

International Federation of Agricultural Producers

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Message of the International Federation of Agricultural Producers (IFAP)

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The theme of this year's International Day of Cooperatives is: "**Peace-building through Cooperatives**". It is an opportunity to recall how cooperatives are making the world a safer and more peaceful place by promoting the understanding of people through democratically-run economic enterprises. One of the reasons that make this possible is the strength of cooperatives in their values and principles which can be shown in different ways. In rural areas, cooperation between farming families brings wellbeing. Farmers working together in cooperatives, as well as the added-value in the market of that cooperation brings, are stabilizing factors among the rural population worldwide. With cooperation for processing, transportation and marketing in the local community, the peaceful development takes place.

Agricultural cooperatives have been the model of enterprise chosen by farmers who wish to rebuild communities after wars or civil strife, and to create conditions to lessen the resurgence of violence. By improving the economic conditions of life of their members, and the communities in which they operate, cooperatives create economic justice while fostering and restoring social dialogue. Cooperatives have and continue to foster peace. The significance of their role can be seen through the economic growth shared by the many members, and through their democratic structures, which are the two most important factors for peace in the world. More than 800 million people belong to cooperatives and they provide 100 million jobs throughout the world (20% more than the multinationals). This cooperative model allows farmers to achieve their personal and community development objectives.

IFAP promotes the advantages of the cooperative system as a model of sustainable development. We believe in the practice of cooperative's principles and ethics which encourage solidarity and tolerance. While agricultural cooperatives are driven by individuals, governments should facilitate cooperation through suitable regulatory frameworks where this type of enterprise in the society could be developed and also compete with other business models. The activities of agricultural cooperatives are a force for peace and give balance to rural communities around the world.

IFAP is the world farmers' organisation representing over 600 million farm families grouped in 115 national organisations in 80 countries. It is a global network in which farmers from industrialised and developing countries exchange concerns and set common priorities. IFAP advocates farmers' interests at the international level since 1946 and has General Consultative Status with the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations.