

**14<sup>th</sup> MEETING OF ICA-AP REGIONAL ASSEMBLY  
ONLINE  
FEBRUARY 24, 2021  
11:00-13:00 INDIA STANDARD TIME**

## **AGENDA NOTES**

### **AGENDA 01: OPENING REMARKS**

The 14<sup>th</sup> meeting of ICA-AP Regional Assembly will be officially opened on February 24, 2021. Mr. Li Chunsheng, President of ICA - Asia and Pacific will chair the ICA Regional Assembly.

### **AGENDA 02: APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

Delegates will be requested to formally approve the Agenda.

### **AGENDA 03: CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES OF THE 13<sup>TH</sup> MEETING HELD IN TEHRAN ON NOVEMBER 26, 2018**

The Minutes of the 13<sup>th</sup> meeting of ICA Regional Assembly held in Tehran (Iran) on November 26, 2018 (**ANNEXURE - 1**) was circulated to all the delegates and member organizations. No suggestions/observations/amendments have been received. The minutes may be confirmed.

### **AGENDA 04: IN MEMORY OF SETHU MADHAVAN, DR. T. PARANJOTHI, MR. PREM KUMAR, MR. KWEK KOK KWONG AND ROYAL PROFESSOR UNGKU A. AZIZ**

### **AGENDA 05: PERUSAL OF MINUTES OF ICA-AP REGIONAL BOARD MEETINGS SINCE LAST REGIONAL ASSEMBLY**

Since the last Regional Assembly, four meetings of the Regional Board were held in:

Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam: April 16, 2019

Kigali, Rwanda: October 13, 2019

Online: May 19, 2020

Online: October 27, 2020

The confirmed minutes of the four meetings are enclosed (**ANNEXURE – 2A, 2B, 2C, 2D**). Necessary follow-up action on these minutes has already been taken. The delegates of the Regional Assembly may kindly peruse.

**AGENDA 06: ICA-AP FINANCIAL REPORT FOR 2018 AND 2019**

**JANUARY TO DECEMBER 2018**

**ICA-AP Administration - January to December 2018**

Description	2018	2018
(All amounts are in USD)	Budget	Actual
<b>Income</b>		
Subscription redistribution (50%)	385,020	387,274
Administrative contribution	30,000	30,000
Meeting Revenue*	55,000	16,580
<b>Total income</b>	<b>470,020</b>	<b>433,854</b>
<b>Expenses</b>		
Personnel	190,000	144,580
Travel	62,000	51,937
Premises and general office	33,300	46,601
Printing and distribution	7,500	5,518
IT and telecommunication	14,600	10,403
External services (including audit fee)	34,700	30,313
Malaysia Business Office	20,000	10,000
Regional Assembly/Meetings/Seminars	35,000	51,850
EU Project 20%	50,920	77,006
<b>Total</b>	<b>470,020</b>	<b>428,208</b>
Tentative +/- (unaudited)		<b>+5,646</b>

**Membership fee:** In line with estimates

**Administrative contribution:** ACFSMC (\$10,000), JCCU (\$8,000), MAFF-Japan (\$9,000), NACF (\$3,000)

\* **Meeting revenue:** The revenue collected is split 50% between meeting year and non-meeting year

**Personnel:** Includes salary of ICA-AP staff on payroll and deputation

**Travel:** Includes travel of Regional Director to visit member countries, attend board meetings; staff travel on non-project related work; and travel of some invited speakers/ resource persons

**Premises and general office:** Cost share payment with Domus Trust for rent, office and equipment maintenance, utilities, insurance, stationery, books and periodicals. Higher than budgeted because of office renovation work and the cost of electricity.

**Printing and distribution:** Amount set aside for printing of studies, newsletters and annual report

**IT and telecommunication:** Internet, phone, internet, and service contract

**External services:** Consultancy, audit fees and legal expenses

**Contribution to Malaysia Business:** Annual contribution to meet MBO expenses

**Regional Assembly/ Meetings/ Seminars:** Increase in support to members to participate in events

**EU project 20%:** Year 3 of the EU project saw an increase in staff and activities. As per contract 20% of the total expenditure needs to be met by the Regional Office

**EU Project – March 2018 to February 2019**

	Expense in \$
Human Resources	249,916
Travel	61,215
Equipment	2,849
Office	7,353
Services	38,509
Subtotal	359,842
Indirect	25,189
Total	385,031

20% of 385,031 = \$77,006 borne out of ICA-AP administration

<b>Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries (MAFF), Government of Japan - July 2017 to June 2018</b>	
	Expenses in \$
Fostering and Improving Management of Agricultural Cooperatives	220,712
Empowering Women in Business and Management of Agricultural Coops.	110,898
Fostering Coordinators to Build Food Value Chain.	101,088
Follow up of ICA-Japan Training Courses	21,995
Total	454,693
The above is the audited statement for the period of July 2017 to June 2018. The MAFF training program is continuing from July 2018 to June 2019.	

**Malaysia Business Office - January to December 2018**

	Financial support
ACFSMC, China	26,321
JCCU, Japan	39,181
NACF, Korea	39,594
Office/operation cost at MBO borne by ANGKASA	833*
Regional office cost apportioned to MBO	800

\*Angkasa hosts the MBO, provides financial support to activities, and provides human resources

## JANUARY TO DECEMBER 2019

### ICA-AP Administration - January to December 2019

Description	2019	2019
(All amounts are in USD)	Budget	Actual
<b>Income</b>		
Subscription redistribution (50%)	401,760	403,240
Administrative contribution	28,000	20592
<b>Total income</b>	<b>429,760</b>	<b>423,832</b>
<b>Expenses</b>		
Personnel	195,000	168,161
Travel	60,000	54,426
Premises and general office	37,500	47,777
Printing and distribution	7,500	1,307
IT and telecommunication	14,750	12,120
External services (including audit fee)	41,000	34,507
Malaysia Business Office	3,300	3,311
Meetings/Seminars	20,000	40,097
EU Project 20%	47,531	6,4539
<b>Total</b>	<b>379,050</b>	<b>426,245</b>
Tentative +/- (unaudited)	<b>+3179</b>	<b>(2,413)</b>

**Membership fee:** In line with estimates

**Administrative contribution:** Drop in MAFF contribution from previous years

**Personnel:** Includes salary of ICA-AP staff on payroll and deputation

**Travel:** Includes travel of Regional Director to visit member countries, attend board meetings; staff travel on non-project related work; and travel of some invited speakers/ resource persons

**Premises and general office:** Cost share payment with Domus Trust for rent, office and equipment maintenance, utilities, insurance, stationery, books and periodicals

**Printing and distribution:** Amount set aside for printing of studies, newsletters and annual report

**IT and telecommunication:** Internet, phone, internet, and service contract

**External services:** Consultancy, audit fees and legal expenses

**Meetings/ Seminars:** Increase in support to members to participate in events

**EU project 20%:** Year 4 of the EU project saw an increase in staff and activities. As per contract 20% of the total expenditure needs to be met by the Regional Office

<b>EU Project – March 2019 to February 2020</b>	
Expense in \$	
Human Resources	247,023
Travel	56,440
Equipment	219
Office	7,585
Services	61,030
Subtotal	372,297
Indirect	26,060
Total	398,357
20% borne out of ICA-AP administration	

<b>Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries (MAFF), Government of Japan - July 2018 to June 2019</b>	
	Expenses in \$
Fostering and Improving Management of Agricultural Cooperatives	188,701
Empowering Women in Business and Management of Agricultural Coops.	105,062
Fostering Coordinators to Build Food Value Chain.	91,637
Follow up of ICA-Japan Training Courses	16,519
Total	401,919
The above is the <b>audited statement</b> for the period of July 2018 to June 2019. The MAFF training program is continuing from July 2019 to June 2020.	

**Malaysia Business Office - January to December 2019**

	<b>Financial support</b>
ACFSMC, China	20,565
JCCU, Japan	83,536
NACF, Korea	30,473
Office/operation cost at MBO borne by ANGKASA	1,887*
Regional office cost apportioned to MBO	800

\*Angkasa hosts the MBO, provides financial support to activities, and provides human resources

## **AGENDA 07: ICA-AP MEMBERSHIP SITUATION**

The following 14 organizations have joined ICA since the last Regional Assembly in Tehran (Iran) in November 2018.

1. Uralungal Labour Contract Coop Society Limited (ULCCS), India
2. Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Cooperatives (MCIC), Kiribati
3. International Solidarity of Korea Cooperatives (ISKC), Republic of Korea
4. Department of Cooperative Business, Ministry of Industry, Trade and Tourism, Fiji
5. Tirumalla Tirupati Multipurpose Cooperative Credit Society Limited, India
6. Metro South Cooperative Bank (MSCB), Philippines
7. Taavon Insurance Company (TIC), Iran
8. 1 Cooperative Insurance System of the Philippines Life and General Insurance (1CISP), Philippines
9. Cooperative Work Agency (CWA), Palestine
10. CLIMBS Life and General Insurance Cooperative, Philippines
11. National Federation of People-based Cooperative Enterprise (INKUR), Indonesia
12. Jiangsu Supply and Marketing General Cooperative (JSMGC), China
13. Fujian Federation of Supply and Marketing Cooperatives (Fujian Coop), China
14. Department of Cooperative Development Cooperative Development and Registrar of Cooperative, Societies, Colombo, Sri Lanka.

The following nine organizations have ceased to be members of ICA due to non-payment of the subscription fee.

1. Cooperative Global Sourcing Limited (CGS), China
2. Cooperative Union of the Philippines (CUP), Philippines
3. National Fisheries Federation (NFF), Sri Lanka
4. Central Union of Iran Animal Farmers (CUIAF), Iran
5. Nasinu Land Purchase & Housing Cooperative Limited, Fiji
6. National Consumer Cooperative Federation, India
7. Cooperative Societies Council (CSC), Saudi Arabia.
8. Kotikawatta Thrift and Credit Coop Society (KTCCS), Sri Lanka.
9. Vietnam National Industrial, Handicraft and Commercial Cooperative Enterprises Association (VICCA), Vietnam.

The current total ICA - Asia and Pacific membership is **110** organizations from **32** countries.

## **AGENDA 08: APPROVAL – POSTPONEMENT OF REGIONAL BOARD ELECTIONS TILL NOVEMBER 2021**

### **Background**

The ICA-AP Regional Board at its meeting on October 13, 2019, in Kigali approved the 14<sup>th</sup> ICA-AP Regional Assembly and Board elections should be held in conjunction with the ICA World Cooperative Congress in Seoul in December 2020.

Due to COVID-19, ICA in consultation with the government of Korea and ICA members in Korea decided to postpone the Congress to March 2021. The ICA-AP Regional Board in its online meeting on May 19, 2020, decided to hold the 14<sup>th</sup> Regional Assembly and Board election in conjunction with the ICA World Cooperative Congress in Seoul in March 2021.

Given the continuing fallout from the COVID-19 pandemic (increase in cases, impact on health and economy, travel restrictions), the ICA Global Board in its online meeting on September 11, decided to postpone the World Cooperative Congress, including its two preparatory events – till 28 November to 3 December 2021.

The ICA-AP Regional Board now needs to take a call on when it will hold the 14<sup>th</sup> ICA-AP Regional Assembly and Board elections.

#### **Points for consideration:**

- As per ICA-AP rules, the term of office-bearers of the Regional Board is **4 years**. The term of the current board which was elected on November 18, 2016, will end on November 17, 2020.
- The decision to postpone by Assembly and elections by a few months is within the purview of the Regional Board; but, postponing the Regional Assembly and Board elections by one-year needs to be approved by the Regional Assembly as it is the highest authority.
- Members in the region are holding their Assemblies online and many have taken part in the ICA online Assembly on September 3, 2020.

#### **Possible options**

- 1) Stand-alone Regional Assembly in February/ March (as approved by the Regional Board on May 19, 2020) - will be difficult given the effects of the pandemic (economic, health and travel) still linger and we do not have a host/ not sure if anyone will be willing to host and members willing to travel.
- 2) Move to November-December 2021 with Congress – this will mean postponing Regional Assembly and extending the term of the current board by a year, and holding elections one-year after it is due.
- 3) Hybrid Regional Assembly/ elections - hold online Regional Assembly in February 2021 and in-person elections with the Congress in November/ December 2021.

#### **Recommendations made by the Board on October 27, 2020**

- Hold online Regional Assembly in February 2021 to take care of administrative related issues and have Assembly approve Board elections with the Congress in November/ December 2021.
- In-person elections during the Congress. The Congress will give the opportunity for members to come together after a long gap. The elections to the Board is the most important event for the region and it is preferable to hold it in-person. The process and procedure will be similar to the one held in Delhi in November 2016 (process and rules attached in **ANNEXURE 3**) which the members have experienced and comfortable with. Subsequent elections by the ICA have used the system developed by the Regional Office.

**AGENDA 09: UPDATE ON EUROPEAN UNION PROJECT**

Please refer to **ANNEXURE 4** for the Year 4 activities highlights.

**AGENDA 10: MBO UPDATE**

The activities of the Malaysian Business Office (MBO) are reported under ICA-AP activities.

**AGENDA 11: SECTOR/THEMATIC COMMITTEE REPORTS**

The Chairperson of the following ICA-AP Sectoral/Thematic Committees will present their report before the Regional Assembly.

1. ICA-AP Committee on Agriculture
2. *ICA-AP Committee on Consumer*
3. *ICA-AP Committee on Credit and Banking*
4. ICA-AP Committee on Forestry
5. ICA-AP Committee on HRD
6. *ICA-AP Committee on Research*
7. ICA-AP Committee on Trade and Business
8. *ICA-AP Committee on Women*
9. *ICA-AP Committee on Youth*
10. *ICA-AP Committee on University/Campus*

**AGENDA 12: ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

**AGENDA 13: VENUE OF NEXT ASSEMBLY**

**AGENDA 14: CLOSING REMARKS**



## **ANNEXURE – 1**

### **MINUTES OF THE 13<sup>TH</sup> MEETING OF ICA-AP REGIONAL ASSEMBLY TEHRAN, IRAN: 29<sup>TH</sup> NOVEMBER 2018**

#### **AGENDA ITEM 01: OPENING REMARKS**

The joint opening ceremony of the 13<sup>th</sup> ICA-AP Regional Assembly and 10<sup>th</sup> Cooperative Forum held at IRIB International Conference Center in Tehran on 28<sup>th</sup> November 2018 was attended by more than 500 delegates from 17 countries across the Asia-Pacific region. The Regional Assembly was hosted by the Iran Chamber of Cooperatives (ICC) on behalf of the Iran Cooperative Movement.

The joint opening was addressed by Mr. Bahman Abdollahi, President of ICC; Mr. Li Chunsheng, President of ICA-AP; Mr. Ariel Guarco, President of ICA (through video); Hon'ble Shariat Madari, Minister of Co-operatives, Labor and Social Welfare, Government of Iran; and Hon'ble Dr. Ali Larijani, Speaker of the Iranian Parliament. Mr. Balasubramanian Iyer, Regional Director of ICA-AP proposed a vote of thanks.

The Cooperative Forum is a biennial event organized in conjunction with the Regional Assembly. The theme of the 10<sup>th</sup> Cooperative Forum was, "Co-operatives Help Economies become more Resilient and Sustainable."

The 13<sup>th</sup> Meeting of ICA-AP Regional Assembly was held on 29<sup>th</sup> November. 240 members and stakeholders from 17 countries attended the Regional Assembly. The Assembly adopted several resolutions including Declaration from the Cooperative Forum and co-option of Chair of Women Committee to ICA-AP Regional Board.

Mr. **Li Chunsheng**, President, ICA-AP and Chairman of ICA-AP Regional Assembly opened the meeting and welcomed all members and special invitees. He said that the last Regional Assembly was held in New Delhi, India, in November 2016. He hoped that in the Regional Assembly there would be meaningful dialogue and solutions worked out to help co-operatives become more self-reliant. He thanked the ICC for hosting the meeting on behalf of Iranian Cooperative Movement.

#### **AGENDA ITEM 02: APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

Mr. Li Chunsheng asked members if they had any comments on the Agenda. The Agenda, which was circulated at the meeting, was unanimously approved.

#### **AGENDA ITEM 03: CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES OF THE 12<sup>TH</sup> MEETING HELD IN NEW DELHI ON 18<sup>TH</sup> NOVEMBER 2016.**

Mr. Balu Iyer informed the meeting that the minutes of the 12<sup>th</sup> ICA-AP Regional Assembly held in New Delhi (India) on 18<sup>th</sup> November 2016 was circulated to all delegates/ member organizations and no comments/ suggestions/ amendments were received. The minutes were confirmed.

#### **AGENDA ITEM 04: PERUSAL OF MINUTES OF ICA-AP REGIONAL BOARD MEETING SINCE LAST REGIONAL ASSEMBLY**

Mr. Balu said that the 1<sup>st</sup> board meeting was held immediately after the election on 18<sup>th</sup> November 2016. The 2<sup>nd</sup> meeting was held in Hanoi on 17<sup>th</sup> April 2017 in conjunction with the 10<sup>th</sup> Asia Pacific Co-operative Ministers' Conference. This meeting discussed the strategic plan for 2017-2020. Mr. Charles Gould, Director General of ICA, who was in attendance said that the global office is planning their strategy and emphasized five elements – membership, primary cooperative engagement, financial management, communications, and governance. The 3<sup>rd</sup> meeting was held in Kuala Lumpur on 14<sup>th</sup> November 2017 in conjunction with the ICA General Assembly. The important issue discussed at this meeting was the term limit of ICA-AP President. A committee was formed to look into the issue and make its recommendation. All board members, except two, decided not to limit the term for ICA-AP President. The 4<sup>th</sup> meeting was held in Kathmandu on 6<sup>th</sup> April in conjunction with the 2<sup>nd</sup> Nepal Cooperative Congress. Mr. Ariel Guarco, ICA President attended this meeting and the Congress. He expressed his satisfaction at the harmony and cooperation prevailing between ICA and the Asia-Pacific region and saw this as a good omen for the important discussions ahead about the new strategic plan for the decade 2020-2030.

The confirmed minutes of the four meetings were circulated at the Regional Assembly. Necessary follow-up action on these minutes has already been taken. The delegates endorsed the minutes of the Regional Board.

#### **AGENDA ITEM 05: ICA-AP FINANCIAL REPORT FOR 2016 AND 2017**

Mr. Balu Iyer said that the main income is member subscription and thanked the members for paying their subscription on time. He then presented the ICA-AP financial report for the years 2016 to 2017. He informed the members that there was a surplus of US\$ 74,388 during 2016 and US\$ 141,087 in 2017. This surplus will be used to meet the 20% obligation for the EU project activities. The ICA-EU Cooperatives in Development: People-Centered Business is a global project implemented by all four regions. The 54 months project (March 2016 to August 2020) will help ICA reach out too many members. Mr. Balu said the project will help build linkage between members and EU delegations in their countries and requested them to develop a relationship and invite EU delegates to meetings. Positive feedback from EU delegations will help in the continuity of the project.

Mr. Balu said that the registration fee for attending regional assembly is now (since 2016) based on a tiered system taking into account the World Bank Country Income Index. The idea is to make it affordable and have more participation. We are also giving concession to the host country and youth to increase their participation.

Mr. Balu said that administrative income is getting lower each year as the ICA-MAFF (Japan) budget has been reducing (from a total budget of US\$ 830,000 in 2013-14 to US\$ 422,000 in 2016-17). The EU project will bring in some administration income as we can charge 7% of expense incurred as an indirect cost. On the expense side, the Regional Office has stayed within budget. Some of the expenses relating to staff salaries, travel and administration have been shifted to the EU project.

Mr. Balu informed the meeting that each region sent the audited report to the global office and the consolidated financial report is sent to all members.

Mr. Li said that Africa and America regions are in deficit and the financial situation of the Asia-Pacific region was good and hoped it would be better in the coming years.

All members expressed happiness about the performance and positive financial results of ICA-AP.

#### **AGENDA ITEM 06: ICA MEMBERSHIP SITUATION IN AP REGION**

Mr. Balu Iyer informed the meeting that 16 organizations had joined ICA since the last Regional Assembly in 2016. He said that four organizations had ceased to be members due to non-payment of subscription. Six organizations have applied for membership to ICA. The ICA-AP now has 104 member organizations from 32 countries. He further said that although the membership is increasing, the subscription amount coming from each new member is not very high. Mr. Balu said that Central Asia and Pacific islands are priority regions and that he would like to use established members (for example Australia and New Zealand in the Pacific) to support new members. He said that we can do more in Central Asia through the Agricultural Committee and Consumer Committee. He requested members who know of organizations interested in becoming ICA member to send their contact information to the Regional Office.

He thanked the members for paying their subscription on time and requested those who had not paid their subscription to do so at the earliest. He said that it is very important that the members pay their subscription on time so that we can plan our activities accordingly.

Mr. Balu said that retention of members is an ongoing concern for the office. He mentioned two reasons members withdraw – one, financial difficulty and two, did not get much value from being a member. The latter is more the concern for the Regional Office.

Mr. Li said that in 2016 we had 94 members from 29 countries and now we have 104 members from 32 countries. We also conduct many seminars, workshops, training courses and conferences on different aspects of cooperative development. The membership situation in our region is very good.

The members appreciated the efforts made by ICA-AP in expanding the member base of ICA in the Asia-Pacific region.

#### **AGENDA ITEM 07: APPROVAL OF AMENDMENT TO THE NAME OF ICA-AP COMMITTEE ON UNIVERSITY/ CAMPUS COOPERATIVES TO ICA-AP COMMITTEE ON COOPERATIVES IN EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS (ICEI)**

Mr. Balu Iyer informed the meeting about the background of this amendment. The regional committee on university/campus cooperative was set up as a sub-committee of the ICA-AP Consumer Committee in 1994, and as a full committee in 2008 during the 8<sup>th</sup> ICA-AP Regional Assembly in Hanoi (Vietnam). The objective of the Committee is to promote the growth and development of co-operatives in educational institutions (university/ college/ schools).

