



**ICA GLOBAL
COOPERATIVE
CONFERENCE**
**COOPERATIVES BUILD
PROSPERITY FOR ALL**
25 - 30 November, 2024
Bharat Mandapam, New Delhi, India



**International Year
of Cooperatives**

Cooperatives Build a Better World

New Delhi Action Agenda on a Cooperative Future: Creating Prosperity for All -

A. Preamble

We, the participants of the ICA Global Cooperative Conference 2024 that launched the UN-IYC 2025 representatives of the global cooperative movement, representing diverse ages, ethnicities, religions, gender identities, countries, and cultures, joined by Heads of State, government leaders, and policymakers, convened at the **ICA Global Cooperative Conference 2024** in New Delhi, India;

We reaffirm our unwavering commitment to the **ICA Statement on the Cooperative Identity**, constituted by the definition, values, and principles, and to strengthening the cooperative movement worldwide.

We assert our shared goal: to expand cooperatives' contribution to the global economy without compromising our cooperative ideals, principles and values that define and drive us;

We further commit to supporting the **2030 UN Agenda for Sustainable Development**, leveraging the cooperative movement's partnership with the United Nations, and celebrating the proclamation of the UN General Assembly to mark **2025 as the International Year of Cooperatives (UN-IYC2025)** under the theme "*Cooperatives Build a Better World*" (Resolution [A/RES/78/289](#));

We recognise the pressing need to address global challenges, including rising inequalities, the climate crisis, economic instability, conflicts and wars, and the shrinking civic space. These challenges demand collective action toward peace, security, sustainability, and democracy, rooted in the cooperative model;

We acknowledge our responsibility to protect and differentiate cooperatives from other forms of enterprises which can erode cooperatives' potential for local wealth generation, perpetuate inequalities, and exacerbate environmental degradation. **Resilience, innovation, and inclusive leadership—especially from women, youth, minorities, and emerging talents—are critical to fulfilling our mission;**

B. The Launch of UN International Year of Cooperatives 2025

The launch of the **UN IYC2025** has marked a historic moment, celebrating the transformative power of cooperatives and their pivotal role in advancing sustainable development. Leaders from around the globe recognised cooperatives as essential in addressing social, economic, and environmental challenges, both locally and globally.

The opening ceremony of the International Year, held in New Delhi, India, on Monday 25 November 2024 during the ICA Global Cooperative Conference, featured distinguished figures, including the Honourable **Prime Minister of India Narendra Modi**, who underscored the unique role of cooperatives in fostering collaboration and shared ownership. For India, he noted, cooperatives are not merely a business model but a way of life rooted in cultural and human-centric values. Expressing gratitude to the United Nations for declaring 2025 the International Year of Cooperatives, Prime Minister Modi envisioned this as an opportunity to strengthen and expand the cooperative spirit for shared prosperity and sustainable growth.

UN Secretary-General António Guterres, in his address, highlighted the critical contributions of cooperatives to achieving the **Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)**. He commended their efforts in fighting poverty, ensuring

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food security, and addressing social exclusion while empowering communities to navigate complex global challenges. The Secretary-General called for unity and collaboration, particularly as the world approaches the **Second World Summit on Social Development**, urging stakeholders to position cooperatives at the forefront of sustainable transformation.

Prominent voices, including **Honorable Prime Minister of Bhutan Dasho Tshering Tobgay**, and **President of the International Cooperative Alliance Dr. Ariel Guarco**, echoed these sentiments, emphasising the importance of innovation, inclusivity, and intergenerational engagement. Honoring leaders such as **Dr. Udai Shanker Awasthi, Managing Director, Indian Farmers Fertilizer Cooperative** for their enduring contributions, the event showcased how cooperatives exemplify the spirit of collective action to “serve the unserved and reach the unreached”.

As we embark on this significant year, the global community reaffirms its commitment to supporting cooperatives as vital drivers of equitable and sustainable development. Together, through the power of cooperation, we can build resilient communities, bridge divides, and create a prosperous future for all.

Our Commitment to the World

We commit to advancing this vision through the following **four pillars of action**:

1. Reaffirming the Cooperative Identity

- **Living Our Principles:** Promote, protect, and communicate the cooperative identity.
- **Cooperative Education:** Inspire and expand access to cooperative education for all.
- **Heritage and Creativity:** Establish a global cooperative program to safeguard cultural heritage and foster creative expression.
- **Showcasing Impact:** Highlight cooperatives’ tangible contributions to inclusive growth and sustainable development.

2. Enabling Policy and Entrepreneurial Ecosystems

- **Supportive Frameworks:** Develop legal and regulatory systems that recognise the cooperative model and its governance.
- **Access to Finance:** Strengthen cooperative financial tools, including cooperative banks and credit unions.
- **Educational Partnerships:** Promote cooperative entrepreneurship in business schools and research institutions.
- **Market Access:** Enhance cooperatives’ access to markets and infrastructure to support entrepreneurial growth.

3. Nurturing Purposeful Leadership

- **Inclusive Leadership:** Empower women, youth, and marginalised groups to lead change within cooperatives.
- **Strategic Leadership Development:** Prioritise executive leadership programs tailored to cooperatives.

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- **Cooperative Uniqueness:** Position cooperatives as a key player in the global economy, leveraging their distinct identity.
- **Knowledge Sharing:** Foster local and international learning opportunities to drive innovation and collaboration.

