

# A People-Centred Path for a Second Cooperative Decade

2020–2030 Strategic Plan

January 2020



**At the ICA 2017 General Assembly in Kuala Lumpur, the newly elected Board of Directors was given the following mandate:**

Revise the overall strategy expressed in the Blueprint for a Co-operative Decade, with a view toward 2030, building on the action plan, the policy guide, and the work of the Leadership Circle, the Co-operative Roundtable and the Blue Ribbon Commission on Co-operative Capital, as appropriate, working in close collaboration with the regions and sectors of the Alliance and in consultation with the entire Alliance membership, with the goal of proposing a new, people-centred path for globalization through increasing importance given to co-operative action, and by the bodies of the Alliance strengthening their combined action at the service of co-operatives and their national structures.

This Strategic Plan has been debated and approved by the ICA General Assembly in Kigali on 17 October 2019 after 22 months of elaboration and consultation with ICA members and ICA bodies. It is aimed at providing strategic guidance to the cooperative movement at the international level, namely the ICA and its regional, sectoral and thematic bodies, as well as the whole ICA membership as far as international action is concerned.

The following pages successively examine

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## SECTION 1

The ICA's Purpose and Mission in the face of the challenges the world is facing;

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## SECTION 2

How to strengthen and deepen the Cooperative Identity in this new decade;

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## SECTION 3

The Vision launched in the Blueprint for a Cooperative Decade, which it is proposed to continue through to 2030;

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## SECTION 4

Analyses the relationship between the four themes of this Strategic Plan, as presented, and the five pillars of the Blueprint;

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## SECTION 5

Comprises the Strategic Plan itself, set out under four key themes. The concept behind each theme is explained, the corresponding strategic objectives are defined, and specific strategic initiatives are spelled out that will be translated into operational work plans.

# 1 The ICA's Purpose and Mission vs. the Global Challenges of this New Decade

The Purpose of the International Cooperative Alliance is as follows:

- To promote the world cooperative movement, based on mutual self-help and democracy;
- To promote and protect cooperative values and principles;
- To facilitate the development of economic and other mutually beneficial relations between its member organizations;
- To promote sustainable human development and further the economic and social progress of people, thereby contributing to international peace and security; and
- To promote equality between men and women in all decision-making and activities within the cooperative movement." (ICA Bylaws, Art. 1).

The greatest strength of the cooperative movement today is its global reach—its spread across every geographic region, its multi-sectoral character, and the sharing of a common identity. Through the ICA, the cooperative movement forms a well-defined, well-linked global network.

Yet today the greatest weakness of the cooperative movement is that, even within the ICA global network, there is limited cooperation among cooperatives, a limited commitment to sharing resources for research and education, and a significant lack of participation by large cooperatives.

At the same time, significant opportunities are emerging for all cooperatives—new opportunities for collaboration; business connections and information sharing through a new generation of information technology and common IT platforms; active participation by youth and women in an inclusive cooperative network; and new and emerging business models in the social and solidarity economy. All this suggests a potential for cooperative expansion and increased influence. The ICA can greatly enhance those opportunities through education, research and cooperation, while acknowledging the diversity in membership size and needs and finding ways to address the rise in new fields of activity for cooperatives.

We therefore reconfirm the Mission of the organisation:

The ICA unites, represents and serves cooperatives worldwide. It is the custodian of cooperative values and principles and makes the case for their distinctive values-based economic business model, which also provides individuals and communities with an instrument of self-help and influence over their development. The ICA advocates the interests and success of cooperatives, disseminates best practices and knowledge, strengthens their capacity building and monitors their progress and performance over time. (ICA Bylaws, Art. 1).

In fulfilling this Mission, the ICA acts as a global hub able to gather, on a voluntary basis, all types of cooperatives and to clearly define the various roles (global, regional, sectoral and national) in implementing this Strategic Plan

We face many challenges today around the world, where cooperatives have a key role to play:

- We see an urgent need to mitigate and adapt to the effects of climate change, including the migration and displacement of peoples.
- We are concerned about growing social and economic disparities, including unequal incomes and wealth, and recognize the need to accelerate efforts to address gender equality.
- In the face of massive youth unemployment, we see an urgent need to mitigate and adapt to the effects of climate change, including the migration and displacement of peoples.
- We seek greater engagement and inclusion of youth in the global cooperative movement.
- We expect digital transformation to bear significantly on the future of cooperatives.
- We anticipate increased instability in the financial sector and a growing risk to the global economy, with cooperatives potentially serving as a mitigating factor.
- We observe a growing global governance gap and the continuing loss of trust in political and economic organisations. We equally recognize the need for good cooperative governance and formal education and training in cooperative governance as a global issue.

