



ILO and Cooperatives

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Editorial

This issue of the ILO's COOP News covers the summer months when often "laziness finds respectability". For those of us working on the cooperative enterprises front, however, these were busy times. Starting with the International Day of Cooperatives (IDC) that falls on the first Saturday of July each year, this was an eventful period with the launch of new initiatives and publications, as well as engaging in on-going projects and contributing into drafting of new ones.

In this issue you find the statement of ILO's Director General, Guy Ryder on the occasion of the IDC on how the 'Cooperative enterprise remains strong in times of crisis' as well as a summary of the IDC event organized by UN DESA along with the ILO, FAO and the ICA in New York. The initiative of the ILO on cooperatives and the post-2015 development framework and the new universal development goals has generated a great deal of interest from the researchers and leaders of the global cooperative movement. In addition to a background study, products and activities include an

online survey and discussions, in-depth interviews, briefs and an expert group meeting that is forthcoming.

Several other initiatives have been launched during this period. The results of a pilot research initiative on the involvement of migrant workers in the social and solidarity economies of Korea, Vietnam, and Kyrgyzstan, initiated during the summer should soon be available. Work on mapping of tourism cooperatives has been initiated on select countries where the phenomenon is becoming widespread. The ILO has also begun work on a global guide for trade unions on strategies and means available to workers to preserve jobs through enterprise conversion into cooperatives. A similar guide adapted to Greek context is under preparation. A report on Greece that looks into ways to promote cooperatives and the social economy was also published in Greek and disseminated widely in-country. The English version will soon be available.

In Japan, the Shinkin Central Bank has translated the ILO publication on the resilience of financial cooperatives in times of economic crisis. The ILO, in partnership with the Japanese Consumer Cooperative Union, organised the 4th study tour for African Cooperative Leaders in Japan in September. Two My.COOP training of trainers' workshops on agricultural cooperative management were undertaken in South Africa; one in Free State and the other in Kwazulu Natal. A My.COOP translation and adaptation into Nepalese is also underway. ILO was also present in the first ever cooperative forum in Kyrgyzstan.

The Cooperatives Unit has also contributed to two on-going ILO projects in the field: one on aromatic and medicinal plants in Tunisia and the other on public procurement through social enterprises in South Africa. We have given inputs to the development of technical cooperation projects on cooperatives from Chad and Sri Lanka to Greece and the occupied Palestinian territory during this time. We continue to highlight the work of COOP champions from the field. This time it is the turn of Rodrigo Mogrovejo, our colleague from Bolivia. We launched an issue brief on cooperatives and migration, which was disseminated in the High Level Dialogue on Migration and Development in New York. The founding meeting of the UN Inter-Agency Task Force on Social and Solidarity Economy took place in Geneva. The Task Force aims to assist countries, mobilize political will and enhance momentum towards mainstreaming the issue of SSE in international and national policy frameworks. As always, COOP staff news, noteworthy resources and events are also noted in this issue. We hope you enjoy reading this issue of Coop News. Stay tuned for our next issue where will be sharing a number of notable and historical events on cooperatives and social economy.

Simel Esim, Manager, Cooperatives Unit

The International Day of Cooperatives

The United Nations' International Day of Cooperatives was celebrated on July 6. This year's theme was "cooperative enterprise remains strong in the times of crisis".

Cooperatives continue to capture international attention as the world searches for ways to achieve a lasting global economic recovery and to find a path toward more sustainable development. On July 8, experts gathered for a panel discussion at the UN's headquarters in New York to examine ways in which cooperatives could serve as engines for economic recovery and growth while providing greater opportunities for social inclusion.

Ms. Daniela Bas, Director of the Division for Social Policy and Development of the UN's Department of Economic and Social Affairs, delivered opening remarks in which she called upon the international community to strengthen its efforts to promote the formation of new cooperatives across economic sectors.

"Around the world today cooperatives are bringing together one billion people as members, and are securing the livelihoods of as many as three billion people," said Bas. "We believe the international community should make efforts to increase the presence of cooperative themes throughout the different development dialogues" she stated.

The discussion following her speech focused on cooperatives' potential to be even more resilient to economic crises, particularly among vulnerable and marginalized populations by mitigating the risks of future financial, environmental and food crises.

Kevin Cassidy, Senior Communications and External Relations Officer of the ILO's Office for the United Nations in New York said many financial cooperatives outperformed investor-owned banking institutions during and following the global financial crisis.

"Unlike many investor-owned banks, [financial cooperatives] maintained very good credit ratings, increased their assets and customer-base and the minority that suffered losses quickly bounced back and are growing again," said Cassidy. "In a time of crisis, cooperatives are a source of stability and resilience, and [they] provide an important channel for bridging market values and human values."

Ambassador Od Och of the Permanent Mission of Mongolia to the United Nations, called cooperatives "a type of self-help organization." He also pointed out the social value-added of the democratic and inclusive nature of cooperative enterprises.

"[Cooperatives] are based on broad community support where everyone, regardless of political or religious beliefs or skin color, can contribute to finding solutions and can give back to their communities," Och stated.

In her presentation, Betsy Dribben, then Director of Policy, International Cooperative Alliance, reminded the panel of the seven principles that define the core guiding values of all cooperatives

Other experts from the UN's Food and Agricultural Organization and the United Nations Federal Credit Union were also present to discuss the social and economic benefits that cooperatives bring and their potential role in shaping the Post-2015 Development Agenda.

>> To read Simel Esim's think piece on cooperatives' resilience in times of crisis, written on the occasion of the International Day of Cooperatives, visit UNRISD website: <http://www.unrisd.org/unrisd/website/newsview.nsf/%28httpNews%29/91522F41785EEC90C1257BA2004FB0C0?OpenDocument>



International Day of Cooperatives

2013

Message of the International Co-operative Alliance (ICA) on the 91st ICA International Co-operative Day and the UN's 19th International Day of Cooperatives



In its message on the 91st ICA International Co-operative Day and the UN'S 19th International Day of Cooperatives, the International Co-operative Alliance (ICA) stated that while investor-owned businesses are currently suffering because of the recent economic crisis, the cooperative model has demonstrated resilience. The investor-owned business model puts profit above human need. Cooperatives are sustainable because they respond to crisis by placing human need at the core of their agenda. The ICA states that cooperatives are sustainable because they seek to optimise outcomes for a range of stakeholders without seeking to maximise the benefit for any stakeholder.

