

Concept Note: International Day of Cooperatives Special Event

Event Title:

Sustainable Development Goes Local: How New York City Cooperatives Are Advancing the UN Millennium Development Goals

- 12 July 2012 (This is in conjunction with the International Day of Cooperatives on Saturday, 7 July during the United Nations-declared International Year of Cooperatives.)
- Location: UN NY-HQ – North Lawn Building, Conference Room 7

Objective: Co-operatives work for the sustainable development of their communities through policies approved by their members, as defined by the International Co-operative Alliance, an independent, non-governmental association active in 96 countries. Many entrepreneurial, opportunity and results-driven cooperatives, however, are also right in our own backyard – New York City.

This interactive, 90-minute panel discussion will raise the visibility of the diversity and strength of local cooperatives, who in serving their communities, are directly empowering women and also providing affordable food, housing, innovative financial products and services, as well as job training/mentorships to meet individuals' growing and ever-changing needs. The educational event, featuring experts in their respective areas, will also underscore the challenges faced by cooperatives and how in an economically turbulent climate, their business model founded on principles of voluntary and open membership; democratic member control; member economic participation; education, training and information; co-operation, and concern for community, is proving resilient and improving lives.

Background

Participants

- United Nations Federal Credit Union (UNFCU)
- Flatbush Food Coop
- SCO Family of Services/Si se Puede! Women's Cooperative We Can Do It! (Worker Co-op)
- Urban Homesteading Assistance Board (UHAB), Housing Co-operative/The Council of New York Cooperatives & Condominiums (CNYC Inc.)

Content

Attendees will gain timely insight on the Cooperative Movement's strengths, namely its solidarity, economic efficiency, equality and social responsibility through practical examples from the panelists. Their pointed remarks will be followed by Q&A and a tabling event featuring literature, the latest news and International Year of Cooperatives updates, as well as a short film

clip about solidarity cooperatives: worker-cooperatives, consumer cooperatives, participatory budgeting, barter networks, credit unions and intentional communities.

Benefits to Attendees

This panel discussion on the occasion of the United Nations International Day of Cooperatives will spotlight and reaffirm cooperatives' significant role shaping economic, social and cultural development.

The session will address: the following questions:

- What is a cooperative?
- What are cooperatives' specific contributions to the UN Millennium Development Goals?
- Who are the actors, including governments at the local and national level?
- How are cooperatives collaborating, serving diverse communities and expanding their operations?
- What are cooperative values and principles for Corporate Social Responsibility?
- How are cooperatives driving economic recovery? How are they being viewed as leaders in providing safety and security?
- What is the cooperative advantage in the Third Millennium?
- What does the future hold for cooperatives and the millions of members they serve?

About United Nations Federal Credit Union

UNFCU offers a wide array of flexible savings, loan, investment and insurance products, as well as advisory services and a culture of corporate social responsibility. Membership is open to staff of the United Nations, its specialized agencies, retirees and their families. UNFCU members reside in more than 200 countries and territories. Headquartered and with branches in New York City, UNFCU has representative offices in Geneva, Switzerland; Vienna, Austria; Nairobi, Kenya, and Rome, Italy. For more information, please visit its website at www.unfcu.org. Follow news about UNFCU social responsibility activities on Facebook at unfcu.org/facebook.

About Si Se Puede!

Si Se Puede! Women's Cooperative, We Can Do It! Inc. was founded in Sunset Park, Brooklyn in 2006 to bring together immigrant women to create a women-run, women-owned, eco-friendly housecleaning business. The cooperative is designed to create living wage jobs that will be done in a safe and healthy environment, as well as to provide social supports and educational opportunities for its members.

The Urban Homesteading Assistance Board, or "UHAB," is the oldest "homesteading" organization in the United States. UHAB helps create affordable, tenant-controlled housing cooperatives out of slumlord-owned or abandoned rental buildings. Since its founding in 1973, UHAB has assisted in the preservation of over 1,700 buildings, creating co-operative

homeownership opportunities for over 30,000 households. UHAB's provides tenant organizing support, construction loan packaging, tenant-influenced renovation, shareholder training, co-op conversion legal services and co-op technical assistance. We also advocate and educate on issues jeopardizing the health of and advancing the expansion of the affordable housing co-op community at the local, state and national level. Today, New York City has the largest community of shared-equity housing co-ops in the country.

The Council of New York Cooperatives & Condominiums (CNYC Inc.) is a membership organization providing information, education and advocacy to the boards and residents of housing cooperatives and condominiums in the New York area. Its members span the full economic spectrum from self-managed limited equity HDFC cooperatives to posh open-market skyscrapers. Its members range in size from tiny 2-unit coops and condos to large multi-building complexes which include many hundreds of units. CNYC has crusaded for property tax fairness for New York City home owners in cooperatives and condominiums; it offers members information on energy-conscious improvements, on complying with City, State and Federal laws, on best governance practices and on a myriad of "people issues" as they arise.

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