- We are concerned that national politics and regulation are not always conducive to an effective cooperative legal framework, as set out in the Statement on the Cooperative Identity.
- In a world prone to multiple conflicts, we continue to maintain our historic commitment to global peace and security.
- We believe that greater focus is needed on the dignity of work and the role of technology in the future of work, and that cooperatives can be one of the main actors in this field.
- We consider the growth of the world population and the challenge of feeding billions to call on cooperatives for substantial contributions to food security.
- We consider that cooperatives have a key role to play in affording billions of people the opportunity to enjoy a decent level of education and health and a reasonable standard in housing and work.

and positive way. Yet as the Blueprint's conclusion rightly states:

The ICA certainly has its own role to play and has every intention of rising to the challenges presented. But for this to be meaningful and effective, it needs to be taken up and endorsed by national bodies, by individual societies, and by all people who believe in the cooperative way of doing business. Cooperatives must lead the way by cooperating amongst themselves.” (Blueprint for a Cooperative Decade, p. 36)



The 2020-2030 ICA Strategic Plan, built upon the foundation of the Blueprint for a Cooperative Decade, is intended to address these challenges and concerns in a proactive

## 2 Strengthening and deepening the Cooperative Identity in this New Decade

The cooperative values of self-help, self-responsibility, democracy, equality, equity and solidarity still ring true. No investor-owned, for-profit organisation can entirely incorporate them into its culture, as much as it might try. The Statement on the Cooperative Identity also includes four ethical values—honesty, openness, social responsibility and caring for others. While any for-profit investor-owned company can claim to embody these four ethical values, their actual behaviour often belies that claim<sup>1</sup>.

Evidence of the power and persuasiveness of cooperative values is their acceptance across the globe by all types of cooperatives. Commitment to these values is so very important in today's torn, divided world.

If we do not sincerely embrace our cooperative identity, if we do not allow that identity to cascade throughout the organisations that we represent, we will face an existential crisis such that we may not survive as cooperatives. We may come to be viewed as irrelevant in comparison with alternative forms of business and alternative approaches to addressing, among other things, the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

<sup>1</sup> The ICA has been the only global cooperative organisation since 1895. Its principal responsibility is to advocate for, defend and protect the cooperative identity (definition, values and principles). On the 100th anniversary of the ICA, the cooperative principles were amended, with the definition of a cooperative, as well as a new set of cooperative values, added and approved by the ICA Congress for the first time, as part of the Statement on the Cooperative Identity (see Annex below). Thanks to intense

advocacy work by the cooperative movement, this foundational text has been incorporated in full in ILO Promotion of Cooperatives Recommendation, 2002 (n° 193), thereby obtaining the formal recognition of the international community.

### 3 The Vision of the Blueprint for a Cooperative Decade Extended towards the 2030 horizon

The present Strategic Plan acknowledges the 2020 Vision expressed in the Blueprint for a Cooperative Decade and proposes to extend it to 2030. This Vision states as follows:

The ambitious plan in this Blueprint – the 2020 Vision– is for the cooperative form of business by 2020 to become

- 1 The acknowledged leader in economic, social and environmental sustainability
- 2 The model preferred by people
- 3 The fastest growing form of enterprise. (Blueprint for a Cooperative Decade, p.3).

To realize this Vision by the end of the new decade, we must begin by establishing a series of measurable indicators. Regarding the first part of the Vision, we now have at hand the structure provided by the 17 UN Sustainable Development Goals, with 169 targets and 230 indicators. However, the latter need to be adapted to cooperatives (as mentioned in section D.I. of the Strategic Plan below). Regarding the second part, we will have to define precise indicators to demonstrate that cooperatives have indeed become the preferred model (as mentioned in B.5 below). As for the third part, we will have to develop indicators defining what growth means for cooperatives (as mentioned in B.6 below).<sup>2</sup>



<sup>2</sup> The ICA document Cooperative Growth for the 21st Century (2013) could be used as a basis for this discussion.