A case in point is that of savings and credit cooperatives, cooperative banks and credit unions, which have grown, kept credit flowing to especially small and medium-sized enterprises and remained stable across regions while indirectly creating employment. The ICA's message highlights the ILO's recent publication "Resilience in a downturn: The power of financial cooperatives". The publication shows that financial cooperatives are more likely to withstand economic

crises. This is because in times of crises, they were less likely to risk as much as investor-owned banks, thus making them more wstable and risk-averse. Financial cooperatives make surpluses, but rather than giving them to managers as shares, they put the surpluses into reserves, thus making financial cooperatives financially very strong.

Finally, the ICA's statement pinpoints another important advantage cooperatives can have in times of crisis: their social dimension. Cooperatives can provide social protection and social services such as health care, and contribute to the social capital in ways investor-owned businesses cannot.

The ICA message concludes by stating that cooperative model is a model that works time and again, whether in hard times or good times.

>> The full statement can be accessed at: <http://ica.coop/en/events/international-co-operative-day-2013>.

>> For the new marque of the International Cooperative Alliance, see <http://identity.coop/>



Message from Guy Ryder, ILO Director-General, on International Cooperative Day 2013

The ILO is pleased to join the international community in celebrating this International Day of Cooperatives.

The theme “Cooperative Enterprise Remains Strong in Times of Crisis” is a positive and encouraging affirmation at a time when confidence in enterprises and their respect for basic human values and ethical principles has often been badly shaken.

Framed and aggravated by the financial and economic crisis, the crisis in the world of work which ranges from unemployment especially among youth, to unfairness and inequality in the labour market and the widespread lack of social protection, along with food and fuel crises, the impact of climate change and natural disasters, all risk generating hopelessness, helplessness and a sense of deep injustice.

The celebration of International Cooperative Day is a welcome reminder that solidarity generates strength and the capacity to build, and that effective organizational and business models can indeed be founded on values of justice and solidarity.

Across continents, cooperative enterprises have been born out of crisis situations, responding directly to the needs of their members. Today when their ideals are put into action, they continue to show their efficacy.



A recent ILO study, “Resilience in a downturn: The power of financial cooperatives” showed that financial cooperatives out-performed traditional investor-owned banks before, during and after the global financial crisis in 2007 and 2008 and pointed to their long-term stability. Importantly, they kept credit flowing to small and medium-sized enterprises – the main source of job creation.

Worker cooperatives are growing in response to new economic realities and the survival rate of such cooperatives in several countries appears to equal or surpass that of conventional firms. Cooperatives have also stood the test of time in delivering a range of social services to their members while consumer cooperatives help with the cost of living. They are adaptable to diverse contexts and can reach the poorest communities.

Underpinning the sustainability of cooperative enterprises are the values and principles that inform their business strategy; proximity between cooperatives and their members; practices that foster a service-orientation rather than self-enrichment of managers; democratic governance; and a long-term orientation centred on members’ security. These factors also explain the relative longevity of cooperatives compared to conventional enterprises.

The ILO’s Promotion of Cooperatives Recommendation adopted in 2002 and founded on these principles, is relevant today not only to confront the immediate crises but also in shaping the future world of work and the development of enterprise models that effectively combine economic efficiency with social and environmental responsibility.

As global attention focuses on the challenge of sustainable development, cooperatives can and must play a key role as creative enterprises expanding into new and innovative areas from recycling to renewable energy, providing people with know-how, inputs, finance and markets at fair prices with low-environmental impact. In so doing they will be making a valuable contribution to a just transition to a low-carbon sustainable development path. From the world of work perspective, cooperative enterprises are well-placed to be leaders in advancing the decent work dimension of a just transition.

In the quest for sustainable enterprises and sustainable development, the cooperative model offers a tested route. The ILO looks forward to joining forces with the UN family and the International Cooperative Alliance on this cooperative journey.

>> To see a video of the statement, visit http://www.ilo.org/global/about-the-ilo/who-we-are/ilo-director-general/statements-and-speeches/WCMS_216859/lang--en/index.htm



THE WORLD WE WANT

What have cooperatives got to do with the Post- 2015 Development Framework and Sustainable Development Goals?

What is the Post-2015 Development Framework About?

In 2000, the UN launched the current development agenda, centered on the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). Year 2015 was set as the target to achieve the eight goals in the areas of poverty alleviation, education, gender equality and empowerment of women, child and maternal health, environmental sustainability, reducing HIV/AIDS and communicable diseases, and building a global partnership for development.

In 2013, the challenges to achieving the MDGs remain substantial despite considerable improvements around many of the goals in quite a few countries. At the same time discussions on what follows the MDGs is gaining momentum. The UN Conference on Sustainable Development, "Rio +20" has started a process for designing sustainable development goals which will build upon the MDGs.

In follow up to Rio+20, the UN General Assembly established an Open Working Group (OWG) to prepare a proposal on Sustainable Development Goals for consideration during the 68th session of its General Assembly, starting in September 2013. In May 2013, a High Level Panel (HLP) appointed by UN Secretary-General Ban-Ki Moon published its report on its vision and recommendations for a post 2015 development agenda. The ILO is actively involved in the new global partnership to meet common economic, socio-cultural and environmental needs for the post-2015 International Development framework.

What about Cooperatives and Sustainable Development Goals?

Cooperatives are instrumental in providing opportunities for productive employment as well as offering services such as health care, education, credit, improved infrastructure and

sustainable energy. Cooperative enterprises are guided by values of social dialogue and democracy, and they are often rooted in local communities, making them a sustainable option for achieving development.

Rio 20+ has recognized the actual and potential role of cooperatives to achieving sustainable development, reducing poverty and creating employment. But the HLP report has not had any real emphasis on cooperatives, nor has the cooperative movement been involved in the process despite its strength of more than one billion strong members from around the world.

In order to bring in cooperatives voice into the process of the post-2015 development agenda, the ILO COOP Unit, in collaboration with the International Co-operative Alliance (ICA), the United Nations Research Institute for Social Development (UNRISD) and other partners has launched an initiative on the contribution of cooperatives to sustainable development.

