



— PRESS RELEASE —

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

‘Co-operatives have the potential to change the status-quo’

Philippe Cousteau tells the ICA General Assembly that the co-operative movement has solutions to the big global issues that will provide the world with hope for the future.

Cancun, Mexico, November 18, 2011 — Philippe Cousteau, environmentalist, journalist & filmmaker today addressed the General Assembly with a message that co-operatives hold the answer to many of the big challenges facing the world and that the movement needs to be poised to take the opportunity to lead by example.

He expressed his view that the economic status quo is not working with the words ‘The world is setting itself up for failure’. He went on to tell the conference that *‘the status quo will change. It is up to us to change it on our terms’*

Mr Cousteau highlighted the values of the co-operative movement, which are rooted in local communities. *‘Co-operatives are not just run by some distant executive committee worried about profit margins. By their very nature co-operatives care about communities. The very values of sustainability that you need to even be considered a co-operative, are the values that the world needs to embrace if we are going to have a sustainable future’*. He added *‘These are the values that you stand for and you have always stood for. The world just needs to hear about them.’*

He took the opportunity to encourage the co-operative movement to continue its work to inspire young people with a co-operative message of hope. *‘Co-operatives should focus on young people. You need to do everything you can to channel the passion of young people*



because young people have the power to change consumer behaviour'

Mr Cousteau also stressed the importance of the work that co-operatives do to promote equality in a world where for so long women have not been considered as equals. He told the conference that the fact that co-operatives around the world give women a vote who have never had a voice was an 'amazing thing' and he urged the movement to continue to empower women in this way.

He asserted his support for the co-operative movement with the words *'I am with you. I am so excited about the potential of the co-operative movement. A movement which has been around for a long time, but a movement that has the potential to blossom and reignite passion in the world'*

Cousteau is a member of the legendary family of ocean explorers. His grandfather was the explorer Jacques Cousteau and Philippe is continuing this legacy by educating the public about environmental and conservation issues. In 2000, he co-founded EarthEcho International with his sister Alexandra Cousteau. EarthEcho International is based in Washington, D.C. and its mission is to 'empower youth to take action that protects and restores our water planet.' He also works as a reporter for CNN and for the Discovery Channel, as well as being Chief Ocean Correspondent for Animal Planet and Planet Green, where he is creating a series of ocean documentary programmes.

Mr Cousteau's speech comes as 2012 is launched as the United Nations International Year of Co-operatives. With a theme of "Co-operative Enterprises Build a Better World," the International Year of Co-operatives offers the global co-operative community a platform to demonstrate that co-operatives offer a diverse, values-based business model to provide a sustainable source of revenue for communities and individuals.

- END -

INTERVIEW OPPORTUNITIES

Interviews can be arranged with some of the world's leading authorities on co-operatives including:

- **Dame Pauline Green, President, ICA**
- **Charles Gould, Director-General, ICA**



To arrange interviews, please contact the ICA's Communications Team:

Nicola Kelly +44 7813 687292 | +44 203 286 8212 | kelly@ica.coop

Alex Baker +44 7776 152847 | +44 208 144 8456 | baker@ica.coop

Notes to editor:

1. The International Co-operative Alliance is the global voice for the values-based business model of the cooperative, uniting co-operatives worldwide and providing a forum for knowledge and concerted action. ICA was established by co-operatives in 1895. It has members in almost 100 countries representing one billion people worldwide.

2. Co-operatives are successful, values-based businesses owned by their members. Whether they are customers, employees or residents, the members get an equal say in the business and a share of the profits. The Cooperative principles were first established in 1844 by the Rochdale Pioneers.

Employing 100 million people, co-operatives are significant economic actors in many different sectors: agriculture/forestry, banking/credit unions, consumer, health, insurance, workers, fisheries, housing, transport and tourism

3. The United Nations has declared 2012 the International Year of Co-operatives. With its theme of 'co-operative enterprises build a better world', the Year is an opportunity to raise awareness of how co-operatives are successful values based businesses owned by their members.

4. Further information available at www.2012.coop.

