



**CO/OPS**  
*for 2030*

**A movement  
achieving sustainable  
development for all**

ANNUAL REPORT

VOLUME I

Co-ops for 2030:

A movement achieving sustainable development for all

Cover photo courtesy of IFFCO

Published in July 2017 by the International Co-operative Alliance



This publication has been co-funded by the European Union. The contents of this publication are the sole responsibility of the International Co-operative Alliance and can in no way be taken to reflect the views of the European Union.

# Table of Contents

Introduction	3
Background	6
SDG 1: Eradicating poverty	8
SDG 2: Zero hunger	10
SDG 3: Ensuring healthy lives	13
SDG 4: Inclusive and quality education	14
SDG 5: Gender equality and women's empowerment	15
SDGs 6 and 7: Water and affordable and clean energy	17
SDG 8: Decent work and economic growth	19
SDG 9: Resilient infrastructure and inclusive and sustainable industrialisation	21
SDG 10: Reduced inequalities	22
SDG 11: Sustainable cities and communities	23
SDG 12: Sustainable consumption and production	24
SDG 13: Climate action	26
SDGs 14 and 15: Water and land	27
SDG 16: Peace, justice, and strong institutions	29
SDG 17: Partnerships	30
Taking co-operative engagement to the next level	32



## Introduction

Consider our shared vision – a better world for all by 2030.

What does this vision look like? A world where our governments communicate and collaborate. Communities that can focus on growth, education, and culture, rather than on eliminating poverty and hunger. People that have their basic needs met and feel that their voices are heard and valued. A planet that can sustain not only the present generations but also those to come.

Yes, this vision is ambitious. And it is also achievable. We have in our hands the strategy to make it happen – the *2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development* with its seventeen Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)<sup>1</sup>.

Since the *2030 Agenda* was adopted by UN Member States in 2015, implementation has been underway at all levels by all stakeholders. Progress is being made, but from here in 2017, it is clear that our commitment and investment in the SDGs must be accelerated if real change is to be achieved by 2030.

Fortunately, the co-operative movement and its one billion members have been engaged in sustainable development work even before the adoption of the *2030 Agenda*.

Millions of co-operative enterprises and their members are contributing every day from within their communities to achieving the SDGs. And in a way that is sustainable, inclusive, and people-focused. Thousands of co-operators convened in Quebec, Canada in October 2016 on the occasion of the International Summit of Co-operatives<sup>2</sup> to share their initiatives to achieve the SDGs and brainstorm future action. Over 700 projects were identified, of which more 400 are currently in progress.

This report captures those and many other actions from the co-operative movement. We hope to show you just how co-operatives build a better world.

Happy reading,



Monique Leroux  
President  
International Co-operative Alliance



Charles Gould  
Director-General  
International Co-operative Alliance

---

<sup>1</sup> [http://www.un.org/ga/search/view\\_doc.asp?symbol=A/RES/70/1&Lang=E](http://www.un.org/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=A/RES/70/1&Lang=E)

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.sommetinter.coop/en>



# Background

Let's start with the basics: what is a co-operative?

A co-operative is an 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.

Co-operatives are businesses owned and run by and for their members. Whether the members are the clients, the workers, or the producers, they have an equal say in what the business does and a share in the profits.

Co-operative enterprises operate on the values of self-help, democracy, and equality, among others. Being businesses driven by values rather than only profit, co-operatives share internationally agreed principles and act together to build a better world through co-operation.

In response to the adoption of the 2030 Agenda in September 2015, the members of the International Co-operative Alliance rallied to show their solidarity and commitment to this new global development policy.

The result was *Co-ops for 2030* ([www.coopsfor2030.coop](http://www.coopsfor2030.coop)), an online platform for co-operatives to learn about the SDGs, make pledges to help achieve them, and track their progress.

The language of the SDGs can be difficult for the grassroots co-operator to translate into everyday business terms, so the International Co-operative Alliance regrouped the SDGs into four key action areas where co-operatives can be most impactful: eradicating poverty, improving access to basic goods and services, protecting the environment, and building a more sustainable food system.

