



International Co-operative Alliance



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PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Co-operatives are key to ending hunger and feeding the world

Geneva, Switzerland. 16 October, 2012; "Why is it that we produce enough food to feed the world and yet 870 million of its inhabitants still go hungry each day?" asked Dame Pauline Green today on the occasion of the Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) World Food Day.

"This inhuman paradox is because the world's poor cannot afford to feed themselves," said the President of the International Co-operative Alliance, the global representative body for the co-operative movement. "Most of the world's poor live in rural areas and survive by scraping their sustenance from small plots or a few livestock."

Delivering a speech in Tokyo to participants in the World Bank/IMF Forum on Sunday, Dame Pauline said that co-operatives can build a sustainable framework around food production: "As a local business model co-operatives are the natural and compelling partner to both public and private institutions in the fight against poverty, particularly in rural areas." The co-operative model of business provides a solution where it was needed, at grassroots level.

The theme of this year's World Food Day, "Agricultural Cooperatives: Key to feeding the world" is fitting because it is the United Nations declared International Year of Co-operatives and because it is those co-operatives that enable the world's farmers to earn a decent living and meet global food needs.

"By bringing small scale farmers together under a co-operative umbrella, farmers can improve their production through better education, gain access to better equipment and improve their marketing power thus ensuring higher prices for their production.

"Giving farmers access to finance through co-operative banks and to training has a direct impact on farmer livelihoods and on the rural economy.

"Africa has 90 per cent of available agrarian land and working together with farmers on this continent to ensure it stays in the hands of communities and not foreign interests will do much to secure food supplies," said Paul Hazen, executive officer of the U.S. Overseas Co-operative Development Council.

"The way out of hunger and poverty is hand-in-hand with farmers."

This model of agricultural co-operatives has been enormously successful throughout the globe, alleviating poverty, providing strong, sustainable business frameworks which encourage and support their members.

"Without enough food children are given a lifetime sentence of never being able to fulfil their potential," said Dame Pauline.



"And yet if their mothers were educated and empowered, it could halt hunger in its tracks."

Women account for 43 per cent of those working in agriculture in developing countries. If those women had fair access to training, funds and technology, it is estimated that those going hungry would drop by nearly 20 per cent.

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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

