



PRESS RELEASE

28/11/2024

2025 UN International Year of Cooperatives launched in New Delhi

The 2025 UN International Year of Cooperatives (IYC) was officially launched at the ICA Global Cooperative Conference and General Assembly, in New Delhi, India. The conference attracted delegates from over 100 countries who discussed how cooperatives build prosperity for all, focusing on four conference pillars: Reaffirming the cooperative identity; Enabling supportive policies; Developing strong leadership; and Building a sustainable future.

These discussions shaped the New Delhi Action Agenda, an action plan adopted at the conference, which asks individual cooperatives, communities, civil society organisations, the private sector, governments, opinion shapers and multilateral institutions to take concrete actions for a just society and safer planet. Read the New Delhi Action Agenda [here](#).

Delegates heard from 100 speakers including UN representatives, Indian government officials and cooperators. The launch ceremony featured over 3,000 participants, including India's Prime Minister, H.E. Narendra Modi, who delivered a keynote address during the ceremony in which he highlighted the important role cooperatives play in his country. India is home to 800,000 cooperatives, including the Indian Farmers Fertilisers Cooperative (IFFCO), the world's the world's largest cooperative by turnover on GDP per capita.

"For India, cooperatives are a way of life," he said. "For the whole world, cooperatives are a business model, but at the same time, cooperation is the basis of our culture. It is a lifestyle." The Prime Minister described how the partnership between the Government of India and cooperatives was key to sustainable growth, and how this growth "should be seen in a human-centric way".

"The importance of cooperatives is not confined to laws, and regulations, we have to move beyond that," he said, arguing that the "cooperative spirit will be the life of the country".

Prime Minister Modi thanked the UN for declaring 2025 as the International Year of Cooperatives. "In this IYC we will empower this cooperative spirit. We will move forward with this cooperative spirit and we will be empowered, we will be prosperous," he concluded.



United Nations Secretary-General António Guterres also addressed the conference via a video message.

“Cooperatives like the ones you represent demonstrate the importance of standing together to forge solutions to global challenges,” he said. He also spoke about the crucial role of cooperatives in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals, especially in light of the upcoming Second World Summit on Social Development. Watch the full video [here](#).

Speaking at the opening session, ICA president Dr Ariel Guarco thanked IFFCO along with the other ICA members in India for hosting the conference.

“We definitely have to go beyond our own borders,” he said. “Convinced of our doctrine, based on permanent principles and values, which allowed us to be the most important social innovation of the modern era, for two centuries and surely, for a long time to come.

“Proud of that Identity, let us go out to embrace the new generations, those who do not know the practice of organised cooperation, to integrate this great family of a billion to a billion more, who surely cooperate today to live - and some to survive - and let us continue to demonstrate that this is the best way for all of us to have a dignified life, leaving no one out and leaving no one behind.”

The UN resident coordinator in India, Shombi Sharp, echoed these remarks, calling India “a nation synonymous with cooperation”. “When people come together the world is a better place,” he said, praising the Indian government for creating a Ministry of Cooperatives.

Also speaking at the open ceremony were H.E. Dasho Tshering Tobgay, prime minister of Bhutan, and Hon. Manoa Kamikamica, deputy prime minister of Fiji. Mr Kamikamica. “Fiji is here to listen, learn and execute,” said Mr Kamikamica.

Mr Tobgay said: “We want to build a hub in the south of the country which is based on mindfulness and innovative thinking - this is very much in line with the human-centric cooperative values.”

The Minister of cooperatives in Kenya, Hon. Wycliffe Ambetsa Oparanya, also said: “Cooperatives have been a cornerstone of Kenya’s development since independence in 1963, underscored by the establishment of the first Ministry of Cooperatives in Africa in 1974. Today, we continue to advance this legacy through a proposed Cooperative Bill currently before the National Assembly. This landmark legislation aims to define the distinct roles of national, federal, and local governments in cooperative governance, ensuring streamlined registration, oversight, and policymaking. By addressing governance challenges, particularly in the agricultural sector, this bill will strengthen the



cooperative movement, driving economic empowerment and sustainable growth across Kenya."

