



# ILO and Cooperatives

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## Editorial

The deepening convergence of economic, social, ecological, and political crises on a global scale is increasing the urgency of strengthening alternatives inspired by international and intergenerational solidarity. The current issue of COOP NEWS highlights the diversity of efforts currently underway to promote cooperative enterprises in contributing to a more just and sustainable development model.

The United Nations International Year of Cooperatives has been crucial in raising the visibility of cooperatives around the world and showcasing their resilience to multifold crisis. The period between the months of April to June has witnessed a flurry of events globally, from Brussels and Cairo to Panama, from Beirut and Beijing to Jakarta. Upcoming activities include those around the International Day of Cooperatives on July 7. The ILO's Africa region is celebrating cooperatives at the heart of the African Social Economy on July 10-13.

There is growing recognition that cooperatives are helping to build regional and international integration on the basis of fulfilling people's needs and respecting their fundamental rights. Economic and financial diversification is best served by the diversification of business models. Cooperatives are thriving thanks to the interaction between experienced members and recent adherents. In this context, youth are not only the future of the cooperative movement; they are also its present.

These are challenging yet exciting times for the ILO Cooperatives Branch. As cooperatives rise on the policy

agenda, in academia, and in the media, there are growing expectations to meet in a resource constrained environment. The recent stocktaking exercise on the promotion of cooperatives across the ILO has detailed the obstacles confronting it. These include the general ones related to the pressing socioeconomic context, and specific ones such as limited knowledge or negative perceptions especially around 'cooperatives' that are not in line with cooperative principles.

The strategy of the Cooperatives Branch to face these challenges is based on the three pillars of vision, collaboration, and innovation. It is rooted in the social justice agenda of the ILO, in line with the vision expressed by its first Director General Albert Thomas in 1920: concern for the conditions of work as well as for the conditions of workers, which are best addressed under the organizational form of cooperatives; and in close collaboration with the international cooperative movement, as well as employers' and workers' organizations. It recognizes that broadening alliances, including through inter-agency collaboration, partnership development, and outreach to various social economy actors, is essential for fulfilling that vision.

In keeping with tradition, new tools and strategies need to be innovated and adapted to the changing circumstances. A recent tool is My.COOP, the fruit of a collaborative effort which has initiated numerous requests for partnership agreements. It is currently under translation into several languages, and is governed by the principles of creative commons. The mainstreaming of cooperative development across ILO sectors, regions, and countries has also been gaining ground. The promotion of cooperatives is integrated into various ILO initiatives from local economic development and crisis response to youth employment, gender equality and rural development.

These initiatives are guided by ILO Recommendation 193 on the Promotion of Cooperatives, which celebrates its tenth anniversary this year. Since 2002, the Recommendation has inspired more than 70 countries in the world to change their policies and legislation based on its provisions. Such change is driven by the dedicated efforts of ILO's Cooperative Champions across the globe from China, Japan, Indonesia and Sri Lanka, to Lebanon, occupied Palestinian territory, South Africa, Ethiopia, Tanzania, Bolivia and Peru. Recognition of achievements to date is a celebration of the efforts of cooperative champions in every region and organization. It is also a timely opportunity for us to further join forces in expanding the building blocks of the alternative social order we seek.

**Simel Esim**

## International Year of Cooperatives – Cooperatives on the agenda

Initiatives to raise awareness and make lasting impacts to promoting and supporting cooperative development continue to be on the rise as International Year of Cooperatives reaches the half-year mark. There are indications in some countries that these initiatives have led to a better understanding of cooperatives. For example, recent surveys in Canada, New Zealand, Switzerland and the United States, are also showing positive perceptions and knowledge about cooperatives. Some surveys indicate that cooperative business ownership is a preferred model based on issues related to integrity, social responsibility including environment, but also interest in their customers and affordability of goods and services provided. However in general even in countries where cooperatives are prevalent, people still do not fully understand the difference between cooperatives and investor-owned businesses.

### Changing policies thanks to International Year of Cooperatives

Cooperatives are receiving the attention of policy-makers as witnessed by recent statements of Laura Chinchilla Miranda, president of Costa Rica (pictured right), Angela Merkel, Chancellor of Germany (pictured below) and Barack Obama president of the United States.



Angela Merkel addressing the official launch of International Year of Cooperatives at the DZ BANK in Berlin.

They join prime ministers, ministers from different sectors, parliamentarians and local government officials in recognizing the contribution of cooperatives in tackling unemployment by creating and maintaining decent jobs, promoting food security and rural development, and alleviating poverty. However, these statements are also leading to action.

Initiatives on policy and legislative revisions attributable to International Year of Cooperatives are also on the rise. New laws or revision of existing policies or legislation is being discussed in countries as different as Bolivia, China, Lebanon, Occupied Palestinian Territory, Peru, Southern Sudan, and Zanzibar where ILO is active in providing support, to Australia, Chile, Korea, India, Portugal, the United Kingdom and the United States to name only a few.



