



International
Labour
Organization

ILO and Cooperatives

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Editorial

The momentum attained around the UN International Year of Cooperatives last year has been continuing in 2013. Bolivia has passed a new general law on cooperatives, and Portugal has adopted a new law on the social economy. National cooperative policy and strategy workshops have taken place in Egypt and Sri Lanka with ILO support.

National cooperative movements are seeking to cooperate with other movements that are natural allies, including those of youth and women, as reflected in the statements of cooperative leaders on International Women's Day. They are also furthering cooperation among cooperatives. The ILO is co-organizing the fourth African Cooperative Leaders' Tour to Japan with the Japanese Consumer Cooperatives Union, following a positive in-depth assessment of previous iterations.

Partners collaborating on the My.Coop training package on the management of agricultural cooperatives met in Rome to take stock of the roll out efforts. They identified advancing national ownership as a key area for improvement. Pilot-testing of My.Coop national adaptations is underway, most recently in Indonesia and Egypt.

The Committee for the Promotion and Advancement of Cooperatives has agreed to focus on showing the cooperative advantage in the context of the Post-2015 Development Agenda. A series of ILO products and activities will illustrate the value of cooperative enterprises in advancing sustainable development goals. We are also intensifying our engagement on the four areas of critical importance that the ILO DG and ICA president have identified as priorities for joint action: crisis response, youth employment, informal economy and rural employment.

The theme of the International Day of Cooperatives (July 6) this year, Cooperative Enterprise remains strong in time of crisis, is given credence by the ILO's newest publication, "Resilience in a downturn: Power of financial cooperatives". A number of other studies are on their way including one on mapping domestic worker cooperative enterprises and other social and solidarity economy organizations, and another one comparing framework legislation on social and solidarity economy.

Quality research on cooperatives requires up-to-date comparable statistics. For the first time in the history of the International Conference of Labour Statisticians (ICLS), cooperative statistics are on the agenda of the 19th ICLS, to be held in October 2013. The ILO will present a paper on the measurement of cooperatives for discussion with statistical experts appointed from tripartite constituents.

COOP News has a new feature on COOP Champions. In every issue it will showcase the efforts of an ILO colleague or partner working on the promotion of cooperatives. This issue features the work of a colleague engaged in strengthening cooperatives and cooperative support institutions in the Northern Province of Sri Lanka, as part of a Local Economic Empowerment and Employment project.

As this issue goes to press, we are working on a number of events including a research meeting on the potential and limits of the social and solidarity economy with UNRISD, a meeting on trade unions and worker cooperatives, and a gathering of the ILO History Project and COOP elders. We will share the details in the next issue.

Simel Esim, Chief, Cooperative Branch

Interagency committee on cooperatives to focus on Post-2015 Development Agenda

The Committee for the Promotion and Advancement of Cooperatives (COPAC) will focus its 2013 activities on the Post-2015 Development Agenda with a focus on employment and food security. Meeting in Rome in late January this year, representatives from ILO, the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), International Cooperative Alliance, United Nations and, the World Farmers' Organization reiterated their four areas of strategic and joint action, namely, information exchange, promoting and raising awareness on the cooperative form of enterprise, inter-agency technical cooperation and coordination, and policy and advocacy.

In 2013, members agreed to specifically collaborate on cooperative statistics and preparation for the International Year of the Family Farming 2014 in addition to seeking new members. They further agreed on the theme of the 2013 theme for United Nations International Day of Cooperatives – “Cooperative enterprise remains strong in time of crisis”. FAO was elected chair the Committee with the vice-chair rotating among members.

>> More information on COPAC at: <http://www.copac.coop> and www.ilo.org/coop

Cooperatives celebrate International Women's Day

“Cooperatives can empower all women” was the overarching message of the international cooperative movement for this year's celebration of International Women's Day (IWD). Although some cooperatives addressed the international theme of the Day, “A promise is a promise: Time for action to end violence against women”, many also used the day to recognize women cooperative leaders and members for their achievements and looked ahead to the untapped potential and opportunities for women in the future.

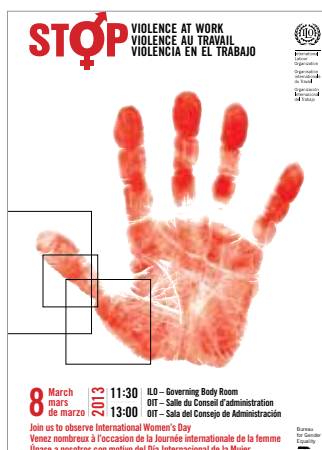
International Women's Day provided the opportunity to recognize women members and leaders of cooperatives. For example, in Argentina, Colombia, Guatemala, and Nicaragua events were held to honour women leaders, provide capacity building and recognize their contributions. In Australia, the women cooperative radio broadcasting cooperative featured a series of radio programmes that addressed a wide range of women's issues. Women only cooperatives and their role in reducing poverty, improving women's livelihoods and protecting their rights were also featured in various media. On 8 March we read about women-run cooperatives in Western Sahel who are tapping into the global demand for fair trade and organic beauty products by selling the skin-care cream they produce from the shea nut crop to top cosmetics firms;

we learned too about women cocoa farmers in Ghana and Côte D'Ivoire who are members of cooperatives engaged in fair trade cocoa production. We read about women artisans from Nepal and Rwanda who had formed cooperatives to sell their crafts, and women owned and run recycling cooperatives in the Philippines being lauded as recycling champions by not only collecting recyclable waste but “turning trash into treasures”. Finally we also learned about cooperatives supporting cooperative development in other countries as is the case of the Canadian Cooperative Association and their support for cooperatives in Uganda and how these cooperatives were offering women the opportunity to better their lives and promote gender equality.

