



International
Labour
Organization

ILO and Cooperatives

COOPERATIVE PROGRAMME (EMP/COOP)

United Nations declare 2012 International Year of Cooperatives

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Editorial

This issue starts with sad news. Mr. Adoum Maurice Héli-Bongo, former Head of EMP/COOP, passed away.

By what I learnt about him I am sure he would have been just as delighted as we are to announce the following: 2012 will be the International Year of Cooperatives!

The partners in the Interagency Committee for the Promotion and Advancement of Cooperatives, COPAC (FAO, ICA, IFAP, ILO and UN), were unanimous in advising the UN on the desirability and feasibility of this International Year. The General Assembly of the UN took the decision by consensus. As the ILO is the only international governmental organization to have continuously worked on its mandate concerning cooperatives, it is most likely that ILO will be asked to take the lead in organizing the activities that will mark 2012 and the years thereafter. The UN emphasizes a number of issues which are also core areas of the activities of COOP, like statistics and regulatory frameworks. Several of the contributions to this issue relate to these areas. Some governments, the cooperative movement represented by

the International Cooperative Alliance and others are already preparing their respective programs.

Other International Years preceded, still others will follow. What makes this Year special is that it highlights an enterprise type because of its specific features. As globalization progresses, the efficiency of enterprise types will be revisited more and more also in the light of their contribution to the achievement of public policy aims, be it Decent Work, be it sustainability as an expression of the diversity principle. Mass media seem to reflect this evolution already (see "In the news..."). Synergies will quite naturally emerge from the activities related to this International Year and the review of where we stand 20 years after Rio. The recent integration of "Green jobs" into the Job Creation and Enterprise Development Department, of which COOP is a part, is more than a lucky coincidence. Finally, 2012 will be 10 years after the adoption of the ILO Recommendation 193 on the promotion of cooperatives (R.193). Time for stock taking and action here as well. A first step has already been taken. The "General Survey concerning employment instruments in the light of the 2008 Declaration on Social Justice for a Fair Globalization", prepared by the Committee of Experts on the Application of Conventions and Recommendations will be discussed by the International Labour Conference this year. While underlining the specific features of cooperatives, this General Survey fully establishes R.193 among the employment instruments. Among others, it suggests, as required by R. 193, to see more to the problem of pseudo cooperatives which violate workers' rights (see "Es hora de abordar la problemática de las "seudo-cooperativas").

This newsletter also reports on the biannual General Assembly of the ICA. COOP participated actively in the Gender Equality Committee activities, as well as in the Legislation Working Group meeting. After having established ties with Kyrgyzstan (see "Conference report") and in view of developing a regional approach, COOP started to collaborate with Tajikistan (see "cooperatives in Tajikistan..."). You will further find reports on our Coop^{AFRICA} and the SAY-JUMP project. We are currently seeking extension of the former in order to ensure sustainability of the initiatives taken so far; the latter is about to be extended. In addition, we are submitting a project document (PAL-COOP) concerning cooperative development in Palestine for financing. COOP's active participation in the 'Rencontres du Mont Blanc' under this year's theme "Comment nourrir la planète" should be read in connection with the effort to use the wider framework of the social and solidarity economy enterprises for the continued assistance to ILO constituents and cooperative organizations in their efforts to sharpen the identity of cooperatives.

Finally, you will find in this issue news about education and training activities (see "Workshop/training..." and "Belgorod University...").

Hagen Henry

Hommage à Adoum Maurice Hél-Bongo



C'est avec un sentiment de grande tristesse que nous avons appris le décès de l'ancien chef du Service des coopératives Monsieur Adoum Maurice Hél-Bongo survenu le 19 janvier à Genève. Sa nomination à la tête de COOP en août 1981 avait alors couronné la longue et exemplaire carrière de Mr. Hél-Bongo au BIT. Ancien Ministre de l'Agriculture et de l'Élevage et Ministre

de la Santé Publique et des Affaires Sociales, entre autres, au Tchad, Mr. Hél-Bongo est entré au BIT en mai 1967 pour devenir Directeur du Bureau de l'OIT de Dakar au Sénégal. Il a supervisé les activités du BIT d'abord dans 7 pays : Sénégal, Mauritanie, Mali, Guinée-Conakry, Gambie, Sierra-Leone et Libéria et par la suite en Guinée Bissau et dans les Iles du Cap-Vert. A ce titre, il a coordonné au nom de l'Organisation les activités de lutte contre la sécheresse dans la zone Soudano-Sahélienne en étroite liaison avec le Comité Inter-Etats pour la lutte contre la sécheresse au Sahel. Dans ses mémoires, Mr. Hél-Bongo a décrit ses années à Dakar comme de loin les plus enrichissantes et les plus enthousiasmantes. En juillet 1976 Mr. Hél-Bongo a été transféré au siège du BIT à Genève, d'abord en qualité de Responsable du Service de coordination des activités de coopération technique en Afrique (CO/AFR) et deux ans après, en tant que Chef du Service des relations avec l'Afrique (REL/AFR). Toutes ces activités se faisaient en liaison étroite

