

CONCEPT NOTE

Special Commemorative Event

“Cooperatives and Sustainable Development : Maintaining momentum and exploring new avenues”

1. Background

Cooperatives are member-owned and democratically controlled enterprises that operate across all sectors of the economy. The cooperative model has proven to be a powerful tool for advancing sustainable development, promoting inclusive economic growth, and fostering democratic participation.

The United Nations General Assembly proclaimed 2025 as the International Year of Cooperatives to highlight the significant role that cooperative enterprises play in economic development, poverty reduction, employment creation, and social integration worldwide. Cooperatives are people-centered enterprises owned and run by and for their members. They operate across all sectors, from agriculture and housing to finance and health, embodying values of self-help, democracy, equality, and solidarity.

Underlining the vital role cooperatives played in India's growth story, H.E. Mr. Narendra Modi, Prime Minister of India launched the UN International Year of Cooperatives 2025 at the ICA Global Cooperative Conference on 25th November 2024 in New Delhi. The event marked an important moment in demonstrating the power of cooperatives in tackling national challenges of inclusive development as well as global challenges like inequality, climate and food insecurity.

2. Introduction

In recognition of the United Nations' proclamation of 2025 as the International Year of Cooperatives, the Permanent Mission of India will organize a special commemorative event on the theme - **"Cooperatives and Sustainable Development : Maintaining momentum and exploring new avenues"** - to celebrate the achievements of cooperatives, promoting awareness of their socio-economic contributions, and exploring pathways to strengthen and sustain the cooperative movement in the years ahead.

3. Date and Venue:

- **Time:** 1100 hrs to 1230 hrs EST
- **Date:** 28 July 2025
- **Venue:** Conference Room 8, UNHQs, New York
- **Format:** In-person

4. Objectives

The special commemorative event aims to celebrate the social, economic, and cultural contributions of cooperatives; raise awareness of cooperative principles and their alignment with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs); engage stakeholders across sectors to build lasting partnerships and support dialogue on creation of an enabling environment for cooperative growth.

5. Guiding Questions

- How can the United Nations and national governments work closer for increasing public awareness and understanding of cooperatives' roles and contributions to sustainable development?
- What mechanisms can be developed to share best practices and success stories from the cooperative sector?
- What steps can be taken for identifying potential steps to enhance the cooperative ecosystem, for achieving SDGs and making cooperatives fit for purpose for the new era of technology and AI?

6. Agenda

Opening remarks

Ambassador Parvathaneni Harish, Ambassador/Permanent Representative of **India** to the United Nations

Sharing national experiences and way forward to foster global collaboration

H.E. Mr. Erastus Ekitela Lokaale, Ambassador/Permanent Representative of **Kenya** to the United Nations

H.E. Mr. Raúl Esteban Sánchez Niño, Ambassador/Deputy Permanent Representative of **Colombia**

H.E. Mr. Ankhbayar Nyamdorj, Ambassador/Permanent Representative of **Mongolia** to the United Nations

A spirit of collaboration and shared ownership – an Indian cooperative story

Mr. Deepak Agarwal, Managing Director, National Agricultural Cooperative Marketing Federation of India Ltd (**NAFED**)

Promotion of cooperatives for sustainable development

Ms. Cynthia Samuel-Olonjuwon, Special Representative to the United Nations and Director, **ILO** Office for the United Nations

Interventions from the floor

Closing remarks

Ashish Sharma, Counsellor