Much remains to be done to ensure equal opportunities for women in decision-making positions. Data released for International Women's Day does provide some promises. In Spain, women hold 40 per cent of leadership positions in the worker cooperative movement while in Brazil, the Organization of Cooperative of Brazil notes 30 per cent of their leadership is in the hands of women (52 per cent of the employees are women). Yet despite the progress, Dame Pauline Green, President of the International Cooperative Alliance (ICA) reminded, “cooperative businesses have done so much to help women onto the ladder of economic activity, with that comes community respect, political legitimacy and influence. So far it has come too slowly. It is time for us to show that our cooperative movement can be a movement for the economic, social and political emancipation of all women”.

>> ILO is supporting cooperatives with specific tools such as the ILO-ICA training package on gender and cooperatives and the ILO-ICA Leadership training manual for women leaders of cooperatives: http://www.ilo.org/wcmstp5/groups/public/---asia/---ro-bangkok/---sro-new_delhi/documents/publication/wcms_124337.pdf

>> International Women's Day Message from Dame Pauline Green, President of ICA: <http://ica.coop/en/media/library/press-releases/international-womens-day-8-march-2013-message-dame-pauline-green>



Cooperative statistics to feature at International Conference of Labour Statisticians

For the first time in the history of the International Conference of Labour Statisticians (ICLS), the ILO will present a paper that will explore sources for the production of statistics on cooperatives. The ILO has been looking into cooperative statistics, to assess the current situation and future prospects of producing national statistics on cooperative enterprises that are internationally comparable for some time now.

Cooperative statistics cover information on a wide range of indicators. These can be the number of cooperatives, sectors of activity, membership, employees, as well as financial indicators such as assets, turnover and reserves. Cooperative statistics are found for many countries, developed and developing, covering all or some of the above data-items. However, they tend to cover only a subset of cooperatives in the country, often only in some sectors of economic activity. This is because identifying cooperatives is not an easy task. Cooperatives are a specific business type with particular characteristics and they do

not always have the possibility of being legally registered as cooperatives or are simply not registered. Statistics therefore can be collected based on legal registration or by compliance to the definition of cooperatives according to the Cooperative Identity Statement.

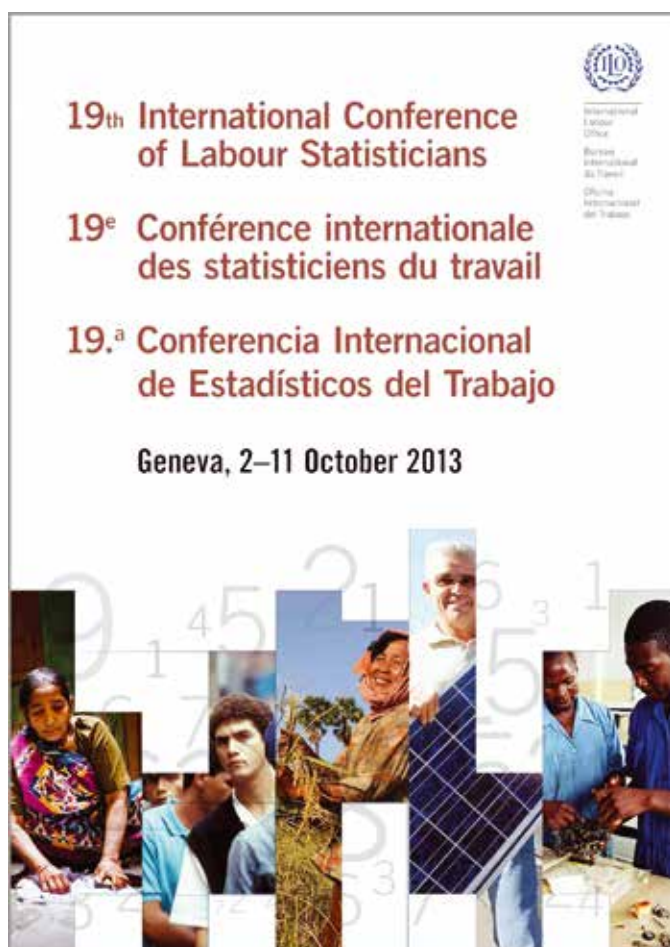
Most existing cooperative statistics are produced on the basis of administrative registers or from surveys. This can be based on administrative lists of government ministries or agencies in charge of cooperatives, national cooperative organizations or survey and census data. A complete and up-to-date register of cooperatives in the public and private domain therefore is difficult to maintain and so cooperative statistics tend to have partial coverage, cover different indicators and can be irregular.

