



International Co-operative Alliance



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PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Dame Pauline Green acknowledges Spanish co-operatives role in combating crisis; ICA receives prestigious lifetime award

Valencia, Spain. 10 July 2012; Dame Pauline Green today acknowledged the market leading position of the Spanish co-operative sector and its role as a stabilising and community-supporting influence, at a time when Spain leads the European Union in its numbers of jobless and its people face higher taxes as part of national austerity measures.

The President of the International Co-operative Alliance also congratulated the government of Mariano Rajoy on its move to increase spending on the social economy to promote self-employment and entrepreneurship, including the development of worker co-operatives, to more than 940 million euros.

Dame Pauline was in Valencia to receive the prestigious Pepe Miquel Valencia award for lifetime achievement on behalf of ICA members whose work she said was behind today's award.

It is the first time that an institution has received this award in its eight year history.

"I am conscious that this award is given to the ICA for the work that it has done over its 117 year history as steward of the values and principles of our global movement and for its work to drive the development of co-operatives across the world," Dame Pauline said. "But in reality, it also represents the intrinsic recognition of the work of the billions of individual co-operators who are the real heroes and heroines."

"It is their work over the last century and a half and today, that has helped to reduce conflict, embed democracy, build community cohesion, build skills and expertise, develop local leadership potential, support women into positions of economic activity and leadership in their communities – in effect they have been building civil society - all with the intellectual underpinning of the value of common endeavour in sustainable member-owned, local enterprises – in effect they have helped to take millions out of poverty with dignity, by helping them to build their own co-operative enterprises."

Once again ICA members and co-operators worldwide are being called upon to provide the economic solutions to a stagnant local and global economy, said Dame Pauline, who visited who today visited two examples of growing cooperative businesses with strong financial results, Anecoop and Consum in Valencia.

"This is the first time the prize is awarded to an institution, and it coincides with the declaration of 2012 as the United Nations International Year of Cooperatives," said Confederación de Cooperativas, which made the award.

"The jury unanimously agreed to award the ICA as the prime example of the representation of cooperative organizations worldwide, especially valuing the dissemination of cooperative principles and values that made this organization and its contribution to unity and cohesion of the sector internationally."

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NOTES TO EDITOR

1. **The International Co-operative Alliance** is the global voice for the values-based business model of the co-operative, uniting co-operatives worldwide and providing a forum for knowledge and concerted action.

ICA was established by co-operatives in 1895. In 1946 the ICA became one of the first three non-governmental organisations to be accorded "consultative status" with the United Nations. Membership is growing and the ICA currently has around 270 members in almost 100 countries active in all sectors of the economy: agriculture/forestry, banking/credit unions, consumer, health, insurance, workers, fisheries, housing, transport and tourism. ICA members represent around one billion people worldwide, and employ 100 million people.

2. **Co-operatives** are successful values based businesses owned by their members. Whether they are customers, employees or residents, the members get an equal say in the business and a share of the profits.
3. The United Nations has declared 2012 the **International Year of Co-operatives**. With its theme of 'co-operative enterprises build a better world', the Year is an opportunity to raise public awareness of how co-operatives are successful values based businesses owned by their members.
4. Further information about the International Year of Co-operatives is available at www.2012.coop.
5. Follow the ICA on **twitter** at @icacoop. Like the ICA's **Facebook** page at www.facebook.com/internationalcooperativealliance
6. For stories on Anecoop and Consum www.stories.coop