

6th Asia-Pacific Co-operative Ministers' Conference

Kathmandu, Nepal, 3-6 April 2002

“Establishing Relevant Legislation & Policy for
Cooperatives in the New Millennium”

CONCLUSIONS & RECOMMENDATIONS



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Foreword

Creation of an enabling legal and policy environment for growth and development of member centric and community oriented cooperatives, is the most significant key result area of the International Cooperative Alliance (ICA) in Asia-Pacific Region. Cooperative Ministers' Conferences and Regional Consultations of Permanent Secretaries in charge of Cooperatives in the Governments and representatives of cooperative movement have been very well recognised fora to facilitate interaction between Governments and Cooperatives to evolve parameters for conducive cooperative legislation and policies keeping in view various contextual issues that emerge from time to time.

The 6th Asia-Pacific Cooperative Ministers' Conference attended by Cooperative Ministers, Government officials, Cooperative leaders and Chief Executives of 17 countries and 8 International organisations focussed on issues that are important to establish relevant legislation and policy for cooperatives in the new millennium. At the end of the deliberations, the Conference adopted a Declaration, hitherto known as the Kathmandu Declaration, calling upon the Governments to formulate and implement public policy and other relevant sectoral policies that support development of member based cooperatives. The most notable outcomes of this Conference that distinguished it from previous Conferences are formulation of broad parameters of Cooperative policy, need for convening a separate Conference of Ministers of Finance par-

particularly on the impact of taxation laws on cooperatives, need for a policy dialogue with multi-national financial institutions e.g. World Bank, ADB, to sensitise them with the concerns of cooperatives and visualisation of innovative tools namely 'Proximity to ICIS' Index and Grid Model to measure the progress and effectiveness of enabling legislative and policy environment for cooperatives.

We feel that implementation of the Recommendations of the Conference will go a long way, not only in achieving a desired level of synergies between public policies and legislations for growth and development of member-centric cooperatives, but will also ensure their effective monitoring for the benefit of cooperatives and their members.

Shil Kwan Lee
Regional Director, ICA

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Rationale

The 6th Co-operative Ministers' Conference is the latest in a series of high-level interaction between governments and the co-operative movements in Asia & the Pacific region, organized by the International Co-operative Alliance Regional Office for Asia & the Pacific (ICA ROAP). Since its inception in 1990 in Sydney, the conference has taken incremental steps in addressing the common agenda of moving co-operative development forward in individual countries and in the region. This bi-annual event, which is attended by government ministers in charge of co-operatives, serves three related purposes.

First, it examines co-operative development in individual countries in the region from the standpoint of co-operative legislation and policies, and in the context of the social, economic

and political realities affecting such development. *Second*, it provides government and co-operative officials the opportunity to discuss and analyze issues from the vantage point of regional realities, recognizing that both the government and the co-operative sector play an important role in shaping and resolving those issues. *Finally*, through this objective analysis and interaction, it aims to create a legal and policy environment that is conducive to the development of co-operatives as autonomous and member-responsive organizations.

The 5th Cooperative Ministers' Conference in Beijing in October 1999 underlined not only the importance of such enabling environment but also the need to sustain the same, noting the legislative reforms already taking place around the region. In addition, it underlined the need to establish new forms of cooperation between government and co-operatives, recognizing that this relationship dictates the quality and phase of the desired changes. In the resolutions adopted, the Beijing conference spelled out concrete actions needed to further reforms in co-operative legislation and policies, along the following areas of concern - namely: autonomy and independence, legal existence, recognition, fair playing field, self-regulation, capitalization and official development assistance.

Follow-up Actions leading to the Conference

As a follow-up, ICA ROAP commissioned a 2nd Critical Study in 2001 to review legislative and policy changes in the region since Beijing and the extent to which the recommendations of the conference were implemented. The study took an in-depth look at Australia, India, Indonesia, Republic of Korea, Nepal, Sri Lanka, Thailand and Vietnam and analyzed the responses of other countries to the survey questionnaire. The findings were then presented to 61 representatives of government and the co-operative sector at the Regional Consultation in Tehran, Iran on 2 to 4 July 2001.

Pursuant to the presentation of the 2nd Critical Study on Cooperative Legislation and Policy Reforms at the Teheran

Regional Consultation and the proposals emerging there from, ICAROAP constituted an Experts Committee to analyze and assess the findings and provide advice so as to finalize the agenda for the Kathmandu Conference. Based on the inputs and advice of the Experts Committee, ICAROAP presented the following set of issues for deliberations and resolution in the 6th Cooperative Ministers Conference:

- ✓ The thrust and direction for the Conference should be self evident from the theme for the conference, namely, “Establishing Relevant Legislation & Policy for Cooperatives in the New Millennium”.
- ✓ It is important to identify the impediments encountered by different countries in successfully implementing the 8 practical and doable resolutions contained in the Beijing Joint Declaration (BJD).
- ✓ It would be equally important to define the measures that will help overcome the impediments in successfully implementing the BJD.
- ✓ It would be relevant to deliberate whether reforms in cooperative legislation sans a cooperative policy or, for that matter a well articulated position on cooperation and cooperatives in public policy is a major impediment in creating an enabling and sustaining environment for cooperative development.
- ✓ It would be equally relevant to discuss the nature and content of cooperative policy and public policy on cooperation and cooperatives as it exists currently.
- ✓ It shall be necessary to distinguish the efforts to be made by countries in the context of reforms in cooperative legislation versus articulating a clear coherent and progressive policy on cooperatives and cooperation.
- ✓ It would be desirable to evolve a common and agreed framework that could serve as an instrument to guide governments of Asia and the Pacific to adopt relevant and enabling public and sectoral policies for the development of member based cooperatives — even as they

continue with the processes of reforms in cooperative legislation.

The initial phase of the 6th Cooperative Ministers' Conference comprised presentation of country papers as well as papers from international organizations. Thereafter, the Conference broadly reviewed the results of the study and the recommendations of the regional consultation. Finally, the set of issues emerging from the advice of the Experts Committee on the subject were taken up for discussion and resolution by the Conference.

Conference processes

Continuing Reforms

- i. In general, legislative reforms in the region are continuing in the direction of the changes envisioned by the cooperative ministers' conferences. However, as the 2nd Critical Study established, the full realization of the recommendations is still largely circumscribed by larger political realities – among them: (1) the relative isolation of co-operatives from the broader public policy agenda of government, and (2) the lingering inability of the bureaucracy to disengage completely from its historical involvement with co-operatives.
- ii. There is a marked shift in the attitude of governments towards co-operatives. From being interventionist, governments are becoming supportive. From being seen as instruments of social policies and programs, co-operatives are now increasingly seen by government as “partners” in development.
- iii. The new co-operative laws that have been passed in the last decade or are in the process of change (Nepal, India, Indonesia) also indicate a growing inclination to adopt progressive and liberal co-operative legislation in the region. The Nepal Co-operative Act of 1992 is notable in this respect, in that it makes co-operatives truly autonomous and independent. The parallel legislation

in India provides a clear avenue for State-controlled co-operatives to register and operate as autonomous and independent organizations. This liberal trend is expected to hold as Asian economies continue to open up and governments pursue market-oriented policies and reforms.

