



PRESS RELEASE

2nd ICA-AP CO-OPERATIVE REGISTRARS' FORUM
on
*Creating Enabling Legal Framework and Policies to Promote Sustainable Development of
Cooperatives in the 21st Century*
April 16 – 19, 2019 | Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam

The 2nd ICA-AP Cooperative Registrars' Forum on the theme *Creating Enabling Legal Framework and Policies to Promote Sustainable Development of Cooperatives in the 21st Century* is being jointly organized by ICA Asia and Pacific, ICA-EU Partnership on Co-operatives in Development, Organic Agricultural Economics Institute and Vietnam Cooperative Alliance (VCA). The Forum will see participation from ICA-AP members, Registrars and representatives of governments, international development agencies and Civil Society Organization. In addition to pursuing the creation and promotion of an enabling (legal & regulatory) environment for existing co-operatives, the 2nd Registrars' Forum will take an in-depth look at the needs of new emerging areas such as work and ownership, healthcare, technology, renewable energy, agri-business processing and marketing.

The Forum was graced by important dignitaries from the Government of Vietnam including Mr. Vuong Dinh Hue the Vice Prime Minister of Vietnam. Mr. Hue acknowledged the important role of cooperatives in Vietnam's National Strategy towards rural development and sustainability. Mr. Bruno Roelants, Director General ICA, in his keynote speech touched on the need to measure the contribution of cooperatives in the implementation of SDGs and to work with multiple stakeholders in furthering the work of cooperatives. Mr. Nguyen Ngoc Bao, President of VCA, welcomed all guests and called for simpler regulations to enable registrations of cooperatives.



The morning Session titled *Status of Cooperative Development in the 21st century* included presentations from the FAO, the National Cooperative Federation of Nepal (NCF), and the ILO. Ms. Kaori Abe, Program Officer, FAO, provided an overview of the trends (changing food habits, demography, and climate change) and the role of cooperatives and opportunities for partnership to achieve SDGs. Mr. Keshav Prasad Badal, Chairperson, NCF shared the experience and efforts of the Nepalese Cooperative Movement towards the recognition of cooperatives as valuable partners in



the achievement of SDGs, including the mention of cooperatives in the Government of Nepal's Voluntary National Review on SDGs. Country Director of ILO, Mr. Chang-Hee Lee, shared about the important impact of the 19th and 20th International Conference on Labour Statisticians on the processes of data collection in cooperatives.

In the session on *Legal Frameworks on Cooperatives in the Asia Pacific*, Drs. Robby Tulus spoke of the need for a conducive policy and legal environment (autonomy, independence); grant support when justified by special circumstances; strengthening cooperative performance (training - promotion); and developing partnerships (equal footing). Ms. Ann Apps, Senior Lecturer, Newcastle University, Australia, spoke of the development of cooperatives in Australia and the Pacific region and the impact of legislation. Mr. Pham Tri Thuc, Vice Chairman of Legal Committee of National Assembly, Vietnam, traced the history of cooperative law and highlighted the need for increasing transparency within cooperatives. Prof. Akira Korimoto, Chair, ICA-AP Research Committee, presented the situation in East Asia and the decisive influence on the evolution of the legal systems of cooperatives.

In the second leg of the session on Legal Frameworks, Ms. Burul Namazova, Expert, Parliament of the Kyrgyz Republic, spoke of the broad contours of the laws governing cooperatives in her country. She spoke of how despite Kyrgyz Republic being an agriculture-focused country, the employment and contribution to GDP continues to decline, and this trend can be witnessed within agriculture cooperatives as well. Mr. Upali Herath, Consultant, Sri Lanka, presented about the South Asian perspective of the cooperative legal development. He called for a need to re-look at the role of Registrars in the current policy environment and provide ways for cooperatives to grow more freely. Prof. Koo Chungok from the Korean Journal of Cooperative Studies, gave a bird's eye-view of the legal framework for cooperatives in Korea. She spoke of innovations such as legislations for creation of social cooperatives. Dr. Nandini Azad, Chairperson, ICA-AP Committee on Women, presented the 2016 ICA-AP Study on understanding the status of women in membership and governance in cooperatives.

In the afternoon, the delegates got an opportunity to visit the Cooperative Trade Fair at the Hoa Lu Sport Center to sample the products manufactured by the cooperatives in Vietnam.