

PRESS RELEASE - ILO Centenary Declaration

15 May 2019

Cooperatives call for people-centred business models for a fair, secure, and inclusive Future of Work

The International Cooperative Alliance (ICA) welcomes the International Labour Organisation ([ILO Centenary outcome document released this week, in which the](#) Director-General calls upon all ILO constituents to **commit to a human-centred** agenda by focusing their efforts on reducing inequalities amongst vulnerable groups, including women and people with disabilities. The document also calls for the safeguarding of a *“fairer, more inclusive, and more secure future of work”* for all by ensuring good governance in ILO processes, based on equality and democratic participation. Moreover, the ICA shares the view that workplaces have to *“ensure adequate protection of all workers”* through the implementation of the Universal Labour Guarantee.

Nevertheless, cooperatives regret that the Draft ILO Centenary Declaration **failed to acknowledge cooperatives as a specific type of sustainable enterprise**: one that is responsible for a large proportion of global employment, generating decent work and continuously experimenting with new ways of working – whereas other types of enterprise are mentioned. More than a decade ago, the cooperative movement committed itself to protecting fundamental workers’ rights and securing an adequate living wage through the ILO Promotion of Cooperatives Recommendation, 2002 (no. 193). Being fully engaged in labour standards, the ICA wishes to point out that last year, the cooperative movement gave itself the task to *“respect, promote, and act diligently to support the fundamental tenets of decent work”* through the [ICA Declaration on Decent Work and Against Harassment](#).

Furthermore, this draft declaration for the consideration of the International Labour Conference fails to address the issue of how ILO constituents can achieve *“the reduction and eventual elimination of informality”* and the role of cooperatives in this regard. These aspects are reiterated in the ILO Transition from the Informal to the Formal Economy Recommendation, 2015 (no. 204) and Global Commission on the Future of Work’s final report which states *“workers in the informal economy have often improved their situation through organising and working together with cooperatives and community-based organisations”*. Cooperatives are a recognised tool in the pathway towards **formalising the informal economy** and – more broadly – also in contributing to sustainable development, peace, and equality. Because every voice counts, cooperatives play a crucial role in shaping a fairer, more democratic, and more inclusive future of work.

The [ILO Centenary outcome document](#) has now been submitted to the Committee of the Whole for the upcoming International Labour Conference (10 to 21 June) where there will be negotiations on the ILO Centenary Declaration on the Future of Work for further consideration.

A call to ILO constituents

As a global actor that **provides jobs or work opportunities to 10% of the total world employed population**, whilst generating decent and stable work and collective wealth – both in urban and rural areas – the cooperative movement calls on all ILO constituents:

- to ensure that the **key role of cooperatives** in achieving a decent, human-centred work agenda is well-reflected in the upcoming ILO Centenary Declaration on the Future of Work and;
- to prioritise people-centred business models, and in particular cooperatives, for a **fair, secure and inclusive Future of Work!**

ENDS

For further information contact:

Leire Luengo

Director of Communications
luengo@ica.coop

NOTES TO THE EDITOR

About the International Cooperative Alliance

The International Cooperative Alliance is a non-profit international association established in 1895 to advance the cooperative social enterprise model. The International Cooperative Alliance is the voice for cooperatives worldwide, representing more than 310 cooperative federations and organisations across 109 countries.

12 % of the humanity are cooperators. Through its membership, the International Cooperative Alliance represents 1,2 billion people from any of the 2.94 million cooperatives worldwide. The largest 300 cooperatives in the world have combined annual revenues of 2.16 trillion USD (2015) and 280 million people around the world (10% of the employed population) secure their livelihoods in cooperatives, either through direct employment or by organizing through a cooperative.

The International Cooperative Alliance works with global and regional governments and organisations to create the legislative environments that allow cooperatives to form and grow. Towards media and public, the International Cooperative Alliance promotes the importance of people-centred cooperatives' values-based business model.

Operating from a global office in Brussels, Belgium, the International Cooperative Alliance is organised with four Regional Offices (Europe, Africa, Americas, and Asia-Pacific), and eight Sectoral Organisations (Banking, Agriculture, Fisheries, Insurance, Health, Housing, Consumer Cooperatives, and service and industry cooperatives).