



International Co-operative Alliance



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PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Tsunami efforts shows co-operative strength

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On the anniversary of the greatest natural disaster in Japan's modern history, Dame Pauline Green, President of the International Co-operative Alliance, paid tribute to the stoicism and resilience of the Japanese people in the face of the earthquake and tsunami that ravaged the country's north-east a year ago.

"On the occasion of one year passing since Japan's earthquake, in this, the International Year of Cooperatives, I ask co-operative businesses to remember those co-operators who lost their lives, their livelihoods and their possessions in the disaster," said Dame Pauline.

"The solidarity demonstrated by our co-operative movement following the devastating earthquake shows how well our model of business does the job of rebuilding, fundraising and co-ordinating a large scale relief effort."

Dame Pauline praised the recovery efforts of the co-operative sector which has seen immediate relief work such as the provision of food, clothing and shelter, followed by more permanent solutions including entire villages re-housed on higher ground, training programs to help those who lost livelihoods find alternative work and new co-operative ventures sparked.

The International Co-operative Alliance raised over USD600,000 from its members for Japan's co-operatives in response to the crisis. Dame Pauline said one of the tremendously positive aspects of the global co-operative movement was that in times of need people from around the globe came together to assist their fellow co-operators.

"The co-operative movement does not have a global brand like Nike or Walmart, nor do we want one. We have something much greater - a huge network of locally-based, community-owned, autonomous, sovereign, independent businesses. What unites us is a common set of values and principles that underpin all our businesses and a unique democratic ownership model that puts people at its core. We seek to serve human need - not human greed."

The magnitude nine earthquake which shook Japan's Honshu island on March 11 last year resulted in the deaths of more than 20,000 people. The earthquake and the subsequent tsunami created a nuclear crisis.

COOPERATIVE ENTERPRISES BUILD A BETTER WORLD



On this anniversary, the ICA and Euricse-partnered stories.coop campaign tells the story of the cooperative relief efforts of some of the members of the Japanese Worker's Co-operative Union at <http://stories.coop/stories/written/symbols-hope-remembering-japan-1-year>

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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

