



# International Co-operative Alliance



Global Office: 150 Route de Ferney - C.P. 2100 - 1211 Geneva 2 - Switzerland - Tel: +41 (22) 929 88 38 - Fax: +41 (22) 798 41 22  
ica@ica.coop - www.ica.coop - www.2012.coop

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## PRESS RELEASE

### FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

### **Build agricultural co-operatives to end global hunger**

Meeting of the Committee on Food Security recommends more co-ops

**Rome, Italy. 20 October, 2012;** The Committee on Food Security, an inter-governmental body of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), has called on UN member states, international organisations and other stakeholders to foster co-operatives and farmer organisations.

This is part of its recommended "twin-track" strategy, ratified in Rome today, to ensure essential assistance is given in the short term to those in need while at the same time protecting and building productive assets for a sustainable future.

"The events in Rome this week underline the growing commitment around the world to agricultural co-operatives as a means to reduce the number of hungry in the world," said Charles Gould, Director-General of the International Co-operative Alliance. According to FAO Director General José Graziano da Silva speaking to the Committee on Food Security delegates on October 16, World Food Day, smallholder farmers are vital to providing needed food and "co-operatives are key" in achieving this goal. This year's World Food Day focused on Agricultural Co-operatives.

Children who fail to receive appropriate nutrients in their first 1000 days are likely to face lifetime hardship including stunting, lower employment, mental acuity problems and potentially life threatening diseases later in life such as diabetes and heart disease. This 1000 day window of opportunity once gone cannot be recaptured even if efforts are redoubled later on. Hence food security is of critical importance to every country.

Betsy Dribben, ICA Director of Policy said from Rome, where she attended the 1000 delegate-strong meeting: "Representatives from member states and international organisations demonstrated what they know first-hand from their own country experiences – co-operatives can spell the difference between success or failure for smallholder farmers, their families, and their communities".

"Fostering integrated programmes which improve agricultural livelihoods and productivity for the poor including through weather, crop and livestock insurance, farmer organizations and co-operatives for market access, decent jobs and public works that create agricultural assets, home-grown school feeding that purchases food from local smallholder farmers, in-kind transfers (food, seeds), vouchers and cash transfers, agricultural livelihood packages and extension services," the final statement of the 39th meeting of the Committee on Food Security said.

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**For further information contact: ICA Director of Communications**

**Nicola Huckerby** +44 7813 687292 | +44 203 286 8212 | [huckerby@ica.coop](mailto:huckerby@ica.coop)

**NOTES TO EDITOR**

1. **The International Co-operative Alliance** is the global voice for the values-based business model of the co-operative, uniting co-operatives worldwide and providing a forum for knowledge and concerted action.

ICA members are international and national co-operative organisations from all sectors of the economy including agriculture, banking, consumer, fisheries, health, housing, industry, insurance and tourism. The ICA has member organisations from almost 100 countries, representing approximately 1 billion individuals worldwide. Around 100 million people work for a co-op globally. ICA was established by co-operatives in 1895. In 1946 the ICA became one of the first three non-governmental organisations to be accorded "consultative status" with the United Nations.

2. **Co-operatives** are successful values based businesses owned by their members. Whether they are customers, employees or residents, the members get an equal say in the business and a share of the profits.
3. The United Nations has declared 2012 the **International Year of Co-operatives**. With its theme of 'co-operative enterprises build a better world', the Year is an opportunity to raise public awareness of how co-operatives are successful values based businesses owned by their members.
4. Further information about the International Year of Co-operatives is available at [www.2012.coop](http://www.2012.coop).
5. Follow the ICA on **twitter** at @icacoop. Like the ICA's **Facebook** page at [www.facebook.com/internationalcooperativealliance](http://www.facebook.com/internationalcooperativealliance)