## 4 The four key themes of the strategic plan vs. the five pillars of the Blueprint

There is a direct relationship between the four themes of the 2020-2030 Strategic Plan and the five Blueprint pillars:

**Promotion of the Cooperative Identity** extends and expands upon the **Identity** pillar of the Blueprint in recognizing that the Statement on the Cooperative Identity needs to be better understood and internalized by all cooperatives and, most specifically, by ICA members. The new theme also extends and expands upon the **Legal Frameworks** pillar by acknowledging the Statement on the Cooperative Identity as central to legislative and regulatory recognition of the cooperative model's unique character.

**Growth of the Cooperative Movement** is dependent on our continuing ability to address the issues identified in the **Legal Framework** and **Capital** pillars of the Blueprint. Both pillars are foundational to the ICA's ability to expand membership and to support the creation of new cooperatives in multiple sectors.

**Cooperation among cooperatives** extends and expands upon the **Participation** pillar of the Blueprint by placing additional focus on the necessity for more and better coordination and participation between and among cooperatives and apex organizations in the global network. Many who provided input to the 2020-2030 Strategic Plan identified significantly greater inter-cooperation as a very important and desirable focus for the ICA.

**Contribution to Global Sustainable Development** extends and expands upon the **Sustainability** pillar of the Blueprint by recommitting to a strong cooperative contribution to the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals of the United Nations. Sustainability encompasses the triple bottom line of cooperative enterprise—economic, social and environmental.



## 5 The Strategic Plan

### A. PROMOTION OF THE COOPERATIVE IDENTITY

Reference in the ICA Purpose:  
Promote and protect cooperative  
values and principles

#### CONCEPT

Cooperative identity is a framework comprising values and principles, together with a definition, enshrined in the 1995 ICA Statement on the Cooperative Identity. Without this identity, cooperatives would not exist as we know them: an international reality, with a single global model, recognized by the UN and its agencies, and regulated in most countries.

#### STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

**Stakeholder and public awareness:** We must assertively promote and defend the cooperative identity to legislators, regulators, governments, international organisations, the public at large, youth, media and others, conveying the idea that cooperatives are not only an entrepreneurial model but also a manifestation of a grassroots capacity to address social and economic issues.

**Institutional support:** From international institutions we seek significant positive change in the form of active recognition of the cooperative identity and the incorporation of that recognition into their objectives, programs and methodologies, including the global response to climate change and environmental degradation as an integral part of the 7th Cooperative Principle—Concern for Community.

**Education:** We must address from a multidisciplinary viewpoint the exclusion of cooperatives and the cooperative identity from education systems at all levels across the globe: business, political science, history, anthropology, sociology, philosophy and development and environmental studies, as well as other academic disciplines. This change should occur at all educational levels, with cooperatives becoming an element in elementary and middle-school curricula.

#### CORRESPONDING STRATEGIC INITIATIVES

##### A.1 Reinforce the ICA Statement on the Cooperative Identity

First, the Guidance Notes on the Cooperative Principles, approved at the ICA 2015 General Assembly, which serve as an intermediary instrument between the Statement on the Cooperative Identity and such outputs as training manuals, legislation, and so on, will be completed with attention to the cooperative values and definition and will be widely disseminated. Second, thematic task forces under the ICA Board's Cooperative Identity Committee will contest any national or international regulation that compromises the cooperative identity. Last but no less important, an ICA 2020 Congress will be convened to deepen our understanding of the cooperative identity and to celebrate the 125<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the ICA as well as the 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the ICA Statement on the Cooperative Identity.

##### A.2 Promote regulation that protects the cooperative identity

Regulation must first of all ensure that cooperatives can preserve and promote their identity and that their identity is fully recognized by regulators. We will seek new methods of translating the cooperative identity into legal rules under the advisory guidance of the Cooperative Law Committee. We will develop a systematic analysis of legislation, respond to requests from members and provide urgent technical help when specific legislation is discussed at the national level. We will also strongly promote regulatory provisions establishing cooperative auditing and monitoring aimed at ensuring compliance with the Statement on the Cooperative Identity.