At the 9<sup>th</sup> meeting held in Kuala Lumpur on 12<sup>th</sup> November 2017 – it was felt that the Committee needed to be clearer in its nomenclature to convey its objectives, composition and purpose.

At the 10<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting of the Committee held in Singapore on 4<sup>th</sup> October 2018 – an amendment was passed to change the name from Committee on University/ Campus Cooperatives to **ICA-AP Committee on Cooperatives in Educational Institutions** to be more inclusive of its stakeholders (covers all kinds of educational institutions including universities, colleges, high schools and others).

The Assembly unanimously approved the amendment to change the name to ICA-AP Committee on Cooperatives in Educational Institutions (CCEI).

**AGENDA ITEM 08: APPROVAL OF AMENDMENT TO THE RULES OF ICA-ASIA AND PACIFIC (Article-7, para-3) regarding co-option of Chair of ICA-AP Women Committee to Regional Board**

At the Regional Assembly held in New Delhi on 18<sup>th</sup> November 2016, this Agenda was discussed and approved. However, this change should be ratified by the ICA General Assembly and for this, we must amend the Rules of ICA-Asia and Pacific (Article-7: Regional Board, para-3). The Regional Assembly unanimously approved the Rules of ICA-Asia and Pacific (Article-7: Regional Board, para-3) as below.

Existing Rule	Proposed Rule
A youth representative shall be co-opted to the Regional Board. The Asia and Pacific members of the ICA Board who are not members of the Regional Board shall have the right to attend and speak at the Regional Board.	The Chair of the ICA-AP Committee on Youth and ICA-AP Committee on Women shall be co-opted to the ICA-AP Regional Board without voting right. The Asia and Pacific members of the ICA Board who are not members of the Regional Board shall have the right to attend and speak at the Regional Board.

**AGENDA ITEM 09: UPDATE ON EUROPEAN UNION (EU) PROJECT**

Mr. Balu Iyer informed the meeting that in March 2016, ICA and the European Commission signed a Framework Partnership Agreement (FPA) in Brussels for a global development program to benefit and advance the cooperative sector worldwide. Titled “Cooperatives in Development – People-Centered Businesses in Action”, the program is to run until 31 August 2020. The program is co-funded by the European Union as part of its commitment to support Civil Society Organizations active in development. The action will strengthen the ICA to build stronger global development policy coordination with the regions and countries. The action will improve the capacities and skills of all members of the ICA network for political dialogue and as a vehicle to obtain enabling environments for the cooperative movement. Political dialogue with governments, EU delegations and international institutions will aim at efficient monitoring of legislation, regulations and operational themes affecting cooperatives.

Mr. Balu requested the members to sign up for the pledge at [www.coopfor2030.coop](http://www.coopfor2030.coop). He also appreciated the mention about co-operatives made in the voluntary national reviews of Nepal, Indonesia, Australia and Singapore.

Mr. Balu said that two Youth Summits (in 2016 and 2018) have been organized so far. The youth summit is one way to include youth inclusion.

Mr. Li suggested that ways to attract new people into co-operatives should be considered very seriously.

**AGENDA ITEM 10: STATUS OF ICA-AAP MALAYSIA BUSINESS OFFICE**

Mr. Balu said that the main objective of the Malaysia Business Office (MBO) was twofold – promote trade and facilitate linkages. The MBO has been active for close to five years now and has, by and large, met the first objective; the second needs to be developed further. The activities carried out by MBO were listed in the Annual Activities Reports of 2016, 2017 and 2018. The MBO is fully functional and four seconded staff from All China Federation of

Supply and Marketing Cooperatives (ACFSMC), Malaysian National Cooperative Movement (ANGKASA), Japanese Consumers Cooperative Union (JCCU), and National Agricultural Cooperative Federation of Korea (NACF) are in place. The office has been registered as a Society, has an operational bank account and streamlined the visas for staff working at MBO.

Mr. Li said that collaboration between cooperatives is very important to our members. The members should be able to sell their produce in the market and get profit.

#### **AGENDA ITEM 11: REPORTS FROM ICA-AP SECTORAL/ THEMATIC COMMITTEES**

**Agriculture Committee:** The 42<sup>nd</sup> meeting of the ICA-AP Committee on Agriculture was organized on 27<sup>th</sup> November. 15 participants from five countries (Iran, Indonesia, Malaysia, Nepal, and Vietnam) attended the meeting and shared knowledge and experiences in the agricultural sector from their countries.

Mr. Balasubramanian Iyer, Regional Director of ICA-Asia and Pacific attended the opening session of the meeting and requested ICA board member Dato Kamaruddin Ismail to chair the meeting, since Mr. K. Srinivas Gowda, Chairperson of the Committee could not attend. As informed by ANGKASA, Dato Hj Aliasak Hj Ambia, the then Board Member of ANGKASA and Vice-Chair of the Agricultural Committee had retired, and they nominated Dato Kamaruddin Ismail in his place. As a result of this change, Dato Kamaruddin Ismail took over the position of Vice-Chair of the Committee. This was ratified by the committee members.

Country reports were presented by the five countries present. The meeting stressed on the need to have visits to agriculture co-operatives among member countries and have an exchange program to increase knowledge and collaboration. The next meeting of the ICA-AP Committee on Agriculture will be announced soon.

**Credit and Banking Committee:** The 14<sup>th</sup> meeting of ICA-AP Committee on Credit & Banking was held on 27<sup>th</sup> November and attended by seven members from Nepal, Korea, India, Indonesia, Malaysia, Sri Lanka and Iran and 18 observers from member organizations. In the absence of the Chairman and Vice-Chairman, the meeting was jointly chaired by Mr. K.K. Ravindran from NAFCARD-India and Mr. Alireza Banaeifar from ICC-Iran.

Mr. K. Kukreja, the Secretary of the Committee extended a warm welcome to all participants. After introductory remarks by Mr. Ravindran and Mr. Alireza, the members presented brief reports on the status of cooperative credit and banking in their respective countries including important recent developments in the sector.

The major observations and suggestions made by members in their presentations were:

- Keeping pace with the advancement of technology in banking is a major challenge;
- Stagnating/ declining membership is a common problem. Youth should be attracted through innovative products and delivery systems based on their needs and preferences and promotion strategies;
- Need to broaden avenues for raising resources including market borrowing through debt instruments;
- Examining crowdfunding practices for funding specific projects;

- Building a strong network of all financial cooperatives in the Asia Pacific with periodical updates on events and developments. DEKOPIN offered support in this regard; and
- Organizing a seminar on Emerging Challenges for Financial Cooperatives in October or November 2019.

Mr. Ravindran proposed that the Committee may consider filling up the position of Vice-Chair which is vacant. The Committee agreed to the proposal and elected Dr. Sukesh Zamwar, CMD of Buldana Cooperative Credit Society in India as Vice-Chair of the Committee for its remaining term.

Mr. Ravindran in his concluding remarks summarized the observations and suggestions by members and thanked Mr. Alireza for his support in conducting the meeting as well as for the excellent physical arrangements made for the meeting and hospitality extended to the participants.

**Research Committee:** The ICA-AP Committee on Cooperative Research (CCR) organized the 13<sup>th</sup> ICA-AP Cooperative Research Conference on 27<sup>th</sup> November. The theme was “Cooperatives contribute to more sustainable and resilient societies” and the presentations made were under the following sub-themes: (a) Sustainable consumption & production of goods & services by co-operatives (b) Financial performance and sustainability of cooperatives; and (c) Adaptation and mitigation strategies of cooperatives.

The event was well-attended by 51 individuals from 11 countries (Belgium, India, Iran, Indonesia, Japan, Jordan, South Korea, Malaysia, Nepal, Philippines and Sri Lanka) and comprised of researchers, policy-makers, practitioners, students, social enterprise and social economy sectors.

Mr. Alireza Banaeifar, International Affairs Manager, ICC welcomed the delegates and said that he was delighted to see the cultural milieu of international participants in Iran. He said that the vision of co-operatives as builders of sustainable and resilient societies has always been the priority of ICC. He spoke about the various sectors where co-operatives have registered their presence in Iran and their role in improving both the social and business fabric of the country.

Dr. Gholamhossein Hosseini, Professor, Tehran University & Consultant to the ICC President, welcomed the delegates to the city of Tehran and extended his warm welcome. He spoke about the vast history of the social and solidarity economy in the country and how the national cooperative movement has showcased resilience in addressing some of the recent geo-political problems. He mentioned that Tehran University is conducting studies and research on co-operatives as they address needs that are not met by the market and government. He hoped that the conference will provide innovative examples and ideas for co-operatives to serve the community better.

Dr. Akira Kurimoto, Chairperson of the ICA-AP CCR, participating via Skype, narrated the background of the Research Committee and its importance. He started with the context of cooperative research originating from 1958 as a forum of research officers of European Consumer Cooperative Federations, which composed of practitioners and researchers. He highlighted where cooperative research is positioned now and touched upon some of the ongoing initiatives including the Asia Pacific Cooperative Research Partnership, originating in Bali in 2014. He laid the vision for where we might be heading, by presenting a framework for future cooperative researches and listed key issues in the areas of cooperative values and principles; cooperative governance and member participation; cooperative business



models and social innovations in times of crisis; cooperative contribution to the SDGs; institutional framework of cooperatives; and cooperative statistics.

Mr. Mohit Dave, Research Officer, Asia-Pacific Unit of the ICA-EU Partnership, presented on the ongoing research priorities in the region, as part of the framework partnership agreement between the ICA and the European Commission. Ushering in a new phase of collaboration on strengthening the co-operative movement as development actors, the partnership is built around activities focused on increasing visibility, enhancing advocacy, sharing capacity building, strengthening cooperative development networking, and supporting all these with evidence from exhaustive research. A mapping of the cooperative actors at the country-level, an analysis of the practical application of national legislation governing cooperatives, a global thematic research on youth within and outside the cooperative movement, and regional thematic research on work & ownership in cooperatives - were projects that were briefly discussed. Lastly, Dr. T. Paranjothi, Vice-Chairperson of the ICA-AP CCR introduced the participants to the conference theme and structure. He mentioned there were 49 abstracts received for the conference; out of which 41 were shortlisted and called for full paper submission following a review process. ICA-AP received 16 full papers; out of which 15 papers would be presented at the conference in three tracks.

**Committee Meeting:** The 5<sup>th</sup> meeting of the ICA-AP Research Committee was held at Feyz Hall on 27<sup>th</sup> November. The meeting began with a welcome note by the Chairperson of the Committee, Dr. Kurimoto. He expressed happiness about the successful completion of the research conference and then requested the Vice-Chair, Dr. Paranjothi to preside over the proceedings of the meeting.

Dr. Paranjothi welcomed all the members of the Committee and also Mr. Balasubramanian Iyer, the Regional Director of ICA-AP to the meeting. He opined that the conference organized by the research committee had attracted a diverse group of researchers from different countries of the region. Mr. Balasubramanian Iyer, stressed upon the need for a road map for the research committee with specific targets. He said there was a need to bring more researchers into the committee and to facilitate this, the Constitution of the Research Committee was amended, and associate members enrolled in the Committee.

It was observed that in the last 10 years, participation in conferences was led by India, with less participation from other countries. Young researchers need to be involved in the field of co-operatives. A live databank of PhD scholars from across the region was proposed to be developed with the help of office bearers and committee members. This can be used to constantly engage with prospective participants for research conferences. More fellowships and young researcher awards need to be offered to incentivise young researchers to submit papers and participate actively. For smooth coordination in each country, a contact person was proposed and agreed from among the participants of this meeting, with a target to achieve 10 abstracts per country for the next conference.

Dr. Paranjothi explained that the strategy of the committee in the coming years would be on expanding membership, attracting young researchers, fundraising, networking with other research organizations, publishing a dedicated research journal and developing researchers' database and cooperative database. The draft paper was discussed in detail and unanimously accepted in the meeting held in Delhi in 2016. It was also felt that the office bearers and members of the committee should devise plans to operationalize the strategy.

Dr. Paranjothi informed that Dr. C. Pitchai (India) has already proofread the compilation of the conference held in Delhi and by December 2018, the two-volume publication

would be initiated with the support of NCUI-India and ICA-AP. Associate member Dr. R. Manjula-India has been tasked with the editing of the 2017 Seoul conference edition and the publication will be completed by April 2019.

The members agreed-in-principle for the need to have a status report on cooperative education in the region and suggested names of a few institutes that can be engaged for the captioned workshop. The office bearers are requested to develop the concept note and plan of action for the same to be discussed further.

Prof. Kurimoto informed that Australia has come forward to host the next research conference in 2019. Dr. Paranjothi also proposed India as one of the potential hosts for the conference. It was unanimously agreed that the office-bearers after consultation with the stakeholders should fix the conference date and venue.

The meeting ended with the Chairperson Dr. Kurimoto thanking all the members for their cooperation in the smooth conduct of the activities of the committee. All the members joined in congratulating the office bearers and hoped that the research activities in the field of cooperatives would find new vigour in the years to come.

**Youth Committee:** The ICA-AP Committee on Youth Cooperation (ICYC) met for its 11<sup>th</sup> Annual meeting on 27<sup>th</sup> November. The meeting was inaugurated by Chairperson Mr. Ahsan Ali Thakur. He presented the committee's strategy, indicators of measuring progress and introduced the new committee members. New members of the Youth Committee, Mr. Farshid Yousefi Moghaddam from Barg-e-No Research and Training Cooperative (Iran) and Mr. Ryan Miquiabas Huesca from AIMCoop (Philippines) were welcomed.

Former chairpersons of the Committee Mr. Ilham Nasai (Indonesia), Ms. Tahmineh Kashani (Iran), and Dr. Sukesh Zamwar (India) shared their experiences with the Committee and extended their good wishes to the new office bearers. The Committee discussed its future programs and projects and their role in the further development of fledgling youth coops. Mr. Balasubramanian Iyer, Regional Director of ICA-AP attended the meeting and urged the members to bring in more youth representatives. Mr. Emad (Pishgaman Cooperative Union-Iran) and Mr. Alireza Banaeifar (Iran Chamber of Cooperatives) presented the current status of youth and cooperatives in the country and delivered the vote of thanks respectively. The meeting was co-chaired by Dr. Mohd Azlan Yahya, Chairperson of the ICA-AP Committee on Cooperatives in Educational Institutions.

**Meeting and Workshop on Youth and Cooperatives in Educational Institutions:** Optimizing the presence of a large gathering of co-operators in Tehran, ICA-AP through its two regional committees on 'youth cooperation' (ICYC), and on 'Co-operatives in Educational Institutions' (ICEI), the ICA-EU Partnership on Cooperatives in Development (#Coops4Dev), and ICA-AP member organizations Rah-e-Roshd Cooperative Educational Complex and the national apex – Iran Chamber of Cooperatives, organized a Development Meeting & Joint Workshop on Youth and Cooperatives in Educational Institutions. The Workshop was held on 26<sup>th</sup> November on the theme 'Building Resilience and Sustainability through the 5<sup>th</sup> Cooperative Principle on Education, Information & Training at Barg-e-No campus, preceded by a visit to the Rah-e-Roshd Cooperative Educational Complex in Tehran.

This event was designed as a #Coops4Dev Activity 4.2 or (Thematic) Cooperative Development Meeting (CDM) which is to enhance networking among organizations active in cooperative development in the Asia Pacific. The CDM and workshop in Tehran were designed to gather interests and ideas of ICA members on youth



cooperation in educational institutions in the region by addressing areas like policy frameworks, ownership & participation structures, new generation enterprises and youth employment. ICA-AP previously organized three CDMs (one per sub-region of East Asia, South-East Asia, and the Arabic speaking States in the Middle East) on SDGs as the central theme and the Asia Pacific Cooperative Development Conference on Building Multi-Stakeholder Engagement for Sustainable Development during year 2 of #Coops4Dev (March'17-February'18).

**Trade and Business Committee:** The informal meeting of ICA-AP Committee on Trade and Business Committee was held in the afternoon of 27<sup>th</sup> November. The representatives from ACFSMC (China), ICC (Iran), ANGKASA (Malaysia) and ICA-AP (Mr. Balu Iyer) attended the meeting. Dato Fattah said that ANGKASA is planning to organize a Malaysian Carnival of top 100 coop products and services (MACCOPS) in November 2019. Mr. Li from ACFSMC emphasized on coop2coop (C2C) trade. ICA-AP offered all help to ANGKASA in organizing the Malaysian Carnival.

**Development Meeting on Industrial and Service Cooperatives:** The Asia Pacific unit of the ICA-EU Partnership collaborated with CICOPA (Sectoral Organization for Industrial and Service Cooperatives) to organize a "Development Meeting on Industrial and Service Cooperatives" during the Regional Assembly. Experts were invited from India (National Cooperative Union of India, Uralungal Labour Contract Cooperative Society, Gandhigram University and Buldana Urban Credit Cooperative Society), Indonesia (DEKOPIN), Iran (Iran Chamber of Cooperatives, Rah-e-Roshd Cooperative Educational Complex), Japan (Japanese Workers Cooperative Union), Korea (Korean Federation of Worker Cooperatives and Sungkonghoe University), and USA (Colab Cooperative) to share knowledge and best practices to create, promote and strengthen industrial and service cooperatives in Asia and Pacific.

Conclusion: In 2018, the ICA-AP organized the International Conference on the Changing World of Work in Kerala and contributed to the Inception report of the ILO Commission on Future of Work. The ongoing research on exploring work and ownership in co-operatives in the Asia-Pacific is expected to be released for comments in April 2019 with a full release in May/June to coincide with the international workers' day and the centennial ILO session that will focus on the Future of Work. The call to regionally network industrial & service cooperatives was made by the stakeholders during the meeting. The release of the research study is expected to chart the future course of action for the ICA-AP and its concerned partners in terms of interventions at the policy level, incubation of worker cooperatives and strengthening local and national representative networks and federations.

**10<sup>th</sup> ICA-AP Women's Forum:** The Women's Forum is a biennial event held in conjunction with the ICA-AP Regional Assembly and organised by the ICA-AP Committee on Women. The Committee was set up in 1998 with the overall aim to promote and encourage member organisations to ensure women's participation in every aspect of cooperative development. It gives attention to promoting women's participation in decision-making, leadership and management at all levels; and ensures gender awareness and gender integration in cooperatives within the region.

The 10<sup>th</sup> Women's Forum on the theme of Strengthening Resilience by Empowering Women in Cooperatives took place on 27<sup>th</sup> November at the IRIB International Conference Centre in Tehran. The Forum was attended by 44 participants from six countries (India, Indonesia, Iran, Kenya, Malaysia and Nepal), including members of various women's cooperatives in Iran, ICA-AP members, and representatives from the government, academia, and international agencies. The Forum was supported by the Japanese Consumers' Cooperative Union (JCCU) and Rah-e-Roshd Educational Complex; a pioneering cooperative working on school education, cooperative research and projects on women's empowerment in Iran.

The Forum was organized to understand the situation of resilience in relation to women's cooperatives, the issues, challenges and opportunities in the Asia-Pacific region. It provided a platform for the participants to share information, exchange ideas, learn about good practices in cooperatives. The Forum was also to formulate ways to assist in strengthening the resilience of women in cooperatives.

The presentations made during the day-long Forum showcased examples from the Asia-Pacific region to improve the resilience of women in co-operatives. The opening session highlighted work being carried out at the global, regional and national level to promote inclusion of women and resilience in cooperatives. Dr. Ariel Guarco in his message reiterated ICA's commitment to mainstream gender in all areas of cooperatives and to encourage the formation of Gender Committees or similar spaces within the cooperative movement. Speaking for the region, Mr. Balasubramanian Iyer said that the ICA-AP Committee on Women works on multiple fronts to strengthen the resilience of women in cooperatives by mainstreaming gender, conducting trainings, organizing workshops on contemporary issues affecting women, and undertaking research. Ms. Om Devi Malla said that cooperatives in Nepal are working to take advantage of the provisions in their Constitution to empower women's participation in public life and increase representation in elected bodies. Dr. Ali Rabie, speaking for Iran said that cooperatives, being democratic business models, are the ideal medium to reduce inequalities and provide a dignified livelihood for women. Dr. Susan Bastani called on governments to constructively support women's cooperatives to enhance their resilience through the allocation of funds and providing support for expansion of business and trade through favourable policies.

The panel discussion on Bolstering preparedness and safeguarding women's interests presented interesting examples from existing and emerging areas of interest for cooperatives. Ms. Diana Dovgan made the case for social cooperatives which provide critical services to the community and include flexible scheduling which helps women maintain a work-life balance; a concern that prevents many women from joining the workforce. Dr. Sifa Chiyoge providing examples from Africa said that it's been established that there is a strong link between the participation of women in cooperatives and poverty reduction. For Dr. Arghavan Farzin Motamed, co-operatives are the key for economic resilience especially when we have a multitude of problems; women can increase their social and economic resilience, especially in rural areas, through economic participation in cooperatives. Ms. Laleh Daraie said that climate change affects women more adversely and called for support to projects that target women, children and young people and harmonizes relationships with their surroundings. The presentations from China, Iran, Malaysia, Nepal and Vietnam showcased country level examples to boost resilience.

The group work session was aimed at understanding the main concerns of women in the Iranian cooperative movement and the steps that could be taken to remedy the situation. The recommendations coming out included access to a platform where women could exchange experiences with an international audience; advocate with government to support social cooperatives and build capacity; and 'Coop Talks' series for women to share their success stories and inspire each other.