One source of cooperative statistics that is being examined is regular establishment or household surveys which could help identify cooperatives and their members with little additional cost to national statistical services. They would require the creation of additional categories to existing questions and the inclusion of a few additional questions in standard questionnaires. Cooperative statistics obtained through regular national establishment surveys or censuses have the potential of having a more global coverage and being less dependent on administrative registers. They could also identify cooperatives whose members are legal persons such as cooperatives created by other forms of enterprises. Cooperative statistics obtained through regular household surveys on the other hand would have the potential of not only identifying members of all types of cooperatives, even the cooperatives that are not registered, but also of describing the demographic and labour characteristics of members, showing the relationship between their labour status and membership by type of cooperatives, and identifying persons with multiple cooperative memberships.

The participants in the upcoming ICLS will be invited to express (a) whether this topic is of interest in their countries; (b) whether they already collect statistics on cooperatives through regular establishment-based surveys or censuses, or household-based surveys; and (c) whether they consider that this topic should be further developed and discussed more in-depth at the next International Conference of Labour Statisticians, with a view to producing statistics on cooperatives that can be internationally comparable in the future.

The 19th International Conference of Labour Statisticians will take place on 2-11 October 2013 in Geneva, Switzerland.

>> More information at: <http://www.ilo.org/global/statistics-and-databases/meetings-and-events/international-conference-of-labour-statisticians/19/lang--en/index.htm>



**19th International Conference
of Labour Statisticians**

**19^e Conférence internationale
des statisticiens du travail**

**19.^a Conferencia Internacional
de Estadísticos del Trabajo**

Geneva, 2–11 October 2013

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Financial cooperative's resilience: New study available

Financial cooperatives have fared better than the investor-owned banks in times of crisis accordingly the new study released on 20 March 2013. Why is this important? Financial cooperatives present an astonishingly large slice of the global banking market serving more than 870 million people worldwide and thus play an important role in providing stability, particularly important in the current protracted economic and job crisis. Author, Prof Johnston Birchall shows that savings and credit cooperatives, cooperative banks and credit unions have grown, kept credit flowing especially to small and medium sized enterprises, and remained stable across regions of the world while (indirectly) creating employment. He points to their unique combination of member ownership, control and benefit that is at the heart of their resilience and that that these characteristics of cooperatives provide a series of advantages over its competitors. The study concludes with a review of practical policy options and recommendations for the way governments and development agencies should approach financial cooperatives – not as 'conduits' but as partners in the wider aims of business development, insurance against episodic poverty, and decent work.

The study has already received wide interest with articles reporting its conclusions including by the International Cooperative Alliance as well as the World Farmers' Organization but also in national cooperative press such as in

Resilience in a downturn:

The power of financial cooperatives



Australia, Canada and New Zealand. It will be presented at the 2nd Cooperative Banks Day ay with academics and stakeholders organized by the European Cooperative Banking Association (EACB) in May 2013.

>> Download the publication at: http://www.ilo.org/empent/Publications/WCMS_207768/lang--en/index.htm or order a hard copy by e-mail at: coop@ilo.org.

Cooperation among cooperatives: African cooperative leaders learn from Japanese experience

The Japanese Consumers' Cooperative Union (JCCU) has renewed its commitment with ILO to jointly organize an annual study tour of cooperatives in Japan for African cooperative leaders. To date, thirteen African cooperative leaders from five countries have participated in the annual capacity-building programme initiated in 2010. An impact assessment study confirmed the usefulness of the programme for cooperative development, with nearly

all participants having applied the knowledge gained during the study tour to within their own cooperatives with wider benefits to their national movements as whole.

“The trip was an eye-opener in terms of what organizations of cooperatives are capable of achieving as well as how much influence they can have on basically any sector of the economy – including politics. There is a need to reform cooperatives in our region – get the right leadership and management as well as the right policy environment. In East Africa the perennial food insecurity can be a thing of the past if we get organized into collective marketing based on organizations like cooperatives in all sectors because the rules of engagement are similar – already there are success stories to ride on in this region as well”.

Former participant of the ILO-JCCU study tours to Japan



ILO thematic policy paper on Social Economy for Sudan

The Social Economy approach to tackling youth employment is one of the areas of technical expertise that the ILO will provide to the Government of Sudan in response to their request for technical support to develop a national youth employment framework. ILO will prepare a policy paper outlining the potential approaches for the establishment of social economy organizations in particular, cooperatives, mutual benefit societies, associations, foundations and social enterprises. It will inform on how Social Economy organizations provide innovative solutions to current social problems including the reintegration of marginalized groups, and empowering women and youth. The paper is part of a series of seven thematic papers on employment which have been identified as priorities by Sudan.

Although the concept of “social economy” is not known in Sudan, social economy organizations do exist. Association and foundation are present, but cooperatives are seen to be the main pillars of the Social Economy. Estimates provided by the National Cooperative Union indicated that there are 3,332 primary cooperatives, (2,000 of which are in the agricultural sector) with between four and eight million members.

Cooperatives have a long history in Sudan. Established in the 1920s under British colonial rule, they have been governed under a number of laws, the most recent enacted in 1999. A revised law which addresses a number of weaknesses as well as excessive government control/intervention of cooperatives is expected. At the request of the the Government (Ministry of Trade) and the National Cooperative Union, ILO is providing technical assistance to finalize the draft Cooperative Law of 2012 in line with Recommendation No. 193 on the promotion of cooperatives. The Government also envisages a new cooperative development policy to improve the support services and performance of cooperatives and increase their role in poverty reduction and job creation.