These four action areas allow co-operators around the world to approach the SDGs in a language they understand, and to reframe their long-standing work on sustainable development into UN language.

*Co-ops for 2030* was launched on 2<sup>nd</sup> July 2016, the International Day of Co-operatives, to resounding support. Since the launch of the platform, 80 co-operatives in 31 countries have made 167 pledges. These pledges cover all of the SDGs and touch all regions of the world. Some pledges come from large enterprises who are leaders in their sectors, and others come from small community groups who touch the lives of those most in need of a helping hand.

This report serves to highlight and summarise the contributions of co-operative enterprises to SDGs. While there is simply not enough space to tell every co-operative's story, the report strives to incorporate a maximum of geographic diversity while recognising the variety within the co-operative movement, as a true force for economic and social change.

The report only covers the pledges made on *Co-ops for 2030* from July 2016 to July 2017. It is intended to be an annual report that will remind policymakers of the importance of co-operatives as a partner and stakeholder in sustainable development initiatives.



## SDG 1: Eradicating poverty

The co-operative model was invented as a poverty fighting tool, meaning that SDG 1 is in the very DNA of co-operatives. The first co-operative was founded in 1844 in Lancashire, England to provide affordable access to quality food, with any surplus being reinvested in the community. Since then, co-operatives have served their members' economic and social needs.

Why are co-operatives so conducive to eliminating poverty? In areas or sectors where few other options exist, they are a self-help way for people to create their own opportunities and to pool their resources for greater impact. As values- and principles-based enterprises, they exist for the greater good of all and not for the financial gain of a few. They are also spaces where members can meet their needs in the long-term and secure their livelihoods.

With co-operatives so rooted in the push to eradicate poverty, it is no wonder that so many of them around the world have pledged to contribute to achieving SDG 1. Here are some standout examples of co-operatives in action.

### *Co-operative implementation in action*

Radikal Coop in Haiti invests in rural and urban women as micro-entrepreneurs to distribute the co-operative's beauty, health, and wellness products. The co-operative pledges to contribute to SDG 1 by investing in training and support to their franchisees and engaging unemployed youth in the co-operative through micro-entrepreneurship opportunities.

The Iligan City Government Employees Multi-Purpose Co-operative in the Philippines commits to providing opportunities for 450 poor families to secure their livelihoods by 2030.

Vancity, a values-based financial co-operative with more than 523,000 member-owners in the Coast Salish and Kwakwaka'wakw territories, is Canada's largest community credit union. The credit union is also Canada's largest private sector Living Wage employer, which means that it pays 20.62 CAD per hour, the hourly rate required for two working parents to meet the basic needs of a family of four, rather than the minimum wage of 10.85 CAD per hour. As its *Co-ops for 2030* pledge, Vancity commits to maintaining this Living Wage and to advocating for other employers in its service area to join the campaign.

Coopermondo is the development NGO of the Confederation of Italian Co-operatives (Confcooperative), which represents nine national federations of co-operatives in the agriculture, housing, credit, consumer, fisheries, tourism, culture, and sports, worker, solidarity, and health sectors.

Coopermondo's mission is to enhance internationally the social and mutual character of Italian co-operatives by promoting economic and social sustainable development. To this end, Coopermondo has pledged to facilitate by 2020 the creation of at least ten new co-operatives led by youth, women, or indigenous people in developing countries.

Coopermondo is well on its way to achieving this pledge with two current projects in Togo and Sierra Leone, and a network of 113 projects in 42 countries carried out itself or by its associate co-operatives.



## SDG 2: Zero hunger

Of all the co-operatives in the world, 32% operate in the food and agriculture sector, meaning that they have an important presence among rural communities.

They help small agricultural producers overcome the many challenges they face as individuals. Being often based in remote, rural areas, these obstacles are often a question of access: to markets, natural resources, information about food prices and market trends, high-quality inputs (such as equipment, seeds, and fertiliser), loans to purchase those inputs, and transport, storage, and other infrastructure.

