



SUMMARY PROCEEDINGS

ILO Sub-Regional Knowledge Sharing Workshop on Cooperatives in the Arab States

<http://www.ilo.org/coop2010>

Beirut, Lebanon

23-26 November 2010

International Labour Organization
Regional Office for the Arab States

Background:

The sub-regional workshop on Cooperatives in the Arab States was held from 23-26 November 2010 in Beirut, Lebanon. It targeted tripartite and cooperative representation from six Arab countries including Lebanon, Syria, Jordan, Iraq, Yemen and the occupied Palestinian territory (oPt). The workshop presented a unique opportunity for social partners, donors, cooperative federations and members to reflect on the Arab cooperative movement in the context of the global experience, examining more closely the potential role of cooperatives to advance the decent work agenda in the Arab States.

More specifically, the workshop sought:

- i. To provide an overview of the cooperatives movement in the Arab States region, examining regulatory policies and legislative frameworks, needs and opportunities, key challenges, best practice and lessons learned;
- ii. To create awareness among the social partners about cooperatives in the context of the social and solidarity economy, the role of cooperatives, their achievements and shortcomings;
- iii. To agree on practical ways to promote and strengthen collaboration between cooperatives and the social partners;
- iv. To take stock of key achievements, highlight best practice and analyze lessons learned and key recommendations toward a participatory action plan for cooperative development in the Arab States region.

Opening Remarks

▪ **Nada Al-Nashif, Regional Director, ILO Regional Office for the Arab States**

In welcoming participants, Al-Nashif noted the significant role cooperatives play at the global level, where over 1 billion, i.e. one in every six people, are members of a cooperative. Cooperatives provide one hundred million jobs worldwide, effectively translating to 20% more jobs than multinational enterprises. The top 300 cooperatives globally are responsible for an aggregate \$1.1 trillion, equal to that of the world's tenth largest economy. Cooperatives are therefore a powerful tool in job creation and the promotion of decent work, one that has been largely untapped in the Arab region.

Al-Nashif emphasized the importance of this meeting as a unique opportunity for the social partners, the UN family, donors, and cooperative unions and members to meet, perhaps for the first time at the sub-regional level, to discuss the state of Arab cooperatives. Al-Nashif noted that knowledge about Arab cooperatives has been poor and fragmented. This workshop therefore presented an important platform to share and document this wealth of knowledge that resides individually with the various organizations, but has not yet been collected, documented or shared at the regional level. Al-Nashif concluded inviting participants to reflect together to establish consensus on some key recommendations to develop the cooperative sector, and harness the potential role of cooperatives to advance decent work in the Arab States.

▪ **Ghassan Ghosn, President, General Confederation of Lebanese Workers (CGTL)**

Ghosn pointed out that in Lebanon cooperatives are active in various sectors, with the more successful cooperatives concentrated in the agriculture sector. Cooperatives are less successful in the industrial sector, and virtually absent in the consumption sector. It is the producers' cooperatives, Ghosn argued, that have the potential for job creation, and decent work if harnessed.

▪ **Ziad Sayegh, Advisor, Ministry of Labour**

Sayegh noted that cooperative development is part of the Ministry of Labour's reform program. The Minister of Labour is keen on activating tripartite social dialogue, with emphasis on social solidarity for a renewed social contract. Cooperatives are important in this process, for unlike other organizations, they necessitate a culture of cooperation and are based on the concept of social solidarity. In this context, Sayegh called for a stronger collaboration between the social partners and cooperatives, so that the syndicates are used as a platform to represent and promote cooperative interests in tripartite national dialogue.

First session: The ILO and Cooperatives – A global perspective towards the International Year of Cooperatives (IYC)

Presentation:

▪ **Igor Vocatch-Boldyrev , Specialist, ILO COOP Branch**

Vocatch-Boldyrev spoke about the important contribution of cooperatives both to the ILO's mandate and work and to socio-economic development more generally.

Historically it was poor people who created cooperatives to climb out of poverty. Cooperatives have a history of alleviating poverty, where the cooperative model has proved resilient in times of crisis. This is because cooperatives address the symptoms of poverty including the lack of opportunity, security, protection, voice and representation. Cooperatives provide opportunities for employment and income generation. They enhance social security by playing a protection role and distributing risk. They also serve as a means of representation, based on the cooperative principle of one member one vote.

Cooperatives are therefore globally recognized as an important social and economic means to overcome poverty, as emphasized in the 1995 World Summit for Social Development, the 1996 UN Secretary-General's Report on the Status and role of cooperatives in the light of new economic and social trends, the 1995 Statement on the Co-operative Identity, the 1999 ILO Report of the Director-General to the International Labour Conference on Decent Work, the 2001 UN Guidelines on the Role of Cooperatives in Social Development and the 2002 [ILO Recommendation No. 193 on the Promotion of Cooperatives](#).

Cooperatives, however, are not only for the poor. In the past, cooperatives were associated with farmers and agriculture. Today, however, cooperatives have proven to be a modern form of enterprise, as exemplified by the growing number of liberal professions, think tanks and research institutions that organize in the form of cooperatives.

By remaining politically neutral, cooperatives also have a special role to play in social dialogue, where cooperatives are considered part of employers' organizations.

Cooperatives are at the same time workplaces, employers, and self-employment vehicles. Cooperatives effect indirect employment through training institutions, audit societies and apex organizations that cater to cooperatives. Job creation nonetheless is not the main objective of a cooperative, it is a consequence. The main objective of a cooperative is to satisfy the needs of its members.

2012 has been declared as the International Year for Cooperatives by the United Nations General Assembly. Its objectives are (i) to increase public awareness about cooperatives and their contribution to socio-economic development and the achievement of internationally agreed development goals including the MDGs; (ii) to promote the formation and growth of cooperatives for socio-economic empowerment; and (iii) to provide an enabling environment for cooperative development.

Vocatch-Boldyrev concluded by providing an overview of some of the main challenges to cooperative development globally. Data about cooperatives worldwide is weak. Data collection does not allow aggregation for cross-country comparison. Thus, statements on the economic value of cooperatives in terms of income and job creations are difficult to make, particularly that not a single international organization collects information about cooperatives. The ILO [R193 Promotion of Cooperatives Recommendation, 2002](#) (ILO R. 193) notes that international policies should seek to improve national statistics about cooperatives.

As a result, knowledge about cooperatives in the public domain is scarce. To address this gap, the ILO Cooperative Branch, ITC Turin, and UNESCO are working together on an inter-regional strategy to improve general education on cooperatives aiming at including cooperatives in the education curricula at all levels, including in universities, schools and professional training centres.