4. Building a Sustainable and Cooperative Future

- **Sustainability Solutions:** Implement cooperative-driven climate action and sustainable development initiatives.
- **Technology Integration:** Leverage cooperative technology, AI, and digital tools to empower growth and branding.
- **Resilient Networks:** Strengthen cooperative value chains, circular economies, and platform cooperatives.
- **Impactful Partnerships:** Collaborate on research, education, and benchmarks for sustainability within planetary boundaries.

By championing these pillars, we reaffirm that the **cooperative enterprise model is a people-centered and sustainable model that puts people and the planet before profit** embedded in social and ecological systems. Through cooperation, we can address complex global challenges and shape a resilient, equitable future for all.

C. Call to Action:

As the **UN-IYC 2025** starts, the cooperatives represented at the ICA Global Cooperative Conference 2024 resolve to unite and act in pursuit of social justice, sustained peace, and prosperity for all. Guided by the International Cooperative Alliance (ICA), the following stakeholders are called upon to foster concrete actions for a just society and safer planet:

Individual Cooperatives:

- **Empower members:** Prioritise education, gender equality, and youth leadership development.
- **Innovate for resilience:** Embrace technologies and new business models to remain competitive.
- **Strengthen unity:** Collaborate with other cooperatives for shared branding, advocacy, and partnerships.
- **Build networks:** Pool resources for scale, finance, and advocacy while contributing to cooperative research and education.

Communities:

- **Support local cooperatives:** Join, patronise, and advocate for cooperative enterprises.
- **Recognise the value of cooperatives:** Promote the benefits of democratic ownership and decision-making.
- **Partner for change with cooperatives:** Collaborate with cooperatives to tackle poverty, inequality, housing, and climate challenges.
- **Foster education:** Advocate for cooperative studies in curricula to equalise with corporate business models.

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Civil Society Organisations:

- **Advocate for cooperative policies:** Lobby governments and institutions to support cooperative-friendly initiatives and development programs.
- **Raise awareness of cooperatives:** Highlight cooperatives' role in sustainable development.
- **Collaborate for impact:** Partner with cooperatives on social and environmental initiatives.
- **Create Cooperatives:** Leverage collective, democratic enterprises to achieve organisational goals.

Diverse Private Sector:

- **Invest in cooperatives:** Provide patient capital, loans, and technical assistance to cooperatives.
- **Collaborate ethically:** Engage in joint ventures and sustainable supply chains with cooperatives.
- **Promote values:** Encourage principles of equity, fairness, and sustainability.
- **Empower workers:** Support the creation of worker cooperatives within industries.

Opinion Shapers:

- **Share success stories on the positive impact of cooperatives:** Highlight cooperative achievements in innovation and development.
- **Counter misconceptions:** Challenge stereotypes surrounding cooperatives.
- **Advocate for cooperative policies:** Leverage influence to shape public and policy perspectives.
- **Inspire action:** Use platforms to amplify the cooperative movement's impact globally.

Governments and Policymakers

- **Create a favorable policy environment and legal frameworks to support entrepreneurial ecosystems for cooperatives:** Support cooperative development through a comprehensive approach that comprises financial, legal, and educational initiatives and take into account adequate tax incentives, regulatory reforms and access to finance.
- **Recognise cooperatives as key partners:** Involve cooperatives in the development and implementation of national policies and legislation.
- **Mainstream cooperative education:** Invest in programs that teach people about cooperative principles and practices.
- **Invest in cooperative research:** Support studies demonstrating cooperatives' socio-environmental and economic impact

Multilateral Institutions:

- **Support cooperative development by adopting a comprehensive ecosystem approach to cooperatives' development:** Provide funding and technical assistance to cooperative organisations.

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- Strengthen cooperatives' unions and national, and regional federations as key knowledge hubs and leverage for developing primary cooperatives.
- **Recognise the role of cooperatives in sustainable development:** Integrate cooperatives into development strategies and programs and endorse the Global Movement joined via the ICA.
- **Promote international cooperation:** Facilitate cross-border cooperation among cooperatives.

The International Cooperative Alliance (ICA) acknowledges its fundamental function as the custodian of the Statement on the Cooperative Identity. With its values, principles and harmonised definition of a cooperative, the ICA drives the vision and mission, as well as the strategy and program, that is co-constructed and co-owned by cooperatives worldwide through their representative organisations who form the General Assembly of the ICA. Through its immense diversity, it aims to be *one movement with one unified and overarching strategy and one brand experience*, and resolves to:

1. **Drive Unified Action:** Implement a cohesive global strategy for cooperatives to contribute to the SDGs and the post-SDG agenda.
2. **Leverage UN-IYC2025:** Use this milestone year to advance cooperative visibility, engagement, and leadership globally.
3. **Equip and Strengthen the Movement:** Build capacity within ICA Regions, Sectors, and Thematic Committees to support cooperatives in achieving tangible outcomes.
4. **Monitor and Report Progress:** Provide periodic progress updates and present an evaluation of achievements at the 2026 Global Cooperative Congress.

D. Closing Resolution

We, the cooperators and the participants of the **ICA Global Cooperative Conference 2024**, express our gratitude to the cooperative movement of India and the Asia-Pacific region for hosting this historic event.

We resolve to:

- Act decisively on the commitments outlined in this Declaration.
- Leverage UN-IYC2025 as a transformative opportunity for the cooperative movement.
- Hold ourselves accountable through regular assessments, culminating in a progress report at the next ICA Global Cooperative Conference, in 2026.

New Delhi, 27 November 2024