As part of this initiative a background study is being drafted to be presented in policy roundtables, conferences and seminars in 2013-14. The study will be informed by a survey and in-depth interviews with representatives of the cooperative movement from around the world to gather information on how cooperatives have contributed to Sustainable Development and their potential to contribute to the achievement of the proposed Universal Goals.

You can take the survey in English, French or Spanish by visiting the following page: http://www.ilo.org/empent/units/cooperatives/WCMS_221753/lang--en/index.htm

>> The COOP think piece on the issue can be accessed at: [http://www.unrisd.org/unrisd/website/newsview.nsf/\(httpNews\)/9A5A21EB7B44E4B3C1257BF30032D9CD?OpenDocument](http://www.unrisd.org/unrisd/website/newsview.nsf/(httpNews)/9A5A21EB7B44E4B3C1257BF30032D9CD?OpenDocument)

>> For more information on the post-2015 development framework, visit: <http://www.worldwewant2015.org/>

ILO research project on the involvement of migrant workers in the social and solidarity economy

There is increasing evidence from around the world that migrants are getting involved in the social and solidarity economy (SSE) in countries of origin or countries of destination. Migrants are organising themselves into cooperatives, establishing social enterprises, gaining employment in the SSE, and receiving life-improving services from SSE enterprises. According to the latest UN figures released this year, the total number of migrants has risen to 232 million (215 million in 2010), and many migrants continue to suffer poor working and living conditions, including low wages, unsafe working conditions, little or no social protection, denial of freedom of association and workers' rights, discrimination and xenophobia. More and more migrants are relying on the SSE to improve their lives and livelihoods.

The ILO Labour Migration Branch (MIGRANT) and Cooperatives Unit (COOP) seek to further research of migrant cooperatives, the most significant cases of which have been highlighted in a joint COOP-MIGRANT thematic brief, *Cooperatives offer migrant workers options for better lives*. Aside from anecdotal evidence little is known about the link between migrants and the SSE. MIGRANT and COOP addressed the subject in July 2013 by commissioning studies on the involvement of migrants in the social and solidarity economy in three countries: the Republic of Korea, Viet Nam, and Kyrgyzstan. All three studies are currently under way and represent an effort on the part of the ILO to improve understanding and policies benefitting access of migrants to cooperatives and other enterprises that can enhance livelihoods, social protection, and economic development.

The Republic of Korea (South Korea) is a popular country of destination in Asia and has a well-developed institutional structure for temporary labour migration in the form of Employment Permit System (EPS). The Korean EPS offers opportunities to promote the cooperatives enterprise model. South Korea also has a vibrant cooperatives and social enterprise movement. Viet Nam is mainly a country of origin, which sends migrant workers abroad—including to the Republic of Korea—and has a growing social enterprise scene. Kyrgyz nationals also migrate for employment to the Republic of Korea, and the policy debate on migration is becoming increasingly important in Kyrgyzstan.

Aside from their connection to each other through the EPS, these countries were also selected because all three, as well as Mongolia, feature in the proposed ILO project *Improving the Return and Reintegration of Migrant Workers under the EPS through Harnessing the Development Potential of the Social and Solidarity Economy*, which proposes to build the capacity of the EPS so that it is able to provide training in and incubation of cooperatives and social enterprises started by migrant workers to South Korea. Therefore, the findings of the three studies will inform this project and ultimately lay foundation for a broader set of activities to engage the public and private sectors in building skills and education of migrant workers.

The findings of the studies will be shared in the next issue of COOP News.

>> For the COOP & Migrant issue brief “Cooperatives Offer Migrant Workers Options for Better Lives”, visit http://www.ilo.org/empent/Publications/WCMS_221743/lang--en/index.htm.



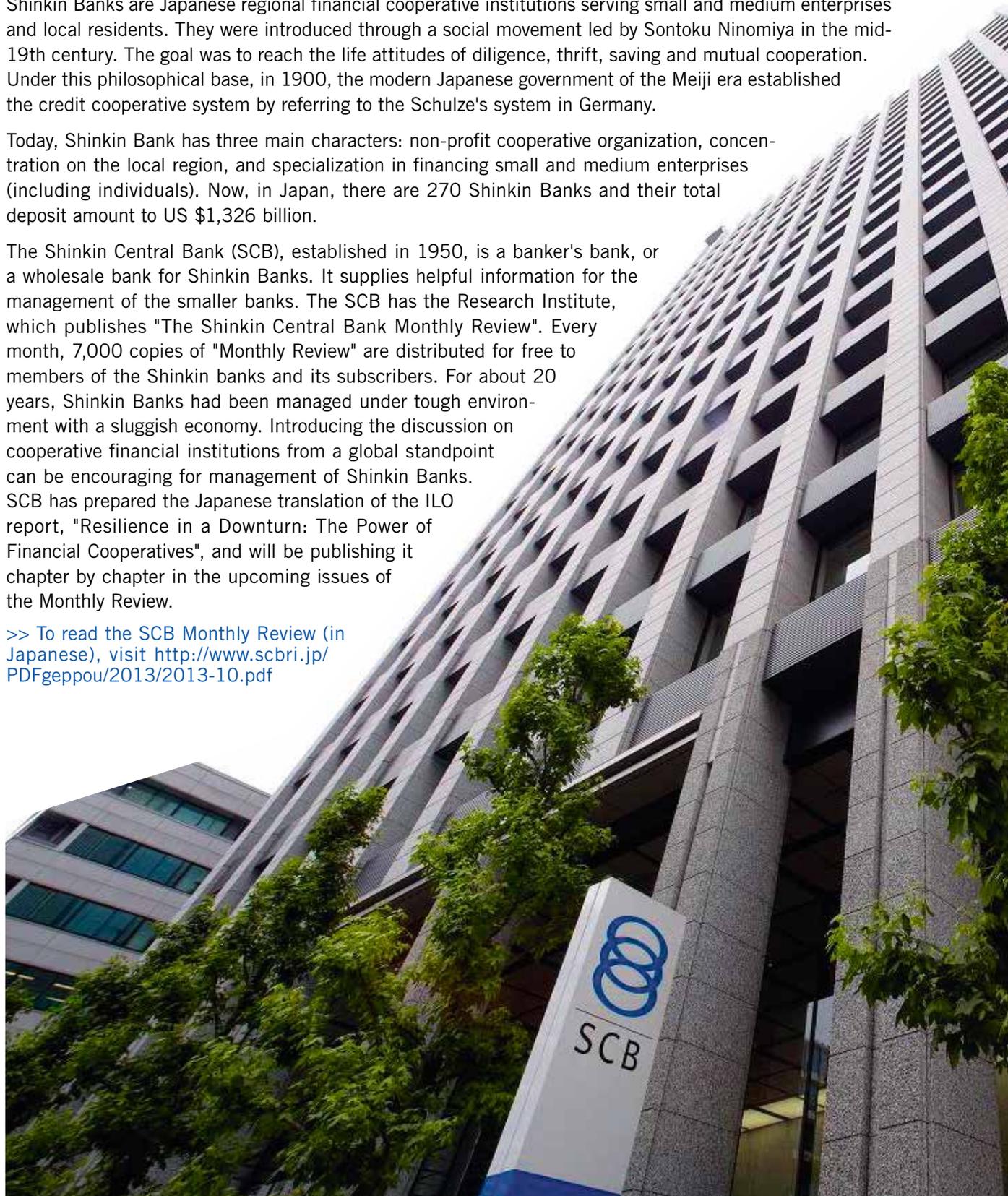
Shinkin Central Bank of Japan translates and prints ILO publication on financial cooperatives

