



ICA Gender Equality Committee

Plenary Meeting

***14:00-18:00, 18 September 2005
Hotel Hilton, Cartagena (Colombia)***

Provisional Agenda

1. Welcome
2. Adoption of the Minutes
3. Report on the Activities of the Committee
4. Reports from Members
5. Financial Report 2005
6. ICA GEC Elections of Members, Executive and Chairperson
7. Discussion on ICA General Assembly Elections
8. 2006 Work plan
9. ICA General Assembly Seminar, "Microfinance is OUR Business"
10. Any other business
11. Closing

Minutes of the ICA Gender Equality Plenary Meeting

31 August 2003, Oslo (Norway)

DRAFT FOR APPROVAL

Welcome

Vanda Giuilano, the ICA GWC Chair, opened the meeting welcoming participants. She noted the good attendance and looked forward to active participation. Given that only two hours were set aside for the meetings, she turned to the agenda.

Adoption of Minutes

Members adopted the Minutes of the ICA GEC Plenary Meeting held in Lisbon (Portugal).

Report from Members

Rahaiah Baheran reported on the activities of the ICA Asia-Pacific Regional Women's Committee. The Committee was implementing a gender programme in the region which included awareness-raising, the organisation of regional women's fora, support for networking among women leaders, the organisation of national women fora in countries in the region, preparation of a training manual for leadership development of women in co-operatives in collaboration with the ILO-CoopNet programme and the holding of sub-regional training-of-trainers workshops.

A number of members provided information on the participation of women in their organisations including statistical information. Some provided written reports.

Junko Ito reported on the progress made by the Japanese Consumer Co-operative Union. She noted that in 1996 only 6% of the JCCU board was made up women while in 2003 19% were women. Although progress was made, efforts continued with "positive actions" at the primary co-operative level and strategic plans at the national level. A representative of JA-Zenchu also provided evidence that women were making progress in reaching decision-making positions and noted that the adoption of the a gender equality law in Japan would also be useful in change. Somakiat Tatriorn of the Co-operative League of Thailand noted that 9% of the board was made up of women and 31% of members were women. Master plans for improving gender equality had been improved and included training and awareness-raising given that changing attitudes was key to progress in this area.

Stefania Marcone noted that the Plenary was being attended by both men and women and was heartened given that gender equality means working together. Collecting data on women's participation in decision-making; establishing what percentage of women are employed in co-operatives and the promotion of women's entrepreneurship were the first steps in promoting gender equality. The second step she said was collecting information on policies (balancing home and work) and best practices. She reported that this was the approach undertaken by Legacoop to date. A national level conference was to be held to discuss the next steps and develop a gender strategy. She noted that changing attitudes was key and efforts by all were still very much needed.

Galina Kiseleva of Centrosojuz shared statistical information on women's participation in decision-making within her organisation. 72% of the leadership was made up women with the highest incidence of women at the top in co-operative educational institutes.

Paula Marques of Uninorte, Portugal reported on the project "A second chance for women". This Socrates programme aimed at increasing women's participation in co-operatives through training and education. It included too a component on training of trainers. The project was in its second year and was expected to expand its coverage and identify additional partners.

Mr. R.K. Dhami of Kribhco in India noted that the Indian fertiliser co-operative movement has had a keen interest in gender equality since the ICA Congress in Tokyo in 1992. Efforts to raise-awareness and promote change have in particular been undertaken at the primary co-operative level. He further reported that the National Co-operative Union of India (NCUI) was also active and was organising a national seminar and that SEWA, a women's co-operative, was also very active. He concluded that state co-operative legislation was also being modified to promote the participation of women in decision-making.

Mary Mathenge of the National Co-operative Housing Union of Kenya shared information on how housing co-operatives involved in housing development were also active in promoting gender issues. The issues of land ownership was key and the idea of joint ownership was being introduced though co-operatives. With regard to the provision of shelter for women, she reported that 50% of the members of housing co-operatives were women and at the grassroots level 70% of the leadership positions were held by women.

Financial Report

Members approved the report.

