

ICA Gender Equality Committee's Statement on the International Women's

Day 2025

International Women's Day during the International Year of Cooperatives is a unique opportunity to reflect on the progress made in the fight for gender equality for women members of cooperatives. It is also timely to acknowledge the great contribution made to the cooperative sector in terms of gender equality and women's empowerment, especially as the development of cooperatives have, since they were created, relied on the contribution of women. This year's theme, "**For ALL Women and Girls: Equality. Rights. Empowerment**", declared by the UN, is of particular significance as it marks the 30th anniversary of the Beijing Declaration and recognises the role of women who are members of cooperatives.

It is an opportunity to pay homage to all the women who, courageously and with determination, have made a difference in our lives and in our communities through their work and by supporting the social economy as the ideal channel for improving people's quality of life.

Throughout history, women have displayed unwavering strength and an extraordinary ability to overcome obstacles. From pioneering scientists and political leaders to social activists and influential artists, women have left an indelible mark on the world. However, despite these achievements, there are still barriers and inequalities that we must dismantle as they prevent women from exercising their rights to the fullest.

It is vital to remember that gender equality is not only a matter of social justice, but also one of development and prosperity. When women enjoy equal opportunities, society as a whole benefits. Education, economic empowerment and women's involvement in politics are essential for building a more equitable and sustainable future. Cooperatives have made great contributions in terms of equity and participation, but we still have a long way to go to achieve said equity, especially when it comes to free and democratic participation.

Today, we reiterate our commitment to fighting for gender equality. We pledge our committee's commitment to supporting and promoting policies and actions that guarantee the respect and dignity of all women. We must work together to eradicate gender-based violence, close the pay gap and ensure that women have a voice and a vote in all spheres of life. Women's full participation in decision-making is fundamental for democracy to be exercised in full.

On this International Women's Day, let us celebrate the achievements that have been made and reaffirm our determination to face the challenges that have yet to be overcome. May this day inspire us all to continue striving for a more just, inclusive and equitable world for all women and girls.

Thank you, God bless people with equal rights, and Happy International Women's Day.

Xiomara Nuñez de Céspedes
Chair of the Gender Equality Committee
International Cooperative Alliance

About the ICA Gender Equality Committee

The Gender Equality Committee of the International Cooperative Alliance (ICA GEC) is a catalyst for change to make gender equality a reality in all cooperatives and serves as a forum for the discussion and exchange of experiences and ideas on issues related to gender equality.