Recently, an ILO senior consultant visited Sudan to discuss existing challenges of social economy organizations (SEOs) and how to improve the policy environment. In consultation with the Government, SEOs and

other stakeholders, a draft policy paper was prepared and is expected to be submitted to the Government later this month.

Cooperatives are currently supported by a National Cooperative Training Centre, a promotional institution which has been in operation since 1976. Initially established with the technical support of the ILO as part of a technical cooperation project, the Centre provides training for the board of directors and members and staff of cooperatives as well as government officials working with cooperatives. The Centre is still using many of the ILO MATCOM (Training for the Management of Cooperatives) materials, but also provides consultancy services and undertakes research. ILO is exploring ways to again support the Centre, introducing My.COOP Managing your agricultural cooperative training package, and strengthening its linkages with the cooperative movement.



COOP engages with European Commission Task Force for Greece

The ILO Cooperative Branch joined other ILO units and departments in a video conference with members of the European Commission Task Force for Greece that was organized between Athens, Brussels and Geneva. The mandate of the Task Force is to assist Greece in mobilizing technical assistance and European Union (EU) funds for growth, investment, employment and improving governance. The Task Force is also cooperating with EU Member states, with regional organizations and with international organizations, including the ILO.

The ILO has been participating in the regular consultation meetings of the EC Task Force for Greece since 2011. Earlier this year, ILO and EC agreed at their annual high level meeting to explore further concrete cooperation in EU programme countries and to discuss next steps before the ILO's regional meeting in Oslo in April 2013. The members of the Task Force welcomed the upcoming ILO meeting on workers' cooperatives in Athens and noted that the recommendations coming out of the meeting would be valuable to feed into the upcoming work of the Task Force.

Vietnam: On-going cooperative development initiatives

The ILO Country Office for Vietnam has been supporting ILO constituents in revising cooperative legislation and supporting cooperatives within their three main areas of work: labour market governance, employment and sustainable enterprise development, and social protection and social security.

Using Recommendation no. 193 as a guide, ILO has supported an extensive revision of the existing coopera-

tive law. It is expected that the National Assembly will review the law later in the year in view of its adoption. The ILO has also been engaging beyond legislation toward policy development and support for implementation. Capacity-building programmes such as *My.COOP Manage your agricultural cooperative* and the soon to be available Start and Improve Your Cooperative package are being proposed for adaptation to support on-going cooperative development initiatives.

Egypt: Proposal for cooperative roadmap

Simel Esim, Cooperative Branch's Chief, was a keynote speaker at the one-day workshop assessing the future of the Egyptian cooperative movement. The workshop, which took place in Cairo on 17 January, was designed to enable a discussion on co-operative law among stakeholders and alert them of the importance of co-operatives in the current economic context. The morning session started with the presentation of a report prepared by ILO Consultant Huseyin Polat entitled "The Cooperative Roadmap: The ILO contribution to the cooperative reform process in Egypt and was followed by working group sessions between farmers, trade unionists, cooperative leaders, academics, journalists and policy makers. Ms.

Esim was also hosted at the Egypt's popular TV Talk Show "Good Morning Egypt" and participated in the first pilot testing and adaptation workshop of the My.COOP training package in Arabic to the Egyptian context.

Egypt's farmers: Sowing the seeds of an agricultural revolution, ILO Feature story, February 7, 2013
http://www.ilo.org/global/about-the-ilo/newsroom/features/WCMS_204313/lang--en/index.htm

ILO proposes a cooperative roadmap for Egypt
ICA News Story, 24 January, 2013
<http://ica.coop/en/media/news/ilo-proposes-%E2%80%98co-operative-roadmap%E2%80%99-egypt>

Egypt's farmers mainly in 7,000 cooperatives
Ag Professional online news, February 7, 2013
<http://www.agprofessional.com/news/Egypt-farmers-mainly-in-7000-cooperatives-190246431.html>

Egyptian TV Talk Show "Good Morning Egypt", January 16, 2013, Interview with Simel Esim and Mr. Hassan Abd el Latif (Shura Council Member)
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iyg4AXt-F2g>

Salasel contributes to the cooperative reform process in Egypt
<http://mdg-hvc-eg.org/resources/news-and-events/tabid/128/articleType/ArticleView/articleId/24/SALASEL-Contributes-to-the-Cooperative-Reform-Process-in-Egypt.aspx>



Sri Lanka: Updating the cooperative policy

Simel Esim, ILO's Cooperative Branch Chief participated in a meeting on the design of a cooperative policy framework document in Sri Lanka organized by the Department of Cooperatives in the Ministry of Cooperatives and Internal Trade (MOCIT) and the ILO's Colombo office. Cooperative experts and leaders from around Sri Lanka participated in the meeting where she provided a presentation on the role of the ILO in designing Cooperative Policy. The ensuing discussion resulted in an agreement that the government would work with the cooperative leaders and experts in updating the comprehensive draft cooperative policy document that was developed in 2001 which was not approved then and bringing it to policy makers' attention for its adoption. Ms. Esim participated in the Planning Workshop for the Cooperative Movement in the Northern Province of Sri Lanka. The two day work-

shop was organized by the ILO's project titled "Local Empowerment through Economic Development (LEED)" funded by AusAid. Ms. Esim worked closely with the LEED project staff and visited several cooperatives in the Northern Province of Sri Lanka during her mission.