#### **AGENDA ITEM 12: REPORT OF THE 10<sup>TH</sup> COOPERATIVE FORUM ON "COOPERATIVES HELP ECONOMIES BECOME MORE RESILIENT AND SUSTAINABLE"**

Ms. Savitri Singh presented a brief draft report of the 10<sup>th</sup> Cooperative Forum on "Cooperatives Help Economies Become More Resilient and Sustainable" on 29<sup>th</sup> November.

The opening ceremony of the 13<sup>th</sup> ICA-AP Regional Assembly and 10<sup>th</sup> Cooperative Forum was held on 28<sup>th</sup> November in Tehran. The Forum on "Co-operatives help economies

become more resilient and sustainable” was co-organized by the ICA-AP and ICC. The event brought together over 300 cooperative members, leaders, researchers, academicians and representatives of international agencies from across 17 countries, including Iran.

The Cooperative Forum is a biennial event which brings together partners and stakeholders to assess progress, discuss challenges and arrive at decisions to strengthen cooperative enterprises as models of sustainable development. The Forum was established in 2000 and is conducted regularly in conjunction with the Regional Assembly to take advantage of the presence of members and partners.

The 10<sup>th</sup> Forum showcased the contribution of cooperatives in helping economies become more resilient and sustainable, reviewed progress and gaps thereof and identified and discussed challenges that limit cooperatives in realizing their full potential as sustainable business enterprises. Despite being recognized as builders of sustainability, cooperatives are constantly struggling to have an identity and conducive environment and are under persistent pressure to do more with less in today’s dynamic and complex economic and political scenario.

The Forum began with welcome speeches by Mr. Bahman Abdollahi, President ICC; Mr. Li Chunsheng, President ICA-AP, and Mr. Ariel Guarco, President ICA (video message). Dr. Mohammad Shariatmadari, Minister of Cooperatives, Labor and Social Welfare delivered the Keynote speech and H.E. Ali Larijani, Speaker of the Parliament of Iran delivered the opening address. The opening ceremony was followed by three technical sessions complementing the theme of the Forum: Cooperatives contribution in helping economies become more resilient and sustainable; creating an ‘ecosystem’ for cooperatives; and innovation for inclusive growth and sustainability. The speeches and presentations showed the diversity of experiences in the Asia-Pacific region in addressing real needs and the contributions of cooperatives in helping economies become more resilient and sustainable.

The Forum noted the achievements and contributions of cooperatives and underscored the need to build a partnership for growth and inclusive support of the state. It outlined the transformative powers of cooperatives in providing not only social resilience but also addressing a real vulnerability in the face of widening inequalities, forced migration, rapid urbanization, accelerated ageing, increasing youth bulge, growing workforce casualization, vanishing long-term regular employment, and widespread natural and manmade disasters. The challenges also provide opportunities for cooperative businesses; to meet this, there was a need to diversify, be innovative, adopt technology, and professionalize business processes. The sessions touched on the need for a cooperative ‘ecosystem’ which required an enabling environment, concern for community, cooperation among cooperatives and innovation in cooperative business. The closing ceremony was marked by speeches from Dr. Farhad Dezh Pasand, Minister of Economy of Iran; Mr. Balasubramanian Iyer, Regional Director; and Mr. Li Chunsheng.

The Report and Resolution of the Forum were presented at the closing for information and at the Regional Assembly for adoption. The “Resolution” provides a roadmap for ICA-AP, the cooperative movement, governments, civil society and other partners to work together for the achievement of inclusive growth, comprehensive development, and socio-economic sustainability in the framework of the 2030 Agenda. The resolution adopted by the Regional Assembly can be found in Annexure-1.

### **AGENDA ITEM 13: ICA GLOBAL STRATEGY REVIEW AND PROCESS**

Mr. Balu Iyer informed the meeting that originally, we had put this Agenda anticipating that ICA President and Director General would be here and present the global strategy. Unfortunately, both of them could not attend. A new board was elected in November 2017

for a four-year period. The multi-global review strategy will be put to the General Assembly in Africa in 2019 for approval. He requested the members to send their input to the global ICA as soon as possible.

#### **AGENDA ITEM 14: ANY OTHER BUSINESS MATTERS**

Mr. Insanial Burhamzah from DEKOPIN (Indonesia) made a presentation on Global Trade – A New Cooperatives World Order – Introducing Scrutinization Chain of Coop2Coop Trade. In his presentation, he raised the following questions: Are we doing as much as we can do? Are we as strong as we should be? Are we as strong as we must be if we are going to maintain our togetherness in co-operatives? Are we ready to hold out the hand of friendship to those who look to us for assistance and survival? He hoped that all of us do not think we are doing enough and that we are not satisfied as a Cooperative Movement with the progress we are making. We should stand for 2 billion cooperators within ‘A New Cooperatives World Order.’

Ms. Om Devi from Nepal said that “we have many committees in ICA and ICA-AP, but do not have any committee for children. I would like to request and suggest the possibility of forming a committee for the children to get knowledge about co-operatives. We have to think about some special programs for children since they are the leaders of tomorrow. I will also take up this matter at the next global board meeting”.

Mr. Ali Hassan from Malaysia said that at the global level we have a committee on housing and another committee on tourism, but we do not have them at the regional level.

Mr. Alireza from Iran said that “there is a lot of poverty in suburban areas of Iran and we need to change their living conditions. There is a lot of inequality and unemployment. I would like you to consider some social welfare scheme for women and homeless people in the suburban areas.”

#### **AGENDA ITEM 15: CONSIDERATION OF VENUE AND DATE OF NEXT ICA-AP REGIONAL ASSEMBLY**

Mr. Balu Iyer informed the meeting that he had talked with some members regarding their interest in hosting the next Regional Assembly in 2020. During the consultation process, Nepal had expressed interest to host the next Regional Assembly and related events. In the meantime, ICA has also decided to hold its Congress in November 2020 and they are in discussion with the administration of Seoul City and members in Korea. If this materializes, we can have a one-day Regional Assembly in Korea. We have to wait until a final decision is made about the Congress in Korea. If not, we will take up the generous offer made by Nepal. The 2020 Regional Assembly is important as we will elect a new board.

The Regional Assembly unanimously agreed to the suggestion of Mr. Balu Iyer.

#### **AGENDA ITEM 16: CLOSING REMARKS**

Mr. Li Chunsheng thanked the members for their kind support in the smooth conduct of the meeting. He also thanked ICC for hosting many activities in Iran and the excellent arrangements. He further said “I was listening to the point made by members since morning and found it very useful. I hope it was the same for all of you. This would be a good opportunity for the participating countries to understand and cooperate with other countries”. He also thanked Dr. Sifa Chiyoge, the Regional Director of ICA Africa, for her participation in the Assembly.

A promotional video depicting the arrival of the participants in Iran, different meetings and cultural program was shown.

Mr. Balu Iyer in his appreciation noted that the Regional Assembly was being held for the first time in Iran and thanked ICC, the cooperative movement and the government for their warm and generous hospitality. He said that cooperatives have demonstrated their remarkable resilience post the global economic collapse of 2008 as they help reduce inequalities, include young people and women, increase awareness; all through adherence to cooperative values and principles. He said that a total of 12 different meetings were held in Tehran from 26<sup>th</sup> to 29<sup>th</sup> November.

The meeting ended with a vote of thanks to the Chair

### **Resolution of the 10th ICA-AP Cooperative Forum**

28<sup>th</sup> November 2018, Tehran, Iran

Organized during the 13<sup>th</sup> ICA-AP Regional Assembly & Related Activities, 26-30 November 2018

#### **“Cooperatives Help Economies become more Resilient and Sustainable”**

**We**, women and men cooperative members, leaders, experts, academicians, and researchers, from 17 countries including Iran, having met at the 10<sup>th</sup> ICA-AP Cooperative Forum on the theme “Cooperatives Help Economies become more Resilient and Sustainable” at the IRIB International Conference Center, Tehran (Iran) on the 28<sup>th</sup> day of November 2018,

**Note** the diverse context in which our cooperatives operate in the region,

**Reaffirm** the commitment to the ICA Statement on Co-operative Identity comprising of the Definition, Seven Principles and Values of cooperation,

**Recognize** the inherent nature of co-operatives as ‘people-entered’, democratic, inclusive, participative and conscionable forms of enterprise and organizations,

**Are aware of** the international recognition accorded to the potential of the cooperative enterprise model in paragraph 41 of Transforming our World: The 2030 Agenda on Sustainable Development (UN A/RES/70/1) as a relevant actor in the implementation of the Goals and targets, and the overall pursuit of development of humanity and the planet, and other important international legal instruments such as the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction, Addis Ababa Action Agenda and the EU New Consensus on Development, and the UNESCO recognition of cooperatives as an intangible cultural heritage of humanity, the Colombo Declaration on Mainstreaming Youth in the Post-2015 Development Agenda, the need to grow the *real economy*, create decent jobs and income for vulnerable sections of the society and increase community wealth that combines economic, social and environmental concerns, the evidenced resilience displayed by co-operatives at times of natural and man-made crisis.

**Having discussed** contribution of cooperatives in helping economies become more resilient and sustainable, reviewed progress and gaps thereof and identified and discussed challenges that limit cooperatives in realising their full potential as sustainable business enterprises,

**We sustain our commitments:**



Acknowledging our achievements and gaps of previous actions, hereby resolve to undertake the following joint actions at local, national and international level for development of cooperatives to help economies become more resilient and sustainable by addressing critical issues of building a cooperative ecosystem, equity and equality, ethical production and consumption, social inclusion and economic security, decent and long-term employment including protection from all forms of violence and discrimination and building multi stakeholder partnership,

**a. Instituting well defined programs to collect, analyse, use and disseminate data & statistics on work and contribution of the cooperative sector and share information in line with the internationally accepted guidelines.**

Action to be taken:

**By governments**

- Review, amend and institutionalize programs for regular collection of gender responsive data on progress and contribution of cooperative sector at country level.

**By all levels of cooperatives**

- Introduce and implement time bound programs for regular collection of gender responsive data on achievements and contribution of their cooperatives, facilitate their member network and follow up for compliance,
- Allocate necessary budget for the program and training of staff to build necessary capacity

**By regional cooperative organizations**

- Create awareness
- Influence upon the cooperatives and governments to ensure implementation
- Provide resources – funds and training

**b. Institutionalize independent and periodic reviews of the legal-policy-regulatory environment governing and affecting co-operatives, to collectively build an ‘Eco-system’ for co-operative development and accord recognition in national as well as regional legal instruments.**

Action to be taken:

**By governments**

- Periodically review, amend and enforce gender responsive cooperative, law, by-laws and policies.

**By all levels of cooperatives**

- Periodically review, amend and enforce gender responsive cooperative by-laws and policies,
- Influence upon the government for periodic review according to changing business environment

**By regional cooperative organizations**

- Create awareness,
- Influence upon the cooperatives and governments to ensure review,
- Provide resources- critical studies, sharing information on best practices, funds and training.

- c. Devise institutional mechanism (policy directive) to consciously support inclusion and capacity building of all sections of the society, particularly women and youth in cooperatives and prioritise to support vulnerable and marginalized sections such as refugees, displaced, migrants and the differently able for social cohesion.**

Action to be taken:

**By governments**

- Devise and enforce responsive cooperative policy directives to address the needs, Monitor compliance.

**By all levels of cooperatives**

- Periodically review, amend and enforce responsive cooperative by-laws and policies,
- Influence upon the government for inclusion of favourable policy to address social inclusion,
- Create awareness and allocate resources to build capacity.

**By regional cooperative organizations**

- Create awareness,
- Influence upon the cooperatives and governments to ensure review,
- Providing resources- Advocacy, sharing information on best practices, funds and training.

- d. Invest in strengthening capacities through research and innovation, building partnership and network, embracing technology, venturing into new emerging areas to address the Future of Work agenda, and adopt a knowledge based approach that can support development of cooperatives.**

Action to be taken:

**By governments**

- Introduce policy instruments to facilitate coop-public partnership (CPP),
- Create awareness and allocate resources for research and innovation.

**By all levels of cooperatives**

- Create a 'political will' through agenda of Annual General Meetings, Board Meetings and other such platforms to adopt technology and venturing into new business areas,
- Influence upon the government for inclusion of favourable policy to create awareness and allocate resources to build capacity,
- Awareness and training of members.

**By regional cooperative organizations**

- Create awareness
- Influence upon the cooperatives and governments to ensure progress,
- Provide resources – Advocacy, research papers, sharing information on best practices, funds and training.

- e. Promote the apolitical character of co-operatives and build a mutually beneficial & sustainable partnership with State-actors, especially in pursuit of the Sustainable Development Goals, and bridge policy gaps that can help cooperative development in the region.**

Action to be taken:

**By governments**

- Ensure and respect autonomy and independence of cooperatives.

**By all levels of cooperatives**

- Create a 'political will' through agenda of Annual General Meetings, Board Meetings and other such platforms to practice democracy, ensure equity and equality and independence,
- Influence upon the government for inclusion of favourable policy to ensure autonomy and independence of cooperatives,
- Awareness and training of members and leaders.

**By regional cooperative organizations**

- Create awareness,
- Influence upon the cooperatives and governments to ensure independence for cooperatives,
- Provide resources - Advocacy, research papers, sharing information on best practices, funds and training.

**We hereby adopt this Resolution and the ensuing Platform of Action.**



## ANNEXURE – 2A

### MINUTES OF THE ICA-AP REGIONAL BOARD MEETING HO CHI MINH CITY, VIETNAM: 16<sup>TH</sup> APRIL 2019

The meeting of the ICA-AP Regional Board was held at New World Hotel in Ho Chi Minh City (HCMC) on Tuesday, 16<sup>th</sup> April 2019 from 14:00 to 17:30 hours. Following members attended the meeting:

01. Mr. Li Chunsheng, ACFSMC, China – Chair
02. Ms. Chitose Arai, JCCU, Japan – Vice Chair
03. Mr. N. Satyanarayana, NCUI, India – Alternate Member
04. Mr. Agung Sudjatmoko, DEKOPIN, Indonesia – Alternate Member
05. Mr. Mohammad Ali Zeyghami, ICC, Iran – Alternate Member
06. Mr. So Seong Mo, NACF, Korea – Alternate Member
07. Datuk Mohamad Ali Hasan, ANGKASA – Alternate Member
08. Mr. Keshav Prasad Badal, NCF, Nepal – Member
09. Atty. Adolfo A. Ibanez, NATCCO, Philippines – Member
10. Ms. Dolly Goh, SNCF, Singapore – Alternate Member
11. Mr. W. Lalith A. Peiris, NCC, Sri Lanka – Member
12. Dr. Nandini Azad, Chair, ICA-AP Women Committee - Member
13. Ms. Chen Fei, ACFSMC, China - Interpreter
14. Mr. Ilham Nasai, DEKOPIN, Indonesia – Observer
15. Mr. Alireza Banaeifar, ICC, Iran – Observer
16. Mr. Haruyoshi Amano, JCCU, Japan – Observer
17. Ms. Takako Tsuchiya, JCCU, Japan – Observer
18. Ms. Shiho Kawamura, Interpreter, Japan
19. Ms. Tamami Sekine, Interpreter, Japan
20. Mr. Ki Hoon Kim, NACF, Korea - Observer
21. Mr. Ki Heung Lee, NACF, Korea - Observer
22. Mr. Nasir Khan Yahaya, ANGKASA, Malaysia – Observer
23. Ms. Noor Azlinn Zahariman, ANGKASA, Malaysia – Observer
24. Mr. D.S.K. Pathirana, COOPFED, Sri Lanka - Observer
25. Dr. Asanka Thilakarathna, NCC, Sri Lanka – Observer
26. Mr. Mohd. Sahabdeen Mohamed Riyas, YECS, Sri Lanka – Observer
27. Mr. Bruno Roelants, Director General, ICA – Special Invitee
28. Mr. Balasubramanian Iyer, RD, ICA-AP, New Delhi.
29. Ms. Savitri Singh, ICA-AP, New Delhi.
30. Mr. Mohit Dave, ICA-AP, New Delhi
31. Ms. Anam Mittra, ICA-AP, New Delhi
32. Mr. K. Sethu Madhavan, ICA-AP, New Delhi

#### AGENDA ITEM 01: OPENING REMARKS

The meeting was chaired by Mr. Li Chunsheng, Chairman of the ICA-AP Regional Board. Mr. Li extended a warm welcome to the members to HCMC and thanked them for attending the meeting. He specially thanked Mr. Bruno Roelants, Director General, ICA for coming to the meeting. He also thanked the Vietnam Cooperative Alliance (VCA) for hosting the meeting.

Mr. Nguyen Ngoc Bao, President of VCA, welcomed the members on behalf of the Vietnam cooperative movement. He thanked ICA-AP for holding the board meeting in HCMC in conjunction with the 2<sup>nd</sup> ICA-AP Cooperative Registrars' Forum. He said that VCA in

collaboration with the Organic Agriculture Economics Institute has made all the arrangements for the Forum which is also very important to VCA. He requested the board members to visit the trade fair being held near to the Forum venue. The trade fair will be opened by Mr. Vuong Dinh Hue, Member of the Political Bureau & Vice Prime Minister of Vietnam and will showcase products from cooperatives from all over Vietnam and other countries. Mr. Balu Iyer had met the Vice Prime Minister in May 2018 when he came to attend the trade fair. Mr. Bao said, “the weather in HCMC is very hot like in Thailand; similarly, there are many rivers around HCMC, which helps cool the city in the evenings. HCMC is a very vibrant city and contributes 30% to the GDP. I hope you will be able to learn more about HCMC and visit some of the important places”. He hoped the board meeting would be fruitful and wished the members a pleasant and comfortable stay in HCMC.

Mr. Bruno Roelants said, “I am delighted to participate, for the first time, as Director-General of ICA, in the board meeting of ICA-AP. It is very important for me to know how you work and what you do. The Registrars’ Forum is very important and is an event specific to this region. The trade fair is also very important since many national organizations are taking part. I want to convey my greetings to each of you. I will come to visit some of your countries in July and try to meet as many members as possible. I wish the meeting all success.”

#### **AGENDA ITEM 02: APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA**

Mr. Li invited views and comments on the Agenda. Mr. Alireza from Iran said that ICC would like to present the flood situation in Iran and their proposal to set up an ICA-AP Cooperative Training and Research Center. It was agreed to take this up under ‘Other Business Matters Arising’. With this, the Agenda was unanimously approved.

#### **AGENDA ITEM 03: CONFIRMATION OF THE MINUTES OF LAST MEETING HELD IN TEHRAN (IRAN) ON 26<sup>TH</sup> NOVEMBER 2018**

Mr. Balu Iyer informed the meeting that the minutes of the Regional Board meeting held in Tehran (Iran) on 26<sup>th</sup> November 2018 were circulated to the members ahead of the meeting.

Mr. Li invited comments from the members; there being none, it was unanimously confirmed.

#### **AGENDA ITEM 04: ICA-AP ACTIVITIES REPORT FOR THE PERIOD OCTOBER 2018 TO FEBRUARY 2019**

Mr. Balu Iyer started with human resources. He said that two staff, Mr. Ivjyot Singh and Ms. Simren Singh, have been recruited for the EU project. Mr. Santosh Kumar joined the ICA global office in Brussels as Legislative Coordinator in March 2019. Mr. Mohit Dave has taken over as the Project Manager of the EU Project. We now have six staff working on the EU project.

Mr. Balu highlighted the following nine activities.

- (a) Meeting of ICA-AP Committee on Cooperatives in Educational Institutions, Singapore, 4<sup>th</sup> October.
- (b) 18<sup>th</sup> ICA-AP Regional Workshop on Management of Consumer Cooperatives, Singapore, 8<sup>th</sup> to 10<sup>th</sup> October.
- (c) ICA-MAFF Training Course on Fostering Agricultural Cooperatives to build Food Value Chain, Tokyo (Japan), 27<sup>th</sup> September to 18<sup>th</sup> October 2018.

- (d) Regional Assembly, Cooperative Forum, Women's Forum, Research Conference, Committee meetings and events, Tehran (Iran), 26<sup>th</sup> to 30<sup>th</sup> November 2018.
- (e) ICA-AP Consumer Committee meeting and Women Committee meeting, Kuala Lumpur (Malaysia), 6<sup>th</sup> to 7<sup>th</sup> December.
- (f) ICA-AP Women Committee Workshop on Data Collection and Monitoring, Kuala Lumpur (Malaysia), 7<sup>th</sup> to 8<sup>th</sup> December.
- (g) Workshop on Future of Cooperative Business in the Digital World, Kuala Lumpur (Malaysia), 9<sup>th</sup> to 11<sup>th</sup> December.
- (h) Workshop on Role of Cooperatives in Addressing Poverty Alleviation, Hainan (China), 10<sup>th</sup> to 15<sup>th</sup> December.
- (i) ICA President's Visit to India and Vietnam, 17<sup>th</sup> to 21<sup>st</sup> January.

Mr. Balu further said that we have carried out activities with the youth committee, women committee and EU project. These will be reported later under a separate heading.

Mr. Li said that many important activities were held from October to February. He specially thanked ICC for hosting the Regional Assembly and related events in Tehran from 26<sup>th</sup> to 30<sup>th</sup> November.

Mr. Nasir informed the meeting that "ANGKASAS's BA 100 Project" (a project which makes use of cooperatives as a vehicle to tackle the rising cost of living and reduces middlemen in the supply chain) has been accepted by the Ministry of Entrepreneur Development as a national project. We will be submitting the report to the Ministry on 23<sup>rd</sup> April.

He also said that they will have a screening of the "Around the World video project" in Malaysia on 29<sup>th</sup> April and inviting Ambassadors of Italy and Morocco to attend. Mr. Balu said that inviting Ambassadors for the screening is a very good initiative.