### A.3 Promote identity-related communication and branding

We will present the image of a cooperative movement that is proud of what it is, one that shows its pride by maintaining, and even intensifying, its own identity as an increasingly modern and innovative entrepreneurial movement with a reinforced business advantage. We will also stimulate intensified cooperative branding, including the use of the .coop domain and the Coop marque, through a worldwide communication campaign.

### A.4 Promote cooperative education

We will promote cooperative education and training, including the inclusion of cooperatives in formal education and research programmes, as a measure needed to raise the profile of the cooperative identity. Curricular internships, job placement and the formation of school cooperatives will be encouraged.

### A.5 Promote the cooperative identity within the international policy agenda

We will promote the cooperative identity within the body of international standards (Universal Declaration of Human Rights, International Labour Organisation (ILO) labour standards, etc.) that has gradually been enlarged since the Second World War. We will carry out a mapping of the main international institutions that play a strategic role in the elaboration of these standards. We will then over time define an agenda with these institutions for the promotion of the cooperative identity.

### A.6 Launch an ISO certification based on the cooperative identity

We will explore cooperative ISO certification, focused on the Statement on the Cooperative Identity. Certification will require collaboration between the ICA system and cooperative organisations at the national level. Certified cooperatives will be geo-localized in an on-line platform (see C.1. below).

## B. GROWTH OF THE COOPERATIVE MOVEMENT

Reference in the ICA Purpose: Promote the world cooperative movement, based upon mutual self-help and democracy

### CONCEPT

This strategic theme focuses on the international effort within the ICA to promote the endogenous growth of the cooperative movement. It is thus the most complex and multi-faceted of the four themes.

### STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

#### Strengthening the cooperative movement:

We must stimulate and motivate the cooperative movement to unite and grow through a multitude of avenues, combining the involvement of the members, advocacy, partnerships, research and communications, with specific attention to gender equality and intergenerational transmission.

**Definition of growth:** We must define growth in cooperative entrepreneurship as being for the purpose of meeting the needs of members, and not as growth simply for growth's sake. We can achieve this through research that focuses on the unique nature of growth within cooperative enterprises as autonomous membership organisations. Our research must identify ways to stimulate the endogenous growth of cooperatives as an entrepreneurial reality, while remaining focused on the social and economic well-being of the members which our movement serves.

**Innovative capacity:** We need to tap into the synergistic and entrepreneurial capacity of the cooperative movement to innovate and to create new knowledge around emerging products, services and markets—in particular, around new technology that can be adopted to address social and economic needs in a changing environment.

## CORRESPONDING STRATEGIC INITIATIVES

### B.1 Promote the growth and involvement of the ICA membership

We will encourage ICA members, especially those from weaker organizations, to participate in the life of the international cooperative movement, both through global conferences and regional and sectoral activities and through a dedicated Internet platform with access to relevant information in different domains. Simultaneously, we will encourage the affiliation of the many still unaffiliated cooperative organisations, some of which have emerged recently in specific sub-regions where membership is weak, and in countries without ICA members. Finally, members' needs will be properly identified to ensure that their membership provides them with concrete benefits.

### B.2. Deepen the coordination among the ICA entities

We will achieve better coordination among the various ICA entities, based on the principle of subsidiarity. Our fundamental focus will be directed towards the Regions and Sectoral Organizations, covering all fields of common interest and jointly managing the issue of the regional-sectoral entities. Coordination with the Thematic Committees and the Youth Network will be achieved through a more dynamic interfacing of these entities with the ICA Board and Global Office and with the Regions and Sectoral Organizations. We will arrange for permanent coordination with such new ICA working groups as the Think Tank and the IT Network (see C.2. below).