Reviving cooperative movement to overcome global economic stresses
Sunday Times Article based on interview with Simel Esim, April 7, 2013
<http://www.sundaytimes.lk/130407/business-times/reviving-cooperative-movement-to-overcome-global-economic-stresses-39549.html>

>> For more information on the ILO's LEED project in Sri Lanka, see: http://www.ilo.org/employment/areas/crisis-response/WCMS_181861/lang--en/index.htm

New feature: COOP Champions

This issue of ILO and Cooperatives marks the launch of a new item to feature colleagues who are currently working with cooperatives. These “COOP champions” will share information about their professional experience, current work, and the future aspirations with regard to promotion of cooperatives.

Cooperatives United

Our first COOP champion is Mohamed Farzan who works with the ILO's Local Empowerment through Economic Development (LEED) project in the post conflict Northern Region of Sri Lanka as a Programme Assistant for Value Chain Development and Cooperative Promotion. Originally from the North Western Province of Sri Lanka Farzan is a training facilitator of LED tools and is a trainer for My.COOP, an agricultural cooperative management training package.

The LEED project, funded by the Australian Agency for International Development (AusAID), is an initiative implemented by the ILO in collaboration with the Ministry of Labour and Labour Relations in Sri Lanka. Started in 2011, the project works in three districts of the Northern Province promoting inclusive local economic development that creates decent jobs and long term sustainable livelihoods in economic sectors with growth potential. Cooperatives have been historically the strongest cooperatives in the country and they are the main partners of the project interventions in the Northern Province as the main economic, social and environmental service providers for the community.

Following the resettlement in early 2010 the Northern cooperative movement reemerged as an important local economy actor. The LEED project partnered with the Provincial Department of Cooperative Development to support the re-establishment of nine primary and secondary cooperatives involved in rice paddy, fisheries, fruits and vegetable. Four multi-purpose cooperatives were also supported to re-equip their rice mills while purchasing



paddy harvest from their thousands of members for a guaranteed price.

The project has been emphasizing business to business partnerships, strengthening of institutional capacities of both government institutions and cooperatives, mainstreaming of gender equality concerns, creation of decent jobs as well as increasing incomes of poor and vulnerable populations by establishing sustainable economic systems via cooperatives.

LEED's focus to date with the cooperative movement has been on the re-establishment of the cooperatives' core businesses and establishing market linkages. Other needs remain unmet for building management capacities, development of cooperative values and principles, provision of better quality and diversified services to members and promotion of innovations. The project has started to address these 'soft needs' through training on planning, effective management, accounting and auditing practices, management of membership skills and know-how.

The Cooperative Branch of ILO in Geneva has supported the project by providing technical advice and expertise in the field. The My.Coop training package has emerged as a relevant tool that the project staff and government stakeholders in the cooperative sector were trained on. In this process, the project has also made an entry point to translate and adapt this training package to both Sinhala and Tamil. Furthermore, the project has also contributed to initiating policy dialogue at national level with the Ministry of Cooperative Development for a comprehensive policy framework for the cooperative movement in Sri Lanka.

Mr Farzan says that the cooperative sector has an enormous potential to grow in the North and other parts of Sri Lanka. For that to happen a more conducive legal and policy environment is needed. The role of ILO in this process has been welcome by the key stakeholders. The efforts initiated through LEED need to be sustained through longer term initiatives at both the national and local levels.



Fishery cooperative members with Upali Herath and Mohamed Farzan

Mapping domestic workers' cooperatives and membership-based associations

More than 52 million people – mostly women – are employed as domestic workers and yet little is known about their organizing efforts beyond trade unions. To better understand the trends and seek to support domestic workers in their efforts for recognition, the Cooperative Branch has initiated a mapping exercise of social economy organizations of domestic workers - in particular cooperatives and other membership based organizations.

The adoption of the Domestic Workers Recommendation, 2011 (No. 201) and the Domestic Workers Convention, 2011 (No. 189), have provided domestic workers with opportunities to seek new employment arrangements while becoming visible, valued and protected workers. The alignment of national laws to the convention is opening the way for the creation of domestic worker's membership based enterprises and organizations as a critical means for securing decent terms and conditions of work. In Spain the passing of new legislation on domestic work has encouraged the creation of new cooperatives, like the Cooperativa Valenciana de Empleadas de Hogar del Levante.

While cooperatives have been providing better livelihoods and improved conditions of work for domestic workers, they face a number of challenges. Access to capital, management and organizational structure, and networks with other domestic worker groups remain as obstacles to starting and improving domestic workers' cooperatives.