#### **AGENDA ITEM 05: ICA-AP MEMBERSHIP SITUATION**

Mr. Balu Iyer said that since the last board meeting in Iran, three organizations (a) Uralungal Labour Contract Coop Society Ltd. (ULCCS), India; (b) Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Cooperatives (MCIC), Kiribati; and (c) International Solidarity of Korea Cooperatives (ISKC), Republic of Korea have joined ICA. The ISKC has been formed by the merger of three existing ICA members - Dure Consumers Cooperative Union, Korea Federation of University Cooperatives, and Korea Federation of Worker Cooperatives.

The total ICA - Asia and Pacific membership is **104** organizations from **33** countries.

The following six organizations have applied for membership of ICA: (1) Sri Lanka Coop Rural Banks Federation Limited (CRB), Sri Lanka; (2) National Federation of People-based Cooperative Enterprises (InKUR), Indonesia; (3) Department of Coop Business, Ministry of Industry, Trade and Tourism, Fiji; (4) National Cooperative Supply Corporation Limited (NCSC), Pakistan; (5) Taavon Insurance Company (TIC), Iran; and (6) Tirumalla Tirupati Multipurpose Cooperative Credit Society Limited, India.

Mr. Balu said that last year we organized a Forum in Vanuatu and invited other members from the Pacific region to participate. In this Forum, Kiribati expressed its interest to become a member and ICA board has now approved their membership. It is heartening to see that Fiji has also applied to become a member. Overall, we are increasing the number of members from the Pacific region. Central Asia is a focus area and we can do more here to

increase members in coordination with the Agricultural Committee and Consumer Committee.

He said that as a matter of process, existing members in a country are consulted before forwarding new applications to the Membership Committee.

Mr. Li commented that the membership situation in our region is good in comparison with other regions as the number is increasing steadily.

Mr. Balu said that retention of members is an ongoing concern for the office. There are two reasons for withdrawal – one, financial difficulty and two, did not get much value from being a member. We would like to get ideas on how we can overcome these problems. He requested, board members who know of organizations interested in becoming ICA member to send their contact information to the Regional Office.

Mr. Alireza said that Transport cooperatives are doing well in Iran and we could consider forming Committees on Tourism and Transport.

Mr. Balu said that the AP and Africa regional offices jointly hosted the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) Cooperative Development Conference in Morocco from 4<sup>th</sup> to 6<sup>th</sup> February. Mr. Mohit will touch upon this later.

Mr. Balu thanked the members for paying their subscription on time and requested those who had not paid theirs to do so at the earliest. He said that it is very important that members pay their subscription on time so that we can carry out our planned activities.

#### **AGENDA ITEM 06: ICA-AP FINANCIAL REPORT FOR 1<sup>ST</sup> JANUARY TO 31<sup>ST</sup> DECEMBER 2018**

Mr. Balu Iyer presented the ICA-AP Financial Report for the period 1<sup>st</sup> January to 31<sup>st</sup> December 2018. He said that administrative income from the ICA-MAFF Japan project is reducing each year as the Japanese government is cutting back its overseas aid. Earlier the MAFF budget was around \$1 million and now it is around \$455,000. To some extent, the loss in administrative income is compensated by the EU project; though, it is not commensurate to the income secured from the MAFF project.

The financial situation of the region remains positive as we received financial support from our members (JCCU, NACF, ACFSMC, ANGKASA, and others) over and above the subscription; and we are grateful to them.

The EU expenses for 2018 (until February 2019) was \$385,031. As per project agreement, for every dollar spent, the EU will reimburse 80% and ICA needs to raise the remaining 20%. A part of the surplus of ICA-AP budget went to EU project (\$77,006) and thus resulted in a net smaller surplus (\$5,646) at the end of the year. The ICA-AP budget is from January to December and EU budget from March to February. The EU project is beneficial as we are able to carry many activities.

Mr. Balu further said that, as per the current plan, the EU project will end in August 2020. We are hopeful for an extension till December 2020. ICA and the Regional Offices will use this time to plan and approach the EU to support the next phase. The EU project pays for six staff and we should have a contingency plan to meet any eventuality. This applies to all the four regions of ICA.

#### **AGENDA ITEM 07: UPDATE ON EUROPEAN UNION (EU) PROJECT**

Mr. Mohit Dave informed the meeting that in March 2016, ICA and the European Commission signed a Framework Partnership Agreement (FPA) in Brussels for a global

development program to benefit and advance the cooperative sector worldwide. Titled “Cooperatives in Development – People-Centered Businesses in Action”, translated into the social media hashtag #Coops4Dev (Cooperatives for Development), the program will run until 31<sup>st</sup> August 2020. The program is funded by the European Union as part of its commitment to support Civil Society Organizations active in development.

The ICA-EU Partnership on Cooperatives in Development involves all ICA regional staff and is coordinated by the Coordination Unit in Brussels. The partnership makes it possible for this international unit to work in harmony and enhance capacities and skills of members and staff towards cooperative development through eight activity streams – institutional strengthening, research, capacity building, cooperative networking, advocacy and political dialogue, alliance building with CSO actors, visibility and communication, and project management. In a nutshell, it strengthens the ICA; contributes to international development as one movement; and ensures visibility.

ICA-AP has identified three strategic development priorities – Youth Inclusion, Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), and Work and Ownership.

The below were the activities carried out from November 2018 to March 2019:

- Research Conference, Youth Workshop and Development Meeting of Industrial and Service Coops in Tehran (26<sup>th</sup> to 30<sup>th</sup> November);
- Coopathon 2.0 & Young Development Professionals Meeting in Delhi (29<sup>th</sup> to 30<sup>th</sup> January);
- Cooperative Development Conference for the Middle-East and North Africa, Marrakech (4<sup>th</sup> to 6<sup>th</sup> February);
- 3<sup>rd</sup> Annual Review Meeting of the Partnership, Nairobi (4<sup>th</sup> to 8<sup>th</sup> March);
- Global Policy Forum on Development, Brussels (13<sup>th</sup> to 15<sup>th</sup> March);
- Global Cooperative Entrepreneurs Training of Mentors, Manchester (18 to 21<sup>st</sup> March)
- Mapping of the Cooperative Actors: Aims at collecting (gender and age-specific) data on the number of cooperatives, the economic size of coops and membership and employment.
- Legal Framework Analysis: Make knowledge on legal frameworks more accessible to cooperative organizations, provide them hands-on tools to support their advocacy and recommendations on the creation of an enabling environment, and Contribution of experts in cooperative legislation at the region and national level.
- Global Thematic Research on Youth: To highlight how cooperatives can benefit the youth, and seek ways to enhance the inclusion, opportunities and empowerment offered by cooperatives to young people – especially by conveying suggestions stemming from the youth themselves.
- Around the World video project – Nepal, Australia and Malaysia.

Mr. Balu informed the meeting that the Global Youth Forum will be held in Sri Lanka from 22<sup>nd</sup> to 26<sup>th</sup> July 2019 (<https://gyf19.coop>). The last date for registration is 28<sup>th</sup> April and he wanted the region to be well represented and gender balanced. The participation costs of resource persons will be fully supported. The delegates will have to buy their air ticket; need-based bursary support is available from the EU project. When the final list of delegates is announced and short-list is out, we will be approaching you to support the participation of youth from your respective countries.

Ms. Dolly said that there is interest from youth in the Forum. She would like to know the number of delegates allotted for Singapore so that they can convey this and nominate accordingly. They are willing to provide financial support to their youth to participate but would like to know the number before they move ahead.

Mr. Alireza said that he fully agrees with Ms. Dolly and would like to know in advance the number of seats for Iran.

Mr. Balu said that the AP region has been allocated 25 seats and we have 33 countries. We will consult with the organizers and get back to members about the number of delegates for each country.

## **AGENDA ITEM 08: UPDATES FROM WOMEN AND YOUTH COMMITTEES**

**Women Committee:** Dr. Nandini Azad's presentation included the following:

- Office bearers' elections held in December 2018 in which Dr. Nandini Azad got elected as Chair and Ms. Chitose Arai as Vice-Chair. Dr. Azad has also been co-opted as the Vice-Chair of ICA Gender Equality Committee;
- Office Bearers Meetings (3 meetings held, the Committee now has 24 members from 14 countries);
- Workshop on Re-work, Re-imagine and Re-shape: Advancing Women CEOs in Cooperatives held in China in April 2018;
- 10<sup>th</sup> Women's Forum held in Iran in November 2018;
- Workshop on Data Collection and Monitoring – tracking progress on gender equality in cooperatives held in Malaysia in December 2018; and
- Participation at the 63<sup>rd</sup> United Nations Commission on the Status of Women (UNCSW) held in New York in March 2019. She mentioned the intervention made during the Town Hall meeting with the UN Secretary General (SG), António Guterres. Dr. Azad informed the SG about how cooperatives have proved their sustainability, especially, at a time when several other forms of CSOs are struggling due to lack of funds. The SG responded by saying, "Cooperatives are excellent mechanisms for organizing low-income communities for economic and social resources but also are a strong political force for transformation." Dr. Azad also made a presentation as part of the official Indian panel on the topic of 'Khadi– the organic weave', with the parameters of organizing women weavers into cooperatives as envisaged by Mahatma Gandhi.

Dr. Azad also presented the following activities planned in 2019: Workshop on Enhancing Gender Equality in Cooperative Business in partnership with NCUI, New Delhi, 20<sup>th</sup> to 22<sup>nd</sup> August; 3<sup>rd</sup> Round of Data Collection on the participation of men and women in cooperatives – ongoing; Training of Trainers for Building Capacity of Women for gender integration and cooperative development (tbc); Participation in ICA General Assembly in Kigali in October 2019; and Newsletter.

Ms. Chitose Arai said that "First of all, I would like to thank ANGKASA for their kind assistance in holding the workshop on Data Collection and Monitoring in Malaysia in December 2018. We have seen a steady increase in the number of Women Committee members. Through the data collection workshop, we were able to discuss some of the problems being faced in data collection. The election process of Women Committee office bearers was very transparent. Dr. Nandini was elected as Chair and she has been very



dedicated and working hard to advance the Women Committee. As the Vice-Chair, I would like to inform you that together with her, we will give more strength to the global gender equality committee”.

**Youth Committee:** In the absence of Mr. Ahsan Ali, Mr. Balu informed the meeting about the activities:

- Global Youth Forum (GYF) will take place in Colombo (Sri Lanka) from 22<sup>nd</sup> to 26<sup>th</sup> July 2019. Discussion is underway to have a process to select the delegates. Request members to encourage participation and register at [gyf19.coop](http://gyf19.coop) website.
- Go Green Campaign 2.0 will be held from 21<sup>st</sup> to 23<sup>rd</sup> April, in commemoration with International Mother Earth Day (22<sup>nd</sup> April). The purpose is to raise the awareness of cooperative among youth since they are the future driving force. The campaign will show to them that cooperatives are sustainable businesses that serve the community through its members. A workshop will be held on 15<sup>th</sup> April to orient youth on the campaign.
- Request Board members and their members to participate in the campaign.

Datuk Ali Hasan informed the meeting that the youth committee of Malaysia is going to plant one million trees in 2019.

#### **AGENDA ITEM 09: UPDATES ON ICA STRATEGY, 2019 KIGALI GENERAL ASSEMBLY AND 2020 ICA CONGRESS**

Mr. Bruno said that a consultative process is underway to develop the ICA strategy through surveys, consultations, and discussions. The first survey of members done last year had a 50% response rate. The second survey done this year had a 66% response rate.

The highlights of the survey are given below:

- High consensus that ICA has contributed substantially to the identity of the cooperative movement and its role in pursuing this endeavour is recognized.
- A critical point for the movement given trends of globalization, technology disruption and climate change. The synthesis between the cooperative identity on the one hand and, on the other, entrepreneurial sustainability, managerial and technological components requires a renewed approach.
- ICA is contributing substantially to the unity of the cooperative movement, but members would like to be able to participate better.
- Satisfaction regarding the evolution of ICA communication work; feel there is a need to substantially reinforce it.
- Need to substantially improve the coordination of the international cooperative movement; which also requires a strong effort at improving communication.
- ICA should create strong partnerships with strategic allies - multilateral and civil society organizations.
- Strong consensus around the need to focus on the SDG framework, and in particular some specific components of it like employment.
- Strong interest regarding knowledge building and exchanges, and therefore the need to improve the ICA's mission as a knowledge-based organization.

- Issue of equality, through its double approach of gender and youth, received much attention.
- Concern at the changing national regulatory environment, and, as a result, show of interest in improving comparative legislation and receiving help in this field.
- “Coop to coop” cooperation also receives a clear interest, but the responses as to what the concrete needs of members are, and therefore their expectations of ICA, are not clear, and more research will need to be done in this field.
- Development is seen as a very important issue, but, here again, what is meant by development appears unclear, and should probably be the object of further research.

The Board has had two Strategy discussions in which they considered the global trends, issues being faced by cooperatives and the direction forward. The board has taken into account member responses to the survey. The proposed strategy includes the following four pillars: Growth of Cooperative Movement (including research, education); Coop Identify (including legislation); Inter-Cooperation; and Sustainable Development Goals (related to growth of the cooperative movement). Under the four pillars, SDG is central.

At the next board meeting in June in Geneva, the Strategy will be reported to the board and finalized. This will then be presented to the General Assembly in Kigali for its approval.

Mr. Bruno informed the meeting that the World Conference on Cooperatives for Development and ICA General Assembly will be held in Kigali, Rwanda from 14-17 October 2019 under the auspices of the Government of Rwanda and with the support of the cooperative movement of Rwanda. In addition to cooperators from around the world, it will bring together other civil society actors, development agencies, policymakers, institutional partners, high officials from government, representatives from international and regional organizations, researchers, and all those who feel concerned by developmental issues. We will show the contribution of cooperatives in different sectors and regions to sustainable development, including economic, social and environmental.

The 2020 ICA Congress will be held in the Republic of Korea. The global office has to work quickly with the municipal government and central government of Korea for hosting this event. The theme of the Congress has been decided by the board – Cooperative Identity. ICA Congress is more important than the General Assembly – 1995 was centenary of ICA, 2012 international year of cooperatives, and 2020 will mark 125 years of ICA.

This is an opportunity to be in ICA Congress and General Assembly together with the Regional Assembly in Seoul. The timing of the event will be the end of November or early December 2020.

Datuk Ali Hassan said that ICA may consider forming a Committee on (a) Housing Cooperatives, and b) Coop Tourism since they are very important sectors.

Mr. Nasir said that ANGKASA may be given some time to share their views on MENA conference resolution in the Kigali World Conference.

Mr. Alireza said that role of trade in other countries is very important.

Mr. Bruno said that the four regions have different traditions; despite differences, cooperatives are doing well. From a global point of view, we do not push any committees. Americas have strong electric cooperatives and worker cooperatives; these are less in number in the AP region. Coop tourism has got tremendous potential. Italy has developed coop tourism as it has got a lot of tourist inflows. CICOPA has developed a manual for



developing coop tourism. There are a number of sectoral regional organizations. The sectoral organizations in the region are connected to the global committees. We have to coordinate this very well.

Mr. Bruno said that Islamic Cooperative Union is a welcome step and we can talk about it in Kigali. The Committee has been formed and they will take up this issue further.

He further said that we have to be very careful when it comes to trade at the inter-continental level. Reliable data is very important for inter-continental trade. When you get the new ICA Strategy, you can look into this.

#### **AGENDA ITEM 10: VENUE OF 2020 ICA-AP REGIONAL ASSEMBLY**

Mr. Balu informed the meeting that ICA is in consultation with the Seoul City government to hold the Congress in November/December 2020. If this materializes, we can have a one-day Regional Assembly in Korea. The term of the current board members will end in 2020 and we need to elect a new board.

Ms. Dolly informed the meeting that the first week of December is marked by holidays in Singapore. She said that it would help members in their planning if ICA could earmark a specific month for its General Assembly.

Mr. Li agreed with Mr. Balu's suggestion to hold a one-day Regional Assembly in Korea in conjunction with the 2020 ICA Congress.

The meeting authorized the Regional Director to take this matter up with the Director-General and keep the members posted.

#### **AGENDA ITEM 11: 2<sup>ND</sup> ICA-AP COOPERATIVE REGISTRAR'S FORUM, VIETNAM, 17-19 APRIL 2019**

Mr. Balu informed the meeting about the 2<sup>nd</sup> ICA-AP Cooperative Registrars' Forum on Creating Enabling Legal Framework and Policies to Promote Sustainable Development of Cooperatives in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century being held in HCMC from 17<sup>th</sup> to 19<sup>th</sup> April 2019 in partnership with the VCA and the Institute for Organic Agricultural Economics. The Forum will bring together registrars and regulators concerned with the promotion and development of cooperatives nationally; leaders and managers of cooperatives from the Asia-Pacific region; and other stakeholders to discuss matters pertaining to legislation on cooperatives, as well as policies and regulations that complement existing laws.

The Forum was organized to focus on the 21<sup>st</sup> Century challenges relating to food security, nature of work and employment, financial inclusion, economic growth, gender equality & equity, climate change, and freedom of association. The rapid economic and social changes, as well as crises during the last decade, have prompted the need to think beyond 'business as usual.' While cooperatives have shown their resilience, there is a need to reinvent, remodel and reorganize to stay relevant to members and society at large. To do this, there is a need for conducive and enabling legal and policy frameworks to increase the ease with which cooperative business is done in Asia-Pacific. While serving as a platform of exchange on strategic issues, the Forum also aimed to build consensus for collaboration among the stakeholders. We expect around 300 delegates from 22 countries including Vietnam to attend the Forum. The opening ceremony will be held on 17<sup>th</sup> afternoon at the Reverie Sai Gon Hotel.

## **AGENDA ITEM 12: OTHER BUSINESS MATTERS ARISING**

Mr. Alireza made a presentation on the devastating impact of the floods in Iran. He said that 269 cities and more than 5,000 villages were affected by floods and the death toll has reached 64. There is a need for financial assistance to provide relief in the short-term and rebuild livelihoods in the medium to long-term. Support is needed from within and outside the country to help the flood victims. This could be in the form of financial, manpower, and essential goods and services.

Mr. Alireza also showed a video on “Iran Flood Sanctions Hamper Relief Efforts”.

Mr. Li said that the magnitude and devastation caused by the flood in Iran are immense. This year China too has suffered a lot because of floods. When the flood happens, cooperatives are mostly affected. We will try and see how we can support.

Atty. Adolfo said that the main problem is US sanction. The question is how can we help the cooperatives in Iran?

Mr. Balu said that Iran is unique. Even if we put up an appeal for flood relief, the money cannot be sent to them. He added the Asia-Pacific region is more susceptible to natural disasters.

Mr. Badal said that the southern part of Nepal was also affected - 39 people died and 500 people were seriously injured, 1,600 houses completely collapsed and another 1,600 partly collapsed. The NCF is providing assistance and has contributed Rs.1.5 million to the Prime Minister’s Relief Fund.

Mr. Li said that the ICA Strategic Plan for 2020 to 2030 should take into account the impact of natural calamities and ways in which to respond.

Regarding the proposal of ICC to set up an “ICA-AP Cooperative Training and Research Center”, Mr. Balu said that we will send this proposal to the board members for their inputs and include this as an agenda item at the next board meeting.

Datuk Ali Hasan presented a promotional video on the Malaysian Carnival of Cooperatives’ Products and Services (MACCOPS) to be held in Johor (Malaysia) from 28<sup>th</sup> November to 1<sup>st</sup> December 2019.

## **AGENDA ITEM 13: DATE AND PLACE OF NEXT MEETING OF ICA-AP BOARD**

It was decided to hold the next board meeting in Kigali (Rwanda) in October 2019 in conjunction with the World Conference on Cooperatives for Development and ICA General Assembly. The Regional Director was authorised to fix the date in consultation with the ICA-AP President.

## **AGENDA ITEM 14: CLOSING REMARKS**

Mr. Li Chunsheng thanked the members for their kind support in the smooth conduct of the meeting. He also thanked Mr. Nguyen Ngoc Bao, President of VCA, for hosting the meeting in HCMC and the excellent arrangements.

The meeting ended with a vote of thanks to the Chair.

## **ANNEXURE – 2B**

### **MINUTES OF THE ICA-AP REGIONAL BOARD MEETING KIGALI, RWANDA: 13<sup>TH</sup> OCTOBER 2019**

The meeting of the ICA-AP Regional Board was held at Kigali Convention Center in Kigali (Rwanda) on Monday, 13<sup>th</sup> October 2019 from 14:30 to 18:00 hours. The following members attended the meeting:

1. Mr. Li Chunsheng, ACFSMC, China – Chair
2. Ms. Chitose Arai, JCCU, Japan – Vice Chair
3. Dr. Chandra Pal Singh Yadav, NCUI, India – Vice Chair
4. Mr. H.A.M. Nurdin Halid, DEKOPIN, Indonesia – Member
5. Mr. M.ohammad Ali Zeyghami, ICC, Iran – Alternate Member
6. Mr. Kyong Won Lee, NACF, Korea – Alternate Member
7. Dato Hj. Abdul Fattah Hj. Abdullah, ANGKASA – Member
8. Mr. Keshav Prasad Badal, NCF, Nepal – Member
9. Mr. Romulo F. Caceres, NATCCO, Philippines – Alternate Member
10. Ms. Dolly Goh, SNCF, Singapore – Alternate Member
11. Mr. W. Lalith A. Peiris, NCC, Sri Lanka – Member
12. Dr. Nandini Azad, Chair, ICA-AP Women Committee – Member
13. Mr. Ahsan Ali Thakur, Chair, ICA-AP Youth Committee – Member
14. Mr. Zhang Wangshu, ACFSMC, China - Observer
15. Ms. Wang Man, ACFSMC, China – Interpreter
16. Mr. Qiao Xiaopeng, ACFSMC, China – Observer
17. Mr. N. Satyanarayana, NCUI, India – Observer
18. Mr. Teguh Boediyana, DEKOPIN, Indonesia – Observer
19. Mr. Ilham Nasai, DEKOPIN, Indonesia – Observer
20. Mr. Gholam Hossein Hosseininia, ICC, Iran - Observer
21. Mr. Alireza Banaeifar, ICC, Iran – Observer
22. Mr. Haruyoshi Amano, JCCU, Japan – Observer
23. Ms. Takako Tsuchiya, JCCU, Japan – Observer
24. Mr. Hyeong In Lee , NACF, Korea - Observer
25. Mr. Nasir Khan Yahaya, ANGKASA, Malaysia – Observer
26. Mr. Mohd Zamri Yacob, ANGKASA, Malaysia – Observer
27. Mr. Ramesh Prasad Pokhrel, NCBL, Nepal - Observer
28. Dr. Asanka Thilakarathna, NCC, Sri Lanka – Observer
29. Mr. Balasubramanian Iyer, RD, ICA-AP, New Delhi.
30. Mr. Mohit Dave, ICA-AP, New Delhi
31. Mr. K. Sethu Madhavan, ICA-AP, New Delhi

#### **AGENDA ITEM 01: OPENING REMARKS**

The meeting was chaired by Mr. Li Chunsheng, Chairman of the ICA-AP Regional Board. Mr. Li extended a warm welcome to the members to Kigali and thanked them for attending the meeting.