ICA General Assembly

The Secretary informed members of the proposed ICA Rules changes and their impact on the Committee. She noted that the thematic committees would be structurally closer to the Secretariat given that the cross-cutting nature of their work can input expertise into the overall work of the ICA. The Secretary further noted that this would facilitate the continuation of an ICA allocation to the Committees for their work.

Workplan 2004

In addition to statutory meetings, members approved the workplan which included the preparation of a joint seminar with ICA sectoral organisations in the financial sector (ICBA and ICMIF) to address women and credit; continued lobbying and awareness-raising through statements for International Women's Day and World Rural Women's Day; and the continued development of the ICA Gender Equality website.

ICA GEC-IHCO Seminar "Health, Gender and HIV/AIDS: Co-operatives Care!"

The Secretary reported on the preparations of the seminar. UNAIDS would make a keynote address followed by reports from the movement on activities currently be undertaken. She invited all to participate.

Closing

The Chair thanked participants for their attendance and participation and reiterated the invitation to the seminar on HIV/AIDS. She officially closed the meeting.

Participants:

R.K. Dhami, Kribhco, India
Stefania Marcone, ICA Board Member, Legacoop, Italy
Utako Minesima, National Council of Agricultural Co-operative Women's Association, Japan
H. Usui, The Japan Agricultural News, Japan
S. Yoshida, The Japan Agricultural News, Japan
Junko Ito, Japanese Consumer Co-operative Union JCCU, Japan
Akiko Yamauchi, Japanese Consumer Co-operative Union JCCU, Japan
Setsuo Nagira, Ie-No-Hikari Association, Japan
Hiroyuki Otake, Ie-No-Hikari Association, Japan
Chikara Sato, JA-ZENCHU, Japan
Ayako Nakata, JA-ZENCHU, Japan
Koji Narumi, JA-ZENCHU, Japan
Mary Mathenge, National Co-operative Housing Union NACHU, Kenya
Rahaiah Baهران, ANGKASA, Malaysia
Hanna Wroblewska, National Co-operative Council, Poland
Joanna Brzozowska, National Auditing Union of Workers Co-operatives, Poland
Teresa Borysiewicz, National Auditing Union of Workers Co-operatives, Poland
Margarida Santos, Portuguese Confederation of Co-operatives, Portugal
Paula Marques, Uninorte, Portugal
Lucila Alves, Uninorte, Portugal
F. Ferreira, Uninorte, Portugal
Elba Echeverria Diaz, ICA Board Member, COOPACA, Puerto Rico
Marina Khayrullina, Centrosojuz, Russia
Andrey Khomich, Centrosojuz, Russia
Ludmila Sipko, Centrosojuz, Russia
Elena Naumova, Centrosojuz, Russia
Oleg Bulekov, Centrosojuz, Russia
Somkiat Tatritor, Co-operative League of Thailand
Chris Herries, Co-operative Group, UK

Cristina Simone, ICA Project Office Buenos Aires, Argentina
Eugenie Djibo-Zongo, ICA Regional Office West Africa, Burkina Faso
Jiro Ito, ICA Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific, India
Savitri Singh, ICA Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific, India

Vanda Giuilano, Chair, ICA Gender Equality Committee
Maria Elena Chavez Hertig, Secretary, ICA Gender Equality Committee

Report of the Activities of the Committee 2004-2005

Follow-up: HIV/AIDS

The ICA Gender Equality held a successful joint seminar with the IHCO (Health) entitled, "Health, Gender and HIV/AIDS: Co-operatives Care!" in Oslo in 2003 conjunction with the ICA General Assembly. The presentations made were posted to the ICA GEC website at: www.ica.coop/gender/seminars/gec-health-2003.

The seminar not only raised awareness of co-operators, but also led to concrete follow-up including the holding of a joint ICA ROAP / UNAIDS seminar in New Delhi (6-7 April 2004) which resulted in funding by UNAIDS India for a regional project in the Asia-Pacific region. The Oslo seminar also led to the formulation by the ICA GEC of an ICA strategy to combat HIV/AIDS for the co-operative movement. This Strategy was proposed to the ICA Board and was adopted in March 2004 by the Board in Beijing.