avec le Bureau régional pour l'Afrique à Addis-Abeba et les Représentations du PNUD en Afrique. Cette période d'activités plus administratives que techniques, a pris fin en août 1981 lorsque Mr. Hél-Bongo a été nommé par le Directeur Général Chef du Service des coopératives. Sous sa direction COOP a réalisé des performances remarquables et continues sur le plan de l'efficacité et du rendement dans le domaine de la coopération technique. Le gros de toutes les opérations d'envergure s'est alors concentré dans les pays en voie de développement. Sans jamais avoir fait la carrière dans le monde coopératif, Mr. Hél-Bongo a été profondément marqué par la pensée coopérative universelle et il a défendu avec enthousiasme et conviction la cause coopérative. Ainsi il considérait le secteur coopératif notamment dans les pays du Tiers-monde comme le facteur capable de contribuer à l'instauration d'une nouvelle société plus juste, plus productive et plus humaine. A la fin des années 80, sous sa direction, le Service des coopératives en termes de volume de la coopération technique, du nombre de projets et d'experts dans les quatre coins du monde, a été l'un des plus importants du BIT. Les projets comme ACOPAM et MATCOM ont été les plus grands projets de l'Organisation et ils continuent à servir de référence jusqu'à présent. Mr. Hél-Bongo a souvent répété que le secteur coopératif et, de façon plus large, toute l'économie sociale sans conteste et en toute objectivité devraient requérir d'avantage d'attention des plus hauts responsables. Une fois à la retraite Mr. Hél-Bongo a continué ses activités politiques et sociales. Au début de 1993 il a assuré avec succès la présidence de la Conférence nationale souveraine du Tchad et par la suite a participé aux élections présidentielles. Modeste, intellectuellement honnête, toujours bienveillant et posé, Mr. Hél-Bongo a incarné lui-même les valeurs et les vertus coopératives qu'il a tellement bien défendues toutes ces années.

United Nations General Assembly proclaims 2012 as the International Year of Cooperatives (IYC)

On 18 December 2009, the UN General Assembly adopted by consensus the UN resolution "Cooperatives in social development" (A/RES/64/136) which proclaims 2012 the International Year of Cooperatives. This proclamation is an acknowledgement of the fundamental role of cooperatives in promoting the socio-economic development of hundreds of millions of people worldwide, especially in times of economic crisis.

Hagen Henry, Manager of the ILO Cooperative Programme (EMP/COOP), said the move "recognizes the pivotal role cooperatives play globally in supporting sustainable development, eradicating and preventing poverty, and creating and securing livelihoods in various economic sectors, both formal and informal, and in urban and rural areas. Cooperatives, as social economic enterprises and self-help organizations, have a meaningful function in uplifting the socio-economic conditions of their members and their local communities in virtually all

countries." ILO EMP/COOP says cooperatives have a proven record of creating and sustaining employment, providing more than 100 million jobs today, while the International Co-operative Alliance (ICA) says the top 300 cooperatives worldwide are responsible for an aggregate turnover of USD 1.1 trillion, equal to that of the world's tenth largest economy.

Since 1959 the UN has designated international years in order to draw attention to major issues and to encourage international action to address concerns which have global importance and ramifications. States are urged to encourage the development of cooperatives, in view of their ramifications and their potential for advancing important social development goals - poverty eradication, employment generation and enhancing social integration. The text also highlights the ability of cooperatives to contribute to poverty eradication by promoting the participation of women, youth, older people, people

with disabilities and indigenous peoples in the economy and in society. States are urged to implement better legislation, research, sharing of good practices, training, technical assistance and capacity-building of cooperatives, especially in the fields of management, auditing and marketing skills. They are also urged to “harmonize” statistical methodologies to enable sound policy formulation.

The proclamation of the International Year underlines the importance of EMP/COOP’s work on policy and legislation today and in the future and the need to focus increased resources on technical assistance and capacity-building. The ILO has devel-

oped in-depth expertise in this area over nearly 90 years. EMP/COOP will work jointly with the UN, the ICA and the other COPAC partners in developing and implementing activities to be undertaken during the International Year.

>> Kindly be informed that EMP/COOP plans regular updates on the preparations in form of a “IYC brief” which you will find on our website www.ilo.org/coop but also as a supplement to the next COOP News. See also ILO Press Release: [http://www.ilo.org/global/About the ILO/Media and public information/I-News/lang--en/WCM_041782/index.htm](http://www.ilo.org/global/About%20the%20ILO/Media%20and%20public%20information/I-News/lang--en/WCM_041782/index.htm)

Operational paragraphs of UN Resolution “Cooperatives in social development” (A/RES/64/136)

