

## COMMUNIQUÉ

21<sup>st</sup> December 2009

### **UN PROCLAIMS 2012 AS YEAR OF COOPERATIVES**

The UN has proclaimed 2012 International Year of Co-operatives. The resolution A/RES/64/136) passed on 18 December 2009 by consensus was proposed by 55 UN Member States. It recognises that the co-operative business model is a major factor in realising economic and social development and calls on governments, international institutions, co-operatives and other stakeholders to support the development and growth of co-operatives worldwide.

Put forward by 55 governments, the resolution calls for member states to raise awareness and promote the growth of co-operatives. It also proposes governments around the world review legislation governing co-operatives to ensure their growth and sustainability.

Working with the global co-operative movement, the resolution asks governments to also "develop programmes aimed at enhancing capacity-building of co-operatives, including by strengthening the organisational, management and financial skills of their members, and to introduce and support programmes to improve the access of co-operatives to new technologies".

The UN also recommends governments and co-operatives work together to promote the growth of agricultural co-operatives through access to finance, investment in rural infrastructure and strengthened marketing mechanisms. Likewise it encourages collaboration to help the expansion of financial co-ops to provide access to banking services for all.

Rainer Schlüter, Director, COOPERATIVES EUROPE, said, "This gives us another tool to promote the co-operative business model and the 'co-operative difference'. I ask all our member organisations to start to consider how they and COOPERATIVES EUROPE could use the year to further our aims and objectives. Along with the global ICA we will be planning future events and activities so, as COOPERATIVES EUROPE, we will need to decide how these actions are co-ordinated and put into practice. I look forward to hearing your ideas."

Dame Pauline President of the ICA says, "It is our responsibility to make sure we're not only ready for that year, but that we maximise the value that it offers to us. This means we have to act now and we have to act with speed.

"We should prepare by making sure that we drive our co-operative visibility in to the decision-making global institutions and create a real sense of the strength and the values of the co-operative economy in the world."

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