FAO Director-General with the president of Costa Rica at FAO's launch of International Year of Cooperatives. (FAO ©)

In Lebanon for example, the Ministry of Agriculture established an IYC National Committee which has prepared a strategy document that finds the existing policy environment "not favourable to cooperative development". ILO has provided technical assistance to finalize the strategy development process. After undertaking a situation and needs assessment, the ILO team of experts proposed a road map for a cooperative reform process in line with ILO Recommendation No. 193 on the Promotion of Cooperatives. The findings were shared with representatives of government, the cooperative movement, NGOs and donor representatives in a national consultation and a verification meeting was organized jointly by the Ministry of Agriculture and National Cooperative Federation in April. A report has been finalized and is being translated into Arabic for submission to the national constituents. Both the Ministry and the ILO Regional Office for Arab States have indicated their willingness and commitment to working together in implementing the cooperative development strategy for Lebanon.

In South Sudan, ILO's newest Member State, ILO through its COOP<sup>AFRICA</sup> programme has also been assisting in developing a national cooperative development strategy. The strategy was presented on 23–24 May 2012 in the first South Sudan National Conference on the Cooperatives to mark International Year of Cooperatives.

### Building partnerships with cooperative stakeholders

ILO's expertise on cooperatives is also being recognized as invitations to IYC international, regional and national events continue to be received. ILO COOP has participated in events at the European regional level, at national events held in Spain, Portugal and Turkey, while ILO colleagues from other offices have or will shortly be involved in events in Brazil, China, Indonesia, Italy and Japan.

ILO COOP is strengthening its collaboration with cooperative stakeholders as a means to not only celebrate the International Year of Cooperatives, but more importantly to improve joint activities for the promotion of cooperatives as a means to advance decent work. One such example is the participation of Ms. Simel Esim, chief of the Cooperative Branch who attended a number of

events organized within European Cooperative Week that took place in Brussels, Belgium from 23–27 April 2012. She joined meetings of Cooperatives Europe, COGECA (European agri-cooperative organization), the European Association of Cooperative Banks (EACB) and European Confederation of Workers' Cooperatives, Social Cooperatives and Social and Participative Enterprises (CECOP) among others. During the week she also met with cooperative and regional leaders to discuss increased ILO collaboration in the International Year of Cooperatives and beyond. Meetings were held with the President of the International Cooperative Alliance (ICA), various interest groups of the European Economic and Social Committee, General Secretary of CICOPA, Director of Cooperatives Europe and the members of the IYC Committee from Turkey.

### Sixth Summit of the Americas resolves to strengthen cooperatives

The Sixth Summit of the Americas was held in Cartagena, Colombia on 14–15 April 2012.

In addressing the issue of poverty, inequality, and inequity, the Heads of State and Governments of the Americas resolved among others:

To promote economic growth with equity and social inclusion by strengthening cooperatives, micro, small, and medium-sized enterprises, including cultural industries, in addition to grassroots economic initiatives and other production units, innovation, and competitiveness in the countries of the Americas.

The Summits of the Americas are institutionalized gatherings of the heads of state and governments of the Western Hemisphere where leaders discuss common policy issues, affirm shared values and commit to concerted actions at the national and regional level to address continuing and new challenges faced in the Americas.

>> See full text in English at [http://www.summit-americas.org/SIRG/2012/041412/mandates\\_sc\\_en.pdf](http://www.summit-americas.org/SIRG/2012/041412/mandates_sc_en.pdf) and in Spanish [http://www.summit-americas.org/SIRG/2012/041412/mandates\\_sc\\_es.pdf](http://www.summit-americas.org/SIRG/2012/041412/mandates_sc_es.pdf)

ILO was also a co-organizer of a National Seminar on Youth Employment and the Role of Cooperatives, an event that linked with International Year of Cooperatives. ILO's office in Lisbon partnered with the Cooperativa Antonio Sergio para a Economia Social (CASES) of Portugal. Maria Elena Chavez Hertz, ILO's IYC coordinator presented the ILO report on youth employment and made specific reference to the role of cooperatives in youth employment at the 4 May seminar in Lisbon. ILO Lisbon and CASES subsequently signed a protocol of cooperation to further collaboration in Lusophone countries. More information at: [http://www.ilo.org/public/portugue/region/eurpro/lisbon/html/portugal\\_seminario\\_cases\\_2012\\_pt.htm](http://www.ilo.org/public/portugue/region/eurpro/lisbon/html/portugal_seminario_cases_2012_pt.htm)



ILO's office in Brazil has also co-organized an event for International Year of Cooperatives with the United Nations, the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), and SESCOOP Rio Janeiro on 30 May on the theme, "Contemporary Cooperativism: The Road to sustainability". SESCOOP is the training centre for cooperatives in Brazil and works both at the national and state levels. SESCOOP Sao Paulo features the ILO video on cooperatives with a voice over in Portuguese to promote International Year of Cooperatives.

In June, a number of events organized for the International Year of Cooperatives are foreseen where ILO will participate. These include a joint event organized by the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) and the World Farmers' Organization which will address issues on the enabling environment required for the development and growth of farmers' organizations and cooperatives and an event for IYC organized by the All China Federation of Supply and Marketing Cooperatives in China.