The General Assembly, (...),

1. Takes note of the report of the Secretary-General on cooperatives in social development;
2. (...)
4. Draws the attention of Member States to the recommendations contained in the report of the Secretary-General for further action (...);
5. Encourages Governments to keep under review, as appropriate, the legal and administrative provisions governing the activities of cooperatives in order to enhance the growth and sustainability of cooperatives in a rapidly changing socio-economic environment by, inter alia, providing a level playing field for cooperatives vis-à-vis other business and social enterprises, including appropriate tax incentives and access to financial services and markets;
6. Urges Governments, relevant international organizations and the specialized agencies, in collaboration with national and international cooperative organizations, to give due consideration to the role and contribution of cooperatives in the implementation of and follow-up to the outcomes of the World Summit for Social Development, the Fourth World Conference on Women and the Second United Nations Conference on Human Settlements (Habitat II), including their five year reviews, the World Food Summit, the Second World Assembly on Ageing, the International Conference on Financing for Development, the World Summit on Sustainable Development and the 2005 World Summit by, inter alia:
 - (a) Utilizing and developing fully the potential and contribution of cooperatives for the attainment of social development goals, in particular the eradication of poverty, the generation of full and productive employment and the enhancement of social integration;
 - (b) Encouraging and facilitating the establishment and development of cooperatives, including taking measures aimed at enabling people living in poverty or belonging to vulnerable groups, including women, youth, persons with disabilities, older persons and indigenous peoples, to fully participate, on a voluntary basis, in cooperatives and to address their social service needs;
 - (c) Taking appropriate measures aimed at creating a supportive and enabling environment for the development of cooperatives by, inter alia, developing an effective partnership between Governments and the cooperative movement through joint consultative councils and/or advisory bodies and by promoting and implementing better legislation, research, sharing of good practices, training, technical assistance and capacity-building of cooperatives, especially in the fields of management, auditing and marketing skills;
 - (d) Raising public awareness of the contribution of cooperatives to employment generation and to socio-economic development, promoting comprehensive research and statistical data-gathering on the activities, employment and overall socio-economic impact of cooperatives at the national and international levels and promoting sound national policy formulation through harmonizing statistical methodologies;



7. Invites Governments, in collaboration with the cooperative movement, to develop programmes aimed at enhancing capacity-building of cooperatives, including by strengthening the organizational, management and financial skills of their members, and to introduce and support programmes to improve the access of cooperatives to new technologies;
8. Invites Governments and international organizations, in collaboration with cooperatives and cooperative organizations, to promote, as appropriate, the growth of agricultural cooperatives through easy access to affordable finance, adoption of sustainable production techniques, investments in rural infrastructure and irrigation, strengthened marketing mechanisms and support for the participation of women in economic activities;
9. Also invites Governments and international organizations, in collaboration with cooperatives and cooperative organizations, to promote, as appropriate, the growth of financial cooperatives to meet the goal of inclusive finance by providing easy access to affordable financial services for all;
10. (...)

ICA General Assembly, 16 - 20 November 2009 (Geneva)

The International Co-operative Alliance (ICA) held its biennial General Assembly with almost 800 delegates from all sectors and regions of the globe. It focused on the theme "Global Crisis - Cooperative Opportunity" and addressed important statutory business including the election of its President and Board. The



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Assembly elected Dame Pauline Green (photo) as its first ICA woman president; it also elected the 18 board members.

The General Assembly opened with a homage to former President, Ivano Barberini, who was also posthumously presented the 2009 Rochdale Pioneer Award by ILO Director-Gen-

eral, Mr Juan Somavia. Climate, energy and cooperative action were the focus of the ICA General Assembly, starting with the keynote presentation by Professor Jeremy Rifkin who spoke in a very captivating way about the role cooperatives can play to address the global economic meltdown, energy security, and climate change.

Three thematic panel sessions followed: one examining sustainable energy, one which looked at cooperative resilience in the economic crisis and a third on climate change. Five resolutions: "Towards a sustainable energy economy", "Cooperative Enterprise and Economic Crisis", "Cooperative Agenda on Climate Change", "Cooperatives and Peace" and "Cooperatives and Nuclear Disarmament", call for action by cooperatives, the ICA and other stakeholders to address sustainability, economic stability and growth and peace. Fundamental to all resolutions was the need to continue raising the visibility of cooperatives in order to enable them to improve people's lives worldwide.

Preceding the General Assembly, seminars and workshops were organized by various ICA committees, working groups, sectoral organizations etc. The "Global crisis: gender opportunity seminar" held by the ICA Gender Equality Committee examined the global financial crisis and gender relations and opportunities to address inequality in economic and social recovery. Eva Majurin, COOP^{AFRICA} Programme, ILO Dar-es-Salaam, said the crisis had impacted on women through increased workloads, reduced access to finance, and declining living standards. Hagen Henry, manager of ILO EMP/COOP, also convened and participated in the first session of the ICA Legislation Working Group, one of the three ICA Working Groups established by the ICA Board to address key issues for the cooperative movement (*see for further information the report on this Working Group's session*).



