



**Message by Juan Somavia
Director-General of the International Labour Office
on the occasion of the
82nd ICA International Co-operative Day and the
10th UN International Day of Cooperatives**

“Cooperatives for Fair Globalization – Creating Opportunities for All”

(3 July 2004)

The ILO is honoured to join the international cooperative movement in celebrating the [82nd ICA International Co-operative Day, and the 10th UN International Day of Cooperatives](#). I commend your initiative in devoting this day to the leading challenge of our time – building a fair globalization that creates opportunities for all.

The cooperative movement has an important role to play in achieving this objective.

Two years ago, the International Labour Organization established the [World Commission on the Social Dimension of Globalization](#). We brought together 26 prominent people who reflected all sides of the debate. From divergent voices a converging view emerged: globalization can and *must* change.

Their Report, entitled [A Fair Globalization: Creating Opportunities for All](#), acknowledges globalization’s potential for good – promoting open societies, open economies, more opportunities and a freer exchange of goods, knowledge and ideas. But it also points to the deep-seated and persistent imbalances in the current workings of the global economy.

One of the Report’s key messages is that globalization begins at home – successful globalization – a people centred globalization – demands successful localization based on sound national and local policies. The Report also calls for fair rules in the global economy and for better global governance to create the space for effective national action.

Cooperatives can be highly instrumental in enabling and empowering women and men to seize the opportunities created by globalization and in providing a buffer against its downside. Deeply rooted in local communities, they are also part of a global movement representing 800 million households worldwide. As business organizations, they contribute to economic development. Cooperatives open up market opportunities for the smallest producer. They harness local comparative advantages and draw on local strengths. Guided by human and social values, they draw on collective strength to promote the well being of members, their families and their communities.

Cooperative organizations give members voice in national, regional and global debates. They are important advocates for a globalization, which recognizes and respects the rights, aspirations,

needs and identity of people. They can also take concrete action to realize this goal. And there is much scope for partnerships within and beyond the cooperative movement guided by principles of fairness and solidarity.

The ILO's [Recommendation No. 193 \(2002\) concerning the Promotion of Cooperatives](#) and the [Memorandum of Understanding](#), which we signed earlier this year with ICA, provide a firm foundation for our own partnership and engagement with the global cooperative movement. We look forward to working together to promote decent lives and livelihoods for women and men, to break into the cycle of poverty and to make steady progress towards a fair and inclusive globalization.