The Committee continued its focus on HIV/AIDS in 2004 with a joint message with the ICA for International Women's Day of 8 March 2004 (www.ica.coop/gender/womens-day-2004.pdf). Of particular note was the message of the United Nations Secretary-General, Kofi Annan, which specifically mentioned the contribution of co-operatives:

...Everywhere that the epidemic is taking a severe toll, there are heroic women's groups and cooperatives doing remarkable work on prevention and care.... (www.un.org/News/Press/docs/2004/sgsm9186.doc.htm)

Assistance to Regional Committees

The Secretary of the ICA GEC also worked with Regional Office in Africa in 2004 assisting in the establishment of the ICA Africa Gender Committee. The Committee is being set up as a network. Information on this new committee can be found at: www.icaroecea.coop/gender/welcome.

Gender Promotion

The Secretary of the ICA GEC participated in the UK Co-op Group's Diversity Conference (March 2004) and presented the ICA Gender Strategy and the experiences collected through the ICA GEC in promoting gender equality in co-operatives.

The Secretary further represented the Committee making presentations at the ICA ROAP/UNAIDS Seminar on HIV/AIDS in May 2004, ICA Americas Women Conference in Buenos Aires (Argentina) in November 2004 and at the 4th ICA Asia-Pacific Women's Forum in Chiang-Mai (Thailand) in December 2004.

In March 2005, the Committee again issued a statement for International Women's Day on the theme, "Gender Equality Beyond 2005: Building a More Secure Future". The text of the message is found at: www.ica.coop/gender/activities/2005-int-womens-day.pdf

In addition, the Secretary continues to maintain the ICA GEC website at www.ica.coop/gender. In 2005, statistical information on women's participation in co-

operatives as members and employees was updated. This is found at: www.ica.coop/gender/statistics.html

Also worthy of note was the participation of the ICA Gender Committee Chairperson in the ICA Election Committee during 2005. The Election Committee has the mandate of ensuring that there is fair representation of candidates by region, sector and gender. Some advances were made on this front to include an African woman candidate for the board and include a woman among the candidates of the Audit & Control Committee.

Meetings

The Secretary in consultation with the Chairperson has prepared 2 Executive Committee meetings in 2004 – Beijing and Warsaw. A 2004 Plenary meeting was planned for Nairobi (Kenya) however; due to low participation the meeting was cancelled. In 2004 too the Secretary began consultations with the International Co-operative Banking Association (ICBA) to develop a joint seminar programme focusing on women and credit. The ICBA decided that it did not wish to hold the meeting as planned.

In 2005, preparations for the Executive and Plenary meetings were undertaken by the Secretary. In addition, the ICA GEC was invited to convene a special ICA General Assembly seminar on microfinance and women, entitled, “Microfinance is OUR Business”. The Secretary in consultation with the Chair identified speakers and prepared the meeting. The provisional agenda of the meeting is found at: www.ica.coop/calendar/ga2005/microfinance-agenda.pdf .

ICA GEC Financial Situation 2004-2005

RESERVES	Carry over from 2003	11,364.20
INCOME	ICA contribution 2004	7,000.00
	Donation – D. Mavrogiannis	962.50
	Donation – D. Mavrogiannis	721.85
	ICA contribution 2005	7,000.00
TOTAL INCOME		27,048.55
EXPENDITURE		
Statutory Meetings	Secretary costs ExCo 2004 (Beijing)	403.15
	Secretary costs ExCo 2004 (Warsaw)	89.60
	Secretary costs in Cartagena (estimate)	500.00
General operating expenses	Fax, post, copies, etc	5.60
Activity costs	Co-op Group (UK) Diversity Conference (March 2004)	107.50
	ICA ROAP Workshop on HIV/AIDS (May 2004)	1,226.50
TOTAL EXPENDITURE 2004-2005		1,832.35
BALANCE 31 August 2005		25,216.20

The financial situation of the Committee is quite healthy however this is due to the fact that no plenary was held in 2004 and no executive meetings requiring travel were held in 2005. Thus there has been a savings both in travel and meeting organisation costs. In addition, given that the Executive meetings of 2004 were held in conjunction with other ICA meetings where the Secretary's presence was required, the cost of her travel were covered by the ICA head office budget.

