

Uniting Co-ops

Put in place all the necessary tools to foster interco-operation between associations and co-operatives of all sizes at the international, national and regional levels.

Bringing co-operators together

One of the strengths of the co-operative movement is its global reach. The Alliance's global and regional conferences bring together co-operators for learning, debating and networking.

The leading event for co-operative business, the International Summit of Cooperatives (www.summit.coop) alternates with the global conference, taking place every other year.

The Alliance's global conference is for Alliance members specifically and focuses on co-operative thinking and doing - because co-ops are businesses who put people first.

Alliance consolidates and increases membership

As of 31 December 2015, the Alliance had 290 members from 96 countries of which 46 were Associate Members. In 2015, the Alliance gained 21 new members and lost 14 for a growth rate of 25% (from the 2008 baseline of 218). In 2015, the Alliance gained 9 new member countries and lost 4 member countries.

Uniting co-ops behind a common global co-operative identity

The Alliance provides co-ops with instruments to lead with their co-operative identity. Launched in 2013, the global co-operative marque allows co-operatives to be recognized as sustainable business leaders.

Adding .coop to a co-op's web and email addresses is the most cost effective way to kick start your online presence and connect with clients.



Promoting Co-ops

Stepping up our presence on the international stage and promoting our co-operative identity built on social responsibility and sustainable development.



Positioning the Alliance in global decision making forums

The Alliance represents co-ops at key policy forums such as the Business 20, where international business makes recommendations to G20 leaders. Our B20 membership emphasises the message that co-operatives make a fairer, more inclusive, sustainable and resilient society.

Building on its work with the United Nations, the Alliance has achieved that the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development includes a reference to co-ops - saying:

"We acknowledge the role of the diverse private sector, ranging from micro-enterprises to co-operatives to multinationals"

The Alliance also has secured permanent representation on the International Financial Reporting Standards council.

Continued promoting of co-operatives towards world leaders, both in new and established global policy bodies will open the door for co-ops to play a significant role in economic, social and environmental development in the next 20 years.



Providing the first global marketing campaign for co-ops

A global marketing campaign - titled Building a Better World Now - is made available to co-operators worldwide. A toolkit serves to promote the co-operative identity and aims to raise awareness of co-ops. The campaign originated in the Co-operative Round Table, an Alliance working group and think tank of leading co-operators from primary co-operatives. The campaign is highly customizable. Co-operators worldwide are invited to use the campaign's toolbox, including videos and promotional lay-out templates.



Leading co-ops and business development



Showing the positive impact of co-ops on the global economy

A central instrument for awareness raising, policy-making, advocacy and research, the World Co-operative Monitor has become the leading source for data on the world's largest co-operatives and mutuals. The latest edition of the Monitor showed the top 300 co-ops generating USD 2.6 trillion in turnover. New features are added every year - included in the 2016 Monitor is an analysis of capital structures used by the world's top 300 co-operatives.

Developing Co-ops

The co-operative movement is affirming itself as a recognized leader in economic, social and environmental development.



The Blueprint for a Co-operative Decade

Now in its second phase, the Blueprint continues to prepare the co-operative movement to tap into emerging trends, such as the collaborative economy and the emergence of platform enterprise models. It will also shed more light on demutualisation of co-operatives and what are the early warning signs. And, of course, capital access remains a key hurdle for the development of the co-operative movement. The Blueprint gives us an opportunity to better explore how solidarity schemes can help maximise how co-operative dollars can get re-invested back into the movement.

Engaging in a civil society partnership

Building on almost a decade of Brussels advocacy work, a partnership agreement for a global development programme to advance the co-operative sector worldwide has been launched between the Alliance and the European Commission end of 2015.

This partnership is to strengthen the capacity of the International Co-operative Alliance to represent and promote the co-operative model within the international development scene, and as a direct result, advance co-operative development globally.

Creating an enabling legal framework for co-ops

To develop, co-ops require an enabling legal environment - and governments have to be convinced that a healthy co-op sector benefits both society and the economy.

The Alliance's Doing Co-operative Business report shows how a vital local co-operative economy fosters equality, good governance and democracy. It calls for creating enabling co-operative laws and builds the case for a healthy, co-operative economy.

Solving co-operatives' "capital question"

To guide the work on the Blueprint's Capital pillar, the Alliance established the Blue Ribbon Commission.

The work of the Blue Ribbon Commission comes at a time when the norms and values that have underpinned our global economic system are being questioned - including beliefs about the role and definition of capital. As a movement, co-operatives have an opportunity to make their voices and perspectives heard, as the world searches for alternative economic models that are balanced and sustainable.

Following the 2014 Survey of Cooperative Capital, the 2015 Capital Conundrum for Co-operatives goes beyond instruments to examine capital from a co-operative Values and Principles standpoint.





Message from the Director-General Charles Gould

Dear Members,

Strength and Impact are the opening words of this year's World Co-operative Monitor, and these also seem to characterize the work of the Alliance over the past year.

