley Muchiri, the Vice-President elect for Africa, Carlos Palacino, the Vice-President elect for the Americas, and Pauline Green Vice-President elect for Europe.

The candidates to the Board were asked to come forward and introduce themselves.

- Mr. Deepak Prakash BASKOTA, National Co-operative Federation of Nepal

- Mr. Pal BARTUS, National Federation of Consumer Co-operatives and Trade Association (Co-op Hungary)
- Mr. Ousseynou DIENG, National Co-operative Union of Senegal (UNCAS)
- Ms. Elsa Gun-Britt Mårtensson, HSB Riksförbund, Sweden
- Mr. Isami MIYATA, Central Union of Agricultural Co-operatives (JA Zenchu), Japan

The two candidates to the Audit and Control committee also presented themselves

- Mr. Shugo OGURA, Japanese Consumer Co-operative Union (JCCU), Japan
- Mr. Roy Berg PEDERSEN, Federation of Co-operative Housing Associations (NBBL), Norway

The Director-General then explained the voting procedure; each member organization had received the number of ballot papers based on the voting entitlement of each member organization calculated according to the ICA Rules. The Elections Committee decided that the Board members would be elected by secret ballot, and the Audit and Control Committee members by a showing of the ballot papers as it was not a contested election. Election results would be announced after the lunch break after the count of the secret ballots which would be supervised by Mr. Jakub Janiak of the Audit & Control Committee.

The Assembly was then asked to ratify the elections of the 3 Vice-Presidents, Stanly Muchiri as Vice-President for Africa, Carlos Palacino as Vice-President for the Americas, and Pauline Green as Vice-President of Europe. The Assembly approved by acclamation.

The President then congratulated the three ICA Vice-Presidents.

9. Statement of the Youth Conference

Entitled “Through Co-operation, Another World is Possible”, the statement indicated that the co-operative model can contribute to the eradication of poverty. It was the responsibility of large well-established Co-operatives to support the creation and growth of co-operatives in developing countries. The Youth Conference asked delegates to encourage the involvement of young people in their organizations.

10. Presentation of certificate to Jens Heiser

In recognition of his 12 years on the ICA Board, Jens Heiser from Germany was presented with a certificate by the President.

11. Report of Elections

The Director General reported that the following were elected to the Board and the Audit & Control Committee:-

Mr. Pal Bartus, National Federation of Consumer Co-operatives and Trade Association (Co-op Hungary)

Mr. Ousseynou Dieng, National Co-operative Union of Senegal (UNCAS)
Ms. Elsa Gun-Britt Mårtensson, HSB Riksförbund, Sweden
Mr. Isami Miyata, Central Union Of Agricultural Co-operatives (JA Zenchu), Japan

12. Report and Recommendation of the Board on ICA Restructuring

Pauline Green presented the Report from the Board which was accepted by acclamation.

13. Rule Changes. These were presented by the Director General

Article 6 Eligibility

There should be three types of member organizations of the ICA

a) **Members** – These are the main types of organizations in membership with full participatory powers. Normally they are:

- National unions or federations of co-operative organizations
- National confederations of co-operative unions (Apex organizations)
- National co-operative business organizations with majority individual ownership
- International co-operative organizations

Exceptionally, they may also be:

- Regional federations or unions of co-operative organizations
- Individual co-operative organizations (of a multi regional nature)
- Educational, research and other institutions which promote co-operatives and are affiliated to the co-operative movement

b) **Associate** – These are organizations which are supporters of co-operatives or are owned and controlled by co-operatives.

c) **Sectoral** – The sectoral organizations are branches of ICA, and therefore all their members are affiliated to ICA as **Sectoral members**. Normally, those Sectoral members who are eligible will also be full members of ICA.

Members and Associate members shall pay an annual subscription in proportion to their economic activities or on the basis of the aggregate business activity of their members. Associate members should pay on a reduced scale.

Associate and Sectoral members do not have voting rights in ICA's global or Regional frameworks.