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>> Election results and decisions of the Assembly can be found on the ICA website: www.ica.coop/calendar/ga2009. Eva Marjuri's presentation can be found on the COOP^{AFRICA} website: www.ilo.org/coopafrika

Cooperatives in Tajikistan: In need for regulation

Since its independence in 1991, Tajikistan has chosen a way of privatization. As a result of restructuring former kolkhozes and sovkhozes, more than 35,000 private farms were created. Both, the number of people working in agriculture as well as the number of rural employers, have increased considerably. Despite the fact that the agricultural sector provides for 67% of the nationwide employment, it remains the most poorly paid sector of the national economy. The agricultural reforms brought about small farms that, on average, have 10.24 ha. Due to this, problems concerning effective land and water use, processing, transportation and sales of agricultural produce arose. The farms do not have possibilities to buy tractors, seeding-machines, combines or reasonably priced fertilizers, pesticides, etc. Farmers also have very limited access to credit. Forming agricultural (service) cooperatives has helped to solve some of the above mentioned problems and to increase the farms' effectiveness. So far, already 63 cooperatives have been established. However, the current Tajik legislation does not provide a specific legal frame which is suited for the development of this type of cooperatives. Tajikistan currently has two laws regulating the cooperative sector: the 1992 Law on Consumer Cooperatives (amended in 2008) as well as the 2002 Law on Producers' Cooperatives. After having realized the lack of specific regulation for this type of cooperatives and, more importantly, the need for such a legal framework, a bill on service cooperatives was drafted.

This bill is currently under review by the Working Group on land reform (a body attached to the Ministry of Agriculture with the participation of different government structures and the donor community). The representative of the Ministry of Agriculture asked EMP/COOP to make comments on this draft law.

The cooperative approach has become more and more accepted and the international technical assistance in the area of land reforms and agriculture policy focuses increasingly on the cooperative sector. Only three years ago, the situation was quite different. The National Tajik Association of Consumer Cooperatives (Association Tajikmatlubot), which counts approximately 20,000 members, has been a member of the International Cooperative Alliance since 2009. The objective of an EMP/COOP mission carried out in November 2009 was to communicate the real need for a general cooperative law which would apply to and support all types of cooperatives, not only in agriculture. As a direct result of these EMP/COOPs efforts, the Ministry of Agriculture has expressed its interest to benefit from the cooperative experience of Kyrgyzstan. Bishkek had just been chosen as location for the newly created international association of credit unions of CIS and Baltic countries (Azerbaijan, Belarus, Kyrgyzstan, Lithuania, Russia, Ukraine, Kazakhstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan), a non-profit association (cf. COOPNews 3/2009, p. 10).

News from


 COOP
AFRICA

The ILO Cooperative Facility for Africa – COOP^{AFRICA} (www.ilo.org/coopafrika) - is a technical cooperation programme for the promotion of cooperative development in Africa (2007-2010). From the ILO Office in Dar-es-Salaam, COOP^{AFRICA} covers 9 countries in Eastern and Southern Africa with support of the Cooperative Programme of the ILO in Geneva.

Twelve Project Proposals Selected for Funding by Coop^{AFRICA} Challenge Fund

The programme disposes of a Challenge Fund mechanism through which funds are accessible through a competitive bidding process. The funds are set up to meet specific objectives such as extending financial services to the poor. Bids are assessed against transparent criteria. The Selection Committee then awards grants to the projects that best meet the aims of the Challenge Fund. Among 192 project proposals received, twelve proposals were selected by the Selection Committee in December 2009. For this round, COOP^{AFRICA} will provide funding worth USD 635,000. Among the approved projects, there are, inter alia, cooperative projects aimed at improving service delivery for SACCOS through ITC (Kenya), at strengthening rural microfinance institutions in Karagwe District (Tanzania), at promoting palm oil processing and soap making (Uganda) and at providing an enhanced infrastructure in order to improve coffee quality, production efficiency, and water usage (Rwanda).

>> Further information available online: "<http://www.ilo.org/coopafrika>" www.ilo.org/coopafrika

Major break-through at the Sub-Regional Workshop on Employers' Organizations and Cooperatives in Nairobi (15-16 February 2010): Resolution adopted

In the world of work, employers' organizations (EOs) play a critical role in creating the necessary conditions for generating and sustaining employment and thereby contribute directly to improved livelihoods and poverty reduction. As one of the three constituents of the ILO they are on the forefront in the implementation of the Decent Work Agenda. The ideals pursued by EOs may not, and need not, necessarily be identical to those of cooperatives. However, the areas of convergence are far greater than those of divergence: Both generate employment; both are committed to human development; both contribute to the poverty eradication effort and both work in partnership with government and development programmes. The 2002 ILO Recommendation 193 on the Promotion of Cooperatives (ILO R.193) also calls upon EOs to seek ways and means of

promoting cooperatives together with cooperative organizations and appeals to them to consider, where appropriate, the extension of membership to cooperatives (cf. paras. 14f., Part IV). Employers' cooperatives can benefit from the considerable experience of EOs in entrepreneurship and in employment issues – including decent work. EOs can help access markets for products produced or handled by cooperatives. Cooperative institutions can support EOs to assist enterprises get together and form entrepreneurs' cooperatives owned and controlled solely by the enterprises themselves. Facilities of specialized cooperative training institutions offering relevant business studies (e.g. the cooperative universities and colleges) can be accessed by commercial enterprises for training their employees in a more formalized manner. Moreover, EOs and cooperatives can complement each other in supporting local or national poverty reduction programmes, the former taking advantage of the well established cooperative networks – particularly in remote rural areas.

