



CONCEPT NOTE

WEBINAR

Global Consultation on the Cooperative Identity: lessons from the Congress, next steps and guidelines

Outcomes of the 33rd World Cooperative Congress, Global consultation on the ICA Statement on the cooperative identity and cooperative identity as a source of international standards and national law

13 May 2022

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14h - 16h CEST

In recent times, and in the current global context, the need to foster cooperation has never been as urgent as it is today. The [33rd World Cooperative Congress](#) held in December 2021 on the theme “Deepening our Cooperative Identity” demonstrated how the relevance of cooperatives in building a better world lies in the genuine implementation and practice of cooperatives’ universal values and principles. Our movement initiated a consultative process aimed at exploring how well the Statement on the Cooperative Identity is known, understood and if it has stood the test of time since its adoption in 1995.

As a first concrete follow-up of the Congress and looking at what is next, the ICA is organising an online discussion on 13 May 2022 with the following objectives:

- to inform widely, the main takeaways of the reports of the rapporteurs of the 33rd World Cooperative Congress,
- create awareness about the global consultation on the ICA Statement on the Cooperative Identity,
- to thematically bring together cooperators and the ILO focusing on ILO’s standard-setting role, in particular through ILO Promotion of Cooperatives Recommendation, 2002 (n°193).

The webinar is also aimed to initiate your engagement with the ICA in forthcoming discussions on fostering cooperation in this decade, including through events such as the 110th session of the International Labour Conference (May 27 – June 10), the 100^o International Cooperative Day and 28th UN International Day of Cooperatives on July 2, and the 20th Anniversary of ILO Promotion of Cooperatives Recommendation, 2002 (n° 193) on June 20, 2022. The section ‘background information’ below gives more details on these actions

We look forward to a large participation of cooperators from all regions and sectors in the consultations including the webinar and the survey on the cooperative identity.

SPEAKERS' BIOS

<p>Ann Hoyt, PROFESSOR EMERITUS UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-MADISON</p>	<p>Martin Lowery, CHAIR, ICA COMMITTEE ON THE COOPERATIVE IDENTITY</p>
<p>Ann Hoyt is internationally recognized for her innovative research and contributions to co-op education. Her work, including 29 years as a professor at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, has had an indelible impact on cooperatives and the cooperative movement. Academically, Ann is an active author, reviewer, teacher, researcher and consultant on a wide variety of issues related to cooperatives, national and international cooperation, and cooperative governance. Ann is a dedicated cooperative practitioner: she has served on numerous cooperative and foundation boards, including 22 years with NCBA CLUSA, two as chair; six years with the National Cooperative Bank; and 20 years, nine as chair, with the University of Wisconsin Credit Union. Throughout her work Ann has consistently inspired thousands of cooperators, young and old, to believe in, support and work for cooperatives as a viable democratic method to achieve economic justice.</p>	<p>Martin Lowery is immediate past Chair of the National Cooperative Bank (NCB) and Executive Vice President, Emeritus, of the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association (NRECA). In 2014, Martin was inducted into the Cooperative Hall of Fame, the highest honor that the U.S. cooperative community bestows on individuals who have made heroic contributions to the cooperative movement. He is currently the elected U.S. representative to the board of the International Cooperative Alliance (ICA); he chairs the ICA Committee on the Cooperative Identity and serves on the ICA Membership Committee. He is also the NRECA representative to the board of the U.S. Global Leadership Coalition, advocating that diplomacy and development are central to U.S. international affairs. Martin received a bachelor's degree from DePaul University and a Ph.D. in Philosophy from Duke University.</p>
<p>Alexandra Wilson, CHAIR, ICA COOPERATIVE IDENTITY ADVISORY GROUP</p>	<p>Anna Torriente, HEAD OF EMPLOYMENT AND TRIPARTITE GOVERNANCE UNIT, INTERNATIONAL LABOUR STANDARDS UNIT</p>
<p>Alexandra Wilson discovered a passion for cooperatives in 1974, when she led her neighbours in a successful fight to create the Bain Apartments Cooperative, putting a stop to the landlord's plans to evict 260 low-income households. This involvement as a teenager in saving her own home led to a career in the development, management and provision of association services to housing cooperatives. After nine years with the Cooperative Housing Federation of Toronto, five as managing director, and 15 years at the head of the Cooperative Housing Federation of Canada, Alexandra started up the Agency for Cooperative Housing, serving as CEO from 2005 until her retirement in 2021. Alexandra spent 22 years on the board of Cooperative Housing International and in 2017 was elected to the global board of the International Cooperative Alliance. She is a board member of Cooperatives and Mutuals Canada, the apex body of the Canadian cooperative movement; vice chair of the board of The Cooperators, a large cooperative insurer; and a member of the board of the Funeral Cooperative of Ottawa.</p>	<p>Ana Torriente joined the ILO in 1998 and is currently Head of the Employment Policy and Tripartite Governance Unit in the International Labour Standards Department, where she deals with employment-related ILO instruments (such as those on employment policy development, public employment services and private employment agencies, and termination of employment). In addition, she deals with the Tripartite Consultation (International Labour Standards) Convention, 1976 (No. 144), as well as instruments on special categories of workers, including workers in specific economic sectors, workers with disabilities and domestic workers. Ms. Torriente has co-authored several ILO training manuals and has provided training on international labour standards to over 600 judges and labour inspectors. She was responsible, together with her team, for the preparation of the 2020 General Survey on promoting employment and decent work in a changing landscape and the 2021 Addendum to the General Survey.</p>
<p>Simel Esim, HEAD, COOPERATIVE UNIT OF THE INTERNATIONAL LABOUR ORGANIZATION</p>	<p>Hagen Henry, CHAIR, ICA COOPERATIVE LAW COMMITTEE, FORMER HEAD OF THE ILO COOP UNIT</p>
<p>Simel Esim a political economist, working in social and economic development for the past 25 years. She is the Chief of the Cooperative Branch at the International Labour Organization in Geneva. Prior to that, she was a Senior Technical Specialist in the ILO's Regional Office for Arab States. She has policy advocacy, research, capacity building, program management and M&E skills. She works on cooperative and social and solidarity</p>	<p>Hagen Henry was the Adjunct Professor of comparative law at the University of Helsinki (Finland) and Research director at the Ruralia Institute of that university until December 2021. He studied law in Saarbrücken/Germany and law and French language in Geneva. He has consulted on cooperative policy and legislation for governmental, as well as non-governmental, national, regional and international organizations. Before joining</p>