Second session: Cooperatives as part of the Social Economy (SE):

Presentation:

▪ **Igor Vocatch-Boldyrev (Chair)**

[The 2009 ILO Regional Social Economy Conference "Africa's Response to the Global Crisis" \(19-21 October 2009, in Johannesburg, South Africa\)](#) defined social economy as "a concept designating enterprises and organizations, in particular cooperatives, mutual benefit societies, associations, foundations and social enterprises, which have the specific feature of producing and providing goods, services and knowledge while pursuing both economic and social aims and fostering solidarity."

Vocatch-Boldyrev announced that social economy enterprises and organizations (SEEOs) constitute a significant movement worldwide, with over \$1.9 trillion in operating expenditures. Cooperatives alone represent 1 billion members in more than 750,000 cooperative societies around the world, providing 100 million jobs.

Cooperatives have played an important role in solving social problems, having the advantage of knowing local situations first hand. Social service cooperatives can fill gaps in the provision of services, when the social security systems created by the State can no longer be maintained or leave significant gaps in the provision of services. In Italy for example, the Italian Parliament passed the legal framework for “social cooperatives” in 1991. Today social cooperatives provide over 60% of social services at the national level. Social cooperatives therefore present a novel way of resolving old problems. Those can be encouraged through additional tax and credit preferences.

Vocatch-Boldyrev concluded there is much to be done in order to define the concept and scope of the social economy in the Arab world and to strengthen the position and visibility of cooperatives as part of it.

- **Ahmed Ait Haddout, Secretary General, Le Réseau Marocain d’Economie Sociale et Solidaire (REMESS)**

Haddout drew a distinction between social work and the social economy, emphasizing that with the social economy, the priority is for the economy first, with emphasis on social solidarity.

Haddout related the success story of la Cooperative Agricole known as COPAG in Morocco. The Cooperative for Vegetables and Fruits was established by approximately 40 people in 1987. Today COPAG includes more than 15,000 small and medium-sized producers who employ 1,500 people. These producers have moved from individual production of fruits and vegetables to milk and dairy production, with export to places as far away as China and Japan.

Haddour listed COPAG’s factors of success including political neutrality, independence and autonomy, and transparency based on cooperative principles. Economic empowerment has further enabled members to address social concerns including women participation in the economy and environmental concerns.

Haddout also spoke of the women cooperatives movement. While in the beginning, less than 50 women participated, today there are more than 160 cooperatives, with more than 5,000 women as active members. Women are now planting trees to ensure environmental preservation. Another women cooperative has been established for educational purposes to educate the elderly, others have allowed for child schooling and healthcare coverage. These examples confirm that, besides economic matters, cooperatives can also advance the social interests of their members, including education, social protection, and environmental concerns.

- **Huseyin Polat, Cooperatives Development Expert, The Social Economy in Turkey**

Cooperatives constitute part of the social economy or the third sector in Turkey, which also includes foundations, associations, mutual assistance funds, trade unions and other socio-economic establishments. The social economy in Turkey creates 500,000 jobs with 17 million direct beneficiaries. It has the largest volume of purchase and sale of main agricultural products and distribution of agricultural inputs.

Today there are currently 87,849 cooperatives in Turkey, with approximately 8.4 million members. Those provide 100,000 jobs, and have \$40 billion business portfolio. Apex organizations include the National Cooperative Union of Turkey, Central Sectoral Cooperative Unions and Regional Sectoral Cooperative Unions. Agricultural credit cooperatives are the second largest distributors of agricultural inputs, with a volume of business exceeding \$4 billion in 2009.

Cooperatives proved resilient to the impact of the financial crisis, where while 40,993 small and medium-sized enterprises closed down subsequent to the crisis, only 3,142 cooperatives in comparison closed down in the first half of 2008.

Third Session: Cooperatives in the Arab World

Presentation:

Huseyin Polat, Cooperatives Development Expert, Cooperatives in the Arab World (Presentation of Background Paper)

Polat presented the main findings of the background paper on cooperatives in the Arab world prepared for the Workshop. The paper provides an overview of cooperative development in Lebanon, Syria, Jordan, Palestine, Iraq and Yemen. The research indicates that cooperatives in the Arab world have a family/tribal orientation and are to a large extent dominated by the State. Cooperatives generally have a low level of participation/coverage. Apex organizations are weak and function under government influence and control. Women participation is low, and is generally concentrated in traditional areas like olive oil, handicraft production and food processing. Cooperatives lack sustainable financial means, and are generally government and donor-dependent.

Cooperative policy and legislation has not been updated and is not conducive to cooperative development. The one exception to this trend is the new Palestinian Cooperative Law, which may be considered a good example.

The majority of cooperatives in the region are agricultural cooperatives, which have played an important role in poverty reduction, particularly in countries like Syria and Yemen. Relationships between cooperatives and the social partners remain weak, though cooperatives are part of employers' organizations and are generally supported by trade unions globally.

In looking at the way forward, Polat suggested that what is needed is: 1) a favorable policy and legal environment that moves from a relationship of domination of cooperatives by states to partnership between the two; 2) a more pro-active support role for the state through provision of support services to cooperatives without governmental intervention; 3) cooperative education and training including special support for women cooperatives; 4) sensitization of ILO's social partners; 5) stronger cooperative apex organizations.

Discussion:

Jihad Al Shrouf, MOL Palestine, made the case that Cooperatives are tribal in nature as evident in elections and in cooperative membership. Cooperative culture is absent in the Arab world, as evidenced by the low member ownership of cooperatives. The establishment of a cooperative in the Arab region is often to get earmarked cooperative funds, not to meet a demand. Government support for cooperatives is weak, as is the collaboration between cooperatives and the social partners to promote common interests.

Karim Hamid Abdel Sada, General Cooperative Federation and the Arab Cooperative Association, Iraq, expressed on behalf of the Arab Cooperative Association support for the main findings and recommendations presented by Polat.

Ali Dbouk, Lebanon, explained that the problem in Lebanon is the lack of finance and credit for cooperatives. The unstable political situation, exacerbated by the lack of national sectoral priorities, has negatively impacted cooperatives. Many cooperatives are donor-driven, and cease to exist as soon as the donor grant is finished.

Mansour Al Banna, the Initiative of the Private Sector for Cooperative Development in Jordan, called for the need to find a way to end government hegemony over cooperatives.

Hussam Mansour, General Workers' Union, Syria, noted that this is the first time participants hear of the Arab Cooperative Federation. It therefore needs to be capacitated, its role elaborated and shared more widely.

Magda Baku hail, Yemen, argued that one of the challenges to cooperative development is the lack of a proper understanding of the needs of the cooperatives sector, due to a communication gap where expats are hired to assess the cooperative sector in a country, even when they don't speak the native language.

Hussam Barznji, Kurdistan Economic Development Organization, Iraq, argued that the major problem for cooperative development is that of marketing, both internally and externally. Women participation is also weak as women are not economically independent, and are subject to male authority, for whom cooperatives are not a primary concern. Barznji also mentioned the lack of a democratic culture in Arab society, both at the family and enterprise level. The State is not convinced of the importance of SMEs and entrepreneurship.

Ali Saleh, MOL, Yemen, emphasized that Government support is very important for cooperative development. Therefore a balance needs to be reached between government hegemony over cooperatives and cooperative autonomy. Saleh also pointed to a recent study by the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC), which revealed there is a vast difference between policy and legal frameworks among Arab countries, therefore bring to the fore the need for harmonization and standardization.

Rasha Harfoushe, MOL, Syria, made the point that ILO projects in the sub-region do not encourage cooperative work, which needs to be integrated and mainstreamed in ILO work for consistency. At the regional level, there is a notable gap, where no representative apex organization currently exists to organize and coordinate cooperative development efforts.

Fourth session: Cooperatives in the Arab World - Country presentations from the sub-region: Problems and prospects

Objective: The Sub-Regional Knowledge-Sharing Workshop on Cooperative Development in the Arab States was primarily designed as an information-sharing participatory platform where participants can share their national experience. The presentations below are country contributions from the floor and in no way indicate ILO validation of the info presented or official recognition of cooperative country representation.

Presentation:**▪ YEMEN, Mohammad M. Basher, Chairman, Agricultural Cooperative Union:**

The Yemeni Agriculture Coop Union merged the unions of the South and North of the country. The Union provides technical and financial support to agricultural cooperatives in the production and marketing of agricultural produce.

Cooperatives face a number of challenges in Yemen including the absence of technical expertise, leading to weak management. This in turn has caused low productivity, which is exacerbated by the lack of sufficient financial and water resources. This has curtailed the ability of cooperatives to export agricultural products abroad, leading to the non-use of surplus crop. Qat has also negatively impacted this process, where due to the prevalent customs of the country the crop is planted at the expense of other crops.

Women participation in the cooperative sector has in addition been weak due to weak technical capacity, cultural norms, and lack of the financial resources to open and sustain cooperatives.

▪ LEBANON, Samir Ayoub, National Federation of Lebanese Cooperatives:

While in 1971 there were only 45 cooperatives in Lebanon, today there are over 1,500 cooperatives. Agricultural cooperatives are more active than other cooperatives, while cooperatives in South Lebanon are stronger than in other geographical areas.

The culture of cooperatives and cooperation is weak in Lebanon. Media attention is not drawn on the importance of cooperative development. There is also a problem with the legally fixed costs of a cooperative share, rendering the latter very cheap. Advertising on the other hand is costly. Furthermore, concerned authorities do not sufficiently promote cooperatives. The policy and legal framework is also limiting, thus impeding cooperative development. More than one attempt has been made to reform Lebanese cooperative legal framework, however none has born tangible fruit yet. The government prefers to work with the private sector, as it receives tax revenue from the latter.

▪ SYRIA, Hussam Mansour, Workers' Union:

The importance of cooperatives is reiterated in the various Syrian constitutions including those of 1950, 1953 and 1973. Law 91 of 1958 is the main legislation that regulates cooperatives in the Arab States. The cooperative sector developed gradually, where decrees specific to different cooperative sectors were issued at different years. A decree regulating

consumer cooperatives was issued in 1969, followed by agricultural cooperatives in 1974 and housing cooperatives in 1981. In 2007, a new law was issued providing incentives to housing cooperatives.

Mansour mentioned that the workers' organizations in Syria have had an important role in the revitalization of the cooperative sector in Syria. However a general lack of awareness prevails about the economic and social impact of cooperatives, while access to finance remains a challenge for cooperatives.

Cooperatives are active in the agriculture, consumer, services, housing and transportation sectors. Common challenges faced by all cooperatives include low technical expertise, a lack of knowledge on cooperatives, and strong competition between cooperatives and private enterprises. Syria still lacks an apex organization to organize the cooperative sector, while there is no policy within the prevalent education systems to promote a culture for cooperative development.

▪ **IRAQ, Karim Hamid Abdel Sada Tamimi, President of the Baghdad General Cooperative Union:**

There are approximately 318 cooperative societies in Iraq. Since 2003, and due to the political situation, there was a halt in cooperative activities. The government only officially recognized the Iraqi General Cooperative Union in 2010. Today the government is supporting the cooperative movement particularly in the agriculture and housing sectors.

▪ **IRAQ, Hussam Hakim Barznji, General Director, Kurdistan Economic Development Organization:**

In 1992 the coop movement in Kurdistan split from Central Iraq. There are 24 cooperative societies in Kurdistan, with a total of 51,889 members. Most coop membership is in the housing sector (30,536 members), followed by consumption (20,603). Housing cooperatives provide important services to their members including land, construction and raw material at reduced rates, access to water and electricity etc.

▪ **PALESTINE, Ghazi Abu Thaher, Ministry of Labour:**

There is a total of 900 cooperatives in oPT distributed across the housing, agriculture, livestock, consumption, services and handicrafts sectors. Agriculture and housing form the biggest coop sectors. A total of 350,000 Palestinians are beneficiaries of cooperatives.

The Government is determined to develop the cooperative movement for job creation and decent work in Palestine. Despite the situation in the occupied territories, a study of the cooperative sector was undertaken for the first time in October 2008, based on which a workshop was convened for the key coop stakeholders.

Cooperatives with an economic and livelihoods focus have been revived in recent years. Meetings were recently convened to elect the boards of the Housing Coop Union, the Agriculture Coop Union, the Olive Oil Coop Union and the Credit Coop Union. A total of 350

cooperative members and stakeholders also attended a meeting in 2009 to garner stakeholder consensus around cooperative development in Palestine. Three working papers were presented on the 3 main challenges for cooperative development including: 1) Absence of a legislative and regulatory framework to organize the cooperatives sector in Palestine; 2) Financing and credit for cooperatives (Donors only want to fund the cooperatives that suit their purposes, while the remaining cooperatives lack credit); and 3) Capacity development of cooperatives.

The cooperative movement agreed on the need to reach a national comprehensive strategy for cooperative development for the next 3 years, with a clear work plan for cooperative development. Accordingly, a new cooperative law has been drafted in Palestine and submitted for final review and ratification.

The new law emanates from a clear recognition that the cooperative movement should be managed collaboratively in a participatory way, instead of by solely one department within the Ministry of Labour. Therefore under the new law, a General Council for Cooperatives will be established incorporating the key stakeholders in cooperatives, to replace the Ministry's Coop Unit.

▪ **JORDAN, Mansour Al Banna, Private Sector Initiative for Cooperative Development:**

In Jordan, the Government has reduced its cooperative activities to a unit within the Ministry of Planning charged with coop registration and dissolution. The Private Sector Initiative for Cooperative Development was launched in 2010 in an individual effort to enable the private sector to partner with the government toward cooperative development.