This fifth edition of the World Co-operative Monitor is the reference for measurement of the global importance of our movement. A chapter dedicated to cooperative capital will be added to this year's Monitor, as this topic catches more and more attention of co-operatives eager for growth.

Noticing the success of our 2014 survey of co-operative capital, the Alliance further developed its expertise in this field. We have released at our global conference in Antalya our "Capital Conundrum for Co-operatives" report, which explores options for co-operatives to acquire long-term capital without sacrificing member ownership. Like its predecessor, The Capital Conundrum originated in The Alliance's Blue Ribbon Commission. We are proud of these Alliance "think thanks" and of the great work they turn out, and thank our members' delegates on these committees for their engagement.

Testimony to the amazing thought leadership inside the Alliance is the Blueprint for a Co-operative Decade, launched in 2012 and now in its second phase. Our strategic plan gives us an opportunity to better explore how solidarity schemes can help maximise how co-operative dollars can get re-invested back into the movement.

In terms of membership, I am pleased to announce that the Alliance is now representing members from over 100 countries. Our steady membership growth is a sign that more cooperatives are becoming aware of their potential to take their business across borders, and to influence legislation.

With co-operative capital, enabling legal frameworks for co-ops is an equally important Alliance focus area. Aware of the diversity in cooperative law in the world, our "Doing Co-operative Business" report, evaluates and compares enabling environments for co-operatives around the world. Closing the loop by extending our influence into global decision making business platforms, our delegation at the B20 forum achieved inclusion of co-operatives in the final recommendations to the G20, building on sustained efforts initiated in 2013.

Growing legal recognition for cooperatives continues also shows in developing partnership between the Alliance and the European Commission. We are eager to see Alliance regions' leverage the tremendous support from the European Commission to put their members at forefront of sustainable development.

We are delighted to see the co-operative movement grow, in terms of business success, in terms of community relevance, and in terms of global recognition. It is a promising time for co-operatives and with the enduring support of you, our members, we will fulfill the 2020 vision.

Best regards,

Charles Gould
Director-General
International Co-operative Alliance

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Annual Report 2015



www.ica.coop



Message from the president Monique F. Leroux

Dear Members,

I am pleased to present you with our 2015 annual report. The Alliance celebrated its 120th anniversary at the closing of 2015, entering a time of new global challenges, such as migration and the collaborative economy. The co-operative model, with its unique take on governance and values, must lead by putting people before profit and work towards the global goals of reducing poverty, improving equality and care for the environment. There are opportunities for co-operatives to grow and I know that together, we can make a difference. This annual report highlights some of our achievements, which put us on our way to contribute to solving some of the world's most pressing issues.

At the heart of my program for the Alliance, are three verbs - Unite, Promote and Develop. Both co-operatives in the field and Alliance bodies need to unite so that we can become people's preferred movement by 2020, aligning tools and goals for inter-co-operation. There is a grown interest for co-operatives, and we need to respond to this interest with adequate promotion of our model. This is an aim we are pursuing with success through our global marketing campaign, the cooperative marque and the .coop domain name. Developing all these great initiatives is done along the lines set out in the Blueprint, our strategic plan for a co-operative decade. Creating an enabling legal framework for co-ops, and solving the conundrum of co-operative capital are two very important pillars of that plan.

A milestone for both the Alliance and the movement, is our newly signed civil partnership agreement with the European Commission. The global structure of the Alliance – its membership, its governance, its organisation – but also the purpose and impact of its actions have convinced the European Commission that co-operatives are a lever for sustainable development. I am thrilled at the prospect of seeing the European Commission partnership move forward, and see Alliance regions benefit from the capacity development which it will bring along.

Governments, international bodies and civil society today are exploring how to best implement the United Nations 2030 Agenda. The Alliance pledged this year co-operatives' commitment to the Sustainable Development Goals before UN representatives. At present, I would like to invite you, our members, to send your pledges, through the Alliance's pledging platform www.Coopsfor2030.coop. We want the world to know that, as sustainable, people-focused businesses, fostering decent work and inclusion, co-operative enterprises play an essential role in implementing the 2030 Agenda.

As I write this letter, many co-operators will be on their way to the 2016 International Summit of Co-operatives. I am looking forward to seeing you at the Summit, which has become the leading event for business development in the co-operative and mutual community. We have chosen to offer the Summit to co-operators every other year, alternating with the Alliance's global conference. In balancing both events, we wish to reflect the balance between social purpose and trade that co-operatives stand for, and which the world needs. I want to extend my gratitude to Angkasa, the great co-operative movement of Malaysia, who has graciously accepted to host the Alliance's 2017 global conference in Kuala Lumpur.

We have seen many highlights the past year, as we take the co-operative model further on its path to become the preferred business model of people by 2020, while achieving the Sustainable Development Goals. Ours is an exciting adventure, and it is not untrue to say that we are writing history. I am pleased to be with you on this great journey.

Best regards,

Monique F. Leroux
President
International Co-operative Alliance