Shinkin Banks are Japanese regional financial cooperative institutions serving small and medium enterprises and local residents. They were introduced through a social movement led by Sontoku Ninomiya in the mid-19th century. The goal was to reach the life attitudes of diligence, thrift, saving and mutual cooperation. Under this philosophical base, in 1900, the modern Japanese government of the Meiji era established the credit cooperative system by referring to the Schulze's system in Germany.

Today, Shinkin Bank has three main characters: non-profit cooperative organization, concentration on the local region, and specialization in financing small and medium enterprises (including individuals). Now, in Japan, there are 270 Shinkin Banks and their total deposit amount to US \$1,326 billion.

The Shinkin Central Bank (SCB), established in 1950, is a banker's bank, or a wholesale bank for Shinkin Banks. It supplies helpful information for the management of the smaller banks. The SCB has the Research Institute, which publishes "The Shinkin Central Bank Monthly Review". Every month, 7,000 copies of "Monthly Review" are distributed for free to members of the Shinkin banks and its subscribers. For about 20 years, Shinkin Banks had been managed under tough environment with a sluggish economy. Introducing the discussion on cooperative financial institutions from a global standpoint can be encouraging for management of Shinkin Banks. SCB has prepared the Japanese translation of the ILO report, "Resilience in a Downturn: The Power of Financial Cooperatives", and will be publishing it chapter by chapter in the upcoming issues of the Monthly Review.

>> To read the SCB Monthly Review (in Japanese), visit <http://www.scbri.jp/PDFgeppou/2013/2013-10.pdf>



ILO work on tourism cooperatives

The current state of cooperatives in the tourism industry

There are tourism cooperatives all around the world, in different forms and types, varying from one country and region to another.

In Italy, for instance, tourism cooperatives are organized into two associations - the Union of International Tourism Cooperative Association (UITCA), and the International Federation of Popular Travel Organizations, where most of the members came from a trade union background. In France, most cooperators in the tourism industry have a background as service providers.

What is the cooperative's advantage to the tourism industry?

Cooperatives have the capability to perceive and meet new needs of their members and tourists, respond to the expectations of tourists in society, contributing to social innovation.

In this context, the Cooperatives Unit of the ILO is seeking to better understand the new challenges tourism cooperatives face.

As part of the work around this theme, a mapping of the state of tourism cooperatives in different regions of the world is being undertaken. In Asia, the focus is on Malaysia, China,

and India; In Africa, Egypt; in Europe the countries that are being mapped are Italy, the United Kingdom, and France; and in America, the mapping is focusing on Canada and Argentina.

The preliminary results of the mapping exercise, that will be available at the beginning of November, will provide information on the current situation of the tourism cooperatives around the world, and emphasize the different activities they perform. The analysis will look into the current and potential challenges and successes by using a wide range of available literature.

After the mapping exercise, the COOP Unit will provide preliminary analysis of advantages of tourism cooperatives to their members and users of their services. Well-functioning cooperatives in tourism industry can promote local community development by improving value chains, working conditions, and gender equality, while providing decent work.

The principles of tourism cooperatives¹

- 1- Respect the right of the workers
- 2- Increase cultural visibility through various means while using products originating from cooperative
- 3- Provide a much greater level of conviviality in personnel relations, a friendly, more pleasing atmosphere.

¹Maurizio Davolio, Responsabile Legacoop Turismo; President, AITR (Associazione Italiana Turismo Responsabile)

Meeting with WIEGO on Formalizing the Informal Economy through Cooperatives

ILO Cooperatives Unit Manager, Ms Esim was invited to present the work of the ILO in formalizing the informal economy through cooperatives and other social and solidarity economy organizations by Women in Informal Employment: Globalizing Organizing (WIEGO) network.

WIEGO is a global action-research-policy network that seeks to improve the status of the working poor in the informal economy, especially women. One of their three constituencies is membership-based organizations of informal economy workers such as cooperatives, unions and associations. WIEGO does not have members from base organizations, therefore its work with cooperatives is primarily with and through federations at different levels. There are however instances of direct support to cooperatives such as SWaCH in Pune, India and with secondary level cooperative structure such as the Asociación de Recicladores de Bogotá (ARB) in Colombia.

During the board meeting of the Organization & Representation Programme of WIEGO meeting, which took

place on September 21, 2013 in the IUF Headquarters in Geneva, in addition to Ms Esim representatives from HomeNet, StreetNet, International Domestic Workers Network and Global Waste Pickers Alliance shared their experiences of informal economy workers forming cooperatives and other forms of social and solidarity economy enterprises. The discussion that followed emphasized that cooperatives are most common among waste pickers and street vendors, although there is a growing body of evidence of the formation of cooperatives among domestic workers and home-based workers as well.

Joint areas of action including research looking into having a better understanding of the types and functions of cooperatives that are formed by the different groups of workers in the informal economy were identified.