Fifth session: Cooperative Policy and Legislation: Creating an enabling environment for cooperatives in the sub-region

Presentation:

▪ **Constanze Schimmel (on behalf of Dr. Hagen Henry, Manager of the ILO Cooperative Branch), ILO Cooperatives Branch, The Policy and Regulatory Framework for Cooperative Development**

ILO R. 193 is seen as part of the employment standards of the ILO. ILO R. 193 defines cooperatives as associations of persons satisfying their needs through the operation of an enterprise. Cooperatives are people based. They contribute to sustainable development in terms of economic security, ecological balance, social justice and political stability.

ILO R. 193 emphasizing the autonomy of cooperatives, applies not only to governments, but to employers' and workers' organizations as well as cooperative organizations, forming the nucleus of public international cooperative law. There are sufficient arguments to support the view that the provisions of ILO Rec. 193 form legally binding law. ILO R. 193 does not constitute a model law, but proposes the main elements for such a law. National specificities therefore need to be integrated and taken into account before considering global best practice.

Recommendation 193 also recommends specific roles for the social partners. The government is to provide a conducive policy and legal environment, supporting cooperative development at the national level including through technical capacity development and financial support. The role of employers' organizations is to extend membership to cooperatives wishing to join. The role of workers' organizations is to assist cooperative employees to join trade unions, and assist trade unions to establish cooperatives, participating in setting up cooperatives and promoting productivity of worker members through education and training.

▪ **Jihad Al Shrouf, Legal Advisor, Ministry of Labor, Palestinian Authority, the Evolution of Cooperative Legislation in Palestine**

The first law for cooperatives in Palestine was drafted under the British mandate in 1933, 13 years after a cooperative law had been established for the Jewish minority in historic Palestine in 1920. Between 1933-1946, the number of cooperatives increased from 50 to 246 cooperatives. Egyptian Law number 50 of 1933 remains effective in the Gaza Strip. The West Bank followed the same Egyptian law of 1933 until 1952 when the Jordanian coop law number 39 was issued, to be later replaced by the 1956 expanded law.

Though the 1956 law underwent many amendments in Jordan last of which was in 1997, in the West Bank these amendments were not applicable due to the Israeli occupation, which curtailed the cooperative movement and halted all registration of new cooperatives for a decade.

Since the establishment of the PA in 1995, the Ministry of Labour with technical support from the ILO successfully drafted a new cooperative law modeled on ILO R. 193 so as to unify the cooperative law applicable in the oPt. This new law was approved by the Council of Ministers in June 2010 and has been referred to the President for signature.

Al Shrouf highlighted some of the main characteristics of this new Law, including its view of cooperatives as autonomous, flexible, independent and comprehensive entities, as per ILO R. 193. The law provides for the creation of a cooperative body as an apex organization, while emphasizing the importance of the horizontal and vertical organizations of the cooperative movement. It includes provisions on control, audit, monitoring and education for cooperative development.

Discussion:

Samir Ayoub, Lebanon, There is no relation between cooperative law and labour law in Lebanon.

Ibrahim Thweib, Palestine, In Palestine, cooperatives have proved instrumental and resilient during times of occupation and in crisis situations.

Hussam Mansour, Syria, Many cooperative projects are parachuted down without looking at the geographic specificities. Taking into account the local conditions of each area is imperative for the success of cooperatives.

Husam Barznji, Iraq, One of the main problems for cooperatives in Iraq is funding and marketing. To Haddout, how did GOPAC manage marketing outside? What are the main sources of funding?

Magida Bukahil, Yemen, How can we promote democratic cooperatives in regimes that are not democratic and that do not believe in democracy? How will they promote democratic legislation in such a governance system?

Ali Saleh, Need an assessment of cooperative laws in the Arab region prior to harmonization and reform in line with ILO R. 193.

Siham Othman, Palestine, People took advantage of the divergence in cooperative laws between the West Bank and Gaza, registering in one place instead of another. The new law resolves this problem by unifying the legal regimes. Under the new law, the role of the Ministry is consultative while the real burden and initiative is with cooperatives themselves.

Jihad Al Shrouf, Palestine, The role of government should be to perform a financial audit of cooperatives and organize licensing. Governments should also provide public land for cooperative development.

Rasha Al Harfoush, Syria, Government role in Syria is monetary audit. There is an internal law regulating the administration of each cooperative sector, but the government does not intervene.

Huseyin Polat, The basic character of cooperatives should be protected. There should be a protection measure to protect cooperative identity. Distinguishing cooperatives from companies established under commercial law is important. It is believed that cooperatives that do not pay tax are violating the rules of the competitive environment. Tax exemptions should be limited to specific activities or to specific target groups, as recommended in R. 193. Cooperatives, for the mere fact of being cooperatives, generally should not be entirely exempt from taxation.

Constanze Schimmel, The relationship between cooperative and labour law is very complex. As for worker cooperatives, as a principle all members are workers and all workers are members. This makes this issue so complex. At the moment, we can observe an increase in so-called pseudo cooperatives, i.e. worker cooperatives that were formed to circumvent the labour law. This was the case in Latin America but also other parts of the world, a tendency that has caused much concern.

Sixth session: Cooperatives and local development – Stories from the grassroots

Presentation:

▪ **Julian Magnat, Crisis Specialist, ILO Regional Office for Arab States:**

The ILO has global experience in promoting cooperative development in post-conflict and crisis situations. In South Lebanon, the methodology that was used was local economic recovery, which is an adaptation of local economic development to crisis countries. The

methodology is built on the premise that to address crisis it is important to support the local economy to promote employment and decent employment.

In South Lebanon, the ILO as part of its Local Socio-Economic Recovery Project worked with cooperatives in the agriculture sector. Some of the challenges faced by these cooperatives include an outdated legal and regulatory framework and weakness in technical expertise to manage cooperatives. Furthermore, many cooperatives have been donor-driven, or money-driven with limited membership and low female participation. There is also a lack of access to finance where it is estimated only 20% of cooperatives are functioning well, while the rest are inactive.

To assess local needs, the project used a Participatory Value Chain Analyses (PVCA) approach. The PVCA is a participatory methodology to prepare an action-oriented diagnostic of the local economy, seeking to engage key local stakeholders to design and take an active role in local economy recovery and development efforts. The PVCA is conducted for a specific sector, to come up with a participatory consensus around key weaknesses, opportunities and projects. In South Lebanon, this was conducted for the olive oil, beekeeping and dairy sector. As a direct outcome for the PVCA, a Local Economic Forum was created for Cooperatives in South Lebanon to develop a strategy for cooperative development in the South.