- iv. Complementing this trend is the new awareness of the unique role that community-oriented institutions like co-operatives play in a global economic and social order. Side by side with the belief in the strength of the free market is the growing recognition of its weakness in addressing social goals. Here, co-operatives help provide the needed balance in achieving sustainable development. At the same time, they help preserve the sense of identity in a global order that prefers to ignore social and cultural boundaries.
- v. Perhaps as important as the changes in the content of co-operative laws, or specific amendments to them, is the process by which that change is accomplished. As the main stakeholder, co-operatives have to be actively involved in the legislative process. Their genuine participation can help ensure that the trend towards progressive co-operative legislation is maintained and reaches its objective.

1. Context (1)

Changes in or reforms through co-operative legislation have not been accompanied by supporting policies in most Asian countries. While legislation is necessary, it is not sufficient to achieve an enabling environment for co-operatives. Policies represent government's effort to translate the intent of the law into practical application or into guidelines for action. By taking this proactive step, government signals not only the importance it gives to the law but also the direction it wants to take in its implementation. The absence of a cooperative policy creates ambiguity that has led to confusion, if not conflict, in the implementation of the law. Governments perhaps

have not seen the importance of stated policy because, as the 2nd Critical Study established, they see no distinction between co-operative legislation and co-operative policy.

2. Context (2)

Yet another ramification of this limitation is the absence of co-operatives in the broader policy framework and decision-making of government. For instance, laws and policies on taxation, labor, competition and industry may be enunciated without consideration of their direct or indirect impact on co-operatives. This “isolation” of co-operatives from broader public policy agenda takes another form in the absence of coordination between the co-operative ministry or department and other branches of government such as finance, labor, agriculture, trade, industry and social welfare.

3. Context (3)

Then there is an even larger (international) public whose opinion, policies and programs affect co-operatives in one way or another. Dialogue with UN-related agencies like the International Labour Organization (ILO) and Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) has been continuing, mainly because of the active interest of these international bodies in co-operatives. ILO’s current initiative in updating Recommendation 127 is an example of this positive relationship. But there are other international institutions, like the IMF, the World Bank and the Asian Development Bank, which have no specific interest in co-operatives but whose country activities sometimes impact on them. Engagement with these multi-lateral institutions by co-operatives has been minimal at best and negative at worst.

4. Context (4)

Finally, harmonization of co-operative laws in the Asia-Pacific region can result from regular exchange and interaction among governments and co-operative movements, like the one afforded by the co-operative ministers’ conference. But

progress will be uneven as the economic and political realities of individual countries come to bear. What is important is a common reference point to measure progress, like the ICIS (ICA Cooperative Identity Statement). To come up with an objective measurement, the 2nd Critical Study recommended the development of a 'Proximity to ICIS' index, to be evolved with the help of suitable academicians and experts.

The study also recommended the development of a Grid Model by which to plot the relative position of individual countries in an ideal co-operative legislation scenario. The grid is interplay of variables that can determine whether a given piece of legislation or policy is enabling (market orientation versus State control) and protective of the identity of the co-operative (cooperative values versus principles of investor-oriented firms). By determining the relative position of the country in the grid, legislative and policy making could become purposeful and the identification of needed changes more definitive. It was also suggested that the grid model be used to measure the efficacy of individual co-operative societies.

Conference Outcomes - The Way Forward

Given the foregoing considerations and reflections, the 6th Co-operative Ministers' Conference adopted the following resolutions:

Resolution # 1 (With reference to Context 1)

Governments should develop and formulate a co-operative policy - consistent with existing laws and supportive of an enabling environment for co-operatives - that would inter alia contain the following elements:

A preamble that articulates the importance and need for a cooperative policy.

A statement on how Parliament, legislatures and governments must work to sustain an environment where cooperatives can have self-regulation, autonomy and independence.

Describe methods by which government would enable capacity building in cooperatives – leading to their empowerment.

Define the areas where government can provide assistance for member education, training and HRD.

Outline how good governance; such as transparency, right of information and accountability of the board towards members shall be recognized and encouraged in cooperatives.

Explain how different ministries that comprise the government would act in a coherent and coordinated manner to fulfill the objectives of cooperative development.

Outline other areas where government assistance could be made available without affecting the autonomy and independence of cooperatives.

Make clear government's commitment to offering infrastructure support to cooperatives.

Provide for collaboration(s) between government and cooperatives in areas that are of concern to the community.

Resolution # 2 (With reference to context 2)

The participation of governments in the succeeding Co-operative Ministers' Conferences should be enlarged to include other ministries, such as finance, agriculture, trade, industry and social welfare.

There are advantages in ICAROAP hosting a separate conference by inviting Finance Ministers or at least senior officials from the Finance Ministry of different countries to discuss the issue of cooperative taxation in depth and arrive at an agreed set of recommendations in so far as taxation of cooperatives are concerned. Similarly, it will be important for ICAROAP to commission studies that could examine how different laws impact the functioning of cooperatives.

Resolution # 3 (With reference to Context 3)

ICA ROAP should initiate information and policy dialogue with

multilateral international institutions like IMF, World Bank and ADB.

Resolution # 4 (With reference to Context 4)

Governments could work to achieve better and superior reforms in cooperative legislation using objective tools – to be developed by the ICAROAP - to measure progress towards an enabling legislative and policy environment for co-operatives in different countries using new and emerging concepts such as the 'Proximity to ICIS' index and the Grid Model.

ICAROAP should develop the 'Proximity to ICIS' index and the Grid Model through processes that could involve representatives from governments, cooperative movement and international organizations, examine whether the grid model can incorporate the idea of mapping cooperatives in a 'cooperative corridor' and factor the concept of social audit in co-operatives to assess overall performance of cooperatives.

In the second stage, ICAROAP's development of the 'Proximity to ICIS' index and the Grid Model should be expanded over time through a larger consultative process so as to incorporate differing interests and position on the subject both within countries and across the region, including *inter alia*, the application of the Grid Model to a model piece of cooperative legislation and linking the Grid Model with the 'Proximity to ICIS' index to first measure the efficacy and ability of a cooperative to fulfill its objectives consistent with the ICIS.

Resolution # 5 (In the Context of the Instrument)

The Kathmandu declaration to which all participating governments of member countries have affixed their hand is symbolic of the importance and commitment of governments to the above resolutions and it is in this spirit that governments of Asia and the Pacific would strive to establish relevant legislation and policy for cooperatives in the new millennium.

