



International Co-operative Alliance



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PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

World's largest co-operative business expo goes back to its roots

Manchester, United Kingdom. 31 October, 2012; The world's largest ever congress of co-operative businesses has gone back to its roots. Manchester, a stronghold of British co-operative business, and just a stones throw from the sector's acknowledged birthplace, Rochdale, became a centre of global co-operative commerce today with the opening of ICA Expo 2012, the co-operative sector's world trade exhibition.

"Trade amongst co-operatives has been a mainstay of the co-op business sector since its birth in Rochdale England in the mid-1800s," said Dame Pauline Green, President of the global peak body for co-operatives, the International Co-operative Alliance (ICA).

The global expo unites co-operative enterprise from around the world under the one roof, to open up a range of business to business opportunities to support the sector in times of market stress.

"This expo has grown in stature since we held the first one in 2008 in Lisbon, Portugal, so that the business deals that are being done are not only co-operative to co-operative in nature, but involve businesses coming from outside the co-operative sector that want to do deals with us," said Luiz Branco, President of ICA Expo.

"They are coming to Manchester to make deals because they recognise that co-operative businesses are doing particularly well in tough times. We are the businesses that are more stable and resilient, so we make excellent commercial partners," said Mr. Branco.

Despite challenging commercial environments co-operatives are thriving as the new World Co-operative Monitor, an index of the Top 300 global co-operative businesses, also launched this week in Manchester, shows. More than 35 countries are represented as part of the expo, and 120 co-operatives are exhibiting a diverse array of products and services.

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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 members are international and national co-operative organisations from all sectors of the economy including agriculture, banking, consumer, fisheries, health, housing, industry, insurance and tourism. The ICA has member organisations from almost 100 countries, representing approximately 1 billion individuals worldwide. Around 100 million people work for a co-op globally. 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.

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. To read a copy of the blueprint go to www.2012.coop