With such a broad common ground the need for strengthened relationship and collaborating between the two institutions to enhance and advance the mutual ideals and aspirations they share is most evident. This led ILO and its programme COOP^{AFRICA}, jointly with the Pan African Employers Confederation and the Federation of Employers in Kenya, to the idea of organizing a Sub-Regional Workshop on Employers' Organizations and Cooperatives in Nairobi (15-16 February 2010). Chairpersons and Chief Executive Officers of national EOs in nine countries – namely: Botswana, Ethiopia, Kenya, Lesotho, Rwanda, Swaziland, Tanzania (Mainland and the Isles), Uganda and Zambia participated. The workshop was based on an initial assessment study of the relationships between the EOs and cooperatives in Africa. The objectives of the workshop included, inter alia, to apprise the participants on the state and current trends in the EOs of the participating countries, to create awareness among leaders of EOs about cooperatives, their role, achievements and shortcomings and to agree on practical ways of promoting and strengthening collaboration between EOs and cooperatives in the context of ILO R.193 and the Global Jobs Pact.

The atmosphere at the workshop was very constructive and the participants were determined to forge links with the cooperative movement and maintain close and sustainable collaboration. A resolution adopted at the end of the workshop contains, inter alia, the recommendation that regular consultative fora between EOs be organized under the auspices of the ILO, that cooperatives be encouraged to join EOs as long as they meet the necessary requirements for membership, that EOs support non-bargaining activities such as workplace cooperatives and that EOs would work closely with cooperatives to ensure that appropriate policies and legislation for a conducive environment for cooperative development are (put) in place.

>> More information on the workshop, including the resolution, will be available on the COOP^{AFRICA} website: www.ilo.org/coopafrika

SAY-JUMP project: Jobs for the Unemployed and Marginalized to escape from Poverty

Cooperative development in South Africa has seen many changes over the last few years. Some positive and some less encouraging. As cooperatives are a development priority in South Africa, many new government interventions are being implemented to support the promotion of a viable cooperative movement in South Africa. These include discussions on a new workers' cooperative law, support to the establishment of a cooperative college and amendments to the current cooperative law.

Notwithstanding the interest and support from the Government, the cooperative model still faces some challenges. Many unwise initiatives to promote the model have resulted in a large number of cooperatives being registered which then, unfortunately, have failed. This has made the model become quite unpopular among young entrepreneurs. In 2006 through a partnership between the Flemish Government and the International Labour Organization the SAY-JUMP project was initiated.

The objective of the project is to contribute to the poverty alleviation efforts in South Africa through creating decent and sustainable jobs for poor and marginalized young women and men. One of the main activities is the promotion and support of cooperatives. This pilot project focuses on identifying sustainable partnerships at local level where ideas, strategies and methodologies can be shared in order to ensure that the greatest impact is achieved in the combined effort to alleviate poverty through the promotion and support of cooperatives.

The project is being implemented in three local municipalities which are characterized by high levels of poverty and unemployment and works with local partners to identify young men and women interested in starting up their own businesses. This initiative was accepted with great enthusiasm amongst the youth. They have been offered courses on how to generate business ideas (GYBI), how to start their businesses (SYB) and how to improve their businesses (IYB). Through the implementation of the project and through consultations with youth and development partners, the project was able to identify additional support interventions that the young entrepreneurs need in order to ensure that their businesses are up and running.

Through the implementation of projects of this nature and the provision of technical support, the ILO has supported the growth of the cooperative sector in South Africa. Current developments in this area also identify a clear role that the ILO can



play to back up South African initiatives towards the establishment of a viable cooperative movement, namely support in the preparation of workers' cooperative legislation, amendments to the current cooperative legislation and the establishment of the cooperative college.





Les Rencontres du Mont-Blanc, 9-10 novembre 2009

Les Rencontres du Mont-Blanc ont été conçues pour permettre la prise de connaissance des enjeux, l'échange d'idées et d'interrogations en commun, la participation à l'élaboration des projets divers parmi les acteurs de tous bords appartenant à l'économie sociale. La quatrième édition a porté sur le thème de l'alimentation mondiale «Comment nourrir la planète ? Quel rôle pour l'économie sociale ?».