Kathmandu Declaration

Recognizing that co-operatives are important people centric organisations imbued with social equity as also instruments for employment generation and wealth creation – particularly for the poor and marginalized in rapidly liberalizing and market driven economies;

Acknowledging the role played by cooperatives during the Asian financial crisis of 1997 when cooperatives amply demonstrated their resilience to thrive in times of crisis;

Noting that Governments of the Asia-Pacific Region have played a very important role to promote cooperatives but in the process there have often arisen major dependencies, thereby limiting cooperatives from achieving their full potential, especially in developing countries;

Emphasizing that the pace of globalization has created a deep sense of urgency to formulate both public policy and other relevant sectoral policies that support development of member based cooperatives;

We the participants of the 6th Cooperative Ministers' Conference held in Kathmandu from April 3-7, 2002 recognize the importance of strengthening processes that facilitate adoption and implementation of appropriate legislation and policy for cooperatives in the new Millennium.

Adopted on Wednesday, this third day of April 2002 at Kathmandu.

**Summary of
COUNTRY PAPERS
presented at the
6th Asia-Pacific Cooperative
Ministers Conference
Kathmandu, Nepal, 3-6 April 2002**

BANGLADESH

As of now in Bangladesh there are 20 National Level, 1,043 central level and 138,575 primary level cooperative societies. The total number of membership is 7,521,946. Experience shows that most of the self-financed cooperatives are performing better than government-sponsored cooperatives. Therefore, the focus of cooperative policies and legislation should be on the promotion of self-financed and self-regulated cooperatives. Cooperative legislation, being an important instrument of cooperative development, should also enable Government-sponsored cooperatives to graduate effectively into member-based and self-financed institutions so that they can cope up with the challenge of an open economy effectively.

In view of that steps have been initiated to formulate appropriate national policy on cooperatives and legislation framework to create an enabling environment for the growth and development of cooperatives.

Basic Features of New Cooperative Societies Act 2001

- Simple Written in Bangla
- More democratic
- Requisite power has been given to the Registrar
- Meeting to ensure democratic management
- Hindrance to the entrance of non-cooperators
- Introduce provisions of punishment for corruption and money defalcation
- Prevention of mushroom growth of cooperatives;
- Decreased Power of Government
- Decreased Power of Registrar;
- Abolishes registrar's exclusive power

- Decentralised Audit
- Limit the inquiry power of Registrar
- Involvement of district Judge to settle the disputes
- Necessary provisions for quick wind-up of inactive co-operatives

New Cooperative Policy

Rural development and Cooperatives Division has prepared a draft cooperative policy which has been discussed in an inter ministerial meeting and a roundtable discussion with representatives from successful and important cooperative societies, cooperative experts, bureaucrats and intellectuals on draft policy has already made.

The new draft cooperative policy is divided into 6 chapters that may be summarised as follows:

(i) Introduction

Analysis of the needs of the government support and services for small and marginal cooperative enterprises in the context of the present world economic scenario.

(ii) Aims and Objectives

The main objective is to encourage the people to organize cooperatives for generating employment and to develop the socio-economic conditions of the poor and unemployed, small producers, lower middle and middle class, professionals, labours etc.

(iii) Principles

Considering cooperatives as an economic institution, importance has given to inclusion of the cooperative sector in the Fifth Five Years Plan and Annual Development Plan and provide economic support and assistance for women empowerment through cooperatives, cooperative extension for Human resource development, expansion of publicity of cooperative activities and Cooperative research information man-

agement and education.

(iv) Implementation Strategies

Two types of government support and assistance is visualised. Financial and other package assistance for necessary capital formation, productions, processing, marketing and other facilities and assistance for human resource development through cooperatives.

(v) Duties and responsibilities of cooperative department

It is illustrated that cooperative Department will take necessary steps for implementing proposed principles under the direct supervision of Rural development and cooperative divisions and in close coordination with concern ministeries and other Government agencies.

(vi) Conclusion

In conclusion, draft cooperative policy emphasises that Co-operators should be promising, active and creative instead of being dependent on Government subsidies and support.

CHINA

Cooperatives were first organised in China at the beginning of the last century and so far have undergone a development of more than 80 years. Cooperatives did not have any substantial developments until 1949 when the new People's Republic was founded. However the then highly centralised planning system could not push forward the development of advantages of genuine cooperatives. This situation has remained unchanged until the end of 1970s when China launched its reform and socialist market economy which provided an effective impetus to the cooperatives. Of all the forms of cooperatives China Supply and Marketing Cooperatives are playing an active role in serving the agriculture rural areas and their members. They have also made great contributions to the industrialisation of the nation's agriculture and therefore, have been greatly supported by the government and highly valued by the people.

SMCs were still boasting a 70% market share both in domestic rural input market and in the domestic cotton supplying market. In the recent years after opening and reform policy; the government successfully made special policies for the reform and development of supply and marketing cooperatives. In order to clarify the legal status of supply and marketing cooperatives effectively and to protect legal rights and interests of cooperative and farmers members, the Standing Committee of Chinese National People's Congress has included "Law of Cooperative Economic Organisation" into its legislation plan. This indicates that all levels of Chinese governments attach great importance to cooperative legislation. In addition, in the process of constituting other relevant laws and regulations, Chinese government fully takes cooperative features into account, for instance, in the "Agricultural Law", a law on economic development of agriculture and rural area revised by the Standing Committee of Chinese Na-

tional People's Congress, it defines the legal status and role of farmers' cooperative economic organisation, proposes to improve development of supply and marketing cooperatives so as to promote the normative and healthy development of cooperative nature of rural economic organisation. This measure provides new policy and legislative guarantee to the further development of cooperative economy. In the movement of the completion of market economy and legislation, our government will issue more policies and laws, which comply with cooperative system principle with Chinese characteristics and promote the development of cooperative course to push forward the healthy development of supply and marketing cooperatives and to contribute both to the people and society.

INDIA

In 1991, India embarked upon the economic reforms through liberalization and globalization of the national economy. The pressures of free and liberal market required cooperatives to be competitive and responsive to the emerging needs. The Government of India of the country, therefore, initiated the process of cooperative reforms in the country.

National Policy on Cooperatives

National Policy on Cooperatives has been put in place to facilitate all around development of the cooperatives in the country. Under this policy cooperatives would be provided necessary legislative and policy support and assistance to enable them to work as autonomous, self-reliant and democratically managed institutions accountable to their members.

Cooperative Law

A model cooperative law based on the principle of autonomy and self sustenance of cooperatives has been prepared for adoption by the state governments. Already five states have enacted the new cooperative legislation for self-reliant cooperatives based on the Model Cooperative Law. Some others are in the process. The Government of India has also formulated and introduced in the Parliament a more liberalized legislation namely Multi State Cooperative Societies Bill, 2000 to replace the existing Act of 1984. The new legislation is likely to be passed by the Parliament shortly.

The reforms in cooperative sector are in line with the joint declarations of ICA Conferences. The National Policy on Cooperatives upholds the values and principles of cooperation as defined in the International Cooperative Identity Statement (ICIS). The new legislation aims at providing the autonomy and democratic management to cooperatives. The government role would be confined to creation of appropri-

ate environment for the growth and development of autonomous member based cooperatives.