### IYC Ambassadors named by FAO

The International Year of Cooperatives has two new goodwill ambassadors (goodwill ambassadors are celebrity advocates who use their talent or fame to attract media attention to specific UN issues.). The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) named Elisabeth Atangana, President of the Pan-African Farmers Forum, a Cameroon national, and Roberto Rodrigues, President of the Superior Council of Agribusiness of the Federation of Industries of São Paulo, Brazil, as special goodwill ambassadors for cooperatives.

Ms. Atangana and Mr. Rodrigues join actor, Hugh Jackman who is one of the official supporter in Australia of International Year of Cooperatives.

See webcast of special FAO event for IYC at: <http://www.fao.org/webcast/index.asp?movie=http://193.43.36.192/20120529-OCE-Redfi&high=1&lang=OT>



## Upcoming ILO events for IYC

12 June

ILO Jakarta/Ministry of Cooperatives and Small and Medium Enterprises of Indonesia, National Seminar "Poverty Reduction and Job Creation through Cooperative Development". The half-day event is organized on the occasion of UN International Year of Cooperative and will bring together ILO constituents, national and international partners. The seminar will aim to improve understanding on the role of cooperative enterprises in achieving development goals. The event will be followed by the launch of the joint ILO/Allianz project on financial education and development of microinsurance through cooperatives.

5 July

UNDESA/ILO/FAO ECOSOC High-Level Segment Ministerial Roundtable Breakfast: "Promoting productive capacity for sustainable livelihood: The role of cooperatives", United Nations Headquarters, New York — on the occasion of International Day of Cooperatives.

10 – 13 July

ILO Africa regional event, "Cooperatives at the Heart of the Social Economy: An Asset for Decent Work in Africa", Lomé, Togo. The ILO Regional Office for Africa in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia is organizing in cooperation with the Government of Togo and the Pan-African Cooperative Conference, an event to highlight the important role that cooperatives and other social economy enterprises have played in Africa; and establish an African platform for the development of cooperatives and other social economy enterprises.



## ILO COOP in the news

International Year of Cooperatives (IYC) has led to a higher visibility of the ILO's Cooperative Branch as witnessed by the requests for interviews and submission of articles. Some of these include:

17 May

ILO's Cooperative Branch Chief, Simel Esim was interviewed on 'The Voice of This Land', a daily television programme on agriculture on the Turkish Radio and Television Corporation on the activities of the ILO on cooperatives and the role of cooperatives in rural development, poverty alleviation and employment generation. ILO COOP's video prepared for IYC was also aired with a Turkish voice-over. She joined the President of the International Cooperative Alliance (ICA), and representatives of International Cooperative Agricultural Organization of the ICA and the Turkish Ministry of Food, Agriculture and Livestock. An archive of the interview will shortly be available at <http://www.bts.gen.tr>

31 March

ILO as the Vice-Chair of the Committee for the Promotion and Advancement of Cooperatives was interviewed as part of a special series published by the French Canadian newspaper, Le Devoir. Maria Elena Chavez Hertig, officer-in charge of the Cooperative Branch at the time stressed that International Year of Cooperatives was not just a year to celebrate cooperatives, but an opportunity put cooperatives on the international agenda in 2012 and beyond. See special insert at <http://www.ledevoir.com/cahiers-speciaux/2012-03-31/annee-internationale-des-cooperatives>

March

COOP specialist, Igor Vocatch contributed an article to the International Organization of Social Tourism (OITS) newsletter, OITS Information. The article, ILO — 90 Years of work on tourism and cooperative sectors, appeared in issue no. 153 as part of coverage on IYC. It featured information on the ILO Toolkit on Reducing Poverty through Tourism which includes information on tourism cooperatives.

16 February

Maria Elena Chavez Hertig was interviewed by Media Global for an article entitled, "In Brazil and elsewhere, cooperation is at the center of attention". ILO's video on cooperatives produced for the IYC was featured as part of the article. It is available at <http://www.mediaglobal.org/2012/02/16/in-brazil-and-elsewhere-cooperation-is-at-the-center-of-attention/>

## Co-ops Rock at the Youth Employment Forum

Cooperatives provide young people with opportunities to create their own businesses, work with enterprises that are value based, flexible and that provide as a rule skills training for members and employees. This was the message that ILO COOP brought to the Youth Employment Forum held at ILO headquarters in Geneva from 23–25 May 2012. This echoed the conclusions which came out of the consultations with youth in Africa, part of a 46 national consultations.