Ces dernières années le thème de la sécurité alimentaire a été à l'ordre du jour de plusieurs grands forums internationaux. En juin 2008, l'envolée des cours des produits agricoles et plusieurs émeutes de la faim ont poussé les chefs d'Etats à se réunir à Rome. Dix-huit mois plus tard le quatrième Sommet mondial sur la sécurité alimentaire convoqué en novembre 2009 par la FAO a eu lieu. Le constat est décevant: en dépit des promesses faites en 2008, il y a 20% de mal nourris en plus dans le monde. Les Rencontres du Mont-Blanc ont réuni cette fois plus de 200 participants. Ont participé à cette rencontre des dirigeants de coopératives, mutuelles, associations, fondations, ainsi que des représentants de mouvements sociaux et syndicaux, des chercheurs et universitaires, des représentants de mouvements citoyens, des personnalités politiques. Les institutions internationales basées à Genève ont été également bien représentées à cette rencontre, p. ex. le Bureau du PNUD, Bureau de liaison de la FAO, Bureau du PAM. Il a été convenu qu'EMP/COOP et COOP^{AFRICA} présenteraient les expériences de l'ancien projet du BIT «Appui associatif et coopératif aux initiatives de développement à la base» (ACOPAM) ainsi que la diffusion de ces expériences à Madagascar. Ce grand projet qui a duré de 1978 à 1999 a été conçu initialement comme une réponse immédiate en collaboration avec le Programme alimentaire mondiale à la grave crise alimentaire qui a ébranlé les pays du Sahel en 1976. Par la suite le projet s'est transformé et a visé aussi bien la sécurité alimentaire que la capacité organisationnelle sous forme coopérative des organisations paysannes. En 2007 EMP/COOP a développé l'idée du projet au Sud de Madagascar en tant que réplique des expériences d'ACOPAM dans le domaine de gestion des banques céréalières. Le travail n'a pas pu être achevé à cause de la crise politique dans le pays, mais le concept reste toujours d'actualité. Ces deux sujets ont été présentés en travaux d'ateliers et ont suscité un



grand intérêt de la part des participants. La discussion qui a suivi a suscité beaucoup de questions. Les représentants du Comité pour les libertés des paysans d'Antsirabé à Madagascar ont également participé à ce groupe de travail et ont enrichi la discussion par leurs propres expériences à Madagascar. Le lendemain EMP/COOP a été invité à témoigner à la Table ronde sur le rôle et la place de l'économie sociale dans la question alimentaire. Les coopératives ont été évoquées à plusieurs reprises et la Conférence régionale du BIT sur l'économie sociale de Johannesburg (octobre 2009) a été citée également. Par la suite les travaux ont continué en ateliers pour concrétiser les idées qui pourraient être à la base des nouveaux projets emblématiques sur lesquels les participants pourraient éventuellement s'engager. Il a été proposé de mettre la gestion de l'eau au centre des préoccupations de tous les nouveaux projets comme sujet principal et incontournable. Il a été suggéré de partager avec les futurs projets les quatre manuels de formation d'ACOPAM en rapport avec les périmètres irrigués villageois. Les Rencontres du Mont-Blanc ont demandé à la FAO, lors de son Sommet sur la sécurité alimentaire en novembre 2009, d'inclure l'économie sociale comme la référence incontournable des stratégies à mettre en œuvre. L'idée de demander à l'ONU de créer une « plate-forme économie sociale » entre les différentes agences a également été discutée.

- In the news.... - Nouvelles... - En las noticias... -

THE ECONOMIST (23 January 2010): Mutual respect. Europe's cooperative banks

The article takes stock of European cooperative banks and their performance during the financial crisis. It reports on findings of various studies, e.g. a 2009 study by the German Central Bank (Bundesbank), which have all concluded that cooperative banks are less likely to fail than those owned by private shareholders. However, the author also mentions critique of cooperative banking which questions, inter alia, the suitability of this form of banking business for new areas like investment banking or capital markets.

>> Read the article on "http://www.economist.com/business-finance/displayStory.cfm?story_id=15331269"

LE TEMPS (30 janvier 2010): Robert Zoellick loue Nestlé en Côte d'Ivoire

L'auteur rend compte d'une visite du Président de la Banque mondiale au Centre de recherches de Nestlé à Abidjan. Robert Zoellick a salué l'«important apport» de la multinationale suisse de soutenir les producteurs locaux de cacao et de manioc. Nestlé a développé un programme de recherche et développement mondial pour rajeunir les plantations et améliorer leur productivité, y compris la production par les coopératives.

>> Lire l'article sur "<http://www.letemps.ch/Page/Uuid/e606de00-0d1e-11df-ac51-ea9d0febb065>"

LE MONDE (2 février 2010): La crise met en lumière les vertus des coopératives

L'article parle des SCOP et de ses résultats économiques supérieurs à la moyenne des entreprises. L'auteur fait référence aux performances des SCOP déjà avant le ralentissement, p.ex. l'accroissement des effectifs de SCOP de 11 % entre 1997 et 2007, quand l'ensemble des entreprises du secteur perdait

plus de 10 % de ses emplois en France. Cet article met aussi en évidence que les SCOP ont moins souffert de la crise.