Other Issues

In the national policies relating to various other segments of national economy such as Agricultural Policy, National Agro-Processing Policy and the Marketing and Storage Policy, the cooperatives have been assigned a prominent role for the development of rural areas and a level playing field has been provided to the cooperative vis-à-vis the other enterprises. On capitalisation of the cooperatives, apart from the financial assistance wherever needed, the new legislation proposes to give full financial freedom to the cooperatives to enable them to raise resources from the external market, to form subsidiaries and holding companies and enter into the strategic alliances with other enterprises. The government has already given special dispensation to cooperatives in the matter of taxation. The National Policy on Cooperatives also recognizes the necessity to phase out government share holding/equity participation in the cooperatives.

The world bank is extending huge financial support to the self help groups and NGOs, but the cooperatives, which are in fact the best form of self-help groups have been excluded. The ICA through its good offices and affiliation with the UN agencies may impress upon them to recognise the cooperatives and accord a special status equity and employment generation. ICA should also have a close liaison and interaction with the national governments during the intervening period between the biennial conferences as well.

INDONESIA

Cooperative Development Policy And Legislation Refors

The cooperative development in Indonesia has been given a strong legal base in the Constitution 1945. The article 33 of the Constitution 1945 states that the Indonesia economy shall be organised as a joint endeavour based upon the principle of brotherhood. In order to materialise this constitutional visualisation a number of steps have been taken through periodical Decress and enactment of Law.

Currently the Indonesian Government is about to finalise draft new law on the amendment of Law Number 25 of 1992 on Cooperatives. Shortly it will be passed by government to the parliament. The new Cooperative Law has included ICA Coop Identity Statement on definition, values and principles of cooperative.

In response to the new challenges egerging from the impact of crisis and globalisation a new cooperative development paradigm along with the policy and legislation reforms is being pursued. The new paradigm visualises:

- a. Bottom up approach to cooperative development
- b. Development of the demand driven and people's based cooperatives
- c. Important indicators for measuring success of cooperatives should be the contribution of cooperatives to GDP and RGDP; employment generation; added value to membership, increased market share, effective inter cooperative relationships and impact on welfare of members and community.
- d. The cooperative policy focuses on the following:
 - (i) Creation of enabling environment conducive to the growth and development of cooperatives

- (ii) Improving access of cooperatives to productive resources;
- (iii) Human resource development of cooperatives

Implementation of the Beijing Joint Declaration

a. On Autonomy and Independence

Indonesia reaffirms its commitment to maintain autonomy and independence of cooperative movement in accordance with the Jakarta Joint Declaration in 1992

b. On Legal Existence

Cooperative Law No 25 of 1992 and Government Regulation Number 4 of 1994 stipulate that only cooperatives that comply with the requirements and procedures shall be given legal status by government.

c. On Recognition

The recognition on the existence of cooperatives should not only be seen from its legal status given by government but more importantly be measured from the cooperative effect on grass-root economy especially welfare of the members.

d. On Fair Playing Field

Experience shows that cooperatives and SMEs appear to be more resilient compared to big businesses during the crisis. The issuance of Law Number 5 Year 1998 regarding the ban on unfair competition (anti monopoly) provides wider opportunities for cooperatives to expand businesses in various economic sectors.

e. On Self Regulation

The Promulgation of Law No 25 Year 1992 on Cooperatives ensures self determination, initiatives and creativeness of cooperatives to generate their own regulations.

f. On Capitalisation

Most of cooperatives find difficulties to raise capital from the members savings. To address their need, cooperatives can

raise capital through borrowings from their cooperatives, banks, financial institutions, issuance of bonds and through share capital from government.

g. On official Development Assistance

The Indonesian government extend a sincere gratitude to the World Bank for its financial support for preparing a comprehensive proposal for amendment of Law Number 25 Year 1992 on Cooperatives. Likewise, a sincere thank is extended to CCA for technical assistance to support initiatives. In collaboration with the Institute of Cooperative Development Study (LSP21) draft new law on cooperatives has been accomplished.

h. On Networking

According to Indonesia's cooperative law, the Indonesia Cooperatives Council known as DEKOPIN, the single Apex organisation of cooperative movement in Indonesia functions as networking mechanism for different types of cooperatives.

IRAN

In 1979, after the triumph of Iran's Islamic Revolution, to acknowledge the importance of cooperatives for the first time, cooperative sector was included as one of the three economic sectors of the I.R of Iran's Constitutional Law where the Principle 44 reads:

“The Islamic Republic of Iran's Economic System contains 3 sectors: Public, Cooperative and Private”.

In addition, on some duties of the cooperative sector, Paragraph 2, Principle 43 of the Constitution reads:

“Provision of job opportunities for all the unemployed until achieving full employment, also, provision of job facilities in cooperative terms through granting interest free loans or any other legal proceedings for those who are deprived while being able to work.”

In 1991, the Iranian Islamic Parliament approved the Cooperative Law as a big step toward providing social justice through wealth adjustment, employment for all alleviation of poverty, reduction of inflation, prevention of hoarding, as well as minimizing the state responsibilities and promotion of grassroots participation. In line with the above, Ministry of Cooperatives was established to support and guide cooperatives without affecting their autonomy.

Implementation of Resolutions of Fifth Asia-Pacific Cooperative Ministers' Conference

- Annual financial facilities with the lowest possible interest rates, for the cooperative sector in order to establish new cooperatives and increase their working capital as indicated in the Iranian Budget Law.
- Exemptions of cooperatives from tax and registration fee for a minimum 8 year period.

- Priority of the cooperative sector to take over public firms in the process of privatization.
- Authorizing organisations, institutions and councils to conduct joint ventures with cooperatives without affecting their autonomy.
- Legal protection for cooperatives.
- Based on Chapter 10 of the Cooperative Law, the Iranian Cooperative Chamber (ICC) was founded in 1992. ICC has been formed by member representatives of coops and unions. It functions to make necessary coordinations in production, domestic investment, as well as various general and technical training and educational courses.
- In relation to removing the gender discrimination in cooperatives, the Ministry of Cooperatives has taken actions in the course of promotional and cultural activities. Currently, the women participation rate indicates 17% which is a considerable increase with respect to the last decade.
- In line with cooperative human resource development, Ministry of Cooperatives has been active with holding educational courses for more than 1 million cooperators.

ISRAEL

In Israel today 2546 Cooperatives operate in a wide range of areas. Many of them are agricultural cooperatives but there are also many in the business area.

They operate within the framework of the law of Cooperative Societies without any government interference; the only advantage they enjoy is some tax benefits.

Every year approximately 100 new cooperatives are registered. In 2001, 121 new cooperatives were registered, and from the beginning of 2002 till now were registered another 41.

The Cooperatives function autonomously and each has its unique by laws that can be amended at any time.

Cooperative Societies in Israel manage their own economic and social affairs. They are totally responsible for their economic growth and welfare of their members and they have to account to their members.

The Law of Cooperatives Societies of 1933 together with its amendments encompass the rules regarding the creation and cessation of the cooperative society and the standards for running the cooperatives in a manner that fulfils its own rules and the requirements of the law.

The Cooperatives in Israel have no problem acting and competing in the economic structure of the Israeli economy and also worldwide. In addition, the cooperatives have recently started to divert part of their holdings into subsidiaries and to market them on the stock exchange so as gain capital for the activities of the cooperatives.

The sub-committee for law and regulation of the General Council for Cooperation has also completed the preparation of a new legislation based on cooperative principles. This

legislation contains the legal tools, which coincide with the holistic worldwide view of the cooperatives.

The law developed from three sources :

1. Relevant parts were taken from proposed cooperative union law, which was presented by the government in July 1965, and was again presented in October 1971.
2. The principles of the new company law that was recently publicized, after being accommodated to the special character and needs of the cooperative societies.
3. The many years of experience which have been amassed in the Department of Cooperative Societies and in legal office of the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs. The ideas and experiences of the World Cooperative Movement and ICA.

JAPAN

A. Agricultural Cooperatives

- (i) *Experts from presentation of Mr Mitsuhiro Miyakoshi, Parliamentary, Secretary*

Agricultural cooperatives in Japan are non-profit organizations whose goal is to encourage mutual assistance among farmers. Their principal mission has been advising cooperative members on the joint shipment of produce, the joint purchase of production materials and farm financing. They have played a significant role in improving agricultural productivity and socio-economic status of farmers.

Given the drastic socio-economic changes occurring in Japan, it is essential for the agricultural cooperatives as autonomous mutual assistance organizations for farmers to achieve sound management in order to support their farming activities and livelihood.

The Japanese government has also revised the Agricultural Cooperative Act, and taken measures to support these agricultural cooperatives reforms so that they can achieve sound management. The measures are allowing farm corporations to become members equal to individual farmers, tightening regulations to prevent permanent trustees from holding multiple positions and tightening up the audit by the Central Union of the Agricultural Cooperatives which is a leading organization of Agricultural Cooperatives.

Japan is now the largest supplier of ODA in the world. The food industry and the agriculture, forestry and fisheries sectors are the key industries for developing countries to promote their self-economic development, as well as to produce and ensure food for their people. Japan, then, has been actively implementing technical and financial cooperation in various areas. Considering the importance of this role, Ja-

pan extends funds to ICA training programme to better organize agricultural and fisheries cooperatives and to train women leaders in the agricultural cooperatives.

In the context of WTO agricultural negotiations. It needs to be emphasized that agriculture has multifacial roles such as land preservation, water supply conservation, food security, ecological preservation, the maintenance and vitalization of rural communities other than supplies food and fiber.

Our opinion that we should take note of non-trade concerns, and should not prejudge the outcome of negotiations, was incorporated in the agricultural part of the ministerial declaration “the coexistence of various types of agriculture” should be the fundamental goal of agricultural negotiations. It is also important to ensure the multi-functionality of agriculture and food security.

(ii) Excerpts from the presentation of Mr. Kazumi IMAO, Executive Director, JA-ZENCHU

Amendments of Agricultural Cooperative Society Law which took effect January this year has given afresh a top priority to the farm advisory function among various activities which the multipurpose agricultural cooperatives are allowed to be engaged in so the JA can do a better job of helping member farmers run their farm business. The amended laws also calls for a stronger management system so that the banking business of multi-purpose cooperatives will be run under a more specialist supervision of full-time executive officials.

Amendments of the Cooperative Law, in the said directions have been introduced by the Japanese government based on wishes of the JA group and after open deliberations of the issue by a body which included people in the private business sectors. Such a legislative process to get all the stakeholders involved could be a some positive experience to look into and learn from for the cooperative movements in the Asia-Pacific region.

In the context of on going agricultural negotiations under WTO,

we would most strongly seek understanding of the countries of the region party to the agricultural negotiation and urge that trade rules be established in such a way as they would make it possible for agriculture anywhere to play its multi-faceted functions and a diverse forms of agriculture can co-exist and as these rules would be fair and equitable to both agricultural importing and exporting countries and regions.

B. Consumer Cooperatives

(Experts from the presentation of Mr. Mikio Moriyama)

Basic Principles of the Consumers Coop Law and Relationship Between Consumer Cooperatives and Government

The Consumer Cooperative is a voluntary livelihood cooperative organization of citizens" under Article 1 of the Consumers' Cooperative Law and is managed under the following basic principles. They are (a) union of persons with other persons within a certain locality or profession (b) management exclusively to promote improvement of socio-economic conditions of cooperative members (c) members to hold equal voting and decision making rights (d) each member is obliged to invest more than one unit of capital (e) members to join or withdraw from cooperatives with their own free will; and (f) the cooperative to aim at maximum contribution to members and not to engage in profit making business operations.

As announced in the Joint Declaration of Beijing Ministerial Conference in 1999, legal assurance of "autonomy and independence of cooperatives" is quite important for their development. In the legal framework, it is also necessary to assure accountability and transparency through various "self regulations". In this respect, a consumer cooperative is required to establish its own bye laws and other management regulations on basic rules of cooperative management and other items that are fundamental to the organization. The law also requires the consumer cooperative to have an "auditor" inside the organisation as the body monitoring the

management's business administration. In view of the rules of autonomy established by cooperatives, control under the Consumer Cooperative Law is limited to inspection and order to take action by government administrators only when there is a rational reason for failure to comply with laws and regulations, keeping government intervention to a minimum. It places maximum respect to cooperative autonomy.

In the area of public support of consumer cooperatives, there are (1) long term, low interest loans to encourage development of stores and distribution centres etc., by cooperatives and (2) preferential taxation different from that applied to private business enterprises. National government mediation of cooperatives is limited to the least necessary minimum insofar that it does not obstruct the autonomy and independence of activity of the cooperatives, in view of the "autonomy" and "independence" of consumer cooperatives as stipulated in the objective of the law.

As stated in 1998 report by a committee on "What Coops Should Be" organized by the Ministry of Health and Welfare, cooperatives are expected to contribute to community development in their respective areas and in cooperation with other consumer groups, non-profit organisations (NPOs) and other civic groups with attention to the fundamental principles of investment, use and management by the cooperative member themselves.

KOREA

Korean agricultural cooperatives have made a significant contribution to the development of agriculture and rural society in Korea. However, globalization and transition to the information era from an industrial society brought serious challenges to the Korean agricultural cooperatives and forced them to meet the new needs of their members and customers.

Korea has had one of the most rapidly growing economies in the world during the last three decades. However, her shortened development leaves many pitfalls in its economy. As you know, in the last part of 1997 the Asian financial crisis struck Korea. During the International Monetary Fund (IMF) bailout period, the Korean people struggled to rebound the economy from the first hard time it experienced since her industrial economic development began.

Now, the Korean economy has recovered well and its soundness is strengthening. The average annual GDP growth rate for the last three years was 7.7 percent. Korea has recorded a five consecutive year balance of payment surplus. There has been little change in the consumer price index for the past three years.