▪ ***Samir Ayoub, National Federation of Lebanese Cooperatives and extension worker in the ILO South Lebanon Project, Lebanon:***

Due to donor-driven support for the cooperatives sector since liberation in 2000, South Lebanon today is the geographic area with the most active cooperative sector in Lebanon. As part of the ILO Project in South Lebanon, 28 cooperative members received training as trainers in cooperative management, 9 of whom became extension workers or trainers themselves. The aim of the project was the capacity development of 24 cooperatives, including increasing participation of women cooperatives.

As revealed by the Project, technical and financial support is needed to strengthen the cooperative sector in Lebanon. More specifically cooperatives need training in marketing, accounting, business management and project development, as well as gender-targeted training to increase women participation and membership. Cooperatives also require increased access to finance, while they also need to conduct more awareness raising campaigns themselves to increase their membership base.

▪ ***Daad Ismail, Extension Worker, South Lebanon***

Also showcasing the South Lebanon experience, Ismail, one of the beneficiaries of the program, related how they were a group of women from South Lebanon, who could not have achieved their objectives individually had they not joined efforts collectively. She reminded that after the 2006 hostilities, the residents of South Lebanon had to re-start from point zero.

Ismail reported that a number of organizations visited after 2006 to assess cooperative needs, however after the initial needs assessment very few organizations in effect followed

up. The ILO was one of very few organizations that came back to work on cooperative development, following the initial needs assessment. This proved pivotal, as most cooperatives in South Lebanon were established in a very haphazard way. The ILO project proved useful in focusing the work of cooperatives, and making an improvement in their management and administration.

In terms of female participation in the cooperatives sector, Ismail preferred not to reinforce this distinction between men and women, because as she argued, women are not weak, and constitute half the society.

In light of her experience, Ismail stressed the importance of carrying out a business feasibility study before a cooperative is established. In Tyre, for instance, more than 100 cooperatives have been established without having carried out such a study. Ismail also emphasized the need for further capacity development and training, to ensure technical expertise to effectively lead a cooperative.

▪ ***Ghazi Abu Thaher, Ministry of Labour, Palestine***

Abu Thaher presented the ILO/Ministry of Labour's Coop Project in Palestine which aims to develop the cooperatives sector in the oPt. The strategy of the project is two-fold. The first is to work with cooperatives directly through capacity development activities, with focus on agriculture cooperatives, to turn them into model productive cooperatives generating revenue and creating jobs. The second is to work at the institutional level, to create 1) a new Cooperatives Fund to support cooperative development through credit provision with low interest rate, and 2) a National Cooperatives Union, which will act as the apex organization for cooperatives in the oPt.

Discussion:

Riad Issa, Lebanon, Through awareness raising and capacity development activities, cooperatives can move from non-functioning entities to active voluntary social enterprises. There should be an awareness raising campaign about the importance of cooperatives and cooperation toward achieve common objectives. Problems that cannot be resolved individually can be addressed collectively.

Yousef Al Ayasa, Palestine, One of the major hurdles to adding more members to cooperatives, is participation in reserve resources in the cooperatives. We resolved it in Palestine through a new law.

Khaled Zyoud, Jordan, Through cooperatives, we are changing the culture in our society.

Ali Dbouk, Lebanon- The obstacles to cooperative development in Lebanon include the absence of a supervising Ministry to regulate (Ministry of Agriculture), in addition to very high production costs and low technical capacity. Cooperatives find it difficult to access local markets and participate in exhibitions to market their goods. The key to accessing larger markets, is to improve the quality of the goods as good quality production is getting a good price. Cooperatives are therefore trying to improve and maintain the quality of their goods.

However more needs to be done in terms of regulating production in the different sectors and promoting a better culture of quality assurance.

Riad Issa, Lebanon, Many times people take the initiative to start a coop but because of the absence of expertise they fail and the coop becomes a burden. In Lebanon we succeed as individuals but not as groups, because with groups disputes start.

Siham Othman, Palestine, Cooperatives are established based on a need. However the sustainability of cooperatives is questionable without a sponsoring agency that provides capacity development and financial resources. How can a farmer sustain a coop without external support? And where does he get the technical expertise to continue with this coop?

Huseyin Polat, The Government has a role to play to provide support services including education and training. From a coop point of view, the most important factor is economies of scales to ensure sustainability of cooperatives. It's important to think big and be competitive. Members should realize that cooperatives are business organizations not charities. They can be supported from outside, but cooperatives ultimately will have to rely on their own resources.

Seventh session: Cooperatives and ILO's social partners – Work of social partners on cooperatives in the sub-region

Presentation: Igor Vocatch-Boldyrev

Vocatch-Boldyev presented the possible relations and modalities of cooperation between cooperatives and employers' and workers' organizations, including their respective roles vis-à-vis one another. The role of Employers' organizations consists in extending membership and provision of services to cooperatives wishing to join them. Cooperatives are part of the private sector, and therefore represent an important number of employers and are often members of national employers associations. By promoting business links between cooperatives and other forms of enterprise, employers' organizations can contribute to the development of the private sector.

Employers' organizations may contribute to the promotion of cooperatives by making support services including information, education and training, management consultancy and related services. Employers' Organizations can also promote cooperative development through encouraging shared service cooperatives wherein independent enterprises pool their purchasing power to acquire goods and services, in this way lowering operating costs. This enables the latter to realize economies of scale and enhance their bargaining power through bulk purchases of consumer goods.

Trade Unions also have a role to play, where as per ILO R.193, trade unions should assist cooperative employees to join trade unions, and trade unionists to establish cooperatives for job creation. Trade unions promote cooperative development through capacity development as a means to improve working conditions and increase income. Some examples of successful trade union cooperative action include the Philippines, Turkey and Singapore.

Cooperatives themselves have an obligation to work with employers' and workers' organizations. According to Recommendation 193, all cooperatives should be encouraged to establish an active relationship with employers' and workers' organizations with a view to creating a favorable climate for the development of cooperatives.

Cooperative as employers' have a significant role to play in increasing social dialogue with the State and between social partners. Vocatch-Boldyrev related the Italian experience where the Italian cooperative apex organizations LEGACOOP and CONFCOOPERATIVE constitute the main components of the Italian cooperative movement, bringing together more than 30 000 cooperatives. Vocatch-Boldyrev also spoke of the ILO former project SYNDICOOP, which sought to promote collaboration between trade unions and cooperatives. SYNDICOOP provided the groundwork for the organizing of informal economy workers through joint trade unions and cooperative partnership, an experience that could be replicated in the Arab States region.

To increase knowledge about this Vocatch-Boldyrev recommended: (i) the translation of the Shared Services Study into Arabic ("Economic and other benefits of the entrepreneurs' cooperative as a specific form of enterprise cluster", ILO: Dar-es-Salaam 2011 to be published); (ii) Replication of Syndicoop in the sub-region; (iii) Translation of Manual on Cooperatives for Workers' organizations (Handbook on Cooperatives for use by worker's organizations) into Arabic.