>> Lire l'article sur "http://www.lemonde.fr/economie/article/2010/02/01/la-crise-met-en-lumiere-les-vertus-des-cooperatives_1299523_3234.html"

- Cooperative education and training - Education et formation coopératives -
- Educación y formación cooperativa -

Workshop / Training Announcements

Curso a distancia (07/06/2010 - 28/02/2011): Generar procesos de desarrollo económico local mediante cooperativas (International Training Centre of the ILO, Turin). Citamos del programa de Turin:

"Este curso se dirige a agentes de desarrollo interesados en generar procesos de desarrollo económico local mediante las cooperativas. Constituidas por dos dimensiones clave (la económica y la social), las cooperativas contribuyen a generar diálogo y confianza, y ofrecen oportunidades de mercado hasta al más pequeño de los productores, sus miembros, sus familias y sus comunidades. Profesionales de desarrollo económico y so-

cial activos en el ámbito de instituciones y organizaciones internacionales, fundaciones y organizaciones no gubernamentales; organismos gubernamentales nacionales, departamentales, provinciales y municipales; organismos de desarrollo económico local, cámaras de comercio, asociaciones de empresarios, cooperativas, sindicatos, proveedores de servicios a las empresas; consultorías; universidades e institutos de investigación."

>> Para obtener más información, póngase en contacto con: delnet@itcilo.org



Workshop (preliminary announcement, to be confirmed): Strengthening the capacity of social and solidarity economy enterprises and organizations (International Training Centre of the ILO, Turin):

From 19 - 21 October 2009, the ILO organized a Regional conference on "The Social Economy – Africa's Response to the

Global Crisis" and came out of the meeting with an action plan. As a follow-up, a Task Force convened at the ITC to discuss, among others, the design of this workshop.

>> Further information will be provided in the next COOP-News

Belgorod University of Consumer Cooperatives

Belgorod University of Consumer Cooperatives is one of the leading cooperative universities of Russia, which trains personnel for cooperatives. The University celebrated its 30th anniversary in June 2008. Currently, there are more than 22,000 students enrolled. Since its establishment, the University has provided training to more than 60,000 students in higher education and more than 14,000 students in secondary vocational education. The University has eleven faculties, including Law, Accounting and Statistics, Information Systems and Information Protection, Economics, Management. Besides two academic and methodology centers and one research centre, they also offer postgraduate and doctoral courses. In order to combine efforts in the training of the personnel for cooperative and other sectors of the economy, the University has expressed its will to cooperate with cooperative educational institutions of vari-

ous countries and is actively developing international links, e.g. with Hamburg University of Applied Sciences.



- Cooperative policy and law - Politique et droit coopératifs -
- Política y derecho cooperativo -

Report on the first meeting of International Co-operative Alliance (ICA) Legislation Working Group (18 November 2009), Geneva

The first meeting of the ICA Legislation Working Group, one of the three ICA Working Groups established by the ICA Board to address key issues for the cooperative movement, was convened on 18 November 2009 by ILO EMP/COOP Manager Hagen Henry who coordinates the work of the group. The group reviewed their terms of reference and discussed how it would be possible not to duplicate the work of other already existing networks in order to create synergies. There was an agreement that the first steps would encompass to identify the most burning legal issues in cooperative law (understood in broad terms) and not only to focus on legislation but also implementation issues, including improving the dissemination of ILO Recommendation No. 193. The phenomenon of "pseudo (worker's) cooperatives" was discussed as one of today's biggest problems (please cf. article in this COOPNews for further details) and it was agreed to put this item high up on the

agenda. One important aspect of the work on this issue will be the collaboration between cooperatives and trade unions. The legal experts also heard five presentations on references to cooperatives in national constitutions. A research is currently being undertaken by EMP/COOP on the question whether and how cooperatives are referred to in national constitutions. So far, 59 references in national constitutions worldwide have been identified. A classification into different categories is possible, e.g. mere references in the (legislative) catalogue or references in connection with a specific human right. The research will be finalized in the coming months and published. In the presentation on the MERCOSUR countries, a focus was laid on the impact of the actual timing of drafting constitutions in relation to already existing legislation on cooperatives. The participants also learned about specific clauses in national constitutions which relate to cooperatives and have not yet been utilized (e.g.

taxation of cooperatives in Brazil). The constitutions of Belgium and Luxembourg do not contain an explicit reference. However, in article 33 of the Belgian constitution there is a reference to economic, social and cultural rights, which, of course, could not be taken as a direct reference, but which could be used

in the political dialogue. There is also no direct reference to cooperatives in the French constitution despite of the fact that the main law predates the constitution. In Spain, the national constitution speaks about cooperatives, but the legislative competence lies with the regions.

Study on the implementation of the EU Regulation 1435/2003 on the Statute for a European Cooperative Society

In 2003 the European Council adopted a Regulation for a European Cooperative Society (the *Societas Cooperativa Europaea*, SCE) in order to facilitate the creation of cross border cooperative structures and to enable them to compete with other European transnational business forms. The statute consists of the regulation containing the basic rules on creation, functioning, and management of European cooperatives and of a directive outlining the rules on mandatory worker participation in the decision-making process. Member States had until August 2006 to introduce measures facilitating the creation of SCEs. A research study on the forms and modalities of the implementation of the Regulation 1435/2003 in European Union Member States and EEA Countries (Norway, Iceland, Liechtenstein) is carried out by the European Research Institute on Cooperative and Social Enterprise (EURICSE), together with EZAI Foundation and Cooperatives Europe, the regional office of the International Co-operative Alliance. The Commission will use the study in order to, inter alia, draft the report foreseen in Article 79

of the Regulation which obliges the Commission to forward to the Council and the Parliament a report on the application of the Regulation and proposals for amendments five years after the entry into force (i.e. August 2011). The research is divided into two levels: the national and the supranational (and comparative) one. The first level involves thirty national experts. These national experts provide a national report on the topics of the research. The second level involves a scientific committee made up of six experts which approves all the national reports and is responsible for the final study. The final study will be presented during an international conference foreseen for October 2010. EMP/COOP is part of the Steering and the Scientific Committee to also ensure that the ILO Recommendation R.193 is observed and respected in all its aspects.