Under the title Co-ops Rock!, Maria Elena Chavez Hertig of ILO COOP gave a short introduction on cooperatives at the Youth Employment Forum Marketplace. She explained how and why cooperatives provided opportunities to young people who were looking to create their own enterprises or work with value based businesses while engaging young people in sharing what they knew about cooperatives. She was joined by Mi Ling Chng of the Singapore National Cooperative Federation, a 27 year old Senior Marketing Executive, who shared first-hand experience on how cooperatives in Singapore were providing young people with jobs and skills for creating their own enterprises, financing for cooperative startups, and continuing education and training as employees and members of cooperatives. Participants at the session also heard about how in Zimbabwe savings and credit cooperatives (SACCO) were providing finance to young people how wish to start their own businesses from the SACCO's representative. The discussion centred on why cooperatives were not better known to young people as this was an option for people who did not want to start their individual business, but would consider starting a business with others to reduce the risk — what some referred to as "collective entrepreneurship". COOP was also invited to present social enterprises in a discussion on social enterprises and entrepreneurship.

>> More information on youth employment at <http://www.ilo.org/youth>. See also ILO's report The Youth Employment Crisis: Time for Action which includes information on cooperatives and youth employment. See [http://www.ilo.org/ilc/ILCSessions/101stSession/reports/reports-submitted/WCMS\\_175421/](http://www.ilo.org/ilc/ILCSessions/101stSession/reports/reports-submitted/WCMS_175421/)

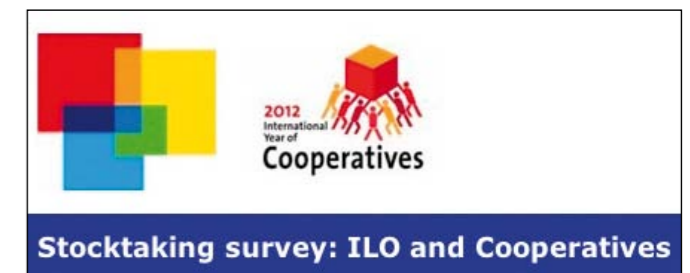


Participant from the Singapore cooperative movement at the ILO Youth Employment Forum.

## Cooperative development shown to respond to Decent Work challenges

ILO COOP surveyed ILO offices and units on their activities and relations with regard to cooperatives and social economy organizations in April. Out of the 40 respondents one-third indicated that cooperative development was integrated as a part of Decent Work country programmes, the main vehicle for delivery of ILO support to countries. Cooperatives are mentioned in the Decent Work Country Programmes of Benin, Comoros, Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana, Kenya, Madagascar, South Africa, Tanzania, and Zimbabwe in Africa; and of Indonesia, Philippines and Sri Lanka in Asia. In addition in Latin America, Bolivia and Peru include cooperatives in their country priorities and outcomes. In undertaking these programmes the ILO's main partners were cooperatives and other social economy organizations followed by government. The priority needs identified to strengthen cooperative development included education and training on cooperative values and principles, activities related to the promotion of cooperatives and cooperative management support.

The preliminary results from ILO field offices show that delivering development results through cooperative enterprises spans across various Decent Work outcomes from local economic development to employment generation and poverty reduction, rural development, empowerment and promoting sustainable livelihoods. While ILO's country programme outcomes may not always reflect it, the practice of integrating cooperative development into ILO responses is not uncommon.

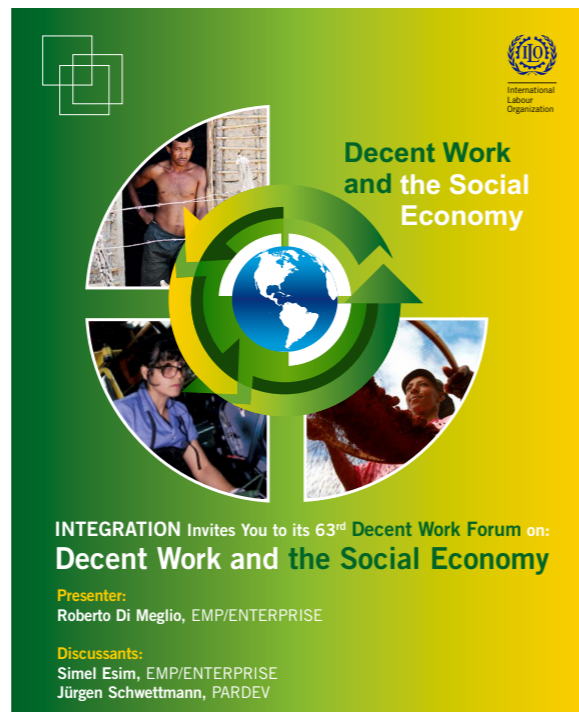




## 63<sup>rd</sup> Decent Work Forum features Social Economy

The Social Economy was the topic at the ILO's Decent Work Forum held on 12 April 2012 at ILO headquarters in Geneva. Roberto Di Meglio highlighted ILO's on-going work on social economy which includes providing advisory services on policy and legislation, improving access to finance, providing research-based advocacy and organizing an annual Social Economy Academy. The two discussants, Jürgen Schwettmann, Director at the Department of Partnerships and Development Cooperation (PARDEV) who formerly held the position of Chief of ILO COOP, and current chief of ILO COOP, Simel Esim, highlighted the synergies between the four pillars of decent work and social economy, and the ways forward for better understanding and integration of social economy into the ILO's work.