Discussion:

Mohammad Al Ali, Damascus Chamber of Industry, Syria, Work in Damascus is mostly individual with a strong family focus. Therefore more has to be done by the government to promote awareness about the importance of cooperatives in Syria, and the various modalities for cooperation between cooperatives and the social partners. It is important to integrate informal workers through cooperatives into the formal economy.

Khaled Al Zyoud, General Federation of Jordanian Trade Unions, Jordan, Cooperative members are both owners and workers of business, with interests that therefore converge with both social partners. Cooperatives provide benefits to their members including social protection. Cooperative interests also converge with trade unions, as do their beneficiaries who are themselves workers. Trade unions therefore need to cooperate with cooperatives to jointly address cooperative challenges and to mutually benefit from one another.

Thweib, Palestinian General Federation of Trade Unions, Palestine, The role of trade unions and cooperatives needs to be capacitated in order to impact change, while noting the need to differentiate between trade unions and cooperatives. Our challenge in the Arab world is to bring about change. How do we optimize the partnership between trade unions and cooperatives? We need to work with cooperatives as a need, not only as a tool to serve specific individuals. It is important to work on promoting a culture for cooperative work, expanding cooperative membership, particularly in light of the financial crisis. How can we promote the sustainability of cooperatives?

Hussam Mansour, Workers' Union, Syria, We have two funds in Syria for workers, the first providing social assistance to cooperatives, and the second social assistance to workers. In Syria, the government does not have financial control over cooperatives. Workers elect their own members, and do their own audit. All trade unions have their own clinics and have health insurance.

Riad Issa, Extension worker Lebanon, Cooperatives need to establish apex organizational unions by economic sector at the national or sub-national level and by geographic area.

Mahmoud Abu Khazneh, Jordan Chamber of Industry, Jordan, Productive cooperatives need to be specified to certain individuals, without their impacting the price at the national level in the face of monopoly. Dairy and poultry cooperatives in Jordan for instance raised the price 100%.

Eighth session: Promoting Women Cooperatives in Conflict and Rural Settings – Case studies from Yemen, Palestine, Iraq

Presentation:

- **Simel Esim, Senior Gender Specialist, ILO**

Cooperatives employ less than 1% of workers in the region. Therefore work has to be done to increase cooperative participation and productivity. Women participation in cooperatives is weak as are women cooperatives, noting the distinction between the two. Women cooperatives are often small and concentrated in traditional sectors. When women participate in mixed cooperatives, their participation is also weak due to insufficient technical expertise and lack of financial resources. In addition, women cooperatives struggle with cultural and social constraints, curtailing the effective participation of women.

- **Magida Baku hail, Federation of Yemeni Agriculture, Yemen**

Women have participated in cooperatives in Yemen since the 1960s, predominantly in agriculture, development and charity (support) cooperatives. Charity (support) cooperatives have their own legal framework, while development and agriculture cooperatives are under the law of unions and associations in Yemen. The main objective behind women participation in cooperatives is poverty alleviation to improve the living conditions for women in Yemen.

Continued resources and technical and financial support are needed to promote increased women participation in the cooperatives sector in Yemen. All projects thus far have been for training, which is important but more is needed to pave the way toward sustainable cooperatives. Illiterate rural women need more than just training.

Apart from sustainability concerns, another problem is the way donor countries address cooperative development in Yemen. Baku hail questioned the value-added thus far of foreign experts visiting countries like Yemen to assess the needs of the cooperative sector, without knowledge of the native language. Translation is insufficient in these situations, and does

not successfully bridge the gap in communication. Baku hail also questioned the target population being selected to be interviewed in needs assessments.

However, there is a big potential to be tapped for women cooperatives as many donors give priority to women. This would present an opportunity in particular for women working in the informal economy.

Baku hail related how 20 rural women were trained on food production (jam) in rural Yemen, as part of an EU-funded project. After two trainings, the 20 trainers were sent to the field to train 3,000 more women. The objective of the training was to see how to make use of and benefit from the surplus in production. Baku hail reported how in many rural areas in Yemen they had no idea what jam was. Though these rural women were successfully trained, the project did not succeed in the final stage, of having independent productive units in rural areas.

One of the major hurdles has been the production of qat that competes with other products, in response to which GTZ has launched a project on the reduction of the cultivation of Qat. Other problems include the need for quality assurance on products and more advanced technical training in food production.

Regarding female participation specifically, more media awareness about the cooperative role and the importance of female participation in cooperatives is needed. Women also face problems accessing finance, in the absence of credit unions for women. And when there is credit interest is high, making it impossible for rural women to access credit, particularly that interest in and of itself is a problem in Islamic countries.

▪ **Siham Othman, Ministry of Labour, Palestine**

The concept of a credit union for women in the oPt originated with the idea that women cannot be capacitated without their being independent/empowered financially. Today the union currently has over 8,300 members across all regions in Palestine. It provides various options for credit, providing loans for up to 3 million JD. The Credit Union has disbursed 15 million JD in loans over the past 5 years.

Reflecting on her experience with the credit union, Othamn observed that women are more compliant to paying back loans. Access to credit is important as cooperative development will not work if it remains dependent on external resources and financing. Cooperatives have to be self-reliant to ensure sustainability.

Women cooperatives therefore need special support for capacity development and empowerment, so as to allow them to expand to sectors that are less traditional. For this, more training, and more innovative thinking and initiative is needed in the region.

Othman noted that developed economies are based on cooperatives. In the region, more work needs to be done to invigorate the cooperative sector, revitalizing exchange of information and trade based on comparative advantage. More knowledge-sharing workshops, at both the regional and global levels, are also needed to exchange expertise and benefit from best practice in cooperative development.

▪ **Hussam Barznji, General Director, Kurdistan Economic Development Organization, Iraq**

Barznji noted that though women in rural areas worked more than men, they remain deprived of their rights. In urban areas, the situation is different and women are empowered. In all political parties, women rarely reach positions of power. The reason is that men do not trust women's capacity. Therefore, more awareness-raising campaigns are needed.

Discussion:

Moh'd Bashir, Yemen, Agricultural Union in Yemen is supportive of women's participation, where ten women cooperatives have been established since 1990. A more active role for relevant UN agencies is also needed to support cooperatives, including FAO and IFAD.

Riad Issa, Lebanon, Most cooperatives are male dominated. Women are not in political power, and if they are it's because they come from political families, where the objective is to bequeath the position of power to their sons.