>> For more information on WIEGO, visit their website at <http://wiego.org/>.

Aromatic and Medicinal Plants in Tunisia: Research on strengthening women's socio economic activities through the cooperative model

The Cooperatives Unit has partnered with the three-year project "The way forward after the revolution - decent work for women in Egypt and Tunisia". The aim of the project was to explore the most suitable economic organizing model to increase the economic and social potential for women engaged in herb picking, traditional handicrafts and home-based agricultural production in Tunisia. A joint mission was conducted in August 2013 to assess the potential of the Aromatic and Medicinal Plants (AMP) sector for women through social economy organisations and cooperative enterprises in particular. As part of the mission, a series of interviews with key stakeholders (government officials, women's groups, support structures, etc.) were carried out in Zaghuan, Nabeul, Beja, Jendouba, Ariana, Kef, and Tunis. Further to the field visits, a background study was drafted to provide information on the key players, the way the sector is structured, the main AMP in the regions concerned, constraints and opportunities of the sector, as well as recommendations for future interventions. Findings will be presented and discussed during a national seminar to be held in late November 2013 with relevant Ministries, local authorities, leaders of women's groups, NGOs and researchers. This study is intended to provide the basis for a pilot initiative.

>> For more information on the project, visit: <http://www.ilo.org/public/english/region/afpro/cairo/projects/wayfwd-regional.htm>



Guide on strategies and means available to workers to preserve jobs through enterprise conversion into cooperatives

In an effort to develop responses to the crisis, COOP and Bureau for Workers' Activities (ACTRAV) prepared a Guide about strategies and means available to workers to preserve jobs through the conversion of failing enterprises into cooperatives. The guide portrays experiences around the world of job preservation.

The Guide is divided into two parts. The first part aims to contribute to the prevention of job losses and layoffs through the early warning system, a strategy based on the workers' right to information. The guide discusses the possibilities for an early identification of problems at the workplace by collecting, organizing and analysing information about the economic situation of the enterprise.

The second part focuses on the legal framework covering the recuperation process of jobs by workers. It explains the influence of insolvency law, the regulation of business

transfers and the cooperative model on opening paths to job preservation. Through case studies, the guide also explores the enterprise situation (bankruptcy, plant shutdowns) and workers' response in this process (negotiation, occupation, worker buyout, employee ownership plan). In addition, it describes the support network provided by trade unions and the cooperative movement. Finally, the guide highlights the Government role in the process (changes in the legislation and institutional structures).

To conclude, the case studies analysed in this guide reveal that an important opportunity not only for workers but also for the wealth of the local community lies in the preservation of existing jobs through the conversion of failed enterprises into cooperatives.

The guide is currently being used to develop a national guide adapted to the Greek context.

Ri-Maflow in Milan, Italy



In 2012 a group of workers lost their jobs at a car component factory in Trezzano, near Milan. The factory was part of the Maflow Corporation which is a multinational with 23 factories spread across the world. In the Trezzano plant, 350 workers produced pipes for cars' air conditioning systems to be sold to major car companies, with 85% of their production going to BMW. In 2004, Maflow was sold to a private equity company for ten times its real price. After some financial speculation, this private equity company acquired 300 million euros worth of debt under Maflow and in 2009 failed. That same year, a Polish industrial group bought Maflow and reduced the number of workers to 80. After a series of financial difficulties, the company closed its main Italian branches at the end of 2012. Maflow still exists in other countries.

First My.COOP training in South Africa

After returning from the Sustainable Enterprise Development Training at the ILO International Training Centre in Turin in 2012, Mirna de Hart from the Free State Province in South Africa, started the ground work in her local municipality, Matjhabeng, to bring the ILO training programme for cooperatives to her district. Through liaison with the ILO Free State Initiative, IMAC Services (De Hart's company) was able to train 85 cooperative members on this programme during May and June.

The initiative was supported by the Matjhabeng Municipality and especially the Department of Local Economic Development. This was the first ILO My.COOP training that took place in South Africa and a milestone for cooperative development in the Province.

"Agri-business is one of the focus sectors of the Free State SME Initiative of the ILO and the cooperatives in our area are in desperate need of focussed training to try and get them to function as valid sustainable enterprises that create a platform for job creation through community participation.

Italian laws force employers to inform trade unionists of the company's economic situation in the collective bargaining. Yet, workers were informed of the company's situation through a legal action at the local Chamber of Commerce telling them the company administrator was a liquidator. They were not informed by the company itself. Only one third of the workers were part of the trade union. They began organizing themselves and camped in front of the factory. The trade union played an important role in helping other workers receive technical support (legal and political) and eventually, they were able to occupy the factory's building once it finally shut down. Once the factory was finally closed, the workers decided to occupy it.

They decided to organize themselves around the idea of worker self-management. This is when the Cooperative Ri-Maflow was born with the aim of using the factory to repair and sell recycled electric and electronic components. In parallel, they are working with the Solidary Economy circuit of Milan. The cooperative will use the space of the factory as an agricultural market for biological and local products. The aim is to employ between 200 workers over the next two years. In addition, the workers set up the association to support the cultural activities organised to integrate Ri-Maflow into the local community.

The Italian cooperative Ri-Maflow stands for a struggle for dignity in the context of economic crises. Preserving jobs through the conversion of failing enterprises into cooperatives is a real alternative to unemployment, as shown by different experiences. Providing technical support to these cooperative experiences/cases can make a fundamental contribution to decent work and social justice.



The cooperative construction in our municipal area is still much disorganised with a very basic understanding of the Cooperative Principles. Through this initiative to bring the valuable training programme to our cooperatives I feel we have made a start in skilling our cooperative members in the importance of the cooperative principles and the value of cooperation between cooperatives" says Mrs Mirna De Hart. The course highlighted the need for basic training on business management, budgeting, costing and entrepreneurial competencies.

My COOP training in Kwazulu Natal, South Africa

In September My.COOP training was conducted in Durban, South Africa within the framework of the ILO project "Public Procurement through Social Enterprises". The training brought together local cooperative trainers, business development service providers, trade advisors, government officials and others working closely with cooperatives in the province of KwaZulu Natal.

Over five days of training all five parts of My.COOP were covered, including cooperative principles, service provision, input supplying and marketing.