#### **AGENDA ITEM 02: APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA**

Mr. Li invited views and comments on the Agenda. There were none and the Agenda was unanimously approved.

**AGENDA ITEM 03: CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING HELD IN  
HO CHI MINH CITY (VIETNAM) ON 16<sup>TH</sup> APRIL 2019**

Mr. Balu Iyer informed the meeting that the minutes of the Regional Board meeting held in Ho Chi Minh City (Vietnam) on 16<sup>th</sup> April 2019 were circulated to the members ahead of the meeting.

Mr. Li invited comments from the members; there being none, it was unanimously confirmed.

**AGENDA ITEM 04: ICA-AP ACTIVITIES REPORT FOR MARCH TO AUGUST 2019**

Mr. Balu Iyer welcomed the members to the meeting and said that he would cover the major ICA-AP activities and part of the EU project activities. The remaining EU project activities will be presented by Mr. Mohit Dave and the Women and Youth activities by the Chair of the respective Committees.

Mr. Balu highlighted the following activities:

- Second Asia-Pacific Cooperative Registrars' Forum, Ho Chi Minh City (Vietnam), 16-19 April
- President Ariel Guarco's visit to Asia (Thailand, Singapore, Indonesia, China, Korea and Japan) from 21 July to 1 August. The country snapshots were produced within the ICA-EU Framework Partnership Agreement and provide touch upon the contribution of cooperatives to the economy, history, legal frame, case studies, and association with international bodies.
- Workshop on Enhancing Gender Equality in Cooperative Business, New Delhi (India), 20-22 August
- 97<sup>th</sup> International Cooperative Day celebrations on 6<sup>th</sup> July
- ICA-MAFF Training Programs (2<sup>nd</sup> Training course on Fostering Leaders for Management and Development of Agricultural Cooperatives in Asia; and 3<sup>rd</sup> training course on Empowering Women in Business and Management of Agricultural Cooperatives)
- Training and Exchanges hosted by ACFSMC-China, ANGKASA-Malaysia, JCCU-Japan, and NACF-Korea

Mr. Li said that many important activities were held from March to August and thanked the Regional Office.

Mr. Balu said that we are also supporting the Africa region and have invited participants to the NACF workshop in Korea and the ACFSMC regional training program in China. We are expecting a few to attend the Climate Action workshop in November in Bangkok.

Mr. Badal said that "there are university cooperatives in Japan and Korea, but we do not have them in Nepal. We want to learn about the university cooperatives and introduce them in some of our 11 universities." Mr. Balu said that a delegation from Nepal visited India (ICA-AP, NCUI and Mysore University) from 20-24 May to learn about curriculum development.

On a question from Dr. Azad on Strategy for the Asia-Pacific region, Mr. Balu said that the region has one for 2017-2020. The global office strategy for 2020-2030 will be discussed during the Kigali General Assembly. Once this is finalized, the Asia-Pacific region will align its strategy for the period 2021-2024.

On a question from Mr. Satyanarayana on legal environment in the region, Mr. Balu said that we are carrying out research on legal framework analysis under the EU project.

#### **AGENDA ITEM 05: ICA-AP FINANCIAL REPORT FOR JANUARY TO JUNE 2019**

Mr. Balu Iyer presented the ICA-AP Financial Report for the period 1<sup>st</sup> January to 30<sup>th</sup> June 2019. He said that the budget was within the target we set. The administrative income from the ICA-MAFF Japan project is reducing each year as the Japanese government is cutting back on overseas aid. The financial situation of the region remains positive as we received financial support from our members (JCCU, NACF, ACFSMC, ANGKASA, and others) over and above the subscription; and we are grateful to them. The members in the region need to be timely in paying their subscription fees to help us stay positive and carry out the planned activities.

Ms. Goh said that while the EU project was good for our region in terms of carrying out activities, she wanted to know the chances of its extension as it has a bearing on the region's finances.

Mr. Balu said that we had a meeting of the Strategy Unit in the morning and one of the items discussed was an extension of the project. We are in the process of looking at the budget and execution in each region and planning to submit an extension request in late November. A clearer picture should emerge in early 2020.

The EU budget for 2019 (until February 2020) was USD 282,544 and we spent around USD 198,047. As per the project agreement, for every Euro spent, the EU will reimburse us 80% and ICA needs to contribute to the remaining 20%. A part of the surplus of ICA-AP budget will go to the EU project (USD 47,531) and will result in a smaller net surplus at the end of the year. The ICA-AP budget is from January to December and EU budget from March to February.

Mr. Li said that the financial position of our region is reasonably good.

#### **AGENDA ITEM 06: ICA-AP MEMBERSHIP SITUATION**

Mr. Balu Iyer said that since the last board meeting in Vietnam, four organizations had joined the ICA. These were: (a) Department of Cooperative Business, Ministry of Industry, Trade and Tourism, Fiji; (b) Tirumalla Tirupati Multipurpose Cooperative Credit Society Limited, India; (c) Metro South Cooperative Bank (MSCB), Philippines; and (d) Taavon Insurance Company (TIC), Iran.

The following three organizations have applied for membership and consultations are underway with them and existing members: (1) Cooperative Insurance System of the Philippines Life and General Insurance, Philippines; (2) Cooperative Work Agency (CWA), Palestine; and (3) National Cooperative Supply Corporation Limited (NCSC), Pakistan.

The total ICA-Asia and Pacific membership is **108** organizations from **33** countries.

The National Federation of People-based Cooperative Enterprises (InKUR), Indonesia has been accepted for membership by ICA. Mr. Halid informed the meeting that according to the law of Indonesia, only DEKOPIN can be a member of ICA. He requested the board to honour the Indonesian law.

Dr. Azad said that ICA has a process for accepting members; at the same time, we need to take into account the views of apex organization.

Mr. Balu said that the Membership Committee has sent a letter to DEKOPIN after the visit of ICA President. DEKOPIN should send a response to the Membership Committee.

Mr. Halid said that they will discuss internally and send a formal letter to the Membership Committee.

Mr. Balu said that as a matter of process, existing members in a country are consulted before forwarding new applications to the Membership Committee.

Mr. Li commented that the membership situation in our region is good as the number is increasing steadily.

Mr. Balu said that retention of members is an ongoing concern for the office. There are two reasons for withdrawal – one, financial difficulty and two, did not get much value from being a member. We would like to get ideas on how we can overcome these problems.

Mr. Balu thanked the members for paying their subscription on time and requested those who had not paid theirs to do so at the earliest. He said that it is very important that members pay their subscription on time so that we can carry out our planned activities.

#### **AGENDA ITEM 07: ICA-AP ACTIVITY PLAN FOR 2020**

Mr. Balu Iyer presented the ICA-AP Activity Plan for 2020. He said that some activities are based on the needs of the region and some are regular training activities. The activities under the EU project have been designed in such a way as to include all the sub-regions.

The important activities to be carried out in 2020 are:

- UNDESA-Pacific Islands Development Forum, February
- Strengthening Cooperatives in Central Asia
- Gender Integration Workshop for Regional Board Members, April
- Regional Assembly 2020 in conjunction with ICA Congress in Seoul, December
- ICA-AP-ACFSMC seminars and workshops (digitization and agriculture)
- ICA-AP-NACF Agriculture Workshop
- ICA-AP Consumer Committee Activities (TBC after Committee meeting in Nov.)
- ICA-MAFF Training Programs (3, with possibility of Africa being added; to be confirmed in December)
- ICA-EU Cooperatives in Development; and
- Committee related activities – research, women, youth.

Mr. Li said that a number of important activities are planned for 2020 and thanked ICA-AP for this.

After brief discussion, the activity plan for 2020 was approved unanimously.

#### **AGENDA ITEM 08: ICA-AP BUDGET FOR 2020**

Mr. Balu Iyer presented the ICA-AP budget for 2020 and said that the activities are synchronized with the budget. He said that the income is taken based on an estimation of subscription at the beginning of the year and actual reflect the amount received. Also, there will be a variation because of the exchange rate. The subscription income for 2020 has been kept at the same level as 2019. Though we are increasing members, the subscription income coming in is low as these are small organizations and some existing members are not paying on time. He mentioned that the administrative income is getting smaller each year as the MAFF-Japan budget has been reducing. The EU project will bring in some administrative income as we can charge 7% of expense incurred as an indirect cost.



The personnel expenses under ICA-AP budget have gone up since we have added the salary of the EU staff for four months. As usual, 20% (of total EU budget) from ICA-AP surplus will go to the EU project. Though it is showing a negative budget, we will try to have a balanced budget. The extension of the EU project is not very clear now.

After a brief discussion, the budget for 2020 was unanimously approved.

#### **AGENDA ITEM 09: NOMINATION TO ICA LAW COMMITTEE**

Mr. Balu Iyer informed the meeting that in 2016 board had approved two members to the ICA Law Committee - Dr. Bhagwati Prasad, Vice Chairman, Cooperative House Building & Finance Corporation Limited, Lucknow, India; and Mr. Untung Tri Basuki, Secretary-General National Commission of Human Rights, Republic of Indonesia. Dr. Prasad was active while Mr. Basuki not so. We went through the names of legal experts we had interacted with during the EU Legal Framework Analysis exercise and found Ms. Ann Apps, Lecturer at Law School at University of Newcastle Law School and Law School's External Engagement Coordinator from Australia to be a suitable replacement. We circulated her CV to board members for approval; all have approved her nomination.

Mr. Li requested the Regional Office to convey the decision of the Board to the Law Committee.

#### **AGENDA ITEM 10: UPDATE ON EUROPEAN UNION (EU) PROJECT**

Mr. Mohit Dave informed the meeting that in March 2016, ICA and the European Commission signed a Framework Partnership Agreement (FPA) in Brussels for a global development program to benefit and advance the cooperative sector worldwide. Titled "Cooperatives in Development – People-Centered Businesses in Action", translated into the social media hashtag #Coops4Dev (Cooperatives for Development), the program will run until 31<sup>st</sup> August 2020. The program is funded by the European Union as part of its commitment to support Civil Society Organizations active in development.

The ICA-EU Partnership on Cooperatives in Development involves all ICA regional staff and is coordinated by the Coordination Unit in Brussels. The partnership makes it possible for this international unit to work in harmony and enhance capacities and skills of members and staff towards cooperative development through eight activity streams – institutional strengthening, research, capacity building, cooperative networking, advocacy and political dialogue, alliance building with CSO actors, visibility and communication, and project management. In a nutshell, it strengthens the ICA; contributes to international development as one movement; and ensures visibility.

ICA-AP has identified three strategic development priorities – Role of cooperatives in the Agenda 2030 for sustainable development; Role of cooperatives in building an inclusive society with a focus on youth; and Role of cooperatives in emerging structures of work and ownership.

The below were the activities carried out from April to August 2019:

- As part of the aroundtheworld.coop project, Sara Vicari, researcher and the filmmaker Andrea Mancori visited members around the world and recorded videos of some inspiring cooperatives. In the Asia-Pacific region, they visited Nepal, Malaysia and Australia:
- Second ICA-AP Cooperative Registrars' Forum, Ho Chi Min city, 16-19 April;
- Report on the ICA-AP and CICOPA study on Cooperatives in Industrial and Service Sectors in the Asia-Pacific Region in May;

- Participated in the 13<sup>th</sup> edition of European Development Days (EDD) in Brussels on 18 and 19 June;
- Coop Mic with Mr. Rajiv Khandelwal. He spoke on 'Decent and dignified work demands action now' in consonance with the theme of this year's International Day of Cooperatives;
- Participated in the regional expert's consultation on Family Farmers Cooperatives to end hunger and poverty through integrated farming organized by National Dairy Development Board in Anand from 22 to 24 July;
- Mapping of Actors and Legal Frames Research: Make knowledge on legal frameworks more accessible to cooperatives, provide them hands-on tools to support their advocacy, and recommendations on the creation of an enabling environment;
- Participated in the workshop on Doubling Farmers Income: exploring pathways for cooperatives organized by the Government of Odisha in Odisha in Bhubaneswar from 29-30 August; and
- Participated in the Policy Forum on Development – Asia Regional Meeting in Kathmandu from 24-26 September.
- The Global Youth Forum will be held in Kuching, Malaysia from 3-7 February 2020 (<https://gyf20.coop>).

#### **AGENDA ITEM 11: UPDATES FROM WOMEN AND YOUTH COMMITTEES**

**Women Committee:** Dr. Nandini Azad's presentation included the following:

- Introduction and objectives of the Women Committee - to promote gender integration in cooperatives and increase participation of women at all levels in cooperatives, especially at leadership levels, in the Asia-Pacific region;
- Participation at the 63<sup>rd</sup> United Nations Commission on the Status of Women held in New York in March;
- Second ICA-AP Cooperative Registrars' Forum on 'Creating Enabling Legal Framework and Policies to promote sustainable development of cooperatives in the 21<sup>st</sup> century' held in Ho Chi Minh city from 16-19 April;
- Workshop on Enhancing Gender Equality in Cooperative Business held in New Delhi from 20-22 August in collaboration with NCUI and support from JCCU;
- Office Bearers Meeting in Ho Chi Minh city in April; New Delhi in August; and Kigali on 13<sup>th</sup> October.
- The Committee now has got 26 members from 16 countries.

Dr. Azad also presented the activities planned in the coming months: Participation in ICA General Assembly (October); Training of Trainers for building capacity of women for gender integration and cooperative development (Colombo, November); Gender integration workshop with regional board members (Philippines, April 2020); Quarterly newsletter of the Committee; Signature campaign to pledge for gender equality in cooperatives; and Brochure on women in cooperatives in Asia and Pacific.

Ms. Chitose Arai said that "The ICA-AP Committee on Women in collaboration with NCUI and support from JCCU organized an International Workshop on 'Enhancing Gender Equality in Cooperative Business' at NCUI in New Delhi from 20<sup>th</sup> to 22<sup>nd</sup> of August. The objectives of the workshop were to take stock of the status and conditions of women in cooperatives and identify actions to promote gender equality and end



discrimination at the workplace. The workshop focused on two broad issues – promoting gender equality in the workplace by looking into issues around parity, opportunity, safety, and mobility; and improving data, especially relating to gender-disaggregated data. 16 international participants from Bhutan, Iran, Japan, Malaysia, Maldives, Nepal, Philippines and Sri Lanka from the Asia-Pacific region, and 29 women leaders and functionaries engaged in women empowerment activities in different states of India, participated in the workshop.

We would like to hold a gender integration workshop for the regional board members in the Philippines in April 2020 in conjunction with the board meeting. It will be good if the board members can participate in the workshop.”

**Youth Committee:** Mr. Ahsan Ali informed the meeting that Mr. Alireza from ICC-Iran has been elected as Vice President of ICYC and a member of the Global Youth Network. His presentation included the following:

- Five new members joined the Youth Committee from ICC-Iran; IFFCO-India; AIMCoop-Philippines; and Rah-e-Roshd-Iran
- Go Green Campaign 2.0 SDG-13 Climate Action and the Youth in collaboration with ICA African Youth Network
- Webinar on UN International Youth Day (12<sup>th</sup> August)
- Global Youth Forum will take place in Malaysia from 3 to 7 February 2020. Discussion is underway to have a process to select the delegates. Requested members to encourage youth to register at <https://gyf20.coop>.
- Planned activities: To collaborate with other cooperative organization, committee or sectors to promote youth-based activities; proposal to amend the ICYC constitution; and discussion on how to start a youth cooperative in ICYC member country.

Mr. Ahsan requested board members to participate in the Go Green Campaign next year by planting a tree and asked them to collaborate on youth coop related activities.

A certificate of appreciation was awarded to All China Federation of Supply and Marketing Cooperatives (ACFSMC) for participating in the Go Green Campaign 2.0. Their involvement towards Climate Action (Sustainable Development Goal-13) and support to ICA-AP Committee on Youth Cooperation and ICA Africa Youth Network is sincerely appreciated. The certificate was signed by Mr. Ahsan Ali Thakur (Chairperson of ICYC) and Ms. Hilda Ojal (President of ICA Africa Youth Network). Mr. Li accepted the Certificate on behalf of ACFSMC.

## **AGENDA ITEM 12: ICC PROPOSAL FOR COOPERATIVE RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT CENTER (CRDC) IN IRAN**

Mr. Balu Iyer said that at the last board meeting in Vietnam it was decided that the ICC proposal to set up a Cooperative Research and Development Center (CRDC) in Iran would be circulated to the members for their review and discussion would take place at the next board meeting.

In the meantime, Mr. Iyer sought clarifications from ICC on the questions below:

**Is the plan to register the Center as a legal entity in Iran?** We have been negotiating with Tehran University, biggest & oldest university in Iran, to have an office there and get the benefit of their professors, as well.

**Would ICA-AP's name be used?** There is no need to set up a legal entity, but we would like to have just official support from ICA-AP.

**In the context of the current geo-political situation, how effective will the Center be (both in terms of carrying out its mandate and in attracting researchers)?** This is going to be an office like MBO but with the presence of researchers and academicians. Do you think political issues will affect?

**Is the ICA-AP (or ICA) expected to put money towards the Center?** For the current phase of the project there is no need to be financially supported by ICA. ICC can handle this. We need data, research, academic and promotion support from ICA.

**What is expected of Regional Members – Send researchers? Pay for the researchers? Pay operational costs?** This can be an office for research for all ICA-AP members, we are just holding its office in Tehran. ICC is handling the operational costs, at this phase.

Mr. Alireza in his presentation said that CRDC will be set up in collaboration with the University of Tehran which is Iran's leading modern university. It was established within the framework of Darul-Funun (polytechnic) School in 1851 and was officially ratified by the Iranian Parliament in 1934. It is a comprehensive university offering a variety of disciplines. It has eight campuses with over one million square meters of educational space and 2,141 faculty members (503 professors, 626 associate professors, 968 assistant professors and 44 lecturers).

Mr. Balu suggested that there should be a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between ICC and the University of Tehran.

Dr. Azad said that given there are issues to be resolved, "could this be considered as a pilot project?"

Mr. Badal said that this is an interesting idea. A Research Center is needed in the region and if the proposal is approved, it will be good. I would suggest we go forward and explore it.

Mr. Li said that "ICC makes more contribution to our members. The proposal is good and the discussions here is a beginning. Setting up the Center is easy, but we need to ensure it works smoothly. In the beginning, we should be cautious in approach, make a small beginning and carefully consider it."

Mr. Nasir Khan suggested that it could be a business office of Malaysia and like C2C and trade activities, it can be a Center for research and training.

Mr. Balu suggested that "we could start as a project now, see how it progresses and give feedback to the board members on the functioning. A decision to expand could be taken up in future."

### **AGENDA ITEM 13: UPDATES ON ICA STRATEGY AND 2020 ICA CONGRESS**

Mr. Balu Iyer made the following presentation about the ICA strategy on UPHOLDING THE VISION OF THE *BLUEPRINT FOR A COOPERATIVE DECADE* TOWARDS THE 2030 HORIZON. There are four key themes in the current strategy versus the five pillars in the ICA Blueprint for a Cooperative Decade.

**Promotion of the Cooperative Identity** extends and expands upon the **Identity** pillar of the Blueprint. Recognition that the *Statement on the Cooperative Identity* needs to be better understood and internalized by all cooperatives.

**Legal Frameworks** pillar focuses on the *Statement on the Cooperative Identity* as central to legislative and regulatory recognition of the uniqueness of the cooperative model.

**Growth of the Cooperative Movement** is dependent on our ability to continue to impact 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 putting an additional focus on the criticality of more and better coordination and participation between and among cooperatives.

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

The 2020 ICA Congress will be held in the Republic of Korea. The global office is working with the municipal government of Seoul City and central government of Korea to host this event. The theme of the Congress will be promotion of the Cooperative Identity. ICA Congress is more important than the General Assembly. ICA held a Congress in 1995, the centenary year of ICA and in 2012, to mark the International Year of Cooperatives. In 2020, ICA will celebrate its 125<sup>th</sup> year!

#### **AGENDA ITEM 014: VENUE AND DATE OF 14<sup>TH</sup> ICA-AP REGIONAL ASSEMBLY IN 2020**

Mr. Balu Iyer informed the meeting that ICA is in consultation with the Seoul City government to hold the Congress in December 2020. The Regional Office would like to hold the Regional Assembly in conjunction with the ICA Congress. The Regional Assembly will elect a new board at the 2020 Assembly.