When producers come together in a co-operative, individuals benefit from the strength of the collective, while preserving their autonomy. Farmers improve their leadership skills by participating in decision-making processes and influencing policy-making processes. They increase their negotiating power for better prices and access to capital and markets. They enjoy the services offered by their co-operative, like group purchasing and marketing or skill building to help them innovate, diversify their products, and adapt to changing markets.

As a result, through a co-operative producers can improve their productivity, strengthen their position in the value chain, build more sustainable livelihoods for their families and their communities, and produce better food for all.

Financial co-operatives and credit unions are also important means to drive rural investment and development and help end hunger.

Savings and credit cooperatives are community-focused institutions that invest in the betterment of their members. SACCOs and credit unions in rural areas offer low-interest loans to agriculture and livestock producers, helping them to access the capital necessary to grow and raise, and process, transport, and market their products. For individuals, SACCOs can offer development loans for building a home or paying children's school fees.

Here are a few examples of how co-operatives are stepping up to end hunger, improve food security, and promote sustainable agriculture.

### *Co-operative implementation in action*

Co-operative JA Fukushima Mirai in Japan will increase by 2020 the agricultural production in the region to levels higher than those before the Great East Japan earthquake, recovering farmland once contaminated by radioactivity to provide safe agricultural products.

The Indian Farmers Fertiliser Co-operative Limited began in 1967 with 57 producer co-operatives as members and now has 36,000 member co-operatives with a network of 55 million farmers in India.

The co-operative's goals are increase the income of farmers through greater crop productivity, maintain environmental health, strengthen its member co-operatives economically and democratically, and ensure an empowered rural India through professional services to the farming community. Today, in addition to producing and distributing high-quality fertilisers, IFFCO also provides group marketing, insurance, and rural telecommunications services.



IFFCO has an ambitious agenda for 2030:

- Provide quality agro-inputs (pesticides, fungicides, weedicides, machinery, and implements to farmers through subsidiaries at reasonable prices;
- Ensure value addition to agri-products and marketing, through the preservation of fruits and vegetables and promotion of an online commodity exchange company for mainly agricultural products;
- Ensure adequate returns to members on their investments, through marketing of products through the co-operative network, diversification into profitable areas, and entrusting handling and transportation of fertilisers to member societies.
- Educate the farming community about modern, scientific technology to improve their quality of life; and
- Achieve self-sufficiency in food production by making available high-quality fertilisers at the right time and in appropriate quantities throughout the co-operative network.

Consumer co-operative iCOOP Korea plans to grow its share of fair trade business to account for 3% of total turnover by 2030, which would be a 200% increase from 2015.

The Young Farmers League Co-operative Society in Ghana is working to engage young people in food production. As its contribution to *Co-ops for 2030*, the co-operative pledges to increase the profit margin of its smallholder farmers to 80% by 2030, by minimising the activities of middlemen along the distribution channel and linking the producers directly to consumers through the country's first ever online farmers' market, to be called Akuafu Market.

The TrioDuol Multipurpose Co-operative Society in Nigeria pledges to increase access to food supply and delivery services by 20% by 2030, by better helping to link farmers to consumers.

The Rungeto Farmers Co-operative Society in Kenya commits to double its members' coffee production and sales by 2030 and to increase milk production and income by 70%.

Social co-operative La Collina designs and manages cultural, administrative, information technology, creative, education, and tourism services for the Trieste region in Italy. The co-operative has pledged to provide a free daily lunch to disadvantaged community members in its "Il Posto delle Fragole" restaurant as one of its contributions to *Co-ops for 2030*.

The People's Food Co-op in the United States operates in La Crosse, Wisconsin and Rochester, Minnesota and pledges to increase the availability of high-quality, safe food at fair prices, emphasising organic, fairly traded, and natural goods.

Tunisie Co-op in Tunisia commits to increasing by 50% the number of its producers engaged in sustainable or organic agriculture.

## SDG 3: Ensuring healthy lives

Health co-operatives are important sources of preventative and curative care around the world, providing everything from home care services to full-service hospitals. They can be made up of healthcare providers, patients and community members, or a mixture of the two. Given the unique people-focused approach of co-operation, health co-operatives respond to the needs of their members and are a source of affordable care for millions of households around the world.