During the interventions from the floor, the need for reaching clarity on the position of the ILO and its constituents on the social economy was raised. Among the recommendations were to set up a comprehensive research agenda to better define and measure the social economy through standards and labour statistics, and to put the issue on the agenda for discussion in the Committee on Employment and Social Policy (ESP) of the ILO's Governing Body and hold a meeting of experts.



## ILO COOP advances the Social Economy in North Africa

Social economy organizations and enterprises have the potential to effectively contribute to stability and economic progress in North Africa. A panel session on "Advancing the social economy in North Africa" was included in the high level interactive conference, "Employment for Stability and Socio-Economic Progress in North Africa", held on 18–19 April in Cairo, Egypt in which ILO COOP's social economy specialist, Roberto Di Meglio participated. His presentation focused on the promotion of the social economy as a practical way forward in addressing simultaneously all four dimensions of the ILO Decent Work Agenda.

The panel session highlighted the specific contribution of the social economy to the three main objectives included in the Strategy for North Africa 2011–2015, namely, creating jobs for youth, women and vulnerable people, empowering social partners, and, extending and improving social protection. Panelists joining ILO COOP included Charles Dan, ILO Regional Director for Africa, Ahmed Luqman, Director-General Arab Labour Organization and Fathy Fikry, Minister of Manpower and Migration, Egypt. The presentations made led to lively

discussions on the state of affairs with regard to the social economy with representatives of the government, and employers' and workers' organizations from Egypt, Algeria, Tunisia, Morocco and Libya. These resulted in proposing the promotion of social economy organizations and enterprises as a way of organizing the informal sector in the North African countries. This was one of the recommendations that was presented to the plenary session of the conference.

The conference aimed to build consensus among stakeholders and development partners on the key priorities and actions required to implement an employment-centred and rights-based approach for stability and growth in the sub-region. It contributed to strengthening the consolidation of the process of democratization and economic recovery of the North African countries.

The social economy presentation is available in English, French and Arabic from the ILO website at: [http://www.ilo.org/addisababa/information-resources/news/WCMS\\_175767/](http://www.ilo.org/addisababa/information-resources/news/WCMS_175767/)

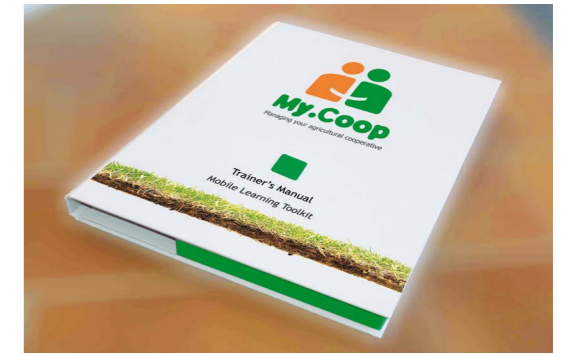


## My.COOP agricultural training package gains ground

Cooperatives, trainers and cooperative development agencies in various parts of the world have found their way to the web-based My.COOP platform: [www.agriculture-my.coop](http://www.agriculture-my.coop). After only four months since its launch, 392 users have registered to view and download the training package. Registered users can freely access the My.COOP training modules, the news board and participate in discussions around topics ranging from the latest applications for cooperative coffee farmers to cooperative elections. So far, seven participants from Colombia, Indonesia, Peru, South Africa and Tanzania have successfully completed the online training of trainers' course. They join the international pool of My.COOP trainers. New trainers will be certified in the coming months given that fifty participants are enrolled to the new edition of the online training of trainers' course that began in May and that additional international My.COOP training activities are scheduled.

### My.COOP translations and adaptations

The development of the Spanish My.COOP platform is underway thanks to CINTERFOR, the ILO Inter-American centre for knowledge development and vocation training (Centro Interamericano para el Desarrollo del Conocimiento y Formación Profesional). This will facilitate the use of My.COOP in other Latin American countries and networks.



At the national level My.COOP is also taking off. In Bolivia, My.COOP has been adapted to the Bolivian context and trainers have been trained with support of the CRE Foundation (the rural electrification cooperative) and the ILO Office for the Andean Countries in Lima.

A similar adaptation and capacity building programme is underway in Peru in collaboration with the Department dealing with micro- and small enterprises and cooperatives in the Ministry of Production. My.COOP partner Agriterra in the Netherlands is also supporting this activity.

In Tanzania, the Moshi University College of Cooperative and Business Studies (MUCCoBS) has introduced My.COOP to trainers in the cooperative movement. MUCCoBS will also lead the development of a Tanzanian version of the My.COOP package. The ILO Cooperative Facility for Africa in the ILO office in Dar es Salaam provides assistance with funding from One UN Tanzania.

In addition, the ILO's Regional Office for Arab States has initiated a translation of My.COOP modules into Arabic. Upon the finalization of the translation at the end of June several country adaptations are envisioned including Occupied Palestinian Territory, Yemen and Lebanon. The ILO Decent Work Team in the ILO Cairo Office has also indicated interest in the adaptation and use of the My.COOP modules in Arabic for Egypt, Tunisia and North Sudan.

