



Promoting Cooperatives Beyond 2012

The Closing Events of the International Year of Cooperatives

19-20 November 2012
United Nations North Lawn Building, CR-1
New York, NY, USA

Hosted by:
United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs
Division for Social Policy and Development
in collaboration with
the International Labour Organization, the Permanent Mission of Mongolia and
Rabobank



Overview

The official closing of the United Nations International Year of Cooperatives, “**Promoting Cooperatives Beyond 2012**” will take place at the United Nations Headquarters in New York on 19-20 November 2012. The two day event will highlight major outcomes of various observances during the year, as well as forthcoming initiatives to strengthen cooperatives beyond 2012. The event programme consists of a series of panel discussions addressing cooperatives and food security, cooperatives and youth, and policy and research directions, and also includes an official closing ceremony, reports from national committees and a short film festival. Thematic side events will also be featured.

The event presents an opportunity for dialogue among the various stakeholders and will serve to promote effective engagement with cooperative enterprises and organizations in achieving agreed development goals.

The event is organized by the Division for Social Policy and Development (DSPD) of the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs in collaboration with the International Labour Organization, the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and Rabobank.

Background

The global impact of recent financial, economic and social crises has shown the importance of concentrating development efforts on empowering people and building their capacity to participate fully in social and economic life. Cooperatives, and the potential that they represent, are a significant and growing feature of the development strategies promoted by the United Nations.

Most recently, at the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, Rio +20, the international community recognized the role that cooperatives play in forwarding key aspects of development such as social inclusion and poverty reduction. In Rio, Member States of the United Nations also placed particular emphasis on the real and potential role of cooperatives in promoting rural development and access to decent work and sustainable livelihoods.

Well-run and properly integrated cooperative enterprises can benefit any society. The cooperative model has shown proven comparative advantage for achieving gender equity both from the income generation perspective and through provision of services. It has also proven advantageous in positively affecting livelihood opportunities among other vulnerable groups, including indigenous peoples and persons with disabilities. The model also presents a promising avenue for empowering the young women and men of the world who are disproportionately affected by issues of unemployment and under-employment. The cooperative enterprise model has also proven itself both efficient and sustainable, and thus a strong contributor to sustainable economies.

The International Year of Cooperatives 2012 presented an opportunity for the international community, national governments and local communities to celebrate and explore the real and potential advantages of engaging with and supporting cooperative

enterprises and organizations. Throughout the year Governments, cooperatives, international organizations, civil-society actors and other stakeholders worked to increase public awareness about cooperatives and their contributions to socio-economic development; promote the formation and growth of cooperatives; and to address policy concerns, laws and regulations that affect cooperative operations.

The two-day event “**Promoting Cooperatives Beyond 2012**” will draw on the outcomes of key internationally focused activities of the year to shape a series of discussions on engaging with cooperatives across varying contexts in addressing major development concerns such as food security, employment generation and sustainable livelihoods, policy orientation and youth development.

Outcomes of the discussions over the two days are expected to further inform the ongoing process of developing an International Plan of Action on Cooperatives.

Objectives of the event

The two-day event is organized around the theme “Promoting Cooperatives Beyond 2012.”

Specifically, the event aims to:

1. Highlight the contributions of cooperatives to building sustainable societies.
2. Highlight activities that occurred around the world during the IYC.
3. Focus attention on the need for an International Plan of Action on Cooperatives

In so doing, the event will provide participants with information regarding the socio-economic power of cooperatives. Participants will also get an understanding of the challenges and opportunities for promoting cooperatives. They will learn about new policy recommendations and initiatives regarding promoting cooperatives.

Organization and Administration

The event will take place at United Nations Headquarters in New York on 19-20 November 2012.

The event will take the form of a series of panels and interactive dialogues aimed at highlighting strategies for engaging with cooperatives in national and international development plans.

All inputs to the meeting will be made available as a resource guide on the site of the International Year of Cooperatives at <http://social.un.org/coopsyear> as well as a summary of discussions.

The event will cater to approximately 300 participants including academic experts, cooperative representatives, the NGO community, government representatives and international organizations.

Documentation and Language of the Meeting

The documentation of the meeting will comprise of relevant publications, documents, and materials related to the development and operation of cooperatives. All documentation will be made available on the website of the International Year of Cooperatives at <http://social.un.org/coopsyear>.

The working language of the meeting will be English. Documentation for the meeting will be provided in English.

Passports and Visas

Participants will be expected to make necessary arrangements with regard to passports, visa and health certificates for travel. An information note will be sent out to participants to assist them with travel arrangements.

All relevant correspondence should be addressed to:

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