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The International Co-operative Alliance

Over 100 Years of International Co-operation

The ICA was founded in London in 1895. Its members are national and international co-operative organisations in all sectors of activity including agriculture, banking, energy, industry, insurance, fisheries, housing, tourism and consumer co-operatives. ICA has 253 member organisations from 101 countries, representing approximately 760 million individuals worldwide.

In 1946, the ICA was one of the first non-governmental organisations to be accorded United Nations Consultative Status. Today it holds the highest category, that of General Consultative Status with the UN Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC).

ICA Mission Statement

The International Co-operative Alliance is an independent, non-governmental association which unites, represents and serves co-operatives worldwide.

Aims

The major objective of the ICA is to promote and strengthen autonomous co-operatives throughout the world. Through actions taken at the international, regional and national levels, ICA also seeks to promote and protect co-operative values and principles; facilitate the development of economic and other mutually beneficial relations between its member organisations; and further the economic and social progress of its members and their communities.

Focus Areas of Work

The ICA Agenda focuses on four priority areas: co-operative identity and image, international presence, development and networking.

As the representative organisation for co-operatives, ICA promotes the co-operative identity and image in all aspects of its work.

- ICA represents the co-operative movement in international fora such as the United Nations, the European Union and other multilateral institutions. ICA thus ensures that the cooperative form of enterprise is better known and that actions are taken to enable co-operative development throughout the world.
- ICA provides technical assistance for co-operative development in Africa, Asia, Latin America, and Eastern and Central Europe, through both its headquarters in Geneva and its regional offices for Europe, the Americas, Africa, Asia and the Pacific.
- ICA serves as a forum for the exchange of experience and information among its membership and organises international, regional and sectoral meetings.

Through its communications programme, ICA provides members and other interested parties access to intelligence on co-operative organisations that is both relevant and useful. It maintains a web site that provides information on co-operatives in general as well as on ICA activities and those of its members.

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