Co-operatives outside of the health sector also promote healthy lives through benefits to their employees and members.

A selection of co-operative contributions to SDG 3 demonstrates their important impacts.

### *Co-operative implementation in action*

The Mutuelle de Santé Tujenge Afya Yetu in the Democratic Republic of the Congo pledges to introduce universal healthcare to its members, improving access to care by 50% for the Congolese population through education and creating new mutuels throughout the country.

Formula Servizi Social Co-operative in Italy is committing to a fixed annual quota for supplementary care funds in order to increase the opportunities for care for workers in both public and private healthcare networks. The co-operative also commits to improved promotion of these opportunities so that more people can benefit.

Italian energy co-operative Centoraggi pledges to reduce the neonatal mortality rate by developing initiatives by 2030 that will enable the supply of electricity, through renewable energies, to manage maternity wards or provide healthcare in general. This initiative is targeted towards its solar energy projects in Madagascar, Kenya, Ghana, Angola, and other countries, like Brazil, where Centoraggi hopes to expand.



In Canada, insurance co-operative The Co-operators pledges to reverse mental illness trends in the workplace by 2030.

## SDG 4: Inclusive and quality education

Education and training count among the founding principles of all co-operative enterprises. Co-operatives primarily contribute to SDG 4 by increasing their members' incomes, thereby allowing to afford better educational opportunities for themselves and for their families.

They can also step in when governments fail to provide infrastructure for education, for example, by building schools or forming co-operatives for youth to develop their professional skills. There are many co-operative schools and universities around the world that provide a people-focused approach to learning.

Education is not only a matter for young people in the co-operative world; co-operatives also provide essential lifelong learning opportunities for their members, whether they relate to professional development, leadership training, or literacy.

Let's explore a few co-operative education initiatives achieving SDG 4.

### *Co-operative implementation in action*



The Co-op Rajiv Gandhi Arts and Science College has committed to educating degree-seeking rural students about the co-operative model and principles, in the hope that these students will create their own economic opportunities by establishing co-operatives.

Social co-operative Copat in Italy serves to link students to professional opportunities. In support of SDG 4, Copat pledges to increase children's access to educational activities to learn about cultural heritage and the role of museums as educators. One of the programs involved in this pledge allows children to create eco-friendly art from materials from the Remida Creative Recycling Centre in Turin.

## SDG 5: Gender equality and women's empowerment

Co-operative enterprises all subscribe to the principle of voluntary and open membership, meaning that anyone can join a co-operative without fear of discrimination. Co-operatives are also democratically governed by their members, which means that members have an equal voice in decision-making processes. These key aspects of the co-operative identity help make them drivers of gender equality and women's empowerment.

The co-operative form of enterprise facilitates women's participation in local and national economies. Through credit unions and co-operative financial institutions, women can save and get access to financial services. The establishment of women's co-operatives are on the rise, particularly among domestic workers, who are often marginalised women in vulnerable economic and social situations. Co-operatives also help create employment, education, and training opportunities for women and girls who are usually excluded from the economy.

Women also strengthen their leadership skills through co-operation by not only participating in their organisation's governance, but by making decisions for members and their communities that increase their image as leaders and change makers.

The levels of membership among women in co-operatives are proof of their potential for achieving SDG 5.

What have co-operatives committed to do in advancement of gender equality and women's empowerment?

### *Co-operative implementation in action*

Many co-operatives are committing to achieve greater gender parity in their Boards of Directors and membership base: CIC Insurance Group in Kenya, Vancity and The Co-operators in Canada, and Reset Social Co-operative, Formula Servizi, Politecnica Engineering and Architecture Social Co-operative, and La Collina Social Co-operative in Italy.

Co-operatives UK, the national apex organisation representing co-operatives in the United Kingdom, has pledged by 2020 to work with its members to achieve the goals of The Co-operative Women's Challenge, a campaign which seeks to ensure that women are fairly represented at all levels in the British co-operative movement. The goals include fair representation in democratic structures, more women in senior management roles, and campaign for gender equality across

the economy and society.

