The Cooperative Branch of the International Labour Office (EMP/COOP) makes available a quarterly bulletin providing regular updates on activities planned for and implemented during the International Year of Cooperatives 2012.

This is the fourth issue of ILO Cooperative Branch’s bulletin providing updates on the International Year of Cooperatives 2012 (IYC). The three previous issues can be found in the publications section of the website: www.ilo.org/coop.

We welcome feedback, ideas and suggestions on how to best celebrate the IYC. We are putting our best efforts into preparing the IYC, but we need your support in order to get the best possible result!

To subscribe to receive the ILO COOP IYC Bulletin regularly by e-mail, please send a message with the reference line “subscribe IYC bulletin” to: coop@ilo.org

31 October 2011: Launch of the International Year of Cooperatives

The United Nations and international community will launch the International Year of Cooperatives at the UN headquarters during the 66th General Assembly (GA) in the afternoon plenary session of 31 October 2011.

Two informal roundtables are scheduled for the morning of the same day. The roundtables will discuss various issues related to the objectives of the year.

The UN encourages “Member States to consider including representatives of cooperatives in their delegations or, as appropriate, being represented by representatives of cooperatives at the plenary meeting of the General Assembly on this occasion, as well as at the informal roundtable discussion”.

Main objectives of the IYC:

UN Resolution A/RES/64/136, Operational Paragraph 3: “Encourages all Member States, as well as the United Nations and all other relevant stakeholders, to take advantage of the International Year of Cooperatives as a way of promoting cooperatives and raising awareness of their contribution to social and economic development”.

Background

On 18 December 2009 the General Assembly of the United Nations proclaimed 2012 as the IYC in its resolution (A/RES/64/136).

For the full text of the resolution in all official UN languages see: http://www.social.un.org/coopsyear

Resolution A/RES/65/184 provides further information on the launch of the IYC.

The official IYC website with more information on the year and the preparations, the slogan and the logo and much more can be found under http://social.un.org/coopsyear/

Since 1959, the UN has designated international years in order to draw attention to major issues and to encourage international action to address concerns which have global importance and ramifications.
Preparing for 2012 and beyond

Experts on cooperatives met in Ulan Bator, Mongolia to provide input to the United Nations on how best to ensure that the International Year of Cooperatives will achieve its goals of raising awareness on the cooperative model enterprise, promoting the formation and growth of cooperatives and encouraging policy changes conducive to the formation, growth and stability of cooperatives. Organised by the United Nations Department for Economic and Social Affairs (UN DESA), the UN Expert Group Meeting (EGM) focused on the theme, “Cooperatives in Social Development: Beyond 2012”. It was hosted by the Government of Mongolia from 3-6 May 2011.

Participants addressed four major themes:
(1) Promoting research on cooperatives;
(2) Identifying and promoting good Practices and addressing challenges faced by cooperatives;
(3) Raising public awareness on cooperatives; and
(4) Policy and planning beyond 2012.

The presentations highlighted the strengths of cooperative enterprises in promoting social development and identified important factors and practices key to the successful operation of cooperatives including how to raise awareness about cooperatives. Experts in cooperative research and practitioners in cooperative development also made presentations to understand the current state and gaps in research and information in support of policy formulation for cooperative development and reviewed prevailing policies and laws impacting cooperatives. The participants identified strategies to create supportive policy environments for cooperatives including priority capacity-building strategies to promote and strengthen cooperatives.

The presentations, discussions and recommendations will in the first instance constitute input to the preparation of the UN Secretary-General's report on cooperatives in social development to the 66th session of the General Assembly in 2011. In addition, they contributed to a draft international plan of action on cooperative promotion and development beyond 2012. The draft plan of action will shortly be made available and widely circulated as part of a consultation process before final adoption as an outcome of the IYC.

Participants included representatives from governments, the UN and its agencies including the Food and Agricultural Organisation and the ILO, academic institutions, and the cooperative movement.

Text of presentations and more information at: http://social.un.org/index/ExpertGroupMeetingsPanelDiscussions.aspx

The launch events will include an official UN press briefing. A number of side events are also planned. More detailed information will be available shortly under: http://social.un.org/coopsyear/index.shtml

The funding challenge

Additional funding is being sought to be able to commission global research, set up a reliable cooperative statistics system, organize global and regional events and generally make information available on cooperatives. A funding appeal is in process. Interested potential supporters or sponsors should contact UN DESA at coopsyear@un.org.

Advisory Committee Update

The International Year will benefit from guidance, support and assistance of an Advisory Committee made up by a select number of eminent public figures, government representatives, cooperative and other business leaders, academics and media. The list of nominees for the Advisory Committee has been finalized and submitted for approval. The nominees have been carefully selected taking into consideration gender and regional balance.

This group is part of a three-part institutional set-up: the Coordinating Committee, co-chaired by UN DESA and ILO, the Secretariat and the Advisory Group. The Coordinating Committee is responsible for the effective implementation of all activities.