First of all in order to enhance the business capability and to meet the needs of members of agricultural cooperatives which changed after the Korean financial crisis, the three cooperative federations in Korea were merged in July of 2000. Now the newly established NACF includes the old NACF, the Livestock Cooperative Federation and the Korea Ginseng Cooperative Federation. This merger was accompanied with heavy restructuring and layoffs. More than 20 percent of the employees of NACF and member cooperatives reduced in those years.

The merger has been in a position to reduce organisational

inefficiencies and improve cost effectiveness in the cooperative sector. The direct beneficiaries are farmers. They are able to sell products through over 3,000 integrated agricultural outlets of the NACF, and can buy farm inputs at reasonable prices on quantity lots. Customers are also served well with over 5,000 financial branches – the largest organisation in the country.

However, globalization and new information technologies challenge them to set up a new vision for the 21st century business environment. They are targeting to strengthen the organizational capability, to innovate their management strategy, and to build-up a sound cooperative culture. Through creative cooperative management they are trying to maximize the synergic effect of three core fields of Korean Multi-Purpose agricultural cooperatives; Agricultural Marketing & Supply, Livestock, Banking and Insurance and Extension Service.

KUWAIT

In 1962 the Constitution of the State of Kuwait and the law No 20 of 1962 regarding the cooperatives societies were promulgated. The constitution attached importance to cooperation as it stipulated in its 23rd article that the State must encourage cooperation and saving as well as supervises the organisation of credit.

The law no 20 of 1962 included in the basic principles of cooperation adopted by the International Cooperative Alliance as well as it included another texts aiming at protecting the cooperative movement and work to develop it.

The period 1962 till 1971 cooperative movement in Kuwait expanded. Therefore in 1966, the Ministry of Social Affairs and Labour updated the Cooperation Controlate to undertake the supervision of the existing cooperative societies.

Cooperation controll subsequently was made fulfilled department of cooperation in 1971. Another important landmark in the growth of cooperative, particularly consumer cooperatives was witnessed in 1978 when the government reserved distribution of consumer articles for such coops in the typical new emerging housing colonies.

In 1977, agricultural cooperative emerged in Kuwait when the first agricultural cooperative society Al-Wafra Cooperative Society was established. Other areas of cooperative development in Kuwait are agriculture and handicrafts that emerged in 1982 and in 1991 respectively. In order to deal with emerging needs of cooperative growth in future, the cooperative law of 1962 was amended in 1979. Further in 1985, the Minister of Social Affairs and Labour issued a resolution to form the High Consultative Committee for Cooperative Affairs for the purpose of proposing the general policy for Kuwait Cooperative Movement with both its consumer and productive sector and coordination between them.

MALAYSIA

Cooperative Policy Development and Legislation

Malaysian government is very supportive towards the cooperative movement as it recognizes its role in the economic development of the country. (Third Outline Perspective Plan and the Eighth Malaysia Plan. Malaysian government through the Ministry of Land and Cooperative Development, formulated the National Cooperative Policy after a preliminary research was undertaken by team of consultants from a local university in 1997. Several consultations, discussions and meetings were subsequently held with the cooperative movement and appropriate parties. Currently, the National Cooperative Policy is awaiting approval from the cabinet.

The policy would become the blueprint and master plan for cooperative development. There are eight strategies that have been outlined in the NCP to ensure the efficiency and effectiveness of the movement's development which are :

- a. To ensure that the cooperative principles and philosophy are understood and practiced in the cooperative movement.
- b. To formulate clear rules and regulations to assist and encourage the development of the cooperative movement.
- c. To recognize the cooperative movement as a prime motivator and contributor in the socio-economic development of the nation.
- d. To strengthen and maintain good cooperative governance, accountable administration, finance and effective supervision.
- e. To increase sources of capital to enable cooperatives to face challenges and competition.

- f. To improve cooperation among cooperatives and between cooperatives and other parties.
- g. To improve the quality of products and services on a continual basis to ensure that members receive the best products and services and
- h. Formation of a “National Cooperative Consultation Council”.

In order to strengthen the cooperative movement so as to withstand competition in the market, to promote self-reliance and good governance, the government continues to formulate suitable fiscal and other policies, which include amendments to the Cooperative Act and Procedures. Amendments are necessary to encourage the growth and development of the movement in the changing socio-economic environment. The 7th Cooperative Principle i.e. “Concern for Community” which was adopted at the ICA General Assembly held in Manchester is to be included in the proposed amendments to the Act. This as well as other amendments are deemed necessary to overcome any lacuna in the Act.

To enhance self-regulation, every cooperative is encouraged to formulate procedures for every activity undertaken. This is an addition to the cooperative by-law which already exists in order to ensure accountability and transparency. The procedures are used to govern the implementation of activities which the members patronize. The cooperative act and procedures on the other hand have adequate scope to promote self-regulation.

In Malaysia besides exemption given as mentioned earlier certain tax incentives have also been given based on the net profit of the cooperative. They are :

- a. An amount equivalent to 8% of shareholders fund is deducted from the taxable income:
- b. Not more than 15% of the net profit (under the Cooperative Act 1993) is to be divided as follows
 - (i) Statutory Reserve Fund – 12%

- (ii) Cooperative Education Trust Fund – 2%
 - (iii) Cooperative Development Trust Fund – 1%
- c. The net taxable income is then taxed to a maximum of 28% as imposed on private companies.

MYANMAR

The Myanmar Cooperative Movement was born 98 years ago in 1904. Since that time, the cooperative of Myanmar have played a vital role in promoting socio-economic development of the nation and improving the quality of the life of the people.

The introduction of market oriented economic policies in 1988 in place of socialist planned economy resulted in the need for the cooperative movement to be transformed to be in line with the changing economic and social environment of our society. Consequently, a new cooperative law of Myanmar was enacted in 1992. Here, the new law is also consistent with the principles of ICA. The autonomy and independence of cooperatives are legally guaranteed under the law.

With the emergence of new cooperative law in 1992, the whole cooperative organization has been restructured with Central Cooperative Society at the apex. Under this body, there exist three levels, namely: Unions (Federations) at the tertiary level, Syndicates at the secondary level and primary societies at the grass root level. At the moment, there are (1806) societies in the movement.

Myanmar cooperative have no gender discrimination on women participation, enabling them to enjoy rights as that of men in membership. The capitalization is another the most important issue. Although the law allows them an access to outside capital, most of our cooperatives have to cope with the issue of financial restraints as well as lack of experience in modern finance. In this context cooperativising of micro-credit is being emphasized in order to provide financial resources for the cooperatives at the grass roots level. At the same time, Myanmar cooperatives are encouraged to invest in other cooperatives locally, and foreign investors are also welcome to invest in Myanmar cooperatives. The cooperative residual assets are protected by making an appropriate

cooperative restructuring fund known as (CRF).

The Government of Myanmar is fully aware of the importance of cooperatives in national development. The government recognizes the autonomous nature of cooperatives and thus, policy and legal framework in cooperative sector were based upon the cooperative principles.