Mr. Li agreed with Mr. Balu's suggestion to hold a one-day Regional Assembly in Korea.

The meeting authorized the Regional Director to take this matter up with the Director-General and keep the members posted.

#### **AGENDA ITEM 15: OTHER BUSINESS MATTERS ARISING**

No item was discussed under this Agenda.

#### **AGENDA ITEM 16: DATE AND PLACE OF NEXT MEETING OF ICA-AP BOARD**

***The next ICA-AP board meeting will be held in the Philippines in April 2020. The date and venue will be decided in consultation with NATCCO. The first half will be devoted to the board meeting and the second towards gender integration.***

Mr. Romulo said that NATCCO will be happy to host the board meeting in the Philippines and he looked forward to seeing everyone in Manila.

#### **AGENDA ITEM 17: CLOSING REMARKS**

Mr. Li Chunsheng thanked the members for their support in the smooth conduct of the meeting. Mr. Li invited all the members for the joint dinner being hosted by him and global board.

The meeting ended with a vote of thanks to the Chair.

## ANNEXURE – 2C

### MINUTES OF THE ICA-AP REGIONAL BOARD MEETING ONLINE: 19<sup>TH</sup> MAY, 2020

The online meeting of the ICA-AP Regional Board was held on Tuesday, 19<sup>th</sup> May 2020 from 11:00 to 13:30 hours. The following members attended the meeting:

1. Mr. Li Chunsheng, ACFSMC, China – Chair
2. Ms. Chitose Arai, JCCU, Japan – Vice Chair
3. Dr. Chandra Pal Singh Yadav, NCUI, India – Vice Chair
4. Mr. Mr. Agung Sudjatmoko, DEKOPIN, Indonesia – Alternate Member
5. Mr. Alireza Banaeifar, ICC, Iran – Alternate Member
6. Mr. Jongwook Lee, NACF, Korea – Alternate Member
7. Dato Hj. Abdul Fattah Hj. Abdullah, ANGKASA – Member
8. Mr. Keshav Prasad Badal, NCF, Nepal – Member
9. Mr. Antonio Aranas, NATCCO, Philippines – Member
10. Mr. Kwek Kok Kwong, SNCF, Singapore – Member
11. Dr. Nandini Azad, Chair, ICA-AP Women Committee – Member
12. Mr. Ahsan Ali Thakur, Chair, ICA-AP Youth Committee – Member
13. Mr. Zhang Wangshu, ACFSMC, China - Observer
14. Ms. Chen Fei, ACFSMC, China – Interpreter
15. Ms. Lin Yueyue, ACFSMC, China - Observer
16. Mr. N. Satyanarayana, NCUI, India – Observer
17. Mr. Mr. Gatot Trihargo, DEKOPIN, Indonesia – Observer
18. Mr. Ilham Nasai, DEKOPIN, Indonesia – Observer
19. Mr. Mohammad Ali Zeyghami, ICC, Iran – Observer
20. Mr. Seyyed Ghasem Alavi, ICC, Iran - Observer
21. Ms. Takako Tsuchiya, JCCU, Japan – Interpreter
22. Mr. Gwangseog Hong, NACF, Korea - Observer
23. Mr. Nasir Khan Yahaya, ANGKASA, Malaysia – Observer
24. Ms. Chitra Kumari Thamsuhang Subba, NCFN, Nepal - Observer
25. Mr. Balasubramanian Iyer, RD, ICA-AP, New Delhi.
26. Mr. Shree Padmanabhan, ICA-AP, New Delhi
27. Mr. K. Sethu Madhavan, ICA-AP, New Delhi

Absent: Mr. G.D. Sarath Weerasiri, NCCSL, Sri Lanka - Member

**Opening Remarks:** The meeting was chaired by Mr. Li Chunsheng, Chairman of the ICA-AP Regional Board. Mr. Li extended a warm welcome to the members, thanked them for attending the online meeting and said that there were important items to discuss (14<sup>th</sup> Regional Assembly, procedures for board elections, etc.). He informed the members that sometimes the connection might not be very good.

#### AGENDA ITEM 01: APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA

Mr. Li invited comments on the Agenda. There were none and the Agenda was unanimously approved.

**AGENDA ITEM 02: CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING HELD IN KIGALI, RWANDA ON 13<sup>TH</sup> OCTOBER 2019**

Mr. Balu Iyer informed the meeting that the minutes of the Regional Board meeting held in Kigali (Rwanda) on 13<sup>th</sup> October 2019 were circulated to the members ahead of the meeting. Mr. Li invited comments from the members; there being none, it was unanimously confirmed.

**AGENDA ITEM 03: RATIFICATION OF NEW BOARD MEMBERS**

Mr. Balu Iyer informed the meeting that three members had requested a change of board members representing their organizations and the meeting had to ratify their names. The new members are from Korea (Mr. Sung-hee Lee, Chairman, NACF); Sri Lanka (Mr. G.D. Sarath Weerasiri, Chairman, NCC); and the Philippines (Mr. Antonio Aranas, Vice-Chair, NATCCO). The meeting unanimously ratified the three names.

Mr. Antonio Aranas and Mr. Jongwook Lee (on behalf of Mr. Sung-hee Lee) thanked the Regional Board for ratifying their names.

**AGENDA ITEM 04: UPDATES FROM MEMBERS ON RESPONSE TO COVID-19**

***Nine board members from India, Iran, Japan, Malaysia, Nepal, Pakistan, Philippines and Singapore presented brief updates on response to COVID-19 by their respective organizations.***

**Dr. Chandra Pal Singh Yadav** (India): The first step taken by the Indian cooperatives is to create awareness among members through activities like educating them on the importance of social distancing, sanitizing, maintaining a healthy diet and preventing spread by using masks.

Safety and security of members, customers and employees have been the top priorities for cooperatives. Use of mask and hand sanitizer, thermal scanning at the entry of the premises, installation of 'disinfection tunnel' and sanitization inside the office premises were some of the steps taken. Cooperative banks have been encouraging customers to use the digital platform to avoid social contact.

Cooperatives are at the forefront of supply and distribution of essential commodities at the doorsteps of households and have also extended help to the needy people by offering food, money and other means. The dairy cooperatives ensured no shortage of milk in the market. All plants of fertilizer cooperatives remain fully operational to ensure farmers face no shortage in input and supply of fertilizer.

Many cooperators and cooperative institutions donated Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) kits to the medical fraternity. One of the cooperatives has developed a communication app for the local Government.

Monetary contribution by cooperatives to various relief funds is quite high. It is estimated that more than 6 million USD have been contributed by cooperative organizations and their employees in the 'PM CARES Fund'. In addition, cooperatives, cooperators and employees have been donating generously towards the 'Chief Minister Relief Fund' to help state (provincial) governments fight against the coronavirus pandemic.

As policy support to the cooperative sector by the Government; credit, agricultural and fisheries coops are allowed to function normally by taking all precautionary measures.

Special Liquidity Facility (SLF) has been announced by the Central Bank of the country to refinance the cooperative banks.

A stimulus package of Rs. 20 lakh crore (approximately 265 billion USD) which is about 10% of GDP has been very recently announced by the Government of India to work on 5 Pillars (Economy, Infrastructure, System, Demography and Demand) for 'Self-Reliant India'. With its wide network, cooperative will play an important role to rebuild the nation and the Economy.

**Dr. Nandini Azad** (India): The Indian Cooperative Network for Women (ICNW) has been active through "barefooted bankers trying to reach out to remote areas through whatever means available". She said in the four Southern states of India, due to lockdown, there has been a loss of livelihood, members are not taking loans and trying to survive on their paltry savings. "The heroines combating Corona" indeed are poor women staff that lead this. She herself engaged in the frontline operations calling Collectors/SP's, Municipal Commissioners, Tehsildars, BDOs for passes/ access to all locations to reach unserved areas. She was invited to the Extraordinary Food Systems Dialogues Reference Group Call on 16<sup>th</sup> April 2020 by Dr. David Nabarro, WHO Special Ambassador on COVID-19 and curator, Food Systems Dialogues, Geneva.

In her presentation, she highlighted "women are on the frontline of the battle to combat COVID-19 in India and the world. They are caregivers, health workers, entrepreneurs, mothers. Indeed, the focal point of the economic social cultural leadership of the family and community ecosystem at the grassroots are women. Special attention in programming could be given to them, during and after the crisis".

She also argued her case at the Niti Aayog (webinar) during an Interaction with Union Health Minister Dr Harshvardhan on COVID-19 last month. Being the only cooperator to speak she said, "While the overall Corona numbers are partial to men in India, it is important to note that frontline health workers, caregivers at home as well as income contributors are women."

She was alarmed however that food security and malnourishment of women and children is increasing. The Government's basic food rations have been useful. This scheme has provided basic resilience against hunger i.e., the line between survival and starvation. "Cooperatives are working shoulder to shoulder with the Government in this pandemic. We welcome the two new infusions this week for the informal sector, farm sector, MSMEs and others to recover again", she concluded.

**Mr. Alireza Banaeifar** (Iran): The coronavirus started officially on February 20 in Iran, and so far, there are more than 100,000 cases with around 8,000 in lost lives. The pandemic had affected trade, production, tourism, industry, exhibitions, and also meetings and training sessions. 1.4 million business units were closed which in turn resulted in the loss of 5.2 million jobs. Many businesses are slowly trying to get on their feet but still have a long way to go.

ICC has been trying to lobby with the government to include and support cooperatives in areas such as social security, tax, banking, production support in different goods and services as they are a crucial part of the economy. It has also stressed on import of commodities to meet the demands of the society so that people are less impacted by the effects COVID-19.

There is a necessity for a smart way of doing things like electronically or online. Despite the pandemic, ICC has been carrying out its activities by relying on online meetings and transactions.



**Ms. Chitose Arai** (Japan): As of May 18, the number of infected people in Japan is about 16,300 and the death toll is 750. Japan has been under a state of emergency since April 7, due to an increase in the number of infections nationwide. The Japanese government is trying to contain the spread of infection by requesting people to stay home, rather than imposing lockdown measures. The number of new infections has been declining since the beginning of May and emergency measures have been lifted in 80% of the prefectures.

Since the declaration of the state of emergency, people have been requested to refrain from nonessential outings, public schools have been closed and working from home has been encouraged. Under such conditions, the demand for our home delivery services has increased and the number of the service users has continued to grow week by week. As might be expected, the suspension of imports from overseas and the surge in the number of orders have affected product procurement, logistics and productions. However, thanks to the employees, who despite the risk of infection, are striving every day to meet the mission of Japanese consumers' cooperatives to support the social infrastructure of food, consumers and members to stay home and be safe.

The pandemic has made us hold back activities which require in-person communication and interaction with members. However, we are connecting and contributing to the livelihoods of our members by providing information and seeking new ways to connect such as online meetings and exchange of blogs. Due to the impact of COVID-19, consumers' coops in the medical and nursing care businesses are facing financial difficulties and shortage of medical supplies; JCCU has submitted a request to the government and political parties.

The support for the businesses and activities of consumers' coops under these circumstances is not only because of the efforts of frontline employees, but also because of the "human chain," which is a connection between all of the coop employees who work in production, logistics and their respective departments, and members who play roles in community activities. To contribute to the livelihoods of consumers and members during this time of uncertainty, JCCU will continue to focus its efforts on business continuity with emphasis on the health of employees and their families and communication.

The pandemic has become an unprecedented crisis that has shaken the world. In times like these, it is most important for cooperatives as mutual-help organizations to recognize, support and cooperate with each other. By utilizing the broad network of the ICA and ICA-AP, I would like to share experiences, overcome this crisis and think together about how we can contribute as cooperatives in the process of reconstruction.

**Mr. Nasir Khan** (Malaysia): Government of Malaysia through the Ministry of Entrepreneurs Development and Cooperatives (MEDAC) remains committed to helping entrepreneurs and cooperatives in addressing the slowdown in business operations following the Movement Control Order (MCO) due to COVID-19 pandemic. In this regard, several initiatives to assist the cooperatives are being planned and implemented. As of now, the financial incentives provided by the Government to cooperatives involves an allocation of RM 1.099 billion as a whole. This amount includes:

1. Postponement of repayments of Revolving Fund (TMP) loans managed by The Malaysian Cooperative Societies Commission (MCSC) for a period of six months starting April 2020, worth of RM99 million.
2. Postponement from depositing profits into the Cooperative Deposit Account (ADK) for the financial year 2019. The postponement will benefit all cooperatives with the total cash involved estimated at RM600 million;

3. For the financial period beginning March 31, 2020 to December 31, 2020, cooperatives are given a reduction in the deduction to the Statutory Reserve Fund from 15% to 8% of the cooperatives' net profit. An estimated RM333 million excess liquidity in cooperative movement can be utilized for business recovery.

4. Cooperatives can obtain financing in the form of a soft loan provided under the Revolving Fund (TMP) up to RM50 thousand without collateral with a grace period of six months for the entire duration of the pandemic. The approval process and duration will be simplified and accelerated. For this purpose, RM15 million is made available.

5. Cooperatives are provided with short term (1-year) financing facilities through the Central Liquidity Fund (CLF) with total funding of up to RM500,000. Amount of allotment involved is RM50 million with a target of 100 cooperatives which extremely requires short-term liquidity injection to continue business operations throughout the MCO period.

6. Emergency assistance *grants* are provided specifically for cooperatives which are severely affected by the COVID-19 pandemic, with a maximum provision of up to RM30,000 per cooperative. A total allocation of RM1 million is provided.

7. Cooperatives' Affordable Price Sale Programs are implemented with an allocation of RM1 million to assist members and communities at large to get daily supply needs at a reasonable price and at the same time helps to revive the cooperatives' business. The programs involve giving subsidy to 200 cooperatives nationwide with an expected RM30,000 increase in sales per cooperative. The subsidized products are sold to members at a reduced price.

The implementation of these initiatives is expected to increase the capacity of 14,628 cooperatives in re-mobilizing their businesses activities and contribute effectively to the country's economic development. Incentives to increase cooperatives' cash flow will enable cooperatives to continue to be active and maintain the welfare of 6.05 million individual members.

Apart from the Government intervention the Movement itself take responsibility by implementing impactful steps to sustain cooperative's businesses and ease the burden of members at the same time. Formidable initiatives include:

8. In tandem with the Central Bank of Malaysia (BNM) order to the licensed banks, licensed Islamic banks and prescribed development financial institutions (DFIS), the Cooperative banks namely Bank Rakyat and Coopbank Pertama along with several other Credit Cooperatives have decided to give moratorium to loans provided to either cooperative societies for business purposes or individual member as personal loans. The moratorium period is for six months starting from April 2020.

9. Many cooperatives take part in implementing CSR by providing assistances in term of supply of PPE, foods and other essentials to the front-liners and community at large.

10. As for ANGKASA: (a) Pledge RM 1.5 million to help affected co-operators and communities. The fund was channelled through the government and run its own CSR programs; and (b) Spearhead the Essential Goods Supply Program (BA100) by offering revolving fund (credit) up to RM 10,000 per coop to more than a thousand cooperatives which operate consumer shops and registered as an outlet of BA 100.

**Mr. Keshav Prasad Badal (Nepal):** Due to Covid-19 pandemic, cooperatives are not able to regularize their services. Below are some of the major impact in the cooperative sector:

1. Dairy Cooperatives are not able to sell 300,000 litres of milk per day due to lockdown. They are collecting around 600,000 liters of milk every day from their farmer members. At the moment, they sell 100,000 litres in the local market and 200,000 to Dairy Development Corporation (DDC).
2. This is the peak season to collect green tea leaves by tea producer cooperatives. They are not able to pick up leaves due to lockdown. There are four tea processing plant in Jhapa district. Around 300 farmers are severely affected; 2,000 workers have lost their daily employment; and 1 million kg of green leaves are lost.
3. Beekeeping cooperatives are also affected by the Covid-19 and lockdown. Around 4,500 farmers are engaged in beekeeping. 50% farmers who are fully dependent on this business have lost their business.
4. Coffee producer coops are also affected by this pandemic. This is the season to collect coffee cherries and they are unable to collect it.
5. Financial cooperatives are also affected as they are unable to visit their office and go to the field to collect saving from their members. The demand of members to withdraw their savings is high which affects the available liquidity. The cooperatives recovery fund is desired.

#### Response of Cooperative Movement of Nepal in this pandemic

1. Cooperatives have contributed more than NRs. 100 million to the Covid-19 Control and Treatment Relief Fund established by the federal, provincial and local level government.
2. Agricultural cooperatives are engaging in the collection of vegetables and fruits from their farmer members and selling them to consumers through home delivery services and mobile shop. This supports to control the price of vegetables in the market. For example - NACCFL, Bhaktapur, Morang, Makawanpur, etc. are doing their best.
3. Coop Movement of Nepal established a Corona Control Cooperative Centre at the Manamohan Memorial Hospital. The approval of government is pending.
4. Significant number of cooperatives are providing foods to the people who are in isolation and quarantine centres established by the government.
5. Financial cooperatives are providing financial services to their members through online services and exempting certain percentage in the interest of loan. They are giving different schemes to attract members to pay their loan.
6. Cooperatives are providing PPE-mask, gloves, sanitizer to their members and distributing relief packages.

**Mr. Ahsan Ali Thakur** (Pakistan): The Karachi Cooperative Housing Societies Union Limited (KCHSU) is an apex of 24 housing societies. The COVID-19 hit during the holy

month of Ramzan, adding to difficulties. One of the societies was able to distribute 300 ration packets to the community of housing societies members. We are still waiting to get the information regarding COVID-19 and measures taken.

**Mr. Antonio Aranas** (Philippines): Business Continuity Plan (BCP) should be ready to address disaster/emergency that may strike any moment. Who would ever have thought that this deadly coronavirus would surface and wreak havoc on the entire humanity? BCP will allow almost seamless business transitions/operations when disasters/emergencies occur. For example, NATCCO sat for two days, to draft the BCP for COVID-19. When the lockdown was declared, NATCCO had the needed plan for implementation.

Mechanisms for quick decision-making and alternate signatories. This is really part of the BCP that when there are disasters/emergencies, there are ample mechanisms which can be put in place to facilitate the continuity of the business operations.

Digitalization is a prerequisite, and especially those which can be operated remotely and/or online. Cooperatives with cloud-based system had more flexibility to service their members and monitor business operations. The new normal, as everybody would come to face, will require social distancing and digitalization can support this.

Back to the Basics: Members of the Cooperatives with adequate savings/deposits and cooperatives with good financial health will have more capacity to face any challenge/trial in this fast-multifaceted human civilization of ours.

**Liquidity Pool for the Network:** In an integrated cooperative network, there should be liquidity pool. In the banking system, there is a liquidity reserve which is kept with the Central Bank. This reserve does not earn interest. This liquidity reserve is then made available to increase the liquidity of the whole banking/financial system.

In the case of the NATCCO Network, the consolidated figures of the member-coops show high liquidity. However, there is not enough liquidity pool which can be used across. There is no adequate capacity to respond to the liquidity needs of members when disaster/emergency strikes. This predicament still exists because of some deep-rooted factors/circumstances hurdles still need to be overcome

**Mr. Kwek Kok Kwong** (Singapore): Like many of the countries represented here, livelihood and life in Singapore are affected by Covid-19. The sectors hit by Covid-19 are tourism, food and beverages, aviation and land transport. We have lockdown for about 6 weeks now and will do so another two weeks. Thus far, 28,000 have been infected and fortunately, the fatality rate has been low at 22.

Government has injected 3 stimulus packages of about USD 42 billion to help companies to tide through cash flow and preserve jobs. For example, it will pay 75% of salaries in companies for two months and the stimulus package will be used to help retrain workers. Cooperatives enjoy these stimulus packages as well and in addition, they also get some tax exemption for one year. In terms of contribution, some cooperatives that have played a big role in Covid-19 is our biggest supermarket chain that has kept the price of grocery and basic medical needs in control and steady supply. My cooperative has also been intimately involved in government efforts in retraining workers in areas that will be in demand post Covid-19.

## **AGENDA ITEM 05: UPDATES FROM ICA-AP**

### **A. Activities carried out since September 2019 to March 2020**

Mr. Balu Iyer said that the activities carried out from September 2019 to March 2020 were included in the board packet. If there were any questions, he would be happy to answer.

### **B. Membership Situation**

Mr. Balu Iyer said that since the last board meeting in Kigali, five organizations had joined the ICA. They were: (a) Taavon Insurance Company (TIC), Iran; (b) 1 Cooperative Insurance System of the Philippines Life and General Insurance (1CISP), Philippines; (c) Cooperative Work Agency (CWA), Palestine; (d) *CLIMBS Life and General Insurance Cooperative*, Philippines; and (e) National Federation of People-based Cooperative Enterprise (INKUR), Indonesia.

Three organizations have been admitted into the membership of ICA, but not paid the subscription fee.

1. *Department of Cooperative Development (DCD)*, Sri Lanka.
2. Jiangsu Supply and Marketing General Cooperative (JSMGC), China.
3. Fujian Federation of Supply and Marketing Cooperatives (Fujian Coop), China.

Three organizations have ceased to be a member of ICA due to non-payment of subscription fees.

1. Cooperative Societies Council (CSC), Saudi Arabia.
2. Kotikawatta Thrift and Credit Coop Society (KTCCS), Sri Lanka.
3. Vietnam National Industrial, Handicraft and Commercial Cooperative Enterprises Association (VICCA), Vietnam.

The total ICA-AP membership was **109** member organizations from **32** countries.