### B.3 Extend and deepen global partnerships and alliances

The transformational capacity of the cooperative movement throughout the world will be substantially enhanced by establishing well-targeted partnerships with multilateral organizations and civil-society organizations. We will reinforce the partnership that exists within COPAC<sup>3</sup>, while creating a

series of new institutional relationships with other international organisations. We will endeavour to form effective partnerships with such civil-society organizations as workers' unions, employers' organizations, chambers of commerce, women's organizations, and environmental NGOs, in addition to academic and research institutions. We will make particular efforts to establish strong partnerships with other global bodies in the social and solidarity economy (SSE). We will strive to position ourselves with the organizations of the UN system and to enhance our collaboration with governments, including inter-parliamentarian bodies and municipalities, through registrars' and ministerial conferences.

### B.4 Deepen the policy impact of the cooperative movement

A fundamental way to promote the growth of the cooperative movement as a global actor is through outreach to multilateral organizations and governments. The Global Office will focus mainly on the international organizations of the UN system, as well as other inter-governmental organizations like the OECD and the G20, while Regions, Sectoral Organizations, Thematic Committees and the Youth Network will reach out to their corresponding inter-governmental organisations.

ICA's policy positioning will be furthered by engagement on this issue with national members. Considering policy as one of the core areas of work for the ICA, we will support members' growing capacity for work with and advocacy towards multi-lateral actors and national governments both to (a) secure conducive policies on the part of international organisations where the pertaining national government is a member, and (b) provide members at the national level with instruments through which they can substantially improve the policy environment for the development of cooperatives.

Among the key policy topics on which the ICA must undertake advocacy over this decade, the top priority is the UN Agenda 2030 and its Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which

3 Committee for the Promotion and Advancement of Cooperatives, grouping the ICA, the UN, the ILO, the FAO and the World Farmers' Organization

are discussed under D.3 below. The main areas of cooperation with the ILO will include the future of work, the transition from the informal to the formal economy, and the monitoring of national policies, laws and regulations to advance and protect the cooperative identity. We will promote the social and solidarity economy (SSE) at the international level and, in particular, within the UN system, which has recognized its significance. We will also promote the recent recognition of cooperatives as a UNESCO intangible cultural heritage.

### B.5 Develop global knowledge of the cooperative movement

To be effective and credible when advocating policies conducive to the promotion of cooperatives, we need accurate information and data. At the same time, we must monitor the progress and impact of our advocacy work and the evolution of the cooperative movement. We will establish a clear research strategy, in direct relation with our policy priorities (see B.4. above), with the ICA Committee on Cooperative Research in its advisory and promotional role, so that the ICA becomes a knowledge-based organization. The ICA Review of International Cooperation will be promoted in this context. We will devote particular efforts to the development of mapping and statistics related to cooperatives, in order to show the importance of cooperative market share and employment in general, to better define cooperative growth, and to estimate the extent to which cooperatives are implementing the SDGs. Finally, through specific indicators, we will monitor the perception of the cooperative movement in public opinion, in order to respond to the second part of the Blueprint Vision (“The model preferred by people”).

### B.6. Deepen the economic role of cooperatives

With the strong involvement of the Regions and Sectoral Organizations, we will carry out an analysis using the main value chains, in order to identify the economic sectors and activities with more potential and to explore ways to strengthen the cooperative movement’s leading role in the global economy, supported with social balance-sheet models and instruments for measurement and interpretation of data.

The ICA will develop a framework whereby the cooperative movement as a whole promotes and supports the grassroots cooperatives and their members. At the same time, clear growth criteria regarding cooperatives will be developed, based on the economic, social and cultural needs and aspirations of their members.

There are many new and emerging areas of cooperative development globally, such as utilities, shared services, tourism and travel and elder care and childcare. Each of these areas, and others such as platform cooperatives, will require innovative approaches to reach critical mass.

Innovative agricultural practices for the global agricultural cooperative movement will be necessary in addressing climate action. A specific focus of attention is needed on soil management, forest conservation and the future of food production, distribution and consumption.

### B.7 Building cooperative capital among cooperatives

We will establish a global financial instrument for the growth of cooperatives in developing countries, first of all with cooperative capital, and with various international institutions such as the EU and international development banks. The establishment of other international financial instruments will be studied.