German assistance from the Government are for the development of cooperatives and is not intended as an interference in the internal affairs of the society but as a collaboration to create and sustain an enabling policy and legal environment, conducive to cooperative development.

NEPAL

It was notably important to mention that the cooperative development as a part of socio-economic development was initiated by His Majesty's Government under the First Five Year Plan (1956/57-1960/61)

It was implemented in accordance with the targets stipulated in the Plan. It was also experienced that the state sponsored cooperative development was not much helpful to create a favourable environment for the voluntary participation of the people in the cooperative development. Accordingly the Cooperative Act, 1992 came into existence. It was also a departure of the government control over cooperatives. It has revealed that cooperatives are autonomous and independent and hence function as autonomous and independent bodies under the purview of the Cooperative Act.

A large number of cooperatives with different type and levels have come into existence on the voluntary basis. They include 6484 primary cooperatives, 105 secondary level cooperatives, 3 tertiary level cooperative and one national level cooperative federation. To organize cooperatives is not the purpose for numerical growth but the purpose for qualitative and efficient services to the people. This has not been achieved so far. The following suggestions are therefore offered:

- Cooperatives should be capable to run their business affairs as autonomous and independent bodies
- Government should give equal preferential treatment to cooperatives in their activities
- Relation between cooperatives and government should be conducive
- Relation should be well-coordinated and established between coops at all levels horizontally and vertically.
- Training on different aspects of cooperation and member education should be carried out.

PHILIPPINES

The Beijing Declaration helped guide our legislators and strengthened our lobby for the amendment of the CDA Charter Amendment bill (and the Cooperative Code Amendments). Minor changes were introduced in the proposed bill in response to the legitimate concerns that were being raised (e.g. safeguards against the CDA personnel dislocation) With this and the strong support of legislators who had attended the Beijing Conference, the CDA Charter amendment bill was passed on third and final reading by the House of Representatives in May 2000.

The Cooperative Code Amendment bill was likewise approved on third reading by the House in early 2001.

However, the proposed approved coop bills together with the other priority bills were overtaken by a political event. In the last months of 2000 up to January 2001, it was busy with the impeachment of then President Joseph Estrada, followed soon after by the May 2001 elections.

These two bills, as approved by on third reading, have been re-filed in the 12th Congress last year. Committee hearings and technical working group meetings have been held by the House of Representatives in December, 2001 and last January, 2002. The Committee reports on these bills are now being prepared.

Executive Action to Re-orient CDA

While the amendatory bills remain pending, the office of the President of the Philippines initiated a performance and institutional audit of the Cooperative Development Authority (CDA) last year. As a result of this audit, a re-orientation of the CDA is now likewise proposed at the executive level, and an Executive Order (EO) to this affect is now being prepared. This re-orientation hews closely to the one being proposed in the bill pending in Congress.

New Challenge : Special Law on Savings and Credit Cooperatives

It is generally acknowledged that savings and credit cooperatives are the strongest in the cooperative sector in the Philippines.

Yet, our Cooperative Code's provisions that deal with savings and credit cooperatives in particular are contained in only four short articles that fit in just one page. In sum, savings and credit cooperatives (SCCs) remain unregulated and unsupported by government despite their importance to the cooperative sector.

NATCCO has started crafting a proposed law on SCCs. This law will set up in the regulatory framework for SCCs and will institutionalised participatory standard setting and self regulation. We also hope to clarify that the cooperative sector shall establish their own stability fund and central liquidity, while government will put up the insurance system for savings deposits in SCCs.

SINGAPORE

Cooperatives were introduced in Singapore as early as 1925. In the early years, cooperatives only focussed on thrift and loan facilities and confined membership to government staff.

The turning point in the development of the Cooperative Movement in Singapore was the launching of cooperative ventures in 1970 by the Singapore National Trade Union Congress (NTUC) and its affiliated unions. NTUC is a national body representing most working class citizens in Singapore.

The Singapore National Cooperative Federation (SNCF), established on 18 September 1980 is the apex body representing the cooperative movement in Singapore.

Seventy four cooperatives in Singapore are currently affiliated to SNCF. These affiliates have a total individual membership of more than 1.3 million. The cooperatives are categorized into four sectors under SNCF i.e. NTUC Sector, Campus Sector, Credit Sector and Services Sector.

The first cooperative legislation – cooperative societies ordinance was introduced in 1924 by the British Government. This was replaced in 1979 by the Cooperative Societies Act. Amongst other features, the Act established the SNCF and the Central Cooperative Fund. The Act has not been amended since then. However, the current legislation is operating smoothly. Minor update amendments are made from time to time on the legislation.

The Government's policy is to take a balanced approach in extending a reasonable amount of assistance and advice to the cooperative movement. At the same time, the government ensures that this help does not stifle the initiative and enterprise essential for the movement to succeed in the future. The cooperative movement will continue to play an active role in the socio-economic development of Singapore.

Future Challenges for Cooperatives in Singapore

- Cooperatives must always be clear about their social mission
- Continuous need to improve management and productivity in cooperative organizations
- Forming new cooperatives to meet emerging needs in the changing social/economic environment.
- Promoting synergy among cooperatives at regional and international level.

SRI LANKA

In 1992, the government introduced an amendment to the Cooperative Act debarring politicians from holding in Cooperative Societies. It did have an immediate impact but the desired results were far short of expectations.

With the introduction of the Provincial Councils system in Sri Lanka, Cooperatives became a developed subject and accordingly it was developed on Provincial Councils. These councils have passed various statutes of their own on cooperatives but unfortunately, they are not compatible with the cooperative identity.

Against this background, there arose the necessity to restructure the cooperative movement of Sri Lanka and accordingly a Presidential Commission on cooperatives was appointed in the year 2000 and its report is under consideration of the President.

Ours is a government which has accepted the concept of globalisation and the free – market economy. At the same time, we believe that the cooperative should be developed as a people based and an independent organisation. As such, the policy of our government is to give every assistance to the cooperative movement to function as a people’s organization in the true sense of the world, and one, which preserves cooperative values and principles. At the same time, we want to create the right atmosphere conducive for the movement to function itself as a self – reliant and entrepreneurial organization, strong enough to compete with the private sector.

It is our firm belief that the cooperative movement is quite capable of meeting the adverse effects of globalization. As such, we consider that country like ours, which is facing many socio-economic problems, can expect relief only through the movement like cooperatives.

THAILAND

The Royal Thai Government has pledged a strong commitment as indicated in Article 45 of the Constitution that Thai people have freedom to form themselves as cooperatives in accordance with their needs. Article 85 even strongly stipulates further that the government must promote, support, and protect the cooperative system. The appearance of the term cooperative system in the Constitution underlines the utmost importance the nation has attached to the cooperatives.

In response to the notions that cooperatives need to exercise autonomy, the Cooperative Promotion Department (CPD) the government agency under the Thai Ministry of Agriculture and Cooperatives directly in charge of all cooperative affairs except auditing (which comes under the Cooperative Auditing Department) has gradually switched its role from a supervisor and controller to an advisor and facilitator of cooperatives.

