



INTERNATIONAL
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ALLIANCE

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Message from the International Co-operative Alliance

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12th UN International Day of Co-operatives
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"Peace-building through co-operatives"

Co-operatives have at their core a set of values and principles designed to advance the cause of peace. The values of solidarity, democracy and equality have helped many millions of people throughout the world build social harmony through a more secure economic future.

Co-operatives play a role in helping to address problems which lead to conflict. They arise out of the need for economic stability whether it is through securing employment or affordable housing, access to credit or consumer products, insurance or markets or the myriad of other needs. By ensuring that people have real alternatives to the failures of markets or governments, co-operatives help provide structures which engage and involve people. By providing a path of inclusion rather than exclusion co-operatives empower people to help themselves and hence help eliminate many of the conditions which can lead to conflict within and between communities.

Co-operatives too offer a real alternative in helping to resolve conflict and significantly contribute to rebuilding communities after wars or civil strife by creating conditions to lessen the resurgence of conflict. They can create the real long-term basis for a sustainable and inclusive peace through their democratic structures. For example, the Palestine and Israeli co-operative movements are currently working together on a range of agricultural marketing projects designed to assist Palestine co-operators improve their livelihoods and by doing so build links between people. Housing co-operative movements are assisting in projects in Bosnia and Serbia help rebuild communities through the creation of co-operative housing and with it dialogue among peoples. A variety of movements have also been very active in assisting with long-term tsunami reconstruction efforts in Indonesia, India and Sri Lanka including in some areas of on-going conflict.

The International Co-operative Alliance (ICA), as the organisational expression of this global solidarity, has a history of over 110 years of putting the co-operative values into practice and actively promoting peace. ICA has sought and continues to seek to be inclusive of diverse political, economic, social traditions acting as a bridge to greater understanding and support among its members encouraging co-operatives to collaborate among each using the co-operative model throughout the world. It works actively with a range of international agencies including the United Nations and its own members to promote co-operative development, particularly in regions subject to conflict. ICA believes that promoting sustainable human development and furthering the economic and social progress of people through the co-operative model of enterprise will contribute to international peace and security.

The ICA calls on all co-operators throughout the world to take the occasion of this year's International Co-operative Day to celebrate all that co-operatives have done and are doing to make the world a safer and more secure place for all.

ICA is an independent, non-governmental association which unites, represents and serves co-operatives worldwide. Founded in 1895, ICA has 224 member organisations from 91 countries active in all sectors of the economy. Together these co-operatives represent more than 800 million individuals worldwide.