Rochdale Pioneers Award

Dr Udai Shanker Awasthi, the managing director of IFFCO, received the 2025 Rochdale Pioneers Award, the highest honour the ICA bestows, in recognition of his immense contribution to the cooperative movement.

"I am deeply humbled and honoured to receive this prestigious award," said Dr Awasthi. "This recognition belongs not just to me but to the entire IFFCO family, whose dedication and hard work have driven the cooperative's success. This award motivates us to continue pushing boundaries and exploring opportunities that benefit the farming community and cooperative sector. I extend my heartfelt gratitude to the International Cooperative Alliance for this recognition, that inspires us to uphold and advance the cooperative spirit globally." [Read more.](#)

Coopathon

Young people attending the conference also took part in the Coopathon, a collaborative event to develop innovative cooperative solutions for global challenges such as climate change, migration, and technology integration.

Ana Aguirre, chair of the ICA Youth Committee, who led the conference Coopathon, explained how the event enabled young people to co-create co-op solutions through games and built long-lasting bridges that will ensure the future of cooperation. "Because our movement is truly transgenerational, and we have to nurture this!" she said.

International Year of Cooperatives

Themed, Cooperatives build a better world, IYC is an opportunity for the global cooperative movement to engage in a year-long celebration of their impact and achievements, and plan for a future that builds prosperity for all.

Over the next 12 months, the ICA will work to increase the visibility of cooperatives and raise public awareness about their contributions to sustainable development; advocate for enabling environment and supportive legal and policy frameworks for strengthening their entrepreneurial ecosystem; and promote the growth and development of cooperatives through capacity-building initiatives, knowledge-sharing, and collaborative partnerships. The ICA is also planning a range of activities to inspire young people to join the movement in 2025.

The UN's first International Year of Cooperatives was celebrated in 2012, when cooperatives worldwide highlighted their contributions to socio-economic development,



particularly their impact on poverty reduction, employment generation and social integration.

Get involved:

The United Nations General Assembly resolution proclaiming the International Year of Cooperatives 2025, invites all Member States to consider taking action towards establishing national mechanisms, where appropriate, such as national committees, to prepare for, observe and follow up on the International Year of Cooperatives, in particular for the purpose of planning, stimulating and harmonising the activities of the governmental and non-governmental agencies and organisations concerned with the preparations for and observance of the International Year;

Find the guidelines for creating National Committees [here](#).

[Apply for the IYC logo.](#)

Organisations interested in using the IYC2025 logo must adhere to specific guidelines provided by the UN [here](#). The logo is available in six official languages—English, French, Spanish, Arabic, Chinese, and Russian.

IYC website

A new website has been created to celebrate the International Year of Cooperatives. Check out the new website [here](#).

For further information contact Leire Luengo, Director of Communications at luengo@ica.coop.

Photos from the launch are available [here](#).

NOTES TO EDITORS:

About the International Cooperative Alliance

Founded in 1895, the International Cooperative Alliance is a non-profit international association established in 1895 to advance the cooperative social enterprise model. The International Cooperative Alliance is the voice for cooperatives worldwide, representing more than 308 cooperative federations and organisations across 106 countries. Through its membership, the International Cooperative Alliance represents 1,2 billion people from any of the 2.94 million cooperatives worldwide. The largest 300 cooperatives in the world have combined annual revenues of 2.4 trillion USD (2021) and 300 million people around the world (10% of the employed population) secure their livelihoods in cooperatives, either through direct employment or by organising through a cooperative. The International Cooperative Alliance works with global and regional



governments and organisations to create the legislative environments that allow cooperatives to form and grow. Towards media and public, the International Cooperative Alliance promotes the importance of people-centred cooperatives' valuesbased business model. Operating from a global office in Brussels, Belgium, the International Cooperative Alliance is organised with four Regional Offices (Europe, Africa, Americas, and Asia-Pacific), and eight Sectoral Organisations (Banking, Agriculture, Fisheries, Insurance, Health, Housing, Consumer Cooperatives and service and industry cooperatives)