<p>economy development, informal employment and women's economic empowerment issues. She holds an MA in International Economics and Middle East Studies and a Ph.D. in economics. She speaks Turkish and English, and has working knowledge of Italian and Arabic.</p>	<p>the Ruralia Institute of the University of Helsinki as Research director in 2011, he was Chief of the Cooperative Branch of the International Labour Office from 2007 to early 2011. He is Chair of the International Cooperative Alliance Cooperative Law Committee.</p>
<p>Danilo Gutierrez, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, INACOOOP Danilo Gutiérrez is the Executive Director of the National Institute of Cooperativism of Uruguay (INACOOOP). Previously, Danilo was President of the Uruguayan Confederation of Cooperative Entities (CUDECOOP) and a member of the Honorary Commission of Cooperativism of the President of the Republic. Danilo was a member of the Uruguayan delegation to the ILO Committee for the discussion and drafting of Recommendation 193 and is involved in the drafting of the Uruguayan Cooperative Law. He has also been a director of COFAC (savings and credit), CABAL (means of payment) and SURCO (insurance).</p>	<p>Bruno Roelants, DIRECTOR GENERAL, ICA Bruno Roelants was Secretary General of CICOPA from 2002-2018 and of its regional organization CECOP CICOPA-Europe since 2006. He worked on development projects in China, India and Eastern Europe, and coordinated the cooperative negotiating group for the ILO Promotion of Cooperatives Recommendation 2002 (n° 193). He has a Masters in labour studies. He has lectured on cooperatives in Italy and is co-author of <i>Cooperatives, Territories and Jobs</i> (2011), <i>Capital and the Debt Trap – Learning from Cooperatives in the Global Crisis</i> (2013) and <i>Cooperatives and Employment – a Global Report</i> (2014). He edited the International Co-operative Alliance (ICA) report <i>Cooperative Growth for the 21st Century</i> (2013).</p>

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

I. 33^o World Cooperative Congress

World Cooperative Congresses have been organized since 1895 and can be said to be the fundamental manifestation of the international cooperative movement, which is centered around people's needs and aspiration and their democratic control of their livelihoods, and which remains deeply concerned about the sustainable development of communities. The 33rd World Cooperative Congress was convened in December 2021 around the theme "Deepening our Cooperative Identity" after almost ten years since the last Congress was convened to celebrate the UN International Year of Cooperatives in 2012.