### **C. Status of 2020 Subscription Fees**

Mr. Balu Iyer said that the total expected membership fees for 2020 were USD 855,006. We have received USD 604,293 and there is a commitment for USD 102,663 (details provided in the board packet). The balance payable by the remaining 45 members were USD 148,050. He thanked the members for paying their subscription on time and requested those who had not paid theirs to do so as soon as possible. He said that it is very important that members pay their subscription on time so that we can carry out our planned activities. However, the COVID-19 pandemic has disrupted the business operations of many members and it will take time for them to recover. The Regional Office is concerned about the well-being of members and will have a flexible approach when requesting subscription dues.

## **AGENDA ITEM 06: ICA-AP FINANCIAL REPORT FOR JANUARY TO DECEMBER 2019**

Mr. Balu Iyer presented the ICA-AP Financial Report for the period of January to December 2019. The EU expenses for 2019 (until February 2020) was USD 322,695. As per project agreement, for every dollar spent, the EU will reimburse 80% and ICA needs to raise the remaining 20%. A part of the surplus of ICA-AP budget went to EU project (USD 62,126) and this resulted in a net deficit of USD 2,413 at the end of the year. The ICA-AP budget is from January to December and EU budget from March to February. The EU project is beneficial as we are able to carry out many activities.

After a brief discussion, the financial report for 2019 was approved unanimously.

#### **AGENDA ITEM 07: REVISED ICA-AP BUDGET FOR 2020**

Mr. Balu Iyer presented the revised ICA-AP budget for 2020. In the last meeting in Kigali the budget for 2020 was presented and approved. At that time the EU project was to end in August 2020. We wanted the EU staff to continue until the end of December; hence, the personnel expenses under ICA-AP budget had gone up. Now, the EU project has been extended until May 2021, and the personnel expenses moved to the EU project. As usual, 20% (of total EU budget) from ICA-AP surplus will go to the EU project. Though the budget is showing a negative balance of USD 12,909; we will have a balanced budget since the travel and meeting-related expenses will come down due to COVID-19.

After a brief discussion, the revised budget for 2020 was unanimously approved.

#### **AGENDA ITEM 08: POSTPONEMENT OF 14<sup>TH</sup> ICA-AP REGIONAL ASSEMBLY**

Mr. Balu Iyer said that in the last board meeting we had decided to hold the 14<sup>th</sup> Regional Assembly in Seoul in conjunction with the ICA World Cooperative Congress in December 2020. Due to COVID-19, ICA in consultation with the government and ICA members in Korea has decided to hold the Congress from March 1 to 3, 2021. He requested the board to decide to shift the Assembly and election to the new Board to February/ March 2021.

Dr. Yadav, Ms. Chitose Arai, Mr. Alireza, Dr. Nandini Azad, Mr. Badal, and Mr. Aranas said that before the Regional Assembly, a board meeting should be held in November/ December.

After discussions, the Board decided to postpone the 14<sup>th</sup> ICA-AP Regional Assembly to 28<sup>th</sup> February 2021 in Seoul (Republic of Korea) in conjunction with the ICA World Cooperative Congress (March 1-3).

#### **AGENDA ITEM 09: APPROVAL OF PROCEDURES FOR BOARD ELECTION**

Under this item, the meeting was Chaired by Mr. Balu Iyer, as requested by Mr. Li.

Mr. Li said that the board elections will be held at the next Regional Assembly and the procedures for board elections should be discussed very carefully. He informed the meeting that he will not be contesting for any post in the Board. Mr. Li said that the 2016 election lacked competition and wide participation as there was only one candidate for President and three for Vice Presidents. To encourage more candidates to apply, Mr. Li put forward the following suggestions in the belief that, in this way, more people could be encouraged to participate and compete, more choices given to candidates, with the efficiency of the election enhanced as well. He suggested that we should reduce the three rounds of election to two; by electing the 11 board members in the first round and President and two Vice-Presidents in the second round. The President and Vice Presidents will be decided based on the number of votes they get.

Mr. Nasir Khan said that the elected 11 board members may not like to contest for President or Vice-President.

Mr. Aranas said nominations for President and Vice-Presidents should be specific.



Mr. Li said that if necessary, this can be mentioned in the nomination form so that the voters will know about it in advance.

Mr. Balu said that as per Rules, the President of ICA-AP has to be elected by the Regional Assembly and he/she will become automatically the Vice President of ICA. He also said that any change in the existing rules should be approved by the Regional Assembly and ratified by the ICA global assembly.

Mr. Li said that he was proposing only a technical change and the Board can approve it. If necessary, we can change the rules of ICA-AP.

Mr. Balu said that any change from the current rules has to be approved by the Regional Assembly.

Dr. Yadav said that Board cannot change the rules and it can only recommend to the Regional Assembly for approval.

Mr. Aranas said that he fully agreed with Mr. Balu. Any change is to be approved by the Regional Assembly. This will be the legal position.

Mr. Li said that if his proposal is approved, this can be put to the next Regional Assembly as the first agenda for approval.

Mr. Aranas said that we should follow the ICA-AP rules. In the Philippines, we cannot change the rules all of a sudden and apply it in the same assembly. The changes will be applicable from next assembly onwards.

Dr. Nandini Azad agreed with Mr. Aranas and said that in India also, we do not take it up immediately.

In conclusion, Mr. Li said that we should follow the existing rules for board elections.

The Board approved the procedures for the board elections to be held during the Regional Assembly.

Mr. Li made additional suggestions in light of the impact of COVID-19 pandemic to ensure maximum participation and good turnout during the Congress/ Regional Assembly: (a) extension of time limit for payment of subscription fees; (b) reduction in subscription fees and/or exemption policies (allow members who have not paid the opportunity to vote); and (c) reduction of registration fees due to COVID-19 (given it is combined event, being held in Asia, and the COVID-19 impact). Mr. Li reiterated his proposals were one-time and in light of the situation created by the pandemic.

Dr. Nandini Azad said that the global registration fee is very high in comparison to the regional assembly registration fees.

Mr. Balu said that Mr. Li could take up the extension of time limit for payment of subscription fees and registration fees at the global board meeting on 25-26 May. The decision regarding Regional Assembly fees can be taken up at the next regional board meeting.

Mr. Aranas said that we should be more specific about how many days we are going to extend the payment of subscription fees and the percentage of reduction in the registration fee.

Mr. Li suggested that according to the situation of our Region, the Regional Office should prepare a detailed plan for discussion at the next board meeting. Mr. Li again emphasized that extension and reduction will be one time due to COVID-19 pandemic.

Mr. Aranas said that registration fee is the payment for attending the assembly and subscription fee is to ICA. So, ICA may be getting some funds from the registration fee.

Mr. Balu said that we have to incur some expenses for the assembly, and it has to come from the registration fee.

Dr. Nandini Azad said that JCCU has given full money to the Gender Project and we may not have many physical activities during this year.

Mr. Balu said that we have to look at it carefully. There is a shortage of 20% to 30% income from subscription fees.

Mr. Li said that this epidemic has caused a lot of damage and we should encourage our cooperative members to pay a lesser registration fee.

Mr. Nasir Khan said that in principle we support this proposal. Let us put it to the global board for the final decision.

Mr. Li said that the Regional Office may consider this proposal and put up to the next board meeting.

Mr. Li further suggested that we should make a back-up plan for the Electronic Voting System (EVS) in case of any eventuality.

Mr. Balu said that for the last regional board elections in New Delhi, we had a back-up plan.

Mr. Alireza said that EVS should actually develop and encourage. Let us consider where travel is not possible the option for online voting. Sooner or later we will come to the online meeting in the future.

Mr. Balu said that the Regional Office will look into what we discussed today and see what can be done and a proposal will be submitted to the next board meeting for discussion.

#### **AGENDA ITEM 10: DATE AND PLACE OF NEXT BOARD MEETING**

The Board decided to hold the next meeting in November or December 2020. The physical or online nature of the meeting will depend on the COVID-19 situation. The Regional Director was authorized to fix the date in consultation with the ICA-AP President.

Mr. Li Chunsheng said that ACFSMC will be happy to host the physical board meeting in China, if the COVID-19 situation improves.

#### **AGENDA ITEM 11: ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

No item was discussed under this Agenda.

**Closing Remarks:** Mr. Li Chunsheng thanked the members for their support in the smooth conduct of the meeting.

The meeting ended with a vote of thanks to the Chair.

## ANNEXURE – 2D

### MINUTES OF THE ICA-AP REGIONAL BOARD MEETING ONLINE: 27<sup>TH</sup> OCTOBER, 2020

The online meeting of the ICA-AP Regional Board was held on Tuesday, 27<sup>th</sup> October 2020 from 11:00 to 13:00 hours. The following members attended the meeting:

1. Mr. Li Chunsheng, ACFSMC, China – Chair
2. Ms. Chitose Arai, JCCU, Japan – Vice Chair
3. Dr. Chandra Pal Singh Yadav, NCUI, India – Vice Chair
4. Mr. Sharmila, DEKOPIN, Indonesia – Alternate Member
5. Mr. Mohammad Ali Zeyghami, ICC, Iran – Alternate Member
6. Mr. Jongwook Lee, NACF, Korea – Alternate Member
7. Dato Hj. Abdul Fattah Hj. Abdullah, ANGKASA – Member
8. Mr. Keshav Prasad Badal, NCF, Nepal – Member
9. Mr. Sarath Weerasiri, NCC, Sri Lanka - Member
10. Dr. Nandini Azad, Chair, ICA-AP Women Committee – Member
11. Mr. Ahsan Ali Thakur, Chair, ICA-AP Youth Committee – Member
12. Mr. Kamarudin Ismail, ANGKASA - Observer
13. Mr. Nasir Khan Yahaya, ANGKASA, Malaysia – Observer
14. Mr. Zhang Wangshu, ACFSMC, China - Observer
15. Ms. Chen Fei, ACFSMC, China – Interpreter
16. Ms. Wang Ma, ACFSMC, China - Observer
17. Mr. N. Satyanarayana, NCUI, India – Observer
18. Mr. Mr. Gatot Trihargo, DEKOPIN, Indonesia – Observer
19. Mr. Ilham Nasai, DEKOPIN, Indonesia – Observer
20. Mr. Gatot Trihargo, DEKOPIN, Indonesia - Observer
21. Mr. Amano Haruyoshi, JCCU, Japan – Observer
22. Mr. Jiro Ito, JCCU, Japan - Observer
23. Ms. Takako Tsuchiya, JCCU, Japan – Interpreter
24. Mr. Alireza Banaeifar, ICC, Iran – Alternate Member
25. Ms. Chitra Kumari Thamsuhang Subba, NCFN, Nepal – Observer
26. Mr. Balasubramanian Iyer, RD, ICA-AP, New Delhi.
27. Ms. Shivali Sarna, ICA-AP, New Delhi
28. Mr. Mohit Dave, ICA-AP, New Delhi
29. Ms. Savitri Singh, ICA-AP, New Delhi
30. Mr. Shree Padmanabhan, ICA-AP, New Delhi
31. Mr. K. Kukreja, ICA-AP, New Delhi
32. Mr. Ganesh Gopal, New Delhi
33. Mr. Soobeyong Chae, NACF, Korea, MBO, Malaysia
34. Ms. Noor Azlinn, ANGKASA, MBO, Malaysia
35. Interpreter, JCCU, Japan
36. Interpreter, JCCU, Japan

Absent: Mr. Kwok Kok Kwong, SNCF, Singapore – Member and Mr. Antonio Aranas, NATCCO, Philippines – Member

#### Opening Remarks

Mr. Li Chunsheng started the meeting by extending a warm welcome to all the Regional Board members and reminding them that the fight against the COVID-19 virus is still on. He said that the online meeting will discuss very important items like date and venue of the ICA-AP Regional Assembly and Regional Board elections.

#### **AGENDA ITEM 01: APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA**

Mr. Li invited comments on the Agenda. There were none and the agenda was unanimously approved.

#### **AGENDA ITEM 02: In remembrance of Mr. Sethu Madhavan and Dr. T. Paranjothi**

Mr. Li informed the board members about the sad demise of Mr. Sethu Madhavan and Dr. T. Paranjothi. He said their passing is a huge loss and requested members to observe one-minute silence in their memory.

#### **AGENDA ITEM 03: Confirmation of the minutes of the last online meeting held on May 19, 2020**

Mr. Li informed that the minutes were circulated to all members ahead of the meeting and invited comments. There were none and the minutes were unanimously confirmed.

#### **AGENDA ITEM 04: Updates from Members**

Members from India, Japan, and Malaysia shared updates on the COVID 19 situation and their response.

**Dr. Chandra Pal Singh Yadav, India:** COVID 19 pandemic is not only altering the social relations but also the lifestyle of people. Alternative development models are required to facilitate and create a sustainable economy and society. The future seems to belong to social business and cooperative easily fit in this model. For the first time, after the great depression of 1930s and the global economic downturn of 2008, governments are pumping in huge amounts of money into the economy. The international and national financial institutions and Central Banks are easing monetary policies and making available funds in the market. This creates a huge opportunity for cooperatives to explore innovative ways to make use of the liquidity to strengthen their business interest, members' need and care for the ailing economy. The government of India has called for the country to be self-reliant but not a globally isolated economy and infused approx. USD 265 billion liquidity into the national market. It sets the direction for cooperatives in the country to adopt policies and strategies.

To highlight the role of cooperatives during the pandemic, NCUI has decided that the first day of the Annual All India Cooperative week celebrations (November 14-20) will focus on the theme "Role of Cooperatives in tackling Covid-19." The Cooperative Education Center of NCUI has been playing an important role in developing human resources by finding ways and means to overcome the physical restrictions imposed by the pandemic. Dr. Yadav said, "Our education center has trained 40% more cooperators during the last 6 months through online training. Though certain difficulties are being faced like interruption in communications, monotony, lack of human touch; the Center is constantly working to improve the situation by using scientific and behavioural tools for effective and impactful training and education." NCUI has recently prepared a climate action plan for cooperatives based on the discussions and suggestions made by the experts during the webinar organized by NCUI and ICA-AP on International Cooperative Day. We have requested all our member organizations and stakeholder to utilize the huge network of cooperatives and join hands with the government to work together to build a better world.

**Dato Abdul Fattah Abdullah, Malaysia** informed the members that the policy document of the Government is still the same and a number of incentives are given to cooperatives and

SMEs to reorganize themselves because of COVID 19. ANGKASA is ensuring the provision of food and PPEs to those who require it. Recently, the Minister announced that they are coming out with new cooperative transformation plan; more will be known after it is approved by the Cabinet in November. ANGKASA concluded a study in collaboration with a local NGO called Malaysian Institute of Economic Research (MIER) on the impact of COVID-19. Overall, cooperatives with limited savings have been severely affected by the pandemic, while the credit cooperatives have fared relatively better. Many cooperatives could not take advantage of the incentives provided by the government as they are not recognized as SMEs. ANGKASA is in talks with the government to recognise cooperatives as SMEs. The second stage of the study by MIER is under discussion to look at how cooperatives, because of their collaborative nature, can be used as a vehicle to tackle the socio-economic needs of the people. We are also preparing our next steps for the future by embracing technology and in talks with the Central Bank of Malaysia to get a license for digital banking for cooperative banks. If we manage to do that, then, we think our service to the community will be more relevant in this area.

**Ms. Chitose Arai, JCCU, Japan** thanked members for the opportunity to share her update. The university and health and welfare cooperatives in Japan have been hit hard by the pandemic and are facing an existential threat. In the case of Japanese universities, all opening ceremonies have been cancelled and lectures are conducted online. Even after the lifting of emergency, university cooperatives have been affected negatively as their canteen and food related business have fallen, leading to decline in revenues and earnings. It is difficult to expect any recovery even in fiscal year 2021. To maintain their viability, university cooperatives are accelerating the speed of their business structure and planning on large scale of retrenchment. For cooperatives, it is important to ensure the retrenched workers are employed; so the university cooperatives are working to ensure other cooperatives receive these workers/ employees.

At the health and welfare cooperatives, there is a state of emergency as the flow of outpatients and inpatients have slowed and profitable businesses such as medical check-up, physical examinations, and preventive vaccinations have stopped. During this time, necessary equipment such as masks and gowns have been delivered by cooperatives. This is in large part to cooperation among cooperatives and cooperators making donations. She concluded by saying, I look forward to working closely with ICA-AP and seeing cooperation among board members to proceed further.

Mr. Li said we know the impact of the pandemic is large on cooperatives in the region. In this situation, we should do our best to continue to develop in areas such as business, trainings, and university cooperatives. Our cooperatives continue to respond positively to the needs of community by promoting alternatives, addressing short term requirements, and supporting the government. I believe, we can work together and share information about our cooperatives in this pandemic. Our cooperative movement will continue to develop.

#### **AGENDA ITEM 05: Discussion on date, venue and mode of the 14<sup>th</sup> ICA-AP Regional Assembly and Regional Board elections**

Mr. Balu began by thanking everyone for joining the online Board Meeting and wished them a happy festive season. It was decided in the last Board meeting that the 14<sup>th</sup> Regional Assembly will be conducted in conjunction with the World Cooperative Congress in March 2021. However, given the pandemic, the Global Board, in its Board Meeting in September, decided to postpone the World Cooperative Congress to November-December 2021 (28<sup>th</sup> November to 3<sup>rd</sup> December). Mr. Balu informed the Board members that the Global Board again met on 12<sup>th</sup> October to decide on the Board elections. The global office consulted with lawyers and their opinion was that the Board elections should take place at the first physical General Assembly. In case it does not happen, the Board can continue but its powers are

limited to approving administrative matters and not taking any big decisions. The Global Board decided that the physical General Assembly and Board elections will be held during the first half of 2022. In Nov 2021, we will have the Congress in Seoul and no assembly and elections.

Given the decision of the Global Board, he laid out the possible options in front of the Regional Board:

- Stand-alone assembly in March. But this will be difficult; given the pandemic, we do not have a host and there is no surety that members will travel.
- Move ICA-AP Regional Assembly and Board elections to Nov-Dec 2021 with Congress. Given the term of the current board ends in December 2020, the decision to postpone by a year should be taken by the Regional Assembly.
- Consider a hybrid model – online and in-person
  - Online Regional Assembly in February 2021
  - In-person elections with the Congress in November/ December 2021

Holding online Regional Assembly in February 2021 will take care of the administrative issues and the Assembly could approve postponement of the elections to November/ December 2021. Holding in-person election along with the Congress is preferable as it will give members the opportunity to come together after a long gap and because elections to the Board is the most important event for the region. The process and procedure will be similar to the previous elections held in November 2016 which was approved in the May Board meeting.

Mr. Li said that options from Mr. Balu are reasonable and feasible considering the impact of the pandemic and agreed to it. He then asked the members for their comments.

Mr. Keshav Prasad Badal was of the opinion to have the assembly in-person along with the Congress in November-December 2021.

Dr. Yadav said that if the World Congress is confirmed in November-December 2021, then we can hold Regional Assembly then; else we can hold online Assembly in February/ March.

Mr. Zeyghami from Iran agreed with Mr. Balu's proposal.

Mr. Nasir from ANGKASA asked, "If we agree to hold online Regional Assembly in February, then what stops us from holding elections as well?"

Dr. Nandini Azad, asked if it is legally possible to have elections online. Mr. Balu answered that in Kigali the General Assembly approved online elections only for administrative issues. Elections to the Board had to be held in person and it is not legally possible to hold online Board elections. The Global Office consulted lawyers and the advice was to hold it the first time the General Assembly met in person.

Ms. Chitose Arai from Japan said that given the uncertainties, the option presented by the Regional Director was the most feasible. She said that the elections should be held according to the Election Procedures and supported holding online Assembly in February to approve the postponement of elections to November/ December 2021 and hold in-person elections during the ICA Congress.



After much discussion, it was decided to hold the Regional Assembly online in February 2021 and the Regional Board Elections, in-person along with the Congress in November-December 2021.

#### **AGENDA ITEM 06: ICA-AP Activities Report**

Mr. Balu Iyer said that the activities carried out since April 2020 were included in the Board packet. He highlighted the following key activities –

01. Launch of webpage for Members' response to COVID-19
02. Webinar to discuss the COVID-19 impact and issues
03. Webinar to promote Youth Entrepreneurship
04. Inter-regional meeting with Africa Office and Aflatoun on educating school children on financial literacy
05. Member exchanges between ANGKASA, Malaysia; ACFSMC, China; and ICC, Iran
06. Two books released on Cooperatives
07. International Day of Cooperatives – webpage launched to engage and inspire members to act against climate change
08. ICA-EU project activities being continued with all the online activities

Mr. Li mentioned that many members have launched activities as part of COVID-19 response, and it is good to see that.

#### **AGENDA ITEM 07: ICA-AP Financial Report – January to August 2020**

Mr. Balu Iyer presented the ICA-AP Financial Report for the period January to August 2020 and highlighted the following:

- The budget presented reflects the revised budget (due to EU project extension) that was approved by the Board in the May meeting.
- From March onwards, physical activities have been constrained and several planned events also could not be conducted. There is a significant underspend on travel and projects.
- We should have a surplus and be in the green as against the earlier projections.

Mr. Li said the financial situation in our region is good and invited comments from the Board members.

Ms. Chitose Arai wanted clarification on why the entire amount under the JCCU budget was not reflected. Mr. Balu said that the budget presented is for ICA-AP administration and the EU project. The main reason being we have staff salaries paid only out of these projects. While the region gets financial support from JCCU, ACFSMC, NACF and MAFF (Japan), these projects do not provide for fixed staff salary. Existing staff are distributed to these projects and ICA-AP Committees.

On the income side for ICA-AP, we show subscription fees, administration contribution and meeting revenue (mainly in the year when we have Regional Assembly). The administration contribution is the amount paid from the projects (JCCU, ACFSMC, NACF and MAFF (Japan) towards administration.