The initial findings from the mapping initiative identified worker cooperatives that provide a range of services to their members from employment intermediation, finance, housing to education and health care. Cooperatives that provide employment intermediation services are common in the US including Si Se Puede, Amigos and Manos Cariñas. Members of these cooperatives receive 100 percent of their pay instead of losing any part of their income to employment intermediaries. Unlike other recruitment agencies, domestic worker cooperatives

inform the employers of their contractual obligations for ensuring decent employment practices. The ILO intends to further investigate the potential of replicating this model in other countries and regions.

The mapping has also identified a number of interfaces between cooperatives and trade unions. *A membership based association can turn into a trade union.* The Jamaican Household Workers Association, which has over 1,600 members, works closely with employers, government institutions and trade unions to ensure their members are provided with fair wages and decent working conditions has recently changed its status to a union. *Unions can provide services to their members through cooperatives.* The Self Employed Workers Association (SEWA) in India, which has over 1.3 million members, is not just a trade union, but also a movement of several types of membership-based organizations, including cooperatives. It has a strategy of "struggle and development" – the union struggles for workers' rights while cooperatives and other collective organizations provide for economic opportunities and development. *Cooperatives and trade unions also join forces under common national platforms for joint action.* The South Korean Home Managers Cooperative has recently joined forces with the domestic workers' trade union on advocating for rights.

The preliminary results of the mapping exercise provided some useful insights which need to be further investigated through in-depth interviews and gathering of case studies of membership based organizations. The ILO, through its relevant departments and in collaboration with partners, is committed to better understanding the role that cooperatives and other membership based organizations in the social and solidarity economy can play to support, strengthen and multiply such initiatives.

>> Learn more about Convention No. 189 at: http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed_protect/---protrav/---travail/documents/publication/wcms_161104.pdf



Analysis of framework legislation on social and solidarity economy

New legal frameworks are emerging around the world in responding to the rapidly changing reality of social and solidarity economy. The ILO's Cooperatives Branch is exploring the recent legal developments in SE through an assessment of the state-of-the art on recent framework laws. In recent years, a number of countries have taken initiatives to create overarching framework legislations to overcome the fragmented landscape of laws on SE organizations. While those organizations that make up SE, i.e. cooperatives, mutual benefit societies, and associations etc. often have their specific legislation and policy frameworks, these recent framework laws aim to highlight the common character of SE as a whole.

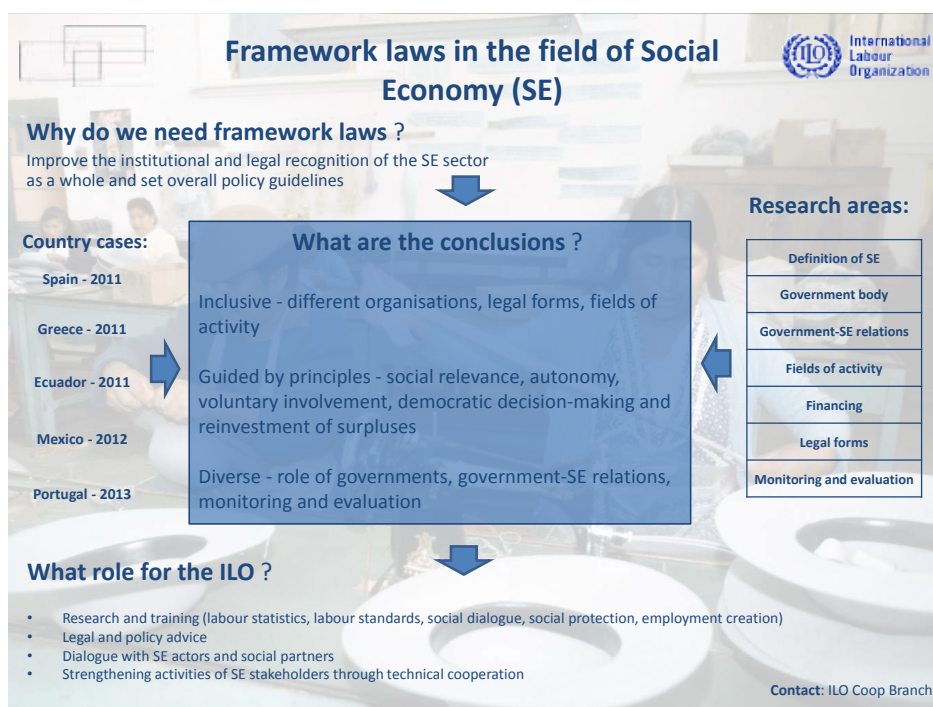
Mere existence of legal frameworks, however, may be a necessary but insufficient condition for the creation of supportive enabling environments for SE organisations. Legislation needs to be translated into practice through concrete policy measures, i.e. the establishment of coordinating government institutions and consultative mechanisms; offering capacity building; setting up of incubation centres; or developing financing programmes. Identification of reporting and monitoring mechanisms; facilitating networks of SE enterprises and organisations; and active promotion of the SE sector are other possible measures. The research project delves into existing country cases of emerging legal and policy frameworks on SE to learn from, and support future developments on the issue and includes the following dimensions among others:

1. Country case studies: Fact sheets were developed on selected countries (Spain, Portugal, Mexico,

Ecuador and Greece) that established framework legislative arrangements, making use of seven variables: definition of SE, fields of activity, governmental body on SSE, government-civil society relations, financing of SE, monitoring and evaluation, and legal forms.