Over 1600 cooperators (1000 onsite and over 600 online) participated in the Congress which was convened by the International Cooperative Alliance and organized in collaboration with the Metropolitan Government of the City of Seoul and the ICA Members in Korea. It was opened by South Korean President Moon Jae-in and graced by ILO Director General Guy Ryder, among other high-level personalities. It was the second time in ICA's 126 years' history that an ICA Congress was convened outside Europe. The theme of this Congress was *Deepening our Cooperative Identity*, and over 200 experts, practitioners and policy makers took the floor to share their ideas, express concerns and offer solutions while addressing the theme and the four sub-themes: *Examining; Strengthening; Committing to; and Living the Cooperative Identity*. An equal number of researchers submitted their findings and thematic works during the Congress Research Conference and the 3rd International Forum on Cooperative Law, which were organized immediately before the Congress itself. A truly participative endeavor, the 33rd Congress and its 9 days of thematic events witnessed conversations which were a mix of innovation and ideas, and youthful creativity, precious advice from experienced co-operators, and forward-looking commitments from policy makers.

II. Conclusions of the Congress

The concluding session of the Congress was aired online on 29 December 2021. Madison University Professor Ann Hoyt, and ICA Identity Committee Chairperson Martin Lowery provided a first account of Congress outcomes. Other concluding speeches were contributed by Spanish Deputy Prime Minister Yolanda Díaz, Acting Governor of Gyeonggi province OH Byung-kwon, , Chair of the Korea Cooperative Solidarity CHO Wan-seok, and ICA President Ariel Guarco, while ICA Director General Bruno Roelants indicated the follow-ups envisioned.

The main-messages and common-threads of the discussions at the 33rd Congress were:

- cooperatives need to assume responsibility and heightened commitment in creating ethical value chains.
- cooperatives need to seize the opportunity to foster inclusivity, have deep consideration of our practices and promote equality and equity at all levels for women, youth and marginalized groups.
- now is a period of new opportunities for culturally relevant education and training, and cooperatives need to use technologies to safeguard economic and democratic participation and urgently aim to measure the tangible and intangible impact they have on communities, especially during crises.
- it is fundamental to position cooperatives as agents towards building a stronger capital base; and foster multilateralism and cooperation among cooperatives across national and sectoral borders, particularly towards climate action and strengthen the ICA to that effect.
- and act consistent with the ICA's history of over 100 years of fostering peace, not only in the context of overt violence but importantly in building positive peace around communities of cooperation, integration, reconciliation, and equality.

III. The Road Ahead: a Global Consultation on the Cooperative Identity

The acts of aggression, incrementing threats to our planet, and the precarity of lives of its people old and young, working or not, has never been higher, and the inclusive prosperity of humans is now more uncertain than in the recent past. Therefore, the need to foster cooperation has never been so urgent as it is today. The relevance of the cooperative entrepreneurial model in building a better world lies in the genuine implementation and practice of cooperatives' universal values and principles enshrined in the ICA Statement on the Cooperative Identity, and the first step towards that is to be able to understand them and to be able to adapt to changes, especially the unforeseen and negative.

The ICA Board established the Cooperative Identity Advisory Group comprising 23 cooperative experts and practitioners selected from all over the world, to facilitate the continuation of the reflection on the cooperative identity which began during the 33rd Congress. This group has been working towards developing a plan of action and a preliminary survey, to understand from co-operators worldwide if the Statement on the Cooperative Identity is well known, adequately understood, and appropriately utilized by cooperatives in deepening the cooperative impact of their missions and benefit to communities.

As part of the continuing process of coordinated reflections on the cooperative identity facilitated by the efforts of the global cooperative movement and its Cooperative Identity Advisory Group, the ICA is organizing a first online discussion on the finalized outcomes of the 33rd Congress, as well as on the work of the Cooperative Identity Advisory Group, and the stewardship of the International Labour Organization, the agency of the United Nations with a mandate per Article 12, Paragraph 3 of the ILO Constitution, in promoting, advancing and safeguarding cooperatives and having approved the Promotion of Cooperatives Recommendation, 2002 (n°193) where the Statement on the Cooperative Identity appears in full, thus making it a source of law and policy.

Aim and Objectives of the online discussion

The online discussion aims to inform widely, the main takeaways of the reports of the rapporteurs of the 33rd World Cooperative Congress, as well as create awareness about the global consultation on the ICA Statement on the Cooperative Identity. It also aspires to thematically bring together cooperators and the ILO, ahead of the 110th Session of the International Labour Conference and the UN International Day of Cooperatives. The event will be a precursor to the ICA marking the 20th Anniversary of the Promotion of Cooperatives Recommendation, 2002 (No. 193) adopted on 20 June 2002.