Another effort to enhance such autonomy is the establishment of Board of National Cooperative Development in accordance with the Cooperatives Act of 1999. The Board is the highest level body for cooperative development policy making in Thailand, which comprises representatives from the government, the cooperatives and experts in the field of cooperatives. It is new mechanism in formulating and directing cooperative development policies which heightens autonomy and independence for cooperatives.

Considerable efforts has been made in strengthening and modernizing the cooperative management with emphasis to efficiency and quality in horizontal and vertical integration. Flow of trade is encouraged among cooperatives and between themselves as the rest of the world.

To develop self-capitalization in cooperatives the CPD has been actively promoting a savings campaign among the co-

operative members all year round and encouraging the cooperatives to use their savings in running business. Furthermore, according to the Cooperatives Act of 1999 the Cooperative Development Fund has been established as the financial body to exclusively stimulate growth and development of cooperatives.

Programme

(Venue: Megha-Malhar Convention Hall,
Soaltee Crowne Plaza Hotel, Kathmandu)

- 2nd April, Tue**
- Arrival of the Hon'ble Ministers and Delegates of the Conference.
 - Registration (whole day)
- 3rd April, Wed**
- 08:30~10:00 Registration
- 10:00~11:30 Opening Ceremony followed by Photo Session.
- 11:30~12:00 Health Break
- 12:00~12:30
- Presentation of Expert Committee
 - Adoption of Conference Procedure and Agenda
- 12:30~12:45 Presentation of Draft of Joint Declaration by Hon'ble Minister of Agriculture and Cooperatives, His Majesty's Government of Nepal.
- 12:45~14:00 Lunch Break
- 14:00~15:30 Presentation by Guest Speakers:
- "Role of Agricultural Cooperatives for the Co-existence of Various

Types of Agriculture” by Mr. Mitsuhiro Miyakoshi, Hon’ble Parliamentary Secretary, Government of Japan.

- “Impact of Globalisation on Farmers and Role of Coops” by Dr. R.B. Singh, Assistant Director General, FAO, Bangkok.
- “Perspectives for Cooperative Banks in the New Millennium” by Dr. Tilak Rawal, Hon’ble Governor, Central Bank of Nepal.

15:30~16:00

Health Break

16:00~18:00

Presentation of Country Statements by Hon’ble Ministers/ National Cooperative Organisations.

19:00~19:30

Signing of Joint Declaration (Venue: Megha-Malhar Convention Hall).

19:30~21:30

Welcome Dinner hosted by the Ministry of Agriculture and Cooperatives, His Majesty Government of Nepal.

4th April, Thu

09:30~11:00

Presentation of Country Statements (continued).

11:00~11:30

Health Break

11:30~13:00

Presentation of 2nd Critical Study on Cooperative Policy and Legislation undertaken by ICA ROAP by Mr. Ravi Shankar and Mr. Garry Cronan.

13:00~14:30

Lunch Break

14:30~15:30

Presentation of Case Studies:

“Parallel Cooperative Law of India” by Dr. Bhagwati Prasad, Chief Executive, NCUI, India.

- “SANASA of Sri Lanka” by Mr. P.A. Kiriwandeniya, President, SANASA, Sri Lanka.

15:30~16:00	Health Break
16:00~16:30	“Cooperative Law Making: An Indonesian Experience” by Dr. Ibnoe Soedjono, Chairperson, Institute for Indonesian Coop Development Studies, Indonesia.
18:30~20:30	Reception hosted by the Prime Minister of Nepal.

5th April, Fri

09:30~10:15	<p>Presentation of UN Guidelines on “Cooperative Law and Policy” by Ms. Teresita M. de Leon, Regional Coordinator, ILO Coopnet/Coopreform.</p> <p>“Imperatives of Cooperative Policies” by Dr. Daniel Ish, Expert on Legislation, Canadian Cooperative Association.</p> <p>“Gender Issues in Cooperatives” by Ms. Akiko Yamauchi, Manager of International Department, Japanese Consumers’ Cooperative Union.</p>
10:15~11:15	Statements by International Organisations.
11:15~11:30	Health Break
11:30~12:00	Briefing on methodology and logistical details of Break Out Session.
12:00~13:00	Break Out Session – Formulation of Action Plans.
13:00~14:30	Lunch Break
14:30~16:00	Break Out Session – Formulation of Action Plans (contd.)

16:00~16:30	Health Break
16:30~17:00	Presentation and Adoption of Conference Report
17:00~17:30	Closing Ceremony
19:00~22:00	Dinner hosted by the National Cooperative Federation of Nepal.
6th April, Sat	Field Visits
7th April, Sun	Departure of Participants

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ICA STATEMENT OF COOPERATIVE IDENTITY

DEFINITION

A cooperative is an autonomous association of persons united voluntarily to meet their common economic, social and cultural needs and aspirations through a jointly-owned and democratically-controlled enterprise.

VALUES

Cooperatives are based on the values of self-help, self-responsibility, democracy, equality, equity and solidarity. In the tradition of their founders, cooperative members believe in the ethical values of honesty, openness, social responsibility and caring for others.

PRINCIPLES

The Cooperative Principles are guidelines by which cooperatives put their values into practice.

First Principle : Voluntary and Open Membership

Cooperatives are voluntary organisations, open to all persons able to use their services and willing to accept the responsibilities of membership, without gender, social, racial, political or religious discrimination.

Second Principle : Democratic Member Control

Cooperatives are democratic organisations controlled by their members, who actively participate in setting their policies and making decisions. Men and women, serving as elected representatives, are accountable to the membership. In primary cooperatives, members have equal voting rights [one member, one vote], and cooperatives at other levels are also organised in a democratic manner.

Third Principle : Member Economic Participation

Members contribute equitably to, and democratically control, the capital of their cooperative. At least a part of that capital is usually the common property of the cooperative. Members usually receive limited compensation, if any, on capital subscribed as a condition of membership. Members allocate surpluses for any or all of the following purposes: developing their cooperatives, possibly by setting up reserves, part of which at least would be indivisible; benefiting members in proportion to their transactions with the cooperative; and supporting other activities approved by the membership.

Fourth Principle : Autonomy and Independence

Cooperatives are autonomous, self-help organisations controlled by their members. If they enter into agreements with other organisations, including governments, or raise capital from external sources, they do so on terms that ensure democratic control by their members and maintain their cooperative autonomy.

Fifth Principle : Education, Training and Information

Cooperatives provide education and training for their members, elected representatives, managers, and employees, so that they can contribute effectively to the development of their cooperatives. They inform the general public – particularly young people and opinion leaders – about the nature and benefits of Cooperation.

Sixth Principle : Cooperation among Cooperatives

Cooperatives serve their members most effectively and strengthen the Cooperative Movement by working together through local, national, regional and international structures.

Seventh Principle : Concern for the Community

Cooperatives work for the sustainable development of their communities through policies approved by their members.

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