One of the highlights of the training was a study visit to an agricultural cooperative, Makari Agricultural and Multi-Purpose Primary Co-Operative, to offer the participants the chance to see and experience the opportunities and challenges of agricultural cooperatives in South Africa.

The 43 member-owners of the cooperative are previous workers of the farm, producing and processing vegetables for sale in local supermarkets. The objective of the cooperative is to create employment and better lives for its members. Main challenges of the relatively young cooperative are in rapport to their management approaches, market access and financial sustainability.

During the training a number of interesting points were raised, including different participatory techniques, issues such as governance and roles of different actors in cooperatives, on cooperative principles and their application, profit-making and -sharing, and improving the performance of cooperatives in South Africa. Because many of the participants had their background in conventional enterprise development, the divergences and specificities of types of enterprises was also discussed.



My.COOP translation to Nepalese

The My.COOP training package on agricultural cooperative management is being translated and adapted into Nepalese context. This joint initiative between My.COOP partners ILO and Agriterro together with the Nepal Agricultural Co-operative Central Federation (NACCFL) aims to strengthen the capacity of Nepalese agricultural cooperatives through capacity building. Until now there is very little training material available in Nepal and in Nepalese language related to the management of agricultural cooperatives.

My.COOP has already been translated to about a dozen languages and is being used in numerous countries, and with the inclusion of Nepalese language it is hoped that the package will be effectively used in Nepal as well. After the translation is finalized in December, there will be a training of trainers taking place in early 2014 to ensure the implementation of the package.

My.COOP Distance Learning ToT under way!



My.COOP Distance Learning Training of Trainers is currently under way in English, French and Spanish. There are active discussions at the My.COOP Platform, please have a look at:

www.agriculture-my.coop.

COOP Champions: Rodrigo Mogrovejo

In this issue of COOP Champions, we present a Bolivian colleague; Mr. Rodrigo Mogrovejo. He works closely on cooperatives and the social economy in Bolivia and the Andean region under the coordination of Philippe Vanhuynegem, a senior specialist at the ILO Office for the Andean countries on small and medium-sized enterprises, including cooperatives.

Rodrigo started working on the theme during his post-degree studies on international development in Spain, concentrating especially on social economy and rural development in the context of education, development and poverty in Bolivia. After finishing his PhD, Rodrigo and his colleagues started their own furniture consumer cooperative in Spain, specializing in furniture that would fit the styles of young people. With innovative ideas, hard work, some state support and a modest amount of capital, the cooperative soon became a major supplier of furniture for young people in the region.

In 2011 Rodrigo moved back to Bolivia to work as the ILO project coordinator. Currently the ILO Office for the Andean countries is working with the cooperative sector in Bolivia particularly on two fronts: 1) My.COOP agricultural cooperative training courses; and 2) the development of the regulations for the cooperative law. This law was passed after the last Act was repealed in 1958, and the ILO participated in the preparation of the new draft law on the basis of the Recommendation 193 on the promotion of cooperatives. ILO also works in promoting transition from informal to formal employment through cooperatives and other social economy organizations.

In 2011 an ILO project concentrated in four areas in support for the Bolivian cooperative sector and Government: technical support in the preparation of the new law; research to assist the legislative process by showing the sector's impact on economic growth, job creation and combating poverty;

The First Kyrgyz Cooperative Forum “Development of cooperative credit system in Kyrgyzstan”

On September 5th, the First Kyrgyz Cooperative Forum “Development of cooperative credit system in Kyrgyzstan” was organized by the Cooperative Union of Kyrgyzstan (CUK), the largest cooperatives association of Kyrgyzstan, and the Academy of Public administration (APAP) under the President of the Kyrgyz Republic.

Established in 2007, CUK brings together over 200 agricultural cooperatives and 12,000 individual members. CUK represents the interests of cooperatives and deals with state agencies developing proposals for cooperative activities to form public policies in support of the agricultural sector. In 2013 the CUK joined the International Cooperative Alliance.

The APAP KR is one of the leading educational and research institutions under the authority of the President of the Kyrgyz Republic. It provides education and trainings in the field of



capacity building on management of the most vulnerable cooperatives; and finally the promotion of dialogue and cooperation of Bolivian cooperative movement with the international cooperative movement. Cooperative development is essential for rural development, particularly as cooperative values and principles promote the achievement of decent work in rural areas.

Rodrigo believes that the ILO has a critical role to play in building capacities of cooperatives in management, including in boosting My.COOP methodology to sectors other than agriculture. Indeed, Bolivia was the first country in Latin America where the methodology was implemented, and also adapted to mining sector. Despite the success of the intervention of the ILO in Bolivia, there are still great challenges in strengthening the management of all cooperatives in Bolivia.

>> In 2012 the ILO Office for the Andean countries published a set of publication on cooperatives in Latin America. These can be accessed at: http://www.ilo.org/americas/publicaciones/lang--es/index.htm?facetcriteria=AMERICA S=COO&facetdynlist=WCMS_178106

public administration and manages research programs in the field of public policy.

In Kyrgyzstan, most of the existing cooperatives were created thanks to the assistance of donor organizations such as Raiffeisen Confederation, GTZ, Helvetas, JICA, ACTED and others. Special foreign guests and representatives of the United Nations to the community in Bishkek were invited to participate in the forum. Most of them represented cooperative banks and cooperative credit institutions as well as the cooperative academic community.

The Forum attracted more than 50 participants from Bishkek and different regions of Kyrgyzstan, and the ILO COOP representative, Mr. Igor Vocatch, spoke about “Cooperative development potential in Kyrgyzstan”, which was followed by discussion.

UN Inter-Agency Task Force on Social and Solidarity Economy Established

The founding meeting of the UN Inter-Agency Task Force on Social and Solidarity Economy took place on 30 September 2013 in Geneva. This is a new inter-agency partnership that aims to assist countries mobilize political will and enhance momentum towards mainstreaming the issue of SSE in international and national policy frameworks.

The Inter-Agency Task Force on Social and Solidarity Economy is a concrete result of the UNRISD Conference, Potential and Limits of Social and Solidarity Economy, held in May 2013. At the conference, researchers, policy makers and civil society actors discussed how SSE can contribute to local development, food security, gender equality, environmental protection and health care provisioning.