Batoul Houballah, Jihad Al Binaa, Lebanon, More training is needed prior to setting up a cooperative. Training people who would like to establish a coop beforehand would preempt a lot of problems in the future, ensuring that members are aware of the basics of coop management before establishing them. Cooperatives in Lebanon are predominantly in manufacturing and food production. Jihad Al Binaa has for the past 4 years launched an annual marketing exhibition, with more than 150 cooperatives participating in 2010. Such an exhibition resolves the problem of market access, however access to the market pre-requisites quality assurance for it to succeed. To promote better quality, Jihad Al Binaa also launches competitions for cooperatives, where several of the awards have gone to women cooperatives.

Hussam Mansour, Syria, I don't see any men in women cooperatives. Leadership should be based on merit not on gender.

Ali Saleh, Yemen, Training on how to use credit is weak. Magida spoke about the weakness in access to finance. Amal Bank was established in Yemen two years ago providing low interest small loans to women, with no interest and only a service charge. Women want gender equality and yet ask for specific agencies, and ministries of their own. This is contradictory.

Huseyin Polat, Each cooperative has by-laws. If a group of women come together to form a women-only cooperative, then this does not constitute discrimination as they are free under the principle of freedom of association to do so. There are some cultural aspects as well, for instance in Norway there are strong fishery cooperatives with women members, but fishery cooperatives in Turkey and Yemen have no women among their members. Cultural values and social environment and cooperative principles have to be taken into account. One of the fundamental values in cooperatives' work is equal opportunities. If women don't feel happy to go and join a cooperative that men dominate, then it is their right to go and join a cooperative where they feel more comfortable. Cooperative by-laws are prepared by their own members, and they themselves decide what kind of people they want to have as

members. The final stage in the promotion of cooperatives should be to establish apex organizations for shared services, for joint production and marketing activities.

Constanze Schimmel, There is the misconception that equality means necessarily the same treatment. Same treatment is obligatory, unless a certain condition justifies a different treatment.

Ninth session: Action Plan for Cooperative Development

Objective: On the third day, participants were split into two thematic working groups, the first working on policy and regulatory frameworks for cooperative development, and the second working on cooperatives and job creation. The purpose behind the working groups was to establish a participatory consensus around the main challenges in each of these areas, and recommendations to address these challenges.

- Working Group I: Policy and Regulatory Framework for Cooperative Development in the Sub-Region (mixed group of representatives from governments, social partners and cooperatives)
Moderated by Constanze Schimmel
- Working Group II: Cooperatives and Job Creation through Technical cooperation (mixed group of donors, social partners and cooperatives)
Moderated by Huseyin Polat

Tenth session: Presentation of group reports and follow-up action (summary of the two reports)

Main highlights:

Working Group I: Policy and Regulatory Framework for Cooperative Development in the Sub-Region (mixed group of representatives from governments, social partners and cooperatives)

Rapporteur: Constanze Schimmel, ILO

Speaker: Ibid

Main recommendations:

1. Coop laws should be reformed in line with ILO R. 193. There is a need for additional ILO technical advisory support, capacity development and training on legal reform and ILO R. 193 for legislative reform toward a conducive regulatory framework for cooperatives in the region.
2. To address the knowledge gap, the ILO also needs to Arabize its resource materials for wider accessibility and dissemination in the Arab world, including the Guidelines for Cooperative Legislation (2nd edition, Geneva, International Labour Office, 2005) and the Handbook on Cooperatives for use by worker's organizations (Geneva, International Labour Office, 2007).

3. There is a need for a unified regional cooperative representation instead of several regional cooperative federations that are fragmented with no umbrella organization to coordinate between them.
4. The establishment of a national committee for cooperatives as well as vertical cooperative structures in the countries are also recommended.
5. The Government needs to play a more proactive role in providing the enabling regulatory and legislative framework for cooperatives. More concretely, Governments need to centralize cooperative supervision within one ministry instead of the current fragmentation of cooperative coordination across line ministries (example ministry of industry for industrial cooperatives, ministry of agriculture for agriculture cooperatives etc.). In this way, one unit would be established that would be responsible in the line ministry for cooperatives.
6. Relations between social partners and cooperative organizations, and cooperative organizations and government should be promoted and enhanced for their mutual benefit.
7. At the national level, there is a need for the harmonization and reform of national frameworks regulating cooperatives work. ILO stands ready to provide technical support toward this end, pending official request from constituents.
8. Governments are encouraged to establish national policies for cooperative development, example through the establishment of a 5 years programme for cooperative development.
9. To address the training gap, the establishment of a specialized Regional Center specialized in the field of cooperatives and cooperative development may prove useful.

Working Group II: Cooperatives and Job Creation through Technical cooperation (mixed group of donors, social partners and cooperatives)

Rapporteur: Rasha El Harfouche, MOL, Syria

Speaker: Tarek Yassine, Union of Cooperatives Cooperatives of Jabal Amel, Lebanon

Main recommendations:

1. Awareness-raising about cooperatives is the responsibility of the cooperative movement through streamlining cooperative education in national curricula, media campaigns, competitions. Coop membership can be expanded by providing incentives such as benefiting from certain services, including health insurance, access to the national social security fund etc.
2. Cooperative structures including apex bodies need to be strengthened;
3. There is a need for increased capacity development and trainings on cooperative management including through training of trainers (TOT);
4. Job creation (green jobs) through cooperative projects to be developed and implemented at the grassroots level; gender mainstreaming; improving the quality and marketing of traditional production (including value chain analysis).

5. National specificities need to be taken into consideration. Cannot straightjacket recommendations across the region. A needs analysis therefore needs to be conducted. International organizations (example ILO) can commission an expert to conduct a needs analysis for cooperatives. Priorities for a project intervention can be based on the results of the needs-assessment. Before forwarding the project to donors, the project document should be shared with the key stakeholders and their input should be incorporated.
6. Local and national stakeholders also need to be better organized, including cooperative federations, sectoral cooperative unions, NGOs for coop training and line ministries. Each country should have a national committee incorporating the main stakeholders.

Closing Remarks

Maurizio Bussi, ILO, Deputy Regional Director for the Arab States

Bussi confirmed that the workshop has successfully achieved its intended goal, which was primarily to share knowledge and exchange cooperative experience in the sub-region. Also and most importantly, the workshop has provided a participatory platform to analyze cooperative needs, and propose a way forward.

Bussi outlined ILO's own follow-up process to the workshop including the finalization of a booklet on cooperatives in the Arab States, and the Arabization of key ILO resource material on cooperatives and cooperative development. Also as part of this knowledge-sharing exercise, the ILO will establish a community of practice on cooperatives in the Arab States, which will incorporate all members present at the workshop today to share knowledge and exchange information. A website (www.ilo.org/coop2010) has also been created, where all the powerpoint presentations and documents are made accessible to all.