### B.8. Deepen the communication capacity of the cooperative movement

We will produce information for our various audiences by developing specific communication tracks directed to the public and citizens in general, and to the young public, in an appropriate style, and make a strong effort to improve our relationship with the press through developing a network of journalists. The website system will be given top priority, with a website formula that is flexible and readily modified and a high level of convergence between the websites of the various ICA entities. Another special effort will be dedicated to social media, both now and as they evolve, as they serve as a key channel for direct communication with members, policy makers and people interested in the organisation’s mission.

## B.9. Deepen the involvement of the youth

We will direct special efforts towards the issue of intergenerational transmission, which is fundamental to cooperative governance concerns and the very survival of the cooperative movement. The ICA Youth Network will be a hub of exchanges that helps member organisations and their own affiliated cooperatives manage this issue through governance measures and instruments.

We will promote the organisation of meetings that will provide opportunities for discussion about the development of the cooperative movement among young cooperative practitioners, youth organisations, young researchers and young people who want to create cooperatives or join them.

We will promote the inclusion of youth in national cooperative movements and their presence on national boards. We will ensure that youth have a voice and vote and are engaged in all aspects of the ICA.

Youth cooperatives, which play a vital role in enabling youth to experiment with our model, will be promoted internationally in order to encourage information exchanges and set goals, such as replication and dissemination initiatives. School and university cooperatives will be encouraged and their success or failure recorded and analysed to understand the factors to which either is due.

Education and capacity building. Training for women must be modified to give women the tools to enter the areas that so far have been closed to them. We will develop gender-equitable criteria for the promotion and evaluation of performance.

Equality as a goal. We will propose an approach to human-resources management, including policies, actions, indicators and plans for continuous improvement, to reduce gender gaps in participation and create more favourable labour and participation conditions for women and men. Protocols for gender equality, including those concerned with gender violence, will also be promoted.

## B.10. Promote gender equality

We will promote the following strategic initiatives, with the Gender Equality Committee playing a central role:

Participation policies in the decision-making bodies of cooperatives. Clear rules favouring the participation of women will be recommended, including equality policies, equality committees and affirmative actions, that bring the policies to life and empower women and men equally. A seal of gender equity, endorsed by the ICA, will be introduced for cooperatives that implement programs and standards that actively maintain gender equality.

## C. COOPERATION AMONG COOPERATIVES

**Reference in the ICA Purpose:**  
Facilitate the development of economic and other mutually beneficial relations between its member organisations

### CONCEPT

This theme is a key condition for the very existence of the cooperative movement; first, it corresponds to one of the cooperative principles; second, given the necessary ambition of a strategic plan for a movement representing cooperatives in the 21st Century and the dilemma of implementing it with limited resources, we need innovative and complex tools. As such, cooperation among cooperatives can be one of the best ways to increase resources, improve the cooperative identity, promote cooperative entrepreneurship, conduct more efficient advocacy work and come up with a unique and distinctive way to respond to the SDGs. We must strengthen cooperation among cooperatives and expand cooperative groups and networks with particular attention to cross-sectoral cooperation.

### STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

**Proactive identification of common interests:** We need to make a commitment to the proactive encouragement of cooperation among cooperatives by identifying areas of common interest, such as shared entrepreneurial projects and jointly evolved ideas. This can be accomplished through data collection, mapping and the development of tools and platforms that identify common challenges by sector, region and cooperative type.

**Data:** We need to collaborate throughout the global cooperative movement in creating value out of the collect processing and use of data.

**Economies of scale:** We need to encourage large cooperatives to assist the smaller in achieving economics of scale through collaborative programs and networks by taking a leadership role and facilitating the

creation of new linkages.

### CORRESPONDING STRATEGIC INITIATIVES

#### C.1. Building and exchanging knowledge

Supported by the ICA database, which will be considerably improved, entrepreneurial cooperation among cooperatives at the international level will include many areas, such as technology, sectoral issues, tenders, value chains, know-how, trade and more, in which cooperatives may want to connect with their peers in other countries. As a first stage, we will develop a platform with a global directory of cooperatives with geo-localisation, based on the UN ISIC classification system. In a second stage, we will create forums for information exchange, with a specific area on value chains and fair trade.

The ICA website will gradually become a hub of documentation and knowledge on the cooperative movement all over the world (documents, books, reports, videos, web platforms etc.). These inputs to the intranet will be provided by all components of the ICA, using an architecture that permits the rapid retrieval of information without loss of the added value contributed by each component.