A Bahasa Indonesia version will also be prepared by the non-governmental organization, "VECO Indonesia". French and Portuguese versions are foreseen with financial support of respectively Agriterra and the Cooperativa António Sérgio para a Economia Social (CASES).

My.COOP is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike copyright procedure (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses>), which enables free access and use of the package. This has facilitated the recent buy-in of additional organizations at both international and national level and contributes to the global outreach and partnership around My.COOP.

>> For further information on international My.COOP training events, please contact: [mycoop@itcilo.org](mailto:mycoop@itcilo.org).

>> For questions on the My.COOP partnership, please contact Carlien van Empel, [vanempel@ilo.org](mailto:vanempel@ilo.org) or visit the My.COOP platform: [www.agriculture-my.coop](http://www.agriculture-my.coop).

My.COOP international training calendar 2012	
28 May–13 July	Online training of trainers, <a href="http://www.agriculture-my.coop">www.agriculture-my.coop</a>
25–29 June	My.COOP elective course during the Sustainable Enterprise Academy at ITC-ILO in Turin, Italy. More information: <a href="http://emld.itcilo.org/en">http://emld.itcilo.org/en</a>
10 Sept.	Online training of trainers. See <a href="http://www.agriculture-my.coop">www.agriculture-my.coop</a>
25–29 Nov.	My.COOP elective course at the International Training of Trainers Forum at ITC-ILO in Turin, Italy. More information: <a href="http://www.itcilo.org/en/the-centre/areas-of-expertise/learning-methodology/learning-methodology-and-technology">http://www.itcilo.org/en/the-centre/areas-of-expertise/learning-methodology/learning-methodology-and-technology</a>
26–30 Nov.	Agricultural Cooperatives Day during the course "Harvesting a future without child labour", at ITC-ILO in Turin, Italy. More information: <a href="http://www.itcilo.org/en/the-centre/areas-of-expertise/labour-rights/child-labour">http://www.itcilo.org/en/the-centre/areas-of-expertise/labour-rights/child-labour</a>



## Strengthening cooperatives in the Mediterranean region

The ILO's Chief of the Cooperative Branch was invited to speak as a keynote speaker at the conference on "The cooperative enterprise as a social economy actor towards social and economic development in the Mediterranean". The conference was organised in the framework of the UN International Year of Cooperatives 2012 by the Spanish Business Confederation of Social Economy (CEPES) and the members of the Euro-Mediterranean Network of Social Economy (ESMED), with the support of the Spanish Agency for International Development Cooperation (AECID). Simel Esim presented on the state of affairs for cooperatives in Arab States and ILO's on-going work in promoting cooperatives in the region.



Simel Esim, ILO COOP Chief and Juan Antonio Pedreño, President of CEPES, at the panel session on the development of cooperatives in the Arab region

The meeting highlighted the size, scale and significance of the cooperative movement in the eleven countries of the region — 200,217 cooperatives generating more than 6.2 million jobs, and bringing together more than 136 million people as members. Discussions focused on developing policy proposals to strengthen north-south cooperation among the countries in the region, and identify priority areas of work to support the development of cooperatives including enabling conditions.

>> The programme of the conference can be accessed from <http://www.socialeconomy.eu.org/spip.php?article1732>

## Palestinian Cabinet approves Unified Cooperative Law

The ILO has been assisting the Ministry of Labour in the Occupied Palestinian Territory (oPt) in establishing a conducive policy and legal framework for cooperatives. Assistance has been provided in the designing a new law in line with ILO Recommendation 193 on the Promotion of Cooperatives, but also taking into consideration the lessons learned from the experience of having two different laws on cooperatives in the West Bank and Gaza

Strip. The new draft law, which proposes the creation of a new supervisory structure, the General Commission for Regulating Cooperatives (GCRC), was recently approved by the Cabinet. A Presidential decree is expected in the coming months for the law to come into effect.

## Mainstreaming gender equality concerns in Palestinian cooperatives

The ILO has actively promoted women's participation in cooperatives in oPt, within the context of a Spanish Millennium Development Goal (MDG) fund project on "Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment in the occupied Palestinian territory". A situation and institutional assessment on mainstreaming gender equality concerns in Palestinian cooperatives was conducted. In follow-up to the assessment, cooperative extension workers were trained to support women cooperatives in the West Bank and Gaza Strip through the provision of cooperative management and leadership training, as well as consultancy and business development services. A "Cooperative Extension Worker" manual was also developed by the project.

A competition for innovation was launched to support women cooperatives in managing their cooperatives in an effective way, and the capacity of forty women-only cooperatives was built through training, coaching and monitoring visits with a local partner. Thirteen women's cooperatives also received seeds grants for income-generating projects. twelve cooperatives started to apply sound, financial and administrative procedures, 446 new members were registered in cooperatives, 214 administrative committee and assembly members of targeted cooperatives were trained in good governance, cooperative principles and communication skills, and thirty members are trained on vocational training and specialized subjects related to their business.