The ILO will seek to develop and elaborate on the Action Plans for Development in the area of job creation and policy and legislation, soliciting donor engagement and support toward the implementation of many of these recommendations. In the area of policy and legislation, the ILO continuously stands ready to provide capacity development support. If there is serious commitment to reforming cooperative law in line with ILO R. 193, the ILO will stand ready to provide technical, advisory and training support on a needs basis. But this needs to be initiated by respective governments first, based on a serious commitment to reform the regulatory and policy frameworks and promote cooperative development at the national level.

Annex 1:
ILO Sub-Regional Knowledge Sharing Workshop on Cooperatives in the Arab States
Beirut, Commodore Hotel
23-26 November 2010
23 November 2010

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| 8:30-9:00 | Registration |
| 9:00-9:30 | Opening ceremonies |
| 9:30 - 11:00 | First session: The ILO and Cooperatives – A global perspective towards the International Year of Cooperatives (IYC): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Impact of cooperatives on ILO's work • Cooperative Contribution to ILO's Decent Work Agenda • Cooperatives and poverty alleviation • Cooperatives and ILO's social partners • Best practices from around the world creating jobs • Discussion: What cooperatives can (and should) do during the IYC in the sub-region? |
| 11:00-11:30 | <i>Coffee Break</i> |
| 11:30-13:00 | Second session: Cooperatives as part of the Social Economy (SE): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The global perspective and ILO's work on SE • Show case 1: Social economy in Morocco • Show case 2: Social economy in Turkey • Discussion: How relevant is the SE for the ILO work in the sub-region? |
| 13:00-14:00 | <i>Lunch</i> |
| 14:00-15:30 | Third session: Cooperatives in the Arab World: Background Paper <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cooperatives in the sub-region – emerging enterprises • The ILO's work on cooperatives in the region • ILO projects in the sub-region • The next step: Revalidating and strengthening the role of cooperatives • Conclusions and recommendations for future work • Discussion: What governments, cooperative organizations and social partners should do to revalidate cooperatives in the sub-region? |
| 15:30-17:30 | Fourth session: Cooperatives in the Arab World - Country presentations from the sub-region: Problems and prospects |

- Iraq
- Jordan
- Occupied Palestine Territory
- Syria
- Yemen
- Lebanon

24 November 2010

- 9:30-11:00 **Fifth session:** Cooperative Policy and Legislation: Creating an enabling environment for cooperatives in the sub-region
- ILO Recommendation No. 193
 - Case study: New Palestinian Cooperative Law
 - Discussion: How to work with Member States and cooperative movements to improve policy and legislation in the sub-region
- 11:00-11:30 *Coffee Break*
- 11:30-13:00 **Sixth session:** Cooperatives and local development – Stories from the grassroots
- Case Study: South Lebanon experience
- 13:00-14:00 *Lunch*
- 14:00- 15:30 **Seventh session:** Cooperatives and ILO's social partners – Work of social partners on cooperatives in the sub-region
- Brief presentation from Employers representative
 - Brief presentation from Workers representative
- 15:30- 17:30 **Eighth session:** Promoting Women Cooperatives in Conflict and Rural Settings – Case studies from Yemen, Palestine, Iraq
- Overview
 - Presentation of case studies
 - Discussion: What can the cooperative movement do to promote gender mainstreaming and involve more women in cooperatives?

25 November 2010

- 10:00- 13:00 **Ninth session:** Action Plan for Cooperative Development
- Working Group I: Policy and Regulatory Framework for Cooperative Development in the Sub-Region (mixed group of representatives from governments, social partners and cooperatives)
 - Working Group II: Cooperatives and Job Creation through Technical cooperation (mixed group of donors, social partners and cooperatives)

- 13:00-14:00 *Lunch*
- 14:00- 15:00 **Ninth session:** Working Groups will continue to work and group reports will be prepared
- 15:00-17:00 **Tenth session:** Presentation of group reports and follow-up action (summary of the two reports)
- 17:00-17:30 Concluding remarks and closing

26 November 2010

- 8:00- 17:00 Field visit to Tyre, South Lebanon (Meeting point for departure at the lobby of the Commodore Hotel)
- 10:00-10:30 **ILO briefing on its work on cooperatives in South Lebanon** (ILO office in Tyre)
- 10:30-11:30 **The Cooperative Association for Beekeepers in Jabal Amel**
The Cooperative Association for Beekeepers in Jabal Amel constitutes of 300 members from 30 villages.
The meeting will be with beekeepers and members of cooperatives who were trained by ILO extension workers as part of the capacity development effort to strengthen beekeeping cooperatives.
- 12:30-13:30 **The cooperative Association for Production and Processing of Agriculture Products (Deir Kanoun Ras El Ein)**
The cooperative Association for production and processing of agriculture products is a women cooperative that works in the agro-industry, producing traditional food. The meeting will be with women cooperative members who will share their work experience. The president of this cooperative is Mrs. Daad Ismail, one of the extension workers trained by the ILO as part of the capacity development effort to strengthen cooperatives in the agro-industry sector.
- 14:00-15:00 *Lunch (Tyre Resthouse)*
- 15:00-16:00 **Meeting with extension workers**
Cooperative extension workers (or field trainers) are active members of cooperatives, who were chosen at the end of the ILO Training of Trainers Workshop for Cooperatives Extension Workers to help in the development of cooperatives through field training and consultation. Nine extension workers will provide a brief about their work experience with cooperatives and the support they provided to 26 cooperatives in South Lebanon.
- 16:00 *Departure to Beirut*

For further information, please contact:



- Mr. Tarek Yassine, President of the Cooperative Association for Beekeepers in Jabal Amel (03.946080);
- Mrs. Daad Ismail, President of the Cooperative Association for Production and Processing of Agriculture Products (deir Kanoun Ras El Ein), (70.430505);
- Mr. Assaad El dor, Project Manager, ILO/LSER South Lebanon, (E: eldor@ilo.org; 03.414666);
- Mrs. Tania Yazbeck, Vulnerability and SME focal point, ILO/LSER South Lebanon, (yazbeck@ilo.org; 03.398297).

Annex 2:**Additional Resources:**

- ILO Cooperative Branch: <http://www.ilo.org/coop>
- COPAC: <http://www.copacgva.org/>
- International Co-operative Alliance: <http://www.ica.coop/al-ica/>
- SYNDICOOP handbook for trade unions and cooperatives about organizing workers in the informal economy: http://www.ilo.org/empent/Whatwedo/Publications/lang--en/docName--WCMS_094047/index.htm
- Handbook on Cooperatives for use by worker's organizations: http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed_emp/---emp_ent/documents/publication/wcms_094046.pdf
- Guidelines for Cooperative legislation, second revised edition: http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed_emp/---emp_ent/documents/publication/wcms_094045.pdf