The ICA will analyse platform cooperativism within the cooperative movement, properly define its boundaries and characteristics, and promote the new forms of cooperatives it includes. A dedicated working group will identify and report on the actual needs of the global cooperative movement in the field of technology and the various technical components to be considered.

## C.2. Deepen the common action of large cooperatives and cooperative groups

Larger cooperatives and cooperative groups will be encouraged to come together to develop new thinking and new strategies, first of all about themselves and for their own benefit, especially within the framework of globalisation, but also for the cooperative movement in general, as the larger cooperatives and cooperative groups are at the forefront of the cooperative movement in dealing with globalization. The International Cooperative Entrepreneurship Think Tank (ICETT), established in October 2018, will continue to grow, while ensuring that its contribution is beneficial to the cooperative movement in general.

The World Cooperative Monitor will provide statistical reference to the think tank, introducing other analysis criteria than turnover.

## C.3. Encourage greater support of small and medium cooperatives (SMEs)

Small and medium cooperatives (SMEs) as well as start-up cooperatives often need the support of larger networks of cooperatives to survive and thrive. Larger cooperatives will be encouraged to support and help scale up smaller ones, with “tractor” cooperatives that can take the leadership in such processes and be facilitators in the construction of links.

## D. CONTRIBUTION TO GLOBAL SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

**Reference in the ICA Purpose:** Promote sustainable human development and to further the economic and social progress of people, thereby contributing to international peace and security

### CONCEPT

This theme focuses on sustainable development through cooperatives: specifically, how cooperatives contribute to sustainable development and peace, as enshrined in the SDGs, beginning at local and regional levels. The SDGs highlight an integral part of what cooperatives are all about and have been doing for decades. The international cooperative movement will use the SDGs to illustrate its continuing contribution to sustainable development.

From a business perspective, the Business and Sustainability Development Commission has identified the SDGs as \$12 trillions in opportunities.<sup>2</sup>

### STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

**Monitoring:** We need to measure and promote the direct contribution of cooperatives to global sustainable development by identifying key indicators within the seventeen interdependent United Nations Sustainable Development Goals against which to measure our economic, social and environmental impact globally, regionally, nationally and by sector.

<sup>2</sup> The Business and Sustainable Development Commission (2019) Better Business, Better World: “Achieving the Global Goals opens up US\$12 trillion of market opportunities in the four economic systems examined by the Commission. These are food and agriculture, cities, energy and materials, and health and well-being. They represent around 60 percent of the real economy and are critical to delivering the Global Goals. To capture these opportunities in full, businesses need to pursue social and environmental sustainability as avidly as they pursue market share and shareholder value. If a critical mass of companies joins us in doing this now, together we will become an unstoppable force. If they don’t, the costs and uncertainty of unsustainable development could swell until there is no viable world in which to do business”; see: <http://report.businesscommission.org/report>

**Reporting:** We must conduct primary and secondary research on the contribution of cooperatives to global sustainable development and produce periodic progress reports for wide dissemination with continuing reference to the 7th Cooperative Principle, “Concern for Community.”

**Promoting development:** We must create a policy framework and strategy conducive to sustainable development through cooperatives and coordinate the various forces engaged in the international development of cooperatives

### CORRESPONDING STRATEGIC INITIATIVES

#### D.1. Identify indicators for the contribution of cooperatives to the SDGs

We will identify specific indicators in the various SDGs in order to estimate the contribution made by cooperatives to each of them. These indicators will be related to those defined by UN statisticians.

#### D.2. Report on the contribution of cooperatives to the SDGs

A reporting system will be developed, based on the above-mentioned indicators, in order to monitor the contribution of cooperatives to the SDGs. Examples of cooperatives including links to SDGs in their annual reports will be disseminated, integrating these contributions with what cooperatives do already.