UN agencies come together to raise SSE profile

At the Conference in May, the United Nations agencies (including UNRISD and FAO, ILO, UNDP and UN-NGLS) agreed on the necessity to raise awareness and visibility of social and solidarity economy within the UN system, noting that attention there tends to be fragmented and has not matched the growing interest in SSE among other sectors of the development community.

“Social and solidarity economy”, or SSE, refers to organizations that have explicit economic, social and often environmental objectives, and involve various forms of cooperation and solidarity. These include cooperatives, women’s self-help groups, social or community enterprises, fair trade networks and associations of informal economy workers.

Globally, such alternative forms of production, finance and consumption are growing in response to social, economic and environmental crises and contexts of vulnerability. Recognizing the development potential of SSE, many governments and regional bodies are responding with initiatives to create an enabling environment for SSE enterprises and organizations.

As the United Nations discusses the contours of the post-2015 development agenda, and given the search for complementary paths to development that simultaneously foster economic dynamism, social and environmental protection and socio-political empowerment, there is clearly space for the UN system to give more coordinated attention to the potential of SSE.

Task Force members, objectives and activities

On Social and Solidarity Economy, the convenors—UNRISD, ILO, UNDP Geneva Representation Office and UN-NGLS—were joined by representatives of the FAO, TDR (the Special Programme for Research and Training in Tropical Diseases), UNAIDS, UN-DESA, UNESCO, UNEP, UNIDO, UN Women, WFP and WHO.

In a meeting that was both productive and inspirational, participants agreed on the objectives, roles and activities of the Task Force. In working towards its objective of assisting

countries, mobilizing political will and enhancing momentum towards mainstreaming the issue of SSE in international and national policy frameworks, the members will undertake collaborative activities that aim to:

- enhance the recognition of social and solidarity economy enterprises and organizations;
- promote knowledge on social and solidarity economy and consolidate SSE networks;
- support the establishment of an enabling, institutional and policy environment for SSE;
- Ensure coordination of international efforts, and strengthen and establish partnerships.

The work of the Task Force will take into account country priorities and circumstances, in consultation with national partners.

Mapping UN work on SSE

Members of the Task Force are already engaged in an exercise to map SSE-related work under way within the UN system. Examples include UNRISD research on SSE, the work of the ILO Cooperatives Unit and SSE Academy UN-NGLS work on complementary currencies, UNDP work on social economy in Central Asia and Latin America, FAO work on producer organizations and cooperatives, and UNIDO work on youth-led start-ups that include social and environmental aims.

According to Mr José Manuel Salazar-Xirinachs, ILO Assistant Director General for Policy, “a sustainable response to the crises should promote instruments that can advance both economic and social aims while fostering solidarity. This kind of integrative approach is [...] shared by many UN agencies. The potential of SSE organizations and enterprises may prove to be crucial, particularly in this context.”

>> If you are working on issues related to social and solidarity economy in a United Nations agency, we would like to hear from you. Kindly contact Nadine van Dijk (vandijk@unrisd.org).

>> For more information on ILO and UNRISD's work on SSE, visit: www.ilo.org/coop, <http://www.sseacb.net/>; www.itcilo.org/socialeconomy; www.unrisd.org/sse



Japanese study tour for African cooperative leaders

From the 2nd to the 11th of September 2013 the Japanese Consumer Cooperative Union (JCCU) and the ILO organised the fourth study tour for African Cooperative Leaders taking place in Japan. Five African participants were selected – three from South Africa, one from Tanzania and one from Zanzibar. South African delegates were especially targeted because the ICA's Global Conference and General Assembly was set to take place in Cape Town this November. Japanese Cooperative leaders who will attend this conference wanted to learn more about cooperatives in South Africa – leading to a true two-way learning event.

The days were filled with lectures and site visits to drive home the importance of governance, practical application of the seven cooperative principles, challenges and opportunities faced by the various cooperative types and of course experiencing the Japanese cuisine first hand. The five guests were treated with the warmest hospitality and the Japanese high standards of efficiency and proficiency were evident throughout the tour.

Agricultural, workers, finance, consumer, insurance, hospital and welfare cooperatives were all visited. During these visits the participants had a chance to be exposed to various forms of cooperatives which may not already form part of

their frame of reference. A lot of questions were asked and comparisons were made between the Japanese models and those we are used to in our own countries.

All the participants gave a presentation on their own cooperative activities at a public seminar, which was well attended by cooperative stakeholders from Japan, as well as Her Excellency the South African Ambassador and delegates from the Embassy of Tanzania and Zanzibar.

JCCU and the ILO have done four previous tours like this with the goal of giving participants an opportunity to learn from the rich and unique Japanese cooperative experience and translate some of that experience into practical actions that will help lift their organization and the people it supports to greater heights of success.

Many valuable lessons were learned and we were amazed by the effectiveness and impact of cooperatives in Japan. The adage – a picture paints a thousand words – were proved beyond doubt. The tour was concluded with a celebratory dinner at a Japanese Hotel where the proud participants received their certificates of completion.

>> To read more about the study tour, visit JCCU: <http://english.roukyou.gr.jp/news.html>



ILO Publications

- **Cooperatives Offer Migrant Workers Options for Better Lives.** Issue brief. Labour Migration Branch, Cooperative Branch, International Labour Office (ILO).

Cooperative enterprises have improved the lives of women and men migrant workers and their families for decades. Migrants find income and jobs, access affordable goods and services and find empowerment through cooperative enterprises, participating in the cooperative movement. Moreover, cooperative enterprises are facilitating economic, social and cultural integration or re-integration of migrant workers in both destination and home countries.