2. Cross-country analysis: A comparative research working paper was produced to take a closer look at framework laws in the five above-mentioned countries, which all passed a framework law in the past two years. The paper concludes that the framework laws analyzed were inclusive, in terms of organisations, legal forms and fields of activity. They were guided by principles of social relevance, autonomy, voluntary involvement, democratic decision-making and reinvestment of surpluses. They also addressed in different ways the role of governmental bodies, the relation between governments and SE organisations; and monitoring and evaluation schemes. The ILO can play a role in providing legal and policy advice, engaging in policy dialogue with ILO constituents and stakeholders on SE, and undertaking relevant research and training activities as needed.

3. Engagement on SSE: A process of engagement has been initiated with critical actors in the field of SE. Within the ILO a SE Task Force has been established. ILO has joined forces with UNRISD in a conference on the potential and limits of social and solidarity economy bringing academics and practitioners together. Establishment of an SSE expert group is also in the making to advise on the theory, methodology and policy dimensions.



COOP builds closer links with the Social Finance Network

At a meeting at the International Training Centre of the ILO, social finance focal points discussed new tools and shared information on how financial inclusion was being integrated into their activities in the regions. Mr Guy Tchami participated on behalf of the Cooperative Branch, joining the focal points for the two-day meeting held on 25-27 March 2013.

Mr Tchami took the opportunity in meeting field colleagues to be briefed on the progress made on joint areas of work related to cooperative development including the development of the training package, *Start and Improve Your Cooperative in the Caribbean*; the translation of My.COOP into Bahasa Indonesia and cooperative capacity-building of cooperatives by trade unions in Indonesia; and support to agricultural cooperatives in Ethiopia through Information and Communication Technology services.



Coming soon: “Start and Improve Your Cooperative Business (SIYC)”

The ILO Office for the Caribbean (ILO Port of Spain) has developed a new cooperative management training package for the English speaking Caribbean. Start and Improve Your Cooperative Business (SIYC) is a training tool intended for groups, individuals, support organizations with no or limited knowledge of cooperative enterprise. Largely inspired by “Start and Improve Your Business” (SIYB) and Training for the Management of Cooperatives (MATCOM), the SIYC package consists of three modules - What is a Cooperative Enterprise, Starting a Cooperative Enterprise, and Cooperative Organization & Management, and a trainers manual.

SIYC is the most recent ILO tool available providing the fundamentals on setting up a cooperative enterprise.

In 2011, a draft version of SIYC was well received by cooperative stakeholders in the region and since then there have been repeated requests for the final testing and implementation of the tool.

ILO Port of Spain and the Cooperative Branch are currently planning the updating and testing of SIYC for use by business development service providers, the cooperative movement, and youth employment support programmes in the English speaking Caribbean region.

>> For more information, contact Kelvin Sergeant, ILO Enterprise Specialist, ILO Port of Spain, email: sergeant@ilocarib.org.tt

My.Coop partners set programme for 2013

The partnership approach has proven successful in making available and continued development of the capacity building programme, My.COOP – Managing your agricultural cooperative. ILO’s Cooperative Branch was the coordinator of the partnership in 2012 when the package was launched. One year later, partners continue their support and commitment to improving the package and making it more widely available. At a meeting in Rome hosted by FAO, ILO, Agriterro, the International Training Centre ILO (ITC-ILO), the Royal Tropical Institute (KIT) and the World Food Programme joined the annual partners meeting. It was agreed during the meeting that the roll out will continue with a focus on national adaptations of My.COOP including the preparation of new language versions to join the existing translations in English, Spanish, French, Swahili and Bahasa Indonesia. Case studies and supporting tools will also be made available on the platform during 2013. The partners also formed a sub-group to work on the roll-out of the Spanish version

of My.COOP in Latin America where ILO’s Sub-regional Office for the Andean region is particularly active.

>> My.COOP is available at: <http://www.agriculture-my.coop>



COOP Staff news

The Cooperative Branch welcomes two new interns. Mr Rafael Peels joined COOP on 15 January 2013 for a six-month internship. Holding a PhD in Labour Studies, he is primarily contributing to the work of COOP on social economy. His internship is being supported by the Government of Flanders.

Ms Dipabali Chowdhury began her three month internship on 1 February. She is involved in research on domestic workers' cooperatives and other social economy organizations involved in organizing domestic workers. She comes to COOP as part of the Cornell University School of Industrial and Labor Relations (USA) internship programme.

Mr. Guy Tchami started work with COOP on 1 March for a four month assignment to assist in preparing technical cooperation concept notes, mobilizing resources, and preparing ILO tools to support cooperative development, rural employment and the social economy.

Ms Maria Elena Chavez Hertig, Senior Technical Specialist, completed her assignment with COOP on 13 April 2013. She was Officer-in Charge of the Branch from April 2011 to March 2012 and Coordinator of the International Year of Cooperatives during which she made significant contributions to the work of ILO in cooperative promotion and development.

Noteworthy resources

Support for Farmers' Cooperatives

According to a new study published by the European Commission, cooperatives play an important role in helping farmers to capture a higher share of the value added in the food supply chain.

