

ICA and its Impact

ICA objectives? It is to

- promote the world co-operative movement, based upon mutual self-help and democracy
- promote and protect co-operative values and principles
- facilitate the development of economic and other mutually beneficial relations between its member organisations
- further the economic and social progress of people, thereby contributing to international peace and security.

How? By

- serving as a forum for exchange of experience and as a source of information on co-operative development, research and statistics
- providing technical assistance for co-operative development
- creating international specialised bodies in various sectors of co-operatives economic and social activities.
- collaborating with United Nations organisations and other non-governmental international and national organisations which pursue aims of importance to co-operatives
- by any other appropriate means.

Progress

The impact of ICA is indeed far reaching. Through their work for economic and social development the members of ICA have achieved salient progress in peace-building, environment and sustainable development, human rights, human settlements, education and health, the advancement of women and protection of children, cultural development, food security and humanitarian assistance, thereby contributing to UN aims and objectives. ICA members are active in all economic sectors - including agriculture, consumer, banking, fisheries, industry, insurance, housing and also provide education and training, and in some cases health services.

Challenges

With its UN Consultative Status, the ICA has been able to increase the visibility of co-operatives and grab international attention to the importance of co-operatives to economic and social development. Via the ICA, co-operatives are given the rightful recognition on the role they play in alleviating poverty, creating productive employment and increasing social cohesion. The ICA has greatly influenced decision makers and governments by sensitising them on how co-operatives are responding to the challenges of social and economical developments.

Networking

The role of ICA as a global facilitator of business cannot be undermined. The international body serves as an ideal vehicle where co-operators around the world could network, learn from each other and excel. Participating in global, regional and local meetings convened by ICA, members of co-operatives interact with co-operators from different backgrounds, race and religious beliefs all learning to work together for a common aim and that is to make life better for the members. For example, come this October in Korea, the ICA will organise a Global Forum focusing on Asian co-operative development in agriculture, consumer and financial sectors (including insurance) and also provide numerous possibilities for business contacts. The meeting will specifically focus on how the new co-operative principle on Concern for Community can be applied in business.

Values

The ICA has undoubtedly made an impactful contribution in assuring that the economic and social well-being of almost 45 percent of the world's population which today comprises the co-operative movement. Throughout its history, the ICA has sought to promote equitable values in every aspect of the development of human society. The past and current achievements of the co-operative movement are indeed impressive but the organisation is looking ahead to see how it can further contribute to improving the quality of life of people around the world.