>> Further information on the SCE project can be found on the EURICSE website: <http://www.euricse.eu/consulting/projects>

¡Es hora de abordar la problemática de las “seudo-cooperativas”!

En un mundo en crisis – financiera, económica y sobre todo una crisis del pensamiento económico que no respete el ambiente natural – no se puede permitir que una de las tres formas reconocidas de empleo formal, el trabajo asociado en forma cooperativa, sea el objeto de abuso y que esto ponga en cuestión el modelo cooperativo mismo. La Recomendación sobre la promoción de las cooperativas, 2002 (R. 193) dice en su Párrafo 8.1): “Las políticas nacionales deberían, especialmente: b) velar por que no se puedan crear o utilizar cooperativas para evadir la legislación del trabajo ni ello sirva para establecer relaciones de trabajo encubiertas, y luchar contra las seudo-cooperativas, que violan los derechos de los trabajadores, velando por que la legislación del trabajo se aplique en todas las empresas”. Es entonces una obligación de “luchar contra las seudo-cooperativas” de la misma manera que es una obligación de promover todo tipo de cooperativas, incluso las cooperativas de trabajo asociado. El fenómeno de seudo-cooperativas – creadas con el fin de no respetar el derecho laboral, la protección social y la seguridad en el lugar de trabajo, o con indebidas, sobre todo

tributarias, es un fenómeno universal, no limitado a un país o una región. Hasta hace poco, en Colombia, por ejemplo, el modelo de trabajo asociado cooperativo era considerado como un atractivo mecanismo para abaratar los costos de la mano de obra y, en la práctica, algunas entidades, en muchos casos públicas, han utilizado a las cooperativas para contratar servicios de ex empleados, disminuyendo e incluso evadiendo responsabilidades sociales y prestacionales. Ello, debido a que la contratación con asociados de una cooperativa permitía pagar por el servicio recibido un monto fijo, más reducido que el que tendrían que asumir si se tratara de empleados; adicionalmente, la cooperativa, constituida únicamente con esta finalidad, suele utilizar mecanismos para desconocer los derechos fundamentales de los trabajadores, amparada en la característica de la auto regulación que excluye la aplicación de las normas laborales. Debemos contestar a dos cuestiones: ¿Debe aplicarse el derecho laboral en las cooperativas de tra-



bajo asociado? y ¿cómo garantizar esta aplicación? El derecho público internacional cooperativo (¡vinculante!) no nos da una respuesta clara a la primera pregunta. La segunda pregunta parece mucho más difícil que la primera. Implica no solo un análisis jurídico, pero también una institucionalización de mecanismos para la implementación de la normativa. Tenemos que: Buscar el pasaje del diagnóstico a una solución; considerar la normativa cooperativa en su totalidad, incluyendo su implementación; establecer un plan de acción conjunto

que sea modesto, es decir que identifique pocas áreas de intervención, defina el rol de cada uno de los actores considerando de manera realista su capacidad y considere la posibilidad de capacitación de los actores. La OIT está dispuesta de abordar las pseudo-cooperativas. Cada uno de los actores mencionados en la R. 193, los gobiernos, las organizaciones de empleadores, de trabajadores y las organizaciones cooperativas, incluso la Alianza Cooperativa Internacional, tiene su papel. ¡Pero solo con un esfuerzo común lograrán!

- To be read... - A lire absolument... - Lectura importante... -



International Conference “Contribution of Cooperatives to Employment and Poverty Prevention in Kyrgyzstan” (Bishkek, 2009 – in Russian):

This publication prepared by the National Union of Kyrgyz Credit Unions and Cooperatives reports on the main interventions and discussions during the above mentioned conference. Please also refer to the previous issue of COOP News which reported on the conference.

This issue was prepared with contributions from Maria Elena Chavez-Hertig, Yves Chamorel, Hagen Henry, Daniel Mahr, Sam Mshiu, Constanze Schimmel, Elisaveta Tarasova, Ursula Titus, Carlien van Empel, Igor Vocatch.

**Cooperative Programme
(EMP/COOP)
International Labour Office (ILO)**

4, route des Morillons
CH-1211 Geneva, 22
Switzerland

Tel: +41 (0) 22 799 7455
Fax: +41 (0) 22 799 8572

E-mail: coop@ilo.org

Website: www.ilo.org/coop