Given the imbalances in bargaining power between contracting parties along the food supply chain, the European Commission's Directorate-General for Agriculture and Rural Development launched a large study to gain better insights in the policies that could help farmers to self-organize in cooperatives as a means of strengthening their market position and so generating a solid market income. The specific objectives of this study were to provide a comprehensive description of the current level of development of cooperatives in the European Union (EU), identify laws and regulations that enable or constrain cooperative development, and to identify specific support measures, which have proved to be effective and efficient in promoting cooperatives and, more generally, producer organizations.

This report provides the overall conclusions of the full study. It was carried out by a European research consortium during 2011 and 2012 which gathered data in all 27 EU Member. The data collected has not only enabled the preparation of country studies, eight sector reports and 34 cases studies have been carried out in addition to a situation report in selected non-EU, OECD countries. These background reports on countries, sectors and cases, as well as the EU-wide analysis, provide farmers, cooperatives and policy makers with

Selection of existing resources on enterprise transition to workers' cooperatives

CANADA: Succession Planning Using the Worker Co-op Option - http://canadianworker.coop/sites/live.cwcf.anarres.ca/files/CWCF_RetOwnersRep_0.pdf

FRANCE: Guide de la transmission d'entreprise en Scop - http://www.les-scop.coop/export/sites/default/fr/_media/docs-outilscommunication/guide-transmission.pdf

SPAIN: De empresa en crisis a empresa cooperativa <http://www.coceta.coop/publicaciones/guia-transformacion-empresas.pdf>

UNITED KINGDOM: Delivering on Employee and Community Buyouts. A guide to succession process - http://www.uk.coop/sites/storage/public/downloads/succession_guide_0.pdf

UNITED STATES: Transitioning a Private Business to a Worker Cooperative: A Viable Community Development Tool - <http://www.geo.coop/node/637>

useful insights regarding the market orientation and organization of cooperatives and producer organizations.

>> Download Support for Farmers' Cooperatives at: http://ec.europa.eu/agriculture/external-studies/2012/support-farmers-coop/fulltext_en.pdf

Upcoming events

MAY	
6-8	United Nations Research Institute for Social Development (UNRISD) – ILO – UN Non-Government Liaison Service (NGLS) Symposium, “Potential and Limits of Social and Solidarity Economy”, Geneva, Switzerland. More information: http://www.unrisd.org/sseconf
9	Journal of Labour Research, ACTRAV and COOP/EMP seminar "Trade unions and worker cooperatives: Where are we at?", Geneva, Switzerland. More information: http://www.ilo.org/empent/units/cooperatives/WCMS_211250/lang-en/index.htm
10	ILO History and COOP elders meeting, Geneva
22-31	ILO-ICA-ACFSMC Training course on agricultural products marketing and logistics for cooperatives, Beijing and Shadong, PR China
JULY	
6	United Nations International Day of Cooperatives. 2013 theme is Cooperative enterprise remains strong in time of crisis”
OCTOBER	
14 October	My.COOP - Managing your agricultural cooperative - Training of Trainers Distance

Conference on the Potential and Limits of Social and Solidarity Economy

6-8 May 2013, UNRISD-ILO, Geneva, Switzerland

The UNRISD conference organized in collaboration with the ILO will explore the potential and limits of Social and Solidarity Economy (SSE). The event aims to raise the visibility of debates around SSE within the United Nations system and beyond, and contribute to thinking in international policy circles about the Post-2015 Development Agenda. During the conference, the following key questions will be addressed: Can SSE make a real difference to food security, rural development, gender equality and decent work? What is the role of governments, civil society and the private sector? Can SSE expand while remaining integrative and rights-based?

The ILO will be involved in various panels. The ILO DG Guy Ryder is an opening speaker and the session on public policy is being chaired by the ILO. ILO's on-going research on social and solidarity economy is also to be published in a think piece presented during a poster session.

UNRISD CONFERENCE

Social and Solidarity Economy: Potential and Limits



As interest in alternative production, finance and consumption grows in the face of global crises, this conference will explore the potential and limits of Social and Solidarity Economy (SSE)—organizations such as cooperatives, women's self-help groups, social enterprise and associations of informal sector workers that have explicit social and economic objectives, and involve various forms of cooperation and solidarity.

Can SSE make a real difference to food security, rural development, gender equality and decent work?
What is the role of governments, civil society and the private sector?
Can SSE expand while remaining integrative and rights-based?

Conference sessions

- Conceptualizing SSE
- SSE and Local Development
- SSE, Public Policy and Law
- SSE and Gender Dynamics
- Political Economy of SSE and Collective Action
- Scaling up SSE through the Market
- SSE, Welfare Regimes and Social Service Provisioning
- SSE, Resilience and Sustainability
- Priorities for Research, Policy and Action

6 - 8 May 2013
Room II, International Labour Office, Geneva, Switzerland



International Labour Organization
Co-organized with the ILO
In collaboration with UN-NGLS

Register online now: www.unrisd.org/sseconf

This issue was prepared with contributions from Maria Elena Chavez Hertig, Dipabali Chowdhury, Roberto Di Meglio, Simel Esim, Walatteri Katajamaki, Louise Nolle, Rafael Peels, Kelvin Seargant, Guy Tchami, and Igor Vocatch.

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