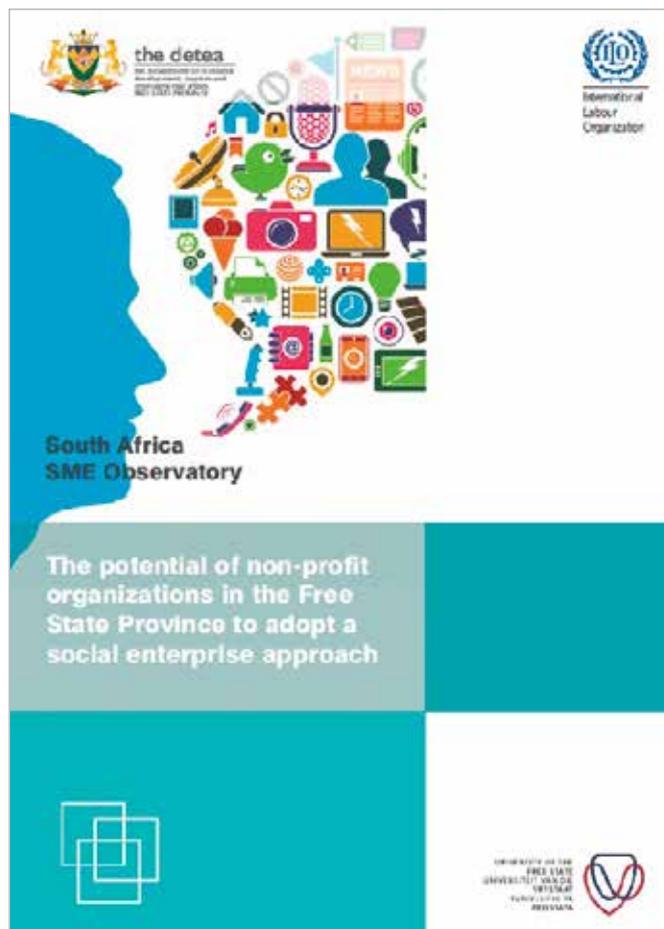
Available at http://www.ilo.org/empent/Publications/WCMS_221743/lang--en/index.htm.

- **Cooperatives and Social Economy for Greece: How to Promote the Social Economy in Greece through Worker Cooperatives, Social Cooperatives and Cooperatives of Artisans and of SMEs.** CICOPA & ILO.

This report, available in Greek, summarizes the challenges Greece is facing particularly in cooperatives and social economy context, reflects on the international experience on these topics, and provides recommendations on how to launch a social economy project based on cooperative promotion in Greece in the near future. English translation of the report will be published later.

- **The Potential of Non-Profit Organizations in the Free State Province to Adopt a Social Enterprise Approach.** ILO South Africa.

The research report reflects on the work done to determine the potential of non-profit organizations in the Free State Province (South Africa) to move towards a social enterprise approach by increasing the proportion of income they earn.



Upcoming :

- **Providing Clean Energy and Energy Access through Cooperatives.** Cooperatives Unit & Green Jobs Program. International Labour Office (ILO).
- **Cooperating out of HIV and AIDS. Policy brief.** HIV/AIDS and the World of Work Branch & Cooperatives Unit. International Labour Office (ILO).

Noteworthy resources

A. Borda-Rodriguez & S. Vicari: **Understanding rural co-operative resilience: a literature review.** The Open University. The Co-operative College.

The paper explores whether and in what ways co-operatives are resilient social and economic organisations.

Available at: <http://dpp.open.ac.uk/research/projects/understanding-rural-co-operative-resilience>

Co-operatives – a Key for Smallholder Inclusion into Value Chains. Framework for an Inclusive Food Strategy. Rabobank Group.

The study posits that it would be inconceivable to maintain the world's food supply, with its present and future imbalances, without calling into play the potential of underutilized smallholders producers who exist in various developing and emerging economies.

Available at: http://www.sommetinter.coop/files/live/sites/somint/files/pdf/nouvelles/DL_2012_Framework_for_an_Inclusive_Food_Strategy_download_zwpg.pdf

Andrew Bibby has recently started a blog exploring developments in the international and UK cooperative scene, visit at www.bibbyoncooperatives.wordpress.com.

COOP staff news

Ms. Jia Qi Wu started a three-month internship at the Cooperatives Unit on August 15, working on Cooperative Tourism. Jia Qi has worked in cultural and tourism project in Canada and China, and is currently finishing a Master's Degree in Leisure, Culture and Tourism at the University of Québec at Trois-Rivières.

Ms. Catherine Seya began her three month internship on 2 September. She is administering the survey and interviews launched for the current background study on the contribu-

tion of cooperatives to sustainable development and drafting a number of briefs portraying the role of cooperatives in attaining sustainable development. She comes to the Unit as part of the Cornell University School of Industrial and Labor (USA) internship programme.

Mr. Emery Igiraneza has completed his three month internship with the Cooperatives Unit and went back to Manchester to complete his Master's degree in International Relations and Globalization at the University of Salford.

Upcoming events

October

- 2-11. 19th International Conference of Labour Statistics, Geneva, Switzerland. For more information, see <http://www.ilo.org/global/statistics-and-databases/meetings-and-events/international-conference-of-labour-statisticians/19/lang--en/index.htm>.
- 4. Committee on World Food Security, side event titled "Why rural cooperative food systems are needed to feed the world", Rome.
- 14. My.COOP Training of Trainers distance course begins.
- 24-26. 4th International CIRIEC Research Conference on the Social Economy. Antwerp, Belgium.
- 29-1st Nov 2nd World Forum of Local Economic Development: Dialogues Between Theories, New insights for LED. Foz de Iguazú, Brazil.

November

- 1-5. International Cooperative Alliance (ICA) Global Conference and General Assembly, Cape Town, South Africa. For more information, see <http://ica.coop/en/eventsica-global-conference-general-assembly-2013>.
- 9-11. The 6th Mont Blanc Meeting "Changing the course of globalization through social and solidarity economy: Towards post 2015 Millennium Development Goals". Chamonix, France. For more information, see <https://www.rencontres-montblanc.coop/en/page/6th-meetings-9-11-november-2013>.

This issue was prepared with contributions from Kevin Cassidy, Natalia Delgado, Mirna de Hart, Roberto Di Meglio, Simel Esim, Emery Igiraneza, Waltteri Katajamäki, Minji Kim, Rodrigo Mogrovejo, Jia Qi Wu, Cathy Seya, Tohru Sukegawa, Guy Tchami, and Igor Vocatch.

Cooperatives Unit (COOP) International Labour Office (ILO)

Route des Morillons 4
CH-1211 Geneva 22
Switzerland

Tel: +41 (0) 22 799 7445 - Fax: +41 (0) 22 799 8572

E-mail: coop@ilo.org - Website: www.ilo.org/coop