Usually, at the end of the year, we show the total budget and expenditure towards the different projects.

After a brief discussion, the financial report for the said period of 2020 was approved.

## **AGENDA ITEM 08: ICA-AP Membership Situation**

Mr. Balu stated that since the last online board meeting on May 19, 2020, two organizations were admitted into ICA:

- Jiangsu Supply and Marketing General Cooperative (JSMGC), China
- Fujian Federation of Supply and Marketing Cooperatives (Fujian Coop), China

He said that the ICA has approved the Department of Cooperative Development (DCD), Sri Lanka into the ICA, but they have not paid the subscription fees.

The two organizations that have ceased to be members due to non-payment of subscription fees are:

- Nasinu Land Purchase & Housing Cooperative Ltd, Fiji
- National Consumer Cooperative Federation, India

Mr. Satyanarayana said that the National Consumer Cooperative Federation, India has committed to pay their subscription fee soon.

He informed the Board that the following members will get a notice about their cessation: GUHE, China; KUCCS, Kuwait; MFA, Maldives; and NICD, Sri Lanka.

The total ICA - Asia and Pacific membership is **109** member organizations from **32** countries.

## **AGENDA ITEM 09: ICA-AP Subscription Status**

Mr. Balu Iyer said that the total expected membership fees for 2020 were USD 863,892; we have received USD 713,609 and there is a commitment for USD 49,938 (details provided in the board packet). He appreciated the members who had committed and had paid their subscription fee on time. The balance payable by the remaining members was USD 100,345. He presented the list of outstanding members and requested those who had not paid their subscription to do so as soon as possible. He said that it is very important that members pay their subscription on time so that we can carry out our planned activities. He also requested the Board members to follow up with members in their countries to pay the subscription fee.

Mr. Li also highlighted the need for subscription fee and invited comments from the members.

## **AGENDA ITEM 10: ICA-AP Draft Budget for 2021**

Mr. Balu presented the draft budget for the Board's consideration. He said that the budget presented is for ICA-AP administration and the EU project. The main reason being we have staff salaries paid only out of these projects.

On the income side, the projection is lower than the previous year. There is a drop anticipated in the subscription due to the impact of COVID-19 on member business. The EU project is budgeted till May 2021, the current end date.

On the expenses side, the staff for the EU project had been accounted till May 2021 and later moved to the administrative budget, so the personnel cost remains the same. Reductions have been planned in travel expenses and other administrative heads to show balance for 2021.

The budget was approved unanimously.

#### **AGENDA ITEM 11: ICA-AP Draft Activity Plan for 2021**

Mr. Balu presented the draft activity plan for the year 2021. The MAFF training project activities have been moved online. The activities under the EU project are planned till May 2021, the current end date. He said the list was very tentative as the office was waiting to hear from the Committees about their plan.

Mr. Badal from Nepal suggested that since the economic situation is very bad for the workers in the informal sector, ICA-AP should launch some special programs to help mitigate their situation. Ms. Sharmila from Indonesia requested for a Charity program from ICA-AP for COVID-19. She suggested that we could develop an e-book with experiences from all the member countries on their response to COVID-19. ANGKASA from Malaysia enquired if a bilateral arrangement for COVID 19 vaccine is possible.

Mr. Balu thanked the members for their suggestions. He said that Vietnam has done well in containing the COVID-19 situation and had committed to sending masks. We will follow up and ensure how responses can be coordinated better. Mr. Li also appreciated the suggestions from the members and said that during this time of pandemic we need strength in cooperation to promote cooperatives in business.

The plan was approved.

#### **AGENDA ITEM 12: Women and Youth Committee Updates**

Dr. Nandini Azad, Chairperson of ICA-AP's Women's Committee said the committee has been very active since the last meeting and organized webinars and other events. She informed that many volunteers from member countries have pledged to undertake gender reforms in their cooperatives and take concrete actions as part of the campaign launched on International Women's Day. This will result in enhanced participation and integration of women into the cooperative movement. The campaign is open till 2023 when the committee will complete 25 years. She proudly said that this is the first committee to complete 25 years and asked all the members to help make the campaign a success. The Committee newsletter has been revived and the first edition of the biannual newsletter, Women in Cooperatives, was released in March 2020; and the second one in November 2020. Due to the ongoing pandemic, the Office Bearers Meeting scheduled in the Philippines was cancelled and a virtual one was organized in August 2020.

In early September, the committee conducted a regional webinar to discuss the Impact of COVID 19 on Women Cooperators in Asia and the Pacific. The meeting was attended by members from India, Japan, Malaysia, Maldives, Myanmar, Nepal, Pakistan, Palestine, Philippines, Singapore, and South Korea. They talked about the difficulties and challenges of COVID 19 and the activities they have pursued.

In mid-September, the Women's Committee in partnership with the Working Women's Forum, Indian Cooperative Network for Women, and the JCCU has organized a Training of Trainers' (ToT) program on Digital Financial Inclusion of Women Cooperators in India. It was a pioneering effort where women from grassroots, who faced many hardships during the lockdown, were taught the basics of digital financial literacy in their local language. The ToT was attended by 65 participants from six districts of South India.

Mr. Li appreciated the work done by the committee especially during the pandemic and said the women committee plays an essential role in the cooperative movement.

Mr Ahsan Ali Thakur presented updates from the Youth Committee. He started with the Global Youth Forum (GYF) held in February 2020 in Malaysia. He appreciated and thanked ANGKASA for hosting the event and their active participation in organizing the GYF.

He spoke about the Go Green Campaign which was first started in 2018. The Campaign is to encourage youth to plant trees and contribute in mitigating the effects of Climate Change. In 2019, the campaign was taken forward in collaboration with the Africa region. In 2020, the Campaign has been extended to the Americas. Youth in the three regions planted trees, encouraged initiatives towards climate action; propagated and promoted the Cooperative Identity in the community. Some of the highlights of the Campaign were:

- More than 17,000 trees were planted in Asia-Pacific by 300 members from 9 countries
- In the Americas, 150 trees were planted, several webinars conducted, and word spread about climate action
- 

He emphasized that the Campaign was carried out despite the COVID 19 situation (lockdown and restrictions); it was difficult but because of the team effort, the campaign was a success.

The Committee celebrated International Youth Day on 12<sup>th</sup> August by organizing a webinar where colleagues from Europe and America participated and discussed issues relating to youth and spread awareness on youth participation in the cooperatives.

The Committee is starting an activity to educate the committee members about cooperative education that exists outside Asia and Pacific. Ms. Aran from St. Mary's University, Canada shared the courses and opportunities present in her University. As a result, one of the committee members took admission for the course.

Mr. Li appreciated the efforts of the Youth Committee.

### **AGENDA ITEM 13: Other Business Matters**

Mr. Balu informed the Board that ICA-AP is completing its 60 years; to celebrate, we are coming out with a publication and organizing an online event. He read out the program for the online event and invited all the members to attend. He added that we are hoping to have an in-person celebration in Seoul during the World Cooperative Congress in 2021.

### **AGENDA ITEM 14: Date and Place of Next Regional Board Meeting**

The Board decided to hold the next meeting in February 2020 before the online Regional Assembly. The Regional Director was authorized to fix the date in consultation with the ICA-AP President and communicate to all the board members.

### **Closing Remarks**

Mr. Li Chunsheng thanked the members for their participation and active conduct of the meeting. The meeting ended with a group photo.

## ANNEXURE – 3

### ELECTION PROCEDURES APPROVED BY ICA-AP REGIONAL BOARD ON MAY 19, 2020

#### Background

The ICA-AP Regional Board was elected at the Regional Assembly held in New Delhi, India on November 18, 2016, for a period of four years. ICA-AP used the Electronic Voting System (EVS) approved by the Regional Board in Colombo, Sri Lanka on June 16, 2016. Since there were only 11 candidates, the Regional Assembly in Delhi decided not to have elections and ratified the 11 members to the Regional Board. As there was only one candidate for President, Mr. Li Chunsheng from ACFSMC in China was unanimously elected as President of ICA-AP. Dr. Chandra Pal Singh Yadav from NCUI, India and Ms. Chitose Arai from JCCU, Japan were elected as first and second Vice-Presidents respectively.

Based on the experience with the EVS, it is recommended that it be used for the next ICA-AP Regional Assembly election.

#### Rules

As per the ICA-AP Rules (Article-7, point-1): “There shall be a Regional Board of 11 persons consisting of a President, two Vice Presidents and eight members elected by the Regional Assembly. *Not more than one person from one country can be elected to the Regional Board.*”

As per Article-6 (point-1): “The President of the region shall, as a rule, be the Chairperson of the Regional Assembly and the Regional Board”.

The Regional Assembly first elects **eleven** (11) Regional Board Members for a period of **four** (4) years. This is followed by separate elections by the Regional Assembly for **two Vice Presidents** and a **President** *from among the elected Board Members*.

#### 1. Nomination Process

- 1.1 As per ICA-AP Rules (Article-7, point-1): “Not more than one person from one country can be elected to the Regional Board.” Therefore, members should discuss the matter with other member organizations in their country and send the nomination of a consensus candidate for the ICA-AP Regional Board.
- 1.2 According to ICA Statutes (Article-29, para-10): No person is entitled to serve on the Board whose organization is no longer in membership of ICA or is in arrears with its membership subscription fee. The subscription fee must be paid forty-five (**45**) days before the election date.
- 1.3 The Nomination Form with brief profile of the candidate, photo and his/her statement of interest should be received at the ICA-AP office forty-five (**45**) days before the election date. Candidates can declare their interest to contest either for President or Vice President. However, this will be subject to their getting elected to the Regional Board.

## 2. Election Procedures

- 2.1 The Regional Board will appoint an Election Committee comprising three persons to conduct the elections.
- 2.2 If the current President is standing for re-election, he or she will yield the chair to the Chair of the Election Committee for the purpose of the election of President.
- 2.3 Each candidate shall be given three (3) minutes to make his/her presentation to the Regional Assembly for each election.
- 2.4 Candidates contesting for the Regional Board can signify verbally to the Regional Assembly their interest to stand for either the President or Vice President before the actual conduct of the election. A regional board member can only seek for one position, either as Vice President or President.
- 2.5 If there is a single candidate for the office of President, the election of the President may be by acclamation or show of hands.
- 2.6 The casting of votes will be done through EVS approved by the Regional Board.
- 2.7 When the vote is cast electronically, the members will then be asked to enter the password they received. Once the password is entered, they will see a welcome screen confirming the name of the organization and the number of votes (ballots) they can cast.
- 2.8 If a member has proxy votes for any organization, they will receive a secret password for each organization. They will need to follow the same process in 2.7 for casting the vote.
- 2.9 If a member marks in more than 11 places on the ballot for the board election, the EVS will not accept. However, a member can cast their vote for less than 11 candidates.
- 2.10 Administrators of the EVS shall be given access to the online system to monitor the election in the back end.
- 2.11 When votes are tallied, the Election Committee members will be present to attest its accuracy and ensure integrity of the system.
- 2.12 During the tallying of votes, candidates and members are not allowed to be present or to be advised of the number of votes cast for a specific candidate.
- 2.13 Results will be tallied on a summary sheet and signed by each of the Election Committee members. The summary sheet will be preserved by the Regional Office until the next election. The ballots will be destroyed or erased after the election results have been certified.
- 2.14 The Chair of the Election Committee will report to the Regional Assembly the results of the election, identifying the number of votes each single candidate received.



### 3. Order of Elections

- 3.1 As per ICA-AP Rules (Article-7, point-1): The President, two Vice Presidents and eight Members have to be directly elected by the Regional Assembly. The election procedure is presented to the Regional Assembly, including appointment of the Election Committee, for approval by show of hands.
- 3.2 The election would be conducted in three phases – first, 11 board members; second, the two Vice Presidents; and third, the President. Since there are two Vice Presidents, the person getting the maximum votes will be 1<sup>st</sup> Vice President.

### 4. Distribution of Password

- 4.1 The Regional Office will randomly generate the password for each eligible organization to use. One password will be used for all three phases of the election.
- 4.2 In countries where there is more than one member, the votes will be divided proportionally among members. The ICA-AP permits members in a given country to voluntarily agree to distribute votes among themselves on condition that no member holds more than twelve votes.
- 4.3 The voting password will be distributed according to voting rights. One designated representative from each eligible member organization will be asked to pick up the voting password for his/her entire delegation. The location where the voting password is distributed will be announced at the time of voting.
- 4.4 When picking up the voting password, the designated representative will be asked to sign an acknowledgement sheet. Once the designated representative has signed his/her name and left the table with the voting password, there will be no possibility of getting duplicate password. The system will ask the designated representative to confirm the number of ballots before proceeding to vote.
- 4.5 Where the country maximum of 25 votes is applicable, allocation of votes among members of that country will be made forty-five (**45**) days before the election date. Members from a particular country that join the ICA after the allocation of votes will not receive any vote for that election.
- 4.6 A list of eligible organizations and permitted votes will be included with the Agenda Notes of the Regional Assembly and distributed to members **one month** before the election date.
- 4.7 Members are permitted to delegate another ICA-AP member in their country in good standing to exercise their votes by providing the Regional Office with a completed proxy form **five** (5) days before the election date.
- 4.8 Once the distribution of voting password has closed, the final number of voting ballot which was distributed will be communicated to the Chairperson of the Election Committee on election date.

## **ANNEXURE – 4**

### **EU PROJECT YEAR 4 REPORT (March 2019 – February 2020)**

#### **Background**

The International Cooperative Alliance (ICA), established in 1895 and currently headquartered in Brussels, is the global umbrella organization that represents, unites and develops cooperatives across diverse sectors of the economy. ICA represents over 300 apex federations and leading sectoral cooperatives from 109 countries. ICA Asia- Pacific (ICA-AP) was established in 1960 in New Delhi (India), and services 107 members from 32 countries.

In March 2016, ICA and the European Union signed a Framework Partnership Agreement (Europe Aid/150-053/C/ ACT/Multi) to implement a multi-year, multi-country development program aimed at benefiting and advancing cooperatives worldwide. “Cooperatives in Development – People-centered Businesses in Action”, is being implemented by the four ICA regional offices (Africa, Americas, Asia-Pacific, and Europe), up till May 2021.

ICA-AP has identified three strategic priorities: Cooperative participation in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), youth inclusion, and exploring work and ownership structures in cooperatives. A video explaining the hashtag, #coops4dev, and the program can be viewed here.

The following is the Year 4 (March 2019 to February 2020) report of the activities carried out by ICA-AP.

#### **Institutional Strengthening**

A training program on SDG-13 Climate Action, “Save the Environment to Sustain Future Generations” was held in November, at the Cooperative League of Thailand (CLT) Training Center in Bangkok. The capacity building program was conceptualized and designed in consultation with GIZ, Thailand, to strengthen the capacity of cooperative leaders and managers. The 31 participants from 8 countries across Asia and Africa deepened their understanding on SDGs and its relevance for cooperatives; explored and analyzed the impact of climate change on various sectors (agriculture, credit, fisheries and consumer), and exchanged good practices and lessons-learned to reduce or cope with climate change risks.

The Coop Mic in June was held with Mr. Rajiv Khandelwal, Executive Director of Aajeevika Bureau, India on "Decent and Dignified Work Demands Action Now", in consonance with the theme of the 2019 International Day of Cooperatives - Cooperatives for Decent Work.

#### **Enabling Environment**

The status of cooperatives in 18 countries GSPN Asia-Pacific were studied and mapped using secondary research. The key parameters were: Contribution of cooperatives to the national economy, sectoral distribution of cooperatives, genesis and evolution of the cooperative movement, historical and current laws on cooperatives, and association of national cooperatives with the international movement and ICA. Eleven national reports on the legal framework have been uploaded on the #coops4dev website. Eighteen country snapshots and the consumer sector snapshot can be accessed here.

ICA-AP entered a joint research project with Access Livelihoods Consulting to ascertain the status of "Autonomy and Independence of Cooperatives in India". The research on Cooperatives in Industrial and Service Sectors in the Asia Pacific Region was co-designed with the International Organization of Industrial and Service Cooperatives (CICOPA) as a participatory study with the engagement of experts and practitioners from 12 countries. A study on the challenges faced by youth and the role for cooperatives is under finalization.

## **Capacity Building**

A training of mentors of the Global Cooperative Entrepreneurship (GCE) QSPKFU was held at Manchester, United Kingdom from 18-21 March. The objective of GCE is to set up an experimental global community of mentors, mutualize tools and resources and implement activities for cooperative entrepreneurship. From Asia and Pacific unit, 5 mentors from 3 Indonesia, India and Malaysia participated. The mentors continue to collaborate on developing, reviewing and sharing resources related to youth entrepreneurship and cooperative development via an online knowledge base. In collaboration with Uralungal Labour Contract Cooperative Society, we organized the GCE Training for Ambassadors from 25-28 November in Kerala, India. 20 Participants from India and Indonesia attended the four-day training meant to capacitate participants with the skills and knowledge to set up new cooperatives.

In August, ICA-AP, the Gujarat Self Employed Women's Association (SEWA) Cooperative Federation and SEWA Bharat organized the National Workshop for Women's Cooperatives, in Ahmedabad, India. The workshop focused on: accessing finance, leveraging technologies to boost business, networking and marketing linkages for goods and services, and supporting an enabling environment for women cooperators. An inter-regional workshop on cooperatives in educational institutions was organized by the ICA-AP Committee on Cooperatives in Educational Institutions and ICA Africa in Kigali on October 14, 2019. The workshop enabled knowledge sharing between ICA members and other stakeholders about cooperatives in educational institutions.

The workshop was attended by 51 participants from diverse backgrounds including policymakers, students, university management and staff, and youth from over 17 countries. We also organized an International Seminar on Curriculum Development for Cooperative Education on 25-26 November in Kathmandu, Nepal. The seminar was attended by 22 international delegates from 6 countries and 50 Nepalese stakeholders, to discuss the status of curriculum development in formal education on cooperatives, and in mapping out future needs.

In December, we organized the "2nd ICA-AP Forum on Development of Cooperatives in Pacific Islands" in Australia, as a follow-up to the Forum in Vanuatu in 2018. The Forum was attended by stakeholders in academia, cooperative federations and government agencies from Australia, Fiji, India, Indonesia, Kiribati, and New Zealand.

## **Cooperative Networking**

ICA-AP participated in the 13th edition of European Development Days (EDD) in Brussels, 18-19 June, engaging with potential partners on the EC's collaborative platform for the international development community. This presented an opportunity to meet with representatives of the Cooperatives Europe Development Platform (CEDP), to discuss potential collaborations with ICA members in Asia-Pacific and establish a regional platform to promote cooperatives in international development.

## Advocacy and Political Dialogue

The Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) is the principal global intergovernmental body exclusively dedicated to the promotion of gender equality and women's empowerment. Dr. Nandini Azad, Chairperson of the ICA-AP Women Committee represented ICA-AP at the 63rd UN CSW in New York, 9-15 March. Dr. Azad made a successful intervention to the UN Secretary-General (SG), António Guterres, during a Town Hall meeting between the SG and Civil Society Organizations (CSOs).

During the annual Global Policy Forum on Development (PFD) meeting in Brussels, 13-15 March, we shared our work in Nepal on the contribution of cooperatives in Voluntary National Reporting (VNR). ICA-AP also made an intervention at the panel "Towards more effective multi-stakeholder partnerships to achieve the environmental ambition of the 2030 Agenda", elaborating on the work of cooperatives in saving the natural environment. The PFD held its Asia Regional Meeting in Kathmandu, Nepal, 24-26 September, to discuss issues on top of the global agenda and progress made in the implementation of the SDGs. Our delegation had the opportunity to meet and greet H.E. Veronica Cody, Ambassador, European Union Delegation to Nepal.

We partnered with Vietnam Cooperative Alliance (VCA) to organize the 2nd Asia Pacific Cooperative Registrars' Forum on "Creating Enabling Legal Framework and Policies to Promote Sustainable Development of Cooperatives" in the 21st Century in Ho Chi Minh City, 16-19 April. The Forum brought together 294 delegates from 22 countries in Asia-Pacific, including cooperative registrars and regulators, leaders and managers; and other stakeholders to discuss matters pertaining to legislation on cooperatives, as well as policies and regulations that complement existing laws.

The Global Youth Forum 2020 (GYF20) was a first-of-its kind immersive training with over 150 youth entrepreneurs (ages 18-35) and cooperators from 50 countries. GYF20 took place in Kuching, Malaysia from 3-7 February. Youth, trainers and experts from 13 countries in Asia-Pacific participated in GYF20. The Forum was a forward-looking event, to create a global network of cooperative youth entrepreneurs. The main outcome of the event was the passing of the GYF20 Youth Resolution.

## Alliances with CSO actors

ICA-AP actively engaged with CSOs through the year. We progressed on MoUs with the Institute of Rural Management Anand (IRMA) and Access Livelihood Consulting India; and collaborated with the Asian Farmers Association for Sustainable Rural Development and the National Dairy Development Board (NDDB) in India; and the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) Secretariat and Agriculture Center, attending the Regional Experts Consultation Meeting on "Family Farmers Cooperatives to End Hunger and Poverty through Integrated Farming in South Asia" at the NDDB Verghese Kurien auditorium, 22-24 July. We also engaged with the Verghese Kurien Centre for Excellence (VKCoE) at IRMA, and the Department of Cooperation in Government of Odisha for the Workshop on "Doubling Farmers Income: Exploring Pathways for Cooperatives in Odisha", organized at the Odisha State Cooperative Bank, 29-30 August. The Aflatoun Global Social & Financial Skills Conference took place in Amsterdam, October 30-November 1, during which ICA-AP facilitated the break-out session on 'Partnering with Cooperatives'. ICA-AP and Aflatoun International signed an MoU to take forward these conversations to a fruitful partnership.