For 2005, there are expected expenditures for the meetings in Cartagena – equipment, refreshments and interpretation, and perhaps some cost sharing for speakers to the Microfinance session conditional on the approval of the Committee.

ICA GEC Elections

As of 5 September 2005, the Secretariat has received the following nominations listed in alphabetical order by country:

- ❖ Ilana LAPIDOT, Executive Director, Egal Seminar Centre, Kibbutz Movement, Israeli Central Union of Co-operative Societies, Israel
- ❖ Smadar SINAI, Chair, Kibbutz Movement, Israeli Central Union of Co-operative Societies, Israel
- ❖ Stefania MARCONE, Director International Relations, LEGACOOB, Italy
- ❖ Junko ITO, Board member, Japanese Consumer Co-operative Union, Japan
- ❖ Hamae OKURA, Chairperson, JA-Zenchu, Japan
- ❖ Rahaiah BAHERAN, Vice President, National Co-operative Organisation of Malaysia (ANGKASA), Malaysia and Chair of the ICA Asia-Pacific Women's Committee
- ❖ Galina KISELVELA, Chairperson of the Board, CENTROSOJUZ, Russia
- ❖ Natalia ARABADZHI, Deputy Director-General, Hotel Complex and Social issues, CENTROSOJUZ, Russia
- ❖ Ludmila SIPKO, First Pro-Rector of Sibirskiyi University of Consumer Co-operation, CENTROSOJUZ, Russia
- ❖ Marita SEROCHTAN, President Rector, Moscow University of Consumer Co-operation, CENTROSOJUZ, Russia
- ❖ Christine HERRIES, Director, Co-operative Group, United Kingdom

Nominations continue to remain open and it is expected that further nominations will be received.

The Committee should elect a new Chairperson and Executive Members as well as confirm the above person as members.

Stefania Marcone has been put forth for the position of Chairperson.

The Executive Committee is made up the Vice-Chairs of the regional women's committees plus others interested in serving and elected to do by the Committee.

Rahaiah Baheran as the Chair of the ICA Asia-Pacific Women's Committee automatically is a member of the ExCo.

ICA General Assembly and Elections

The ICA Gender Equality Committee aims to promote gender equality within the ICA and the co-operative movement. Thus when there is an election, the Committee is particularly interested in seeing that ICA members are implementing the ICA Gender Strategy in terms of promoting gender balance in decision-making positions within the ICA and among their own delegations to ICA meetings.

It is therefore not very encouraging to see that as of 5 September 2005:

- ❖ Only 16.9% of the registered representatives – i.e. have the right to vote – are women.
- ❖ Only 16.3% of the registered observers are women

These figures compares with the fact that 66.6% of the youth delegates are women, a more encouraging sign on the future of the movement.

With regard to the candidates for ICA's elected positions:

- ❖ 3 of the 21 candidates for the Board are women or 14%
- ❖ 1 of the 5 candidates for the Audit & Control Committee is a woman or 20%

This regrettably indicates that the targets of the ICA Gender Strategy are still not being met five years after its adoption.

ICA Gender Equality Committee Work Plan 2006

The ICA GEC Executive will meet prior to the Plenary to formulate proposal for the 2006 work programme. Members are encouraged to submit proposals for consideration at the Plenary as it is the Plenary meeting (i.e. members) that will set the work programme.

Microfinance is OUR business! Seminar convened by the ICA Gender Equality Committee

The ICA GEC was invited by the ICA to convene a special seminar to address microcredit and women. Given that the role of the ICA Gender Committee is to monitor progress on gender equality as well as provide a forum for the discussion and the exchange of experiences and ideas on issues related to the promotion of gender equality in the worldwide co-operative movement, it will use the session to highlight the role of microcredit and micro-insurance in co-operatives and their particular contribution to the advancement of women and the reduction of poverty. A provisional agenda of the meeting is found on the ICA website at: www.ica.coop/calendar/ga2005/microfinance-agenda.pdf