#### D.3. Develop advocacy on the SDGs

We will highlight the contribution of cooperatives to all 17 SDGs, including those in the environment field. Having the same time horizon as the strategy that the ICA is to define, Agenda 2030 and the SDGs will be used as a framework to improve the alignment of members’ sustainable development strategies with their business priorities and to allow members a) to report on how they contribute to the implementation of the SDGs, b) to monitor their progress throughout the upcoming decade and c) to use these data in their advocacy to urge governments to be more supportive of their work. In parallel, we will build a cooperative strategy of sustainable development, including an analysis of the specific impacts cooperatives have on sustainable development.

#### D.4. Deepen the cooperative movement’s initiatives supporting international development cooperation

Through the ICA-EU Partnership Programme, the efforts of the ICA Global Office and Regions to strengthen cooperatives’ contribution to sustainable development will continue, with greater involvement of the sectoral component of the ICA, based on the above-mentioned ICA development policy. We will support cooperation and coordination among international development cooperation agencies specialized in cooperatives within the International Cooperative Development Platform (ICDP), through exchange of knowledge and mutual assistance. In order to advance the international development of cooperatives, the ICA will encourage the formation of a global network of development practitioners in different parts of the world.

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## Final Considerations

As in the Blueprint for a Cooperative Decade, the initiatives proposed in this document correspond to the fundamental economic, social and environmental needs that are increasingly expressed by people around the world. These must be addressed, with a clear priority given to sustainability and human concerns.

The cooperative model is a concrete and fully tested way of meeting people's economic, social and cultural needs through democratic empowerment. Although an estimated 12 per cent of the world population are members of a cooperative, most are not aware of the power and potential of the cooperative movement, nor how it could transform their lives. Each of us in the international cooperative movement has a serious responsibility and a role in making the cooperative model work in the interest of the economic, social and environmental sustainability of humanity and our common planet.



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## ANNEX

# Statement on the Cooperative Identity

## Definition

A cooperative is an autonomous association of persons united voluntarily to meet their common economic, social and cultural needs and aspirations through a jointly owned and democratically controlled enterprise.

## Cooperative values

of self-help, self-responsibility, democracy, equality, equity and solidarity; as well as the ethical values of honesty, openness, social responsibility and caring for others.

## Cooperative principles

The cooperative principles are guidelines by which cooperatives put their values into practice.

### 1<sup>st</sup> Principle

#### **Voluntary and open membership.**

Cooperatives are voluntary organizations, open to all persons able to use their services and willing to accept the responsibilities of membership, without gender, social, racial, political or religious discrimination.

### 2<sup>nd</sup> Principle

#### **Democratic member control.**

Cooperatives are democratic organizations controlled by their members, who actively participate in setting their policies and making decisions. Men and women serving as elected representatives are accountable to the membership. In primary cooperatives members have equal voting rights (one member, one vote) and cooperatives at other levels are also organized in a democratic manner.

### 3<sup>rd</sup> Principle

#### **Member economic participation.**

Members contribute equitably to, and democratically control, the capital of their cooperative. At least part of that capital is usually the common property of the cooperative. Members usually receive limited compensation, if any, on capital subscribed as a condition of membership. Members allocate surpluses for any or all of the following purposes: developing their cooperative, possibly by setting up reserves, part of which at least would be indivisible; benefiting members in proportion

to their transactions with the cooperative; and supporting other activities approved by the membership.

### 4<sup>th</sup> Principle

#### **Autonomy and independence.**

Cooperatives are autonomous, self-help organizations controlled by their members. If they enter into agreements with other organizations, including governments, or raise capital from external sources, they do so on terms that ensure democratic control by their members and maintain their cooperative autonomy.

### 5<sup>th</sup> Principle

#### **Education, training and information.**

Cooperatives provide education and training for their members, elected representatives, managers, and employees so they can contribute effectively to the development of their cooperatives. They inform the general public - particularly young people and opinion leaders - about the nature and benefits of cooperation.

### 6<sup>th</sup> Principle

#### **Cooperation among cooperatives.**

Cooperatives serve their members most effectively and strengthen the cooperative movement by working together through local, national, regional and international structures.

### 7<sup>th</sup> Principle

#### **Concern for community.**

Cooperatives work for the sustainable development of their communities through policies approved by their members.



A PEOPLE-CENTRED PATH FOR A  
SECOND COOPERATIVE DECADE  
2020 – 2030 STRATEGIC PLAN



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