Working Group Sessions from the Cooperatives Training of Trainers (ToT) Workshop for Cooperative Extension Workers in the West Bank

Update from

COOP  
AFRICA

In Zanzibar, a number of new cooperative development activities have been initiated. During May and June this year, cooperative officers will be trained in mobilizing and organizing agricultural, livestock and fishery cooperatives. Guidelines and a tool for conducting feasibility studies as a precondition for the formation of new cooperatives are being designed. COOP<sup>AFRICA</sup> also supports the formulation of primary society bylaws in Zanzibar.

In mainland Tanzania and Zanzibar, six saving and credit cooperatives (SACCOs) have been successful in obtaining a grant through the One UN Challenge Fund. They have started projects in supporting farmers' groups.

Furthermore, COOP<sup>AFRICA</sup> supported the development of a Cooperative Development Strategy for South Sudan which was presented in a United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) sponsored national cooperative convention in May.

## COOP<sup>AFRICA</sup> thanks outgoing staff

Guy Tchami completed his assignment as international coordinator of the ILO COOP<sup>AFRICA</sup> Programme in March 2012. He joined the ILO office for Kenya, Rwanda, Tanzania and Uganda in Dar es Salaam as a COOP<sup>AFRICA</sup> Challenge Fund expert in 2008, in charge of the design, delivery and evaluation of the Fund. He had been in charge of the overall coordination of COOP<sup>AFRICA</sup> since January 2011.



The new animal feed factory at the Limuru Dairy Farmers Cooperative Society in Kenya which was made possible with support of COOP<sup>AFRICA</sup>

Eva Majurin, gender and monitoring and evaluation (M&E) expert with the ILO COOP<sup>AFRICA</sup> programme at the ILO office in Dar es Salaam also completed her assignment in March 2012. She managed COOP<sup>AFRICA</sup>'s gender component, coordinated the One UN Challenge Fund and supported the M&E and impact assessment of ILO cooperative development activities in East Africa since September 2008.

## Cooperative development to promote decent work in Bolivia

The ILO Office for the Andean Countries has been providing technical assistance to Bolivia for the formulation of cooperative development policies to promote decent work in Bolivia. Experts have used ILO's Recommendation 193 on the Promotion of Cooperatives to support the Ministry of Labour in finalizing the work on the revision of the General Law on Cooperatives. ILO also supported the design of a new law on the promotion of cooperatives, an initiative of the Bolivian Senate coordinated with Ministry of Labour and cooperative stakeholders. Although R.193 has guided revisions in cooperative policy and legislation in more than 65 countries around the world, this promotional law in Bolivia is unique in that it specifically translates ILO's Recommendation into law. Both laws have counted on the participation of the Bolivian cooperative movement and are expected to be adopted in 2012 during International Year of Cooperatives.

ILO has released a video describing its work in the country entitled, Políticas de desarrollo cooperativo para la promoción del Trabajo Decente en Bolivia (Cooperative Development Policies for the Promotion of Decent Work in Bolivia) which is available on YouTube on ILO TV at: [http://youtu.be/i\\_hobjqYy0](http://youtu.be/i_hobjqYy0)





### Publications

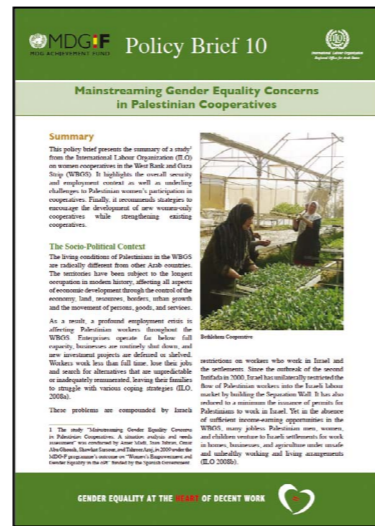
#### Policy Brief: Mainstreaming Gender Equality Concerns in Palestinian Cooperatives

The policy brief on mainstreaming gender equality concerns in Palestinian cooperatives presents the summary findings from the International Labour Organization (ILO) on women cooperatives in the West Bank and Gaza Strip. It highlights the overall security and employment context as well as underlying challenges to Palestinian women's participation in cooperatives. Finally, it recommends strategies to encourage the development of new women-only cooperatives while strengthening existing cooperatives.

>>The brief is available in English and Arabic.

[http://www.ilo.org/public/english/region/arpro/beirut/downloads/info/fact/genderbriefs/policybrief\\_10\\_pal.pdf](http://www.ilo.org/public/english/region/arpro/beirut/downloads/info/fact/genderbriefs/policybrief_10_pal.pdf)

[http://www.ilo.org/public/arabic/region/arpro/beirut/downloads/info/fact/genderbriefs/policybrief\\_10\\_pal.pdf](http://www.ilo.org/public/arabic/region/arpro/beirut/downloads/info/fact/genderbriefs/policybrief_10_pal.pdf)



#### Action Brief: Promoting Women's Participation in Cooperatives in oPT

This action brief describes ILO activities in strengthening the participation of women in cooperatives in oPT undertaken in collaboration with the Union of Cooperative Associations for Savings and Credit.

