

MEDIA RELEASE

2014 International Day of Co-operatives: “Co-operative enterprises achieve sustainable development for all”

92nd Alliance International Co-operative Day
20th UN International Day of Co-operatives

Brussels, 25 June 2014 – On 5 July, co-operatives around the world will celebrate the Alliance’s 92nd International Day of Co-operatives. The theme this year, “*Co-operative enterprises achieve sustainable development for all,*” has been carefully chosen to reflect how co-operatives are at the forefront of modern sustainability actions and how concern for the community is one of the movements’ founding values. Indeed, the need to sustainably safeguard favourable living conditions for communities underpins all co-operatives’ operations and vision.

The United Nations is currently discussing Sustainable Development Goals, a set of ambitious new targets for the post-2015 period, replacing the Millennium Development Goals. The co-operative movement touches one billion people worldwide and through their vision of sustainable development for all, co-operative enterprises can be key partners in the implementation of these goals.

Indeed, one of the goals of the Blueprint for a Co-operative Decade is to “position co-operatives as builders of sustainability.”¹ As such, the Alliance is working to explain and show to the world that sustainability is part of its intrinsic nature, and that co-operative enterprises make a positive contribution to sustainability.

Co-operatives exist in almost every sector, in all world regions, and are especially prevalent in sectors critical to achieving sustainability. More than half of the world’s co-operatives are estimated to focus on agriculture and food production, cementing the contributions of the business model to food security and rural development.

President of the International Co-operative Alliance, Dame Pauline Green, said: “what we want from this Day is to spread the message that co-operatives approach sustainability in a holistic way. By combining financial health, concern for the environment and social purpose, co-operatives are the ultimate sustainable enterprise. They can take a multitude of shapes and forms and the important thing to remember is that they are a proven self-help model in both good times and bad.”

Director-General of the International Co-operative Alliance, Charles Gould, said: “the Alliance takes co-operatives’ commitment to sustainability very seriously and as such we commissioned a scan last year of co-operatives from different sectors and regions around the world to see how closely linked they are to sustainability. Launched at our global conference in Cape Town in November 2013, the report concluded that co-operatives embed

¹ *Blueprint for a Co-operative Decade*, p. 15.

sustainability into their operating model and values, and that the United Nations can and should recognise this.”

We would like to urge co-operatives around the world to use 5 July to showcase how co-operatives are the best-placed enterprise model to develop and build sustainability in the 21st century.

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NOTES TO THE EDITOR

About the ICA

The International Co-operative Alliance is a non-profit international association established in 1895 to advance the co-operative social enterprise model. The Alliance is the apex organisation for co-operatives worldwide, representing 268 co-operative federations and organisations across 93 countries (figures of May 2014). The Alliance’s members are national level co-operative federations and individual co-operative organisations.

The International Co-operative Alliance works with global and regional governments and organisations to create the legislative environments that allow co-operatives to form and grow. Towards media and public, the Alliance promotes the importance of co-operatives’ values-based business model.

Yearly, the Alliance publishes the World Co-operative Monitor, the index of the world’s largest co-operative and mutual enterprises. The Monitor demonstrates the economic impact of co-operative enterprises worldwide. The 2013 Monitor revealed a total worth of USD \$ 2 trillion for the world’s top 300 co-operative and mutual organisations, spread across 23 countries.

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

Further information about the Alliance's Blueprint for a Co-operative Decade is available at www.ica.coop. Follow the Alliance on **twitter** at [@icacoop](https://twitter.com/icacoop). Like the Alliance's **Facebook** page at www.facebook.com/internationalcooperativealliance