

Europe Region of the International
Co-operative Alliance

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Press Communiqué – to be released on 7th July 2012

UN Secretary General Ban Ki Moon says co-operatives build a better world

On 7th July 2012 co-operative businesses around the world will celebrate the International Day of Co-operatives.

Mr Ban Ki Moon, Secretary General of the United Nations, launched a strong message to governments around the world in order to encourage them to create more awareness and to pursue policies for strengthening co-operatives everywhere.

“Co-operatives empower their members and strengthen communities” said Mr Ban Ki Moon. “They are better tuned to local needs and better positioned to serve as engines of local growth. By pooling resources, they improve access to information, finance and technology. Their underlying values of self-help, equality and solidarity offer a compass in challenging economic times.”

“By contributing to human dignity and global solidarity – concluded Mr Ban Ki Moon – co-operatives truly do build a better world”.

Klaus Niederländer, Director of Cooperatives Europe, said: “The support of the United Nations for promoting the co-operative business model during 2012 is of immense value. Let’s not focus on many words and big announcements. 2012 should be a year of inspiration and action for building a more co-operative economy around the world to achieve greater economic prosperity and social justice for all”.

As part of its 2012 activities Cooperatives Europe not only developed a political document for “Cooperatives for Europe: Moving forward together”, but above all focused on action in supporting the development of the co-operative sector around Europe like in the Balkans or more recently in Greece and to provide young co-operators with a greater voice.

Notes to the editors

Cooperatives Europe is the biggest membership organization in Europe promoting the co-operative business model. Cooperatives Europe represents a force for economic growth and social change of 123 million member co-operators owning 160,000 co-operative enterprises and giving jobs to 5.4 million European citizens.

A **co-operative enterprise** is a group of people acting together to meet the common needs and aspirations of its members, sharing ownership and making decisions democratically.

The United Nations proclaimed 2012 International Year of Co-operatives. This is an acknowledgment by the international community that co-operatives drive the economy, respond to social challenge, are resilient to the global economic crisis and are successful businesses that create sustainable jobs in all sectors. Member States, the United Nations and all relevant stakeholders are encouraged to take advantage of the IYC to promote co-operatives and raise awareness of their contribution to social and economic development and promote the formation and growth of co-operatives.

Co-operatives for Europe: Moving forward together can be downloaded at the following link: <http://www.coopseurope.coop/about-co-operatives/co-operative-agenda-2020>

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