>>The brief is available in English.

<http://www.ilo.org/public/english/region/arpro/beirut/downloads/areas/equality/actionbrief/opt1.pdf>

#### Research on the situation of cooperatives in Latin America soon to be released

ILO's Regional Office for Latin America and the Caribbean, jointly with the International Cooperative Alliance Americas will soon publish the results of research undertaken to respond to the question, "what is the current situation and impact of cooperatives in development and poverty reduction in Latin America?"

Six countries have been studied- Bolivia, Colombia, Costa Rica, Guatemala, Paraguay and Peru - to determine the situation of cooperative development in the region and measure their impact. The research has enabled an analysis of patterns of development and integration of cooperative movements in the region, identifying their different characteristics, progress and challenges, and the elaboration of policy recommendations to promote cooperative development in the region which underline the need for further implementation of ILO's Recommendation 193 on the Promotion of Cooperatives.

### Noteworthy

#### ILO COOP staff news

Simel Esim, previously a Senior Technical Specialist in the ILO's Regional Office for Arab States, was appointed as head of the Cooperatives Branch in April of this year. Ms. Esim holds a Ph.D. in economics and brings extensive knowledge on informal employment, enterprise development and women's economic empowerment.

Maria Elena Chavez Hertig was appointed as Coordinator for the International Year of Cooperatives / Senior Technical Specialist in April 2012. She previously was officer-in-charge of the Cooperative Branch.

Emanuel Kamdem left the ILO at the end of February 2012 to manage the Pan African Institute for Development (PAID [www.paidafrica.org](http://www.paidafrica.org)) as its Secretary General.

Nele Achten completed a three month internship with ILO COOP in May 2012. She worked with the My.COOP Mining validation and review process and supported the preparation of the Social Economy Academy. She will continue her studies, starting a PhD at the University of Geneva and has indicated that her time with the ILO has led to her considering writing her doctoral thesis about legal aspects of the social economy.

Daniela Martini completed a six month internship with ILO COOP in May 2012 as part of the Italian Master Dei Talenti Programme. She assisted the piloting of the My.COOP online training programme Managing your Agricultural Cooperative in close collaboration with the International Training Centre of the ILO.

#### ILO video - Cooperative enterprises build a better world

The video produced by ILO COOP for International Year of Cooperatives continues to be requested. Official versions are available in English, French, and Spanish, but cooperative stakeholders in a number of countries have included subtitles or voice-overs, most recently in Portuguese and Turkish.



#### Social and Solidarity Economy Academy to focus on youth

The third edition of the ILO Academy on Social and Solidarity Economy will be held under theme, "An opportunity to enhance youth creativity".

The Academy will provide an opportunity for participants to gain a better understanding of the concept of social and solidarity economy and its possible application to job creation for young people. It's objective is to contribute to strengthening the impact of a social and solidarity economy approach through the creation of a community of practice on the subject. This year there will be a special focus on strengthening the knowledge on available tools that can reinforce the South-South cooperation.

The Academy will be held from 22-26 October 2012 in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. Course fees which include tuition and half-board accommodation are 2,750 Euros. The deadline for registration is 21 September 2012.

>> Register at <http://emld.itcilo.org/en> or e-mail [socialeconomy@itcilo.org](mailto:socialeconomy@itcilo.org) for more information.



>> Watch the video at <http://youtu.be/KALLFDpuHUE>

## Upcoming events

### 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Adoption of ILO Recommendation 193, 20 June 2012

20 June will mark the ten year anniversary of the adoption of Recommendation 193 on the Promotion of Cooperatives, ILO's international standard on cooperatives. ILO COOP will mark the anniversary during the ILO Governing Body meeting in November 2012 with an event and publication.

>> See the text of the Recommendation at <http://www.ilo.org/ilolex/cgi-lex/convde.pl?R193>

### International Day of Cooperatives, 7 July 2012

Save the date! The United Nations International Day of Cooperatives will be celebrated around the world on 7 July 2012. This year, the theme of the annual observance will echo the slogan for the International Year of Cooperatives, "Cooperative enterprises build a better world".

### World Food Day, Agricultural cooperatives key to feeding the world, 16 October 2012

Agricultural cooperatives are the focus of World Food Day 2012 celebrated on 16 October worldwide.

The official World Food Day theme, announced each spring by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), gives focus to World Food Day observances and raises awareness and understanding of approaches to ending hunger.

"Agricultural cooperatives – key to feeding the world" is the formal wording of the 2012 theme. It has been chosen to highlight the role of cooperatives in improving food security and contributing to the eradication of hunger.

This year's theme was selected to commemorate 2012 International Year of Cooperatives.

>> More information:

<http://www.fao.org/getinvolved/worldfoodday/>



This issue was prepared with contributions from Nele Achten, Maria Elena Chavez Hertig, Roberto Di Meglio, Simel Esim, Daniela Martini, Sam Mshiu, Carlien van Empel, Philippe Vanhuynegem and Igor Vocatch.

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