

Guadalajara Declaration

I Cooperative Summit of the Americas

In the city of Guadalajara, Jalisco, Mexico, within the framework of the I Cooperative Summit of the Americas "The Cooperative Model: response to global crisis", 1200 participants from the American continent gathered at the Hilton Hotel so as to analyze and define the position and challenges of the Cooperative Sector, regarding the global crisis and the interrelations with Development Paradigms and New Economic Order, Growth and Sustainability and Cooperative Organization for Economic and Social Development.

Mankind is at a crossroads facing profound crises of multiple dimensions: economic, financial, social, values, cultural and environmental. This is a turning point. The indiscriminate use of energy resources, the pursuit of profit before nature and people, production paradigms, consumerism, the wide gap between economically developed countries and developing countries, are some of the most serious signs of these times.

The present situation means an opportunity for the cooperative sector, to strengthen its role enabling social cohesion and inclusion.

Therefore:

We declare that cooperatives are autonomous association of persons united voluntarily to meet their common economic, social, and cultural needs and aspirations through a jointly-owned and democratically-controlled enterprise.

We reaffirm that the cooperative movement integrated in the International Cooperative Alliance - Americas has an unquestionable and unavoidable role to play within each organization and its country.

We firmly believe cooperatives contribute to employment creation, resources mobilization and investments generation, which mitigates the effects of the crises and helps local, regional and international economies as well.

We declare cooperatives promote people's active participation in their economic and social development through cooperative principles and values.

We underline that a balanced society needs private and public sectors as well as a strong cooperative sector, mutuals and other social and non-governmental organizations.

We reaffirm that cooperatives promotion, guided by cooperative values and principles, should be considered one of the pillars for economic and social development at national and international level.

We commit ourselves to:

Promote greater cooperative integration at national, regional and international level so as to get an effective economic incidence in social, political and cultural terms.

Promote the creation of development networks and strengthen the different cooperative sectors.

Develop inter co-operation models in order to generate productive and value chains, create jobs, local development processes and endogenous markets; and boost the creation of funds aimed at innovative productive investments.

Promote the access to cooperative services for the most vulnerable sectors of the social pyramid.

Education and cooperative training.

Promote cooperative education as a continuous process, coordinated and integrated in all levels and types of formal education systems.

Establish different training processes aimed at various groups of people (leaders, employees, members) who participate in the cooperative life. Education should be regarded as an investment.

Design and develop a model of training for cooperative trainers which makes the educational process in cooperative organizations easier.

Include in cooperative organizations' regulations, the appointment of a Secretariat or Committee of Cooperative Education.

Develop permanent training strategies for cooperatives' leaders and employees to favour competencies management coherently aligned with the strategic objectives of the organization.

Establish relationships with Education Centres in the communities where cooperative organizations exist to favour local development.

Incorporate new information and communication technologies, trying to reach all the national and international financing resources so as to bridge the digital gap.

Promote a real and effective participation of members strengthening their sense of belonging as owners, managers and users of the cooperative.

Make use of the Cooperative Social Balance as a management and communication tool, to measure the compliance with cooperative principles in the day-to-day management of the organizations, both at institutional and functional level, keeping a balance between business and associative sectors.

Governance and Ethics

Generate mechanisms towards cooperative governance which are coherent with its values and principles.

Create an Ethics Code to guarantee coherence between speech and cooperative action.

Environmental Sustainability

Raise awareness among our members and the community in terms of measures to prevent environmental damage, putting campaigns into practice in areas such as recycling and the use of renewable fuels (wind energy, sun energy, etc).

The cooperative movement shall work towards the design and implementation of clean productive processes, within the agricultural and industrial sectors.

Promote and adopt the Pacto Verde Cooperativo (Co-operative Green Pact) which is included in the present Declaration (Appendix N° 1)

Influence national governments to adopt public policies aimed at boosting technological innovation, environment protection and clean production among others.

Foster environment prevention and care culture within the cooperative sector.

Integrate an ICA-Americas' special commission to study and analyze the possibility of proposing ICA the incorporation of an eighth cooperative principle on the environment.

Youth

Favor the permanent participation of the youth in the cooperative movement, providing spaces and responsibilities to encourage young people to make decisions and get involved in the management of the institutions.

Ensure the generation transition and guarantee cooperatives' continuity and sustainability.

Design and implement policies for the youth in base cooperatives and their integration bodies.

Gender equality

Design and implement gender policies in base cooperatives and their integration bodies.

Advocate for the values expressed in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and in all the subsequent international legislations which protect women's rights.

Promote the integration of Gender Committees within each cooperative organization so that there is an equal participation between men and women.

Include a gender equality approach in cooperative statutes and regulations.

Finance and Insurance

Favor a new financial global architecture to prevent speculative financial operations. Evaluate and minimize the impact of operations in the system risks, in the pursuit of healthier and stronger cooperatives.

Promote the creation of a Cooperative Insurance Network to render services to all the cooperative enterprises in America.

Analyze the feasibility for the creation of an investment fund at regional level, to promote and encourage new cooperatives and the development of the existing ones.

Continue the incidence work of ICA-Americas and the cooperative movement so that the International Accounting Standards do not include capital as liabilities since it distorts its nature (IAS 32).

We request the authorities and competent institutions to:

Fully apply ILO's Recommendation 193.

Design regulation and fiscal frameworks which respect the cooperative nature.

Consult cooperative organizations when formulating and revising legislations and policies concerning cooperatives.

Promote those cooperatives which are inspired by the cooperative principles and values, put such values into practice and work in compliance with the law.

Acknowledge the right for cooperatives to operate in all the economy sectors.

Penalize the use of the cooperative model to evade taxes and/or compliance with work legislation.

Favor the development of information systems for cooperatives in order to facilitate the supervision and creation of promotion programs and cooperative credit.

Facilitate the access of cooperatives to support services aimed at strengthening cooperatives and making them more feasible as a means to job creation and income generation.

Lobby their governments for support of a United Nations International Year of Cooperatives.

Commit universities to promote active investigation programs aimed at strengthening and developing cooperative capabilities in terms of use, control and responsible management of natural resources. This is also intended to favor knowledge and experience interchange with national and foreign cooperatives and to enable cooperative leaders training programs.

ICA-Americas members, participating in the I Cooperative Summit of the Americas, approve the content of this Guadalajara Declaration and commit ourselves to guarantee compliance with it.

Guadalajara, Jalisco, Mexico, 24 September 2009