Article 8 Rights of Members

a) Remove “at the meetings”

Article 11 Subscriptions

Delete para e)

Article 12 Authorities

Add “Regional Elected Bodies” after “Board”

Insert new Article 17 “Powers of Regional Assemblies”

after third paragraph on page 16:

- d) Replace with “elect a President of the Region, who will also serve as ICA Vice President subject to ratification by the General Assembly, and elect a Regional Governing Body”

Article 19 Powers of the Board

Add – (new clause) “(a) to develop and monitor a global strategy for ICA”

(Renumber other clauses)

At end of i) “including Thematic Committees”

Add new Article 20 “Regional Elected Bodies”:

- a) A Regional Elected Body shall consist of a President, Vice Presidents and other members elected by the Regional Assembly for a four-year term. Vacancies shall be filled through election at a subsequent Regional Assembly or by co-optation subject to ratification at a subsequent Regional Assembly.
- b) The Regional Elected Body shall be elected as decided by the Regional Assembly as long as it is within the Rules of the ICA

Add new Article 21 Competencies of the Regional Elected Body:

- a) To work within the policy guidelines and decisions laid down from time to time by the ICA Board
- b) To manage the affairs of the ICA at regional level between the meetings of the Regional Assembly
- c) To prepare the agenda and organize the meetings of the Regional Assembly
- d) To reinforce member active participation
- e) To promote sustainable co-operative regional development
- f) To strengthen and expand regional sectoral organizations and Thematic Committees and ensure their co-operation with their global equivalent
- g) To enhance the image of ICA and the co-operative movement within the Region, with national and regional institutions
- h) To establish committees where appropriate
- i) To provide recommendations on membership applications from its Region to the ICA Board
- j) To implement and monitor activities and programmes financed by the Regions, sectoral organizations and ICA partners in collaboration with Head Office
- k) To ensure regional finance and budgeting is strictly monitored and within the general guidelines of ICA
- l) To approve the annual budget and work plan prepared by the Regional Director before submitting to the Director-General and ICA Board for final approval

New Article 22 Thematic Committees

Thematic Committees shall be based on functional or multi-purpose activities and shall receive support from the ICA, as mutually agreed. They will:

- a) Draw up their rules, which shall be approved by the ICA Board

- b) Report regularly on their activities to the ICA Board and General Assembly
- c) Have the right to propose to the ICA Board themes for discussion
- d) Establish a working collaboration with each other, where practicable and desirable
- e) Collaborate with the ICA Head Office and Regional Offices, where practicable
- f) Ensure that their regional committees are established, and operate, in conformity with policies established by ICA and its Regional Assemblies, with regional chairs represented on global committees
- g) Be entitled to one representative at General Assembly, with voting rights

Article 26 Director-General

Add new b) “Coordinate, monitor, evaluate and support the work of the Regional Offices”

Article 27 Responsibilities of Regional Offices

- Delete first paragraph
- Add at end of d)....”and support elected bodies”
- Delete penultimate paragraph

Section VI Sectoral Members

Article 28 Sectoral Organisations

Replace all after first paragraph with:

The ICA Board may establish or dissolve, and recognize or withdraw recognition from international Sectoral Organisations in such areas of economic and social activity of co-operatives as considered desirable.

The Sectoral Organisations shall:

- a) Draw up their Rules, which shall be approved by the ICA Board;
- b) Report regularly on their activities to the ICA Board and General Assembly;
- c) Be entitled to one representative at the General Assembly, who shall have full voting rights;
- d) Have the right to propose to the ICA Board themes for discussion;
- e) Be responsible to their members and seek to establish a working collaboration with each other, where practicable and desirable;
- f) Collaborate with the ICA Head Office and Regional Offices, where practicable;
- g) Ensure that their regional committees are established, and operate, in conformity with policies established by the ICA and its Regional Assemblies, with regional chairs represented on global committees;
- h) Self-finance their activities

Membership Application and Admission Requirements

Paragraph 7, delete and replace with:

“Member organizations having difficulty in paying subscriptions can apply for leniency to the Director-General by 31 March each year as follows:

- a) Members may be granted one year’s postponement of subscription payments provided that the outstanding debt is cleared.

- b) No member should be entitled to more than one year's postponement. If the above definition is not complied with, a final decision shall rest with the Board
- c) Organisations once expelled from the ICA for non-payment of subscriptions cannot re-apply for membership within five years unless their outstanding debts are cleared"

Subscription Formula

Delete 3 and 4 and replace with:

"3. Minimum subscriptions established by the General Assembly shall be 5,500 Swiss Francs
4. Maximum subscription as established by the General Assembly shall be 275,000 Swiss Francs"

Standing Order III

Representation at General Assembly

- 1. and 2. Replace "5000" with "5,500"
- 8. Add "associate", after "representative"

Standing Orders – Section VI. Specialised Bodies

Rename "ICA Specialised Organisations" as "ICA Sectoral Organisations" and "Thematic Committees" throughout.

Remove "8. INTERCOOP" AND "10. ICEO"

Replace "ICA Global Women's Committee" with "ICA Gender Equality Committee"

The Rule changes were agreed and the DG indicated that the new rule books would be published later in the year.

14. Resolution

The ICA Board proposed a resolution following the important discussions on co-operative development which had taken place during the Oslo Assembly. The Resolution read as follows:

"The 2003 ICA General Assembly,

AWARE of the changes, complexity and challenges of the global environment in which co-operatives operate.

REAFFIRMS its continued support to the RIO Co-operative Declaration and the belief in the co-operative principles and the co-operative form of organization in solving the problems of poverty and other social ills and in contributing to the achievement of the UN's Millennium Development Goals.

LOOKS FORWARD to working with the ILO in the implementation of the ILO Recommendation 193.

APPRECIATES the relevance of the theme of the General Assembly, *Co-operatives for economic, social and democratic development*, which underlines the role of co-operatives in development.

COMMENDS the active and leading role of the ICA in promoting co-operative development, and

WELCOMES the continued constructive partnership with ICA's development partners, and

REMINDS members and partners of the important role of women and youth in all development activities and the need to include a gender perspective when addressing co-operative development,

ASKS members and partners to push governments, international donor organizations and other development agencies to contribute more to co-operative development.

CALLS ON its member organizations in the industrialized world to give renewed attention to the way in which they can rally the support of their members in promoting development in the developing world.

DECLARES its resolve to actively support ICA's development programme and the campaign against poverty"

The Assembly approved the resolution by acclaim.

15. Venue of next meeting

The President then announced that an invitation had been received from the Colombian Co-operative Movement to hold the next General Assembly in Cartagena, Colombia, and encouraged the Assembly to accept. A presentation by Carlos Palacino was then projected.

The Assembly then accepted the invitation unanimously.

16. Closing

The President then said that the time had come to bring the General Assembly to a close. He, on the Assembly's behalf expressed great appreciation to our hosts – Coop NKL, NBBL, the Norwegian Federation of Co-operative Housing Association and Norsk Landbrukssamvirke, the Federation of Norwegian Agricultural Co-operatives for their tremendous efforts. The efficient arrangements enabled a successful meeting. The President thanked Steiner Dvergsdal and his organizing committee for their hard work.

The President also thanked ICA staff for their hard work in making the event a success. Thanks went also to the interpreters who had facilitated the discussions and assisted during the meeting.

The members were also thanked for coming to Norway in such large numbers. The President stated that it was only through their continued support that ICA could carry out its role – and was thanks to them that ICA existed. The President ended the Assembly by saying that the future of co-operation was in our hands and asked that we join together to make the co-operative difference to members, our communities, our nations, our regions and the world.

The President announced that the Rochdale Awards would be presented at the Gala Dinner later that evening, outgoing Board members would be recognized and an award would be given for the best .coop website.

Board members were asked to stay on in the hall for a brief meeting.