The Indian Farmers Fertiliser Co-operative Limited (IFFCO) in India is supporting women's economic participation. The co-operative pledges to promote self-help groups for women and arrange training programmes to improve women's skills in beekeeping, tailoring, embroidery, adult education, fruit and vegetable preservation, and computer literacy, among others.



## SDGs 6 and 7: Water and affordable and clean energy

Co-operative enterprises arise out of the needs of people. To improve their quality of life, to provide for their families, to ensure the longevity of their culture or their communities.

In the case of water, sanitation, and energy, co-operatives can bring services to remote, rural areas where public and private actors do not find the investment attractive. Water and electric co-operatives are a community-managed solution for people to bring infrastructure to their area and make services affordable.

Co-operatives can also allow communities to transition to renewable energy and sell that energy to increase local wealth. People-owned renewable energy co-operatives have seen great success in Europe in recent years, and the U.S. has a long history of rural electric co-operatives.

Co-operatives around the world are contributing to SDGs 6 and 7. Here's how they're doing it.

### *Co-operative implementation in action*

With more than two billion Australian dollars in assets, 1,100 permanent employees, and 1,800 seasonal employees, The CBH Group is Australia's largest co-operative and a leader in the national grain industry, with operations all along the value chain. The co-operative is owned and controlled by 4,200 Western Australian grain growers.

As one of its *Co-ops for 2030* pledges, The CBH Group commits to increase the share of renewables in its energy mix to 1 megawatt by 2019.



The Alberta Solar Co-op in Canada pledges to develop Alberta's first community-owned solar farm by 2018 through member's individual investment. L'Îlot Fleuri Housing Co-operative wants to increase its independence from the main energy grid in order to be able to provide basic services (heating, lighting, refrigeration, etc.) self-sufficiently for 72 consecutive hours by 2030.

In Greece, Electra Energy engineering co-operative commits to raising the public's awareness about energy co-operatives and to developing community energy projects for people to access local and clean energy at an affordable cost. The co-operative plans to develop by 2021 at least one community energy project for each of the following sources: wind, biomass, and solar.

The National Auditing Union of Workers' Co-operatives in Poland has pledged by 2030 to transition to photo-voltaic power for water heating in all of its health care co-operatives.

The Midcounties Co-operative in the United Kingdom has pledged through *Co-ops for 2030* to improve the overall energy efficiency of its business by 20%. Co-operative Group Limited is improving access to water and sanitation in the UK. The enterprise commits to continuing its partnerships with the One Foundation and the Global Investment Fund for Water, supporting clean water, sanitation and hygiene projects.

## SDG 8: Decent work and economic growth

Co-operatives play a significant role in employment creation and income generation, through both direct employment and organising people's economic activities through co-operatives. It is estimated by the International Organisation of Industrial, Artisanal and Service Producers' Co-operatives (CICOPA) that co-operatives secure the livelihoods of 272 million people in the world<sup>1</sup>.

Because co-operatives are people-centred, they are also sources of decent work. Co-operatives often place more emphasis than their corporate counterparts on employee pay and benefits, offerings of education and training opportunities for workers, and community investment. Co-operatives have also proven to be an important means for workers in the informal economy to transition to the formal economy, thereby increasing their job security.

In terms of economic growth, co-operatives have proven to be resilient, and even report growth in times of crisis<sup>2</sup>. There are even increasing instances of workers buying out businesses when they fail and saving their jobs by turning those companies into worker co-operatives.

SDG 8 is one of the key goals where co-operatives can make significant contributions. Here's a sample of what they pledge to achieve.

### *Co-operative implementation in action*

The co-operative movement has made a significant number of pledges on *Co-ops for 2030* related to SDG 8, showing the importance of this issue.

Many co-operative enterprises are committing to creating jobs. The Artisans Development Co-operative in India pledges to create regular employment for 1,000 members by 2030. Femmes CoopCongo in the Democratic Republic of the Congo aims to integrate 20% more women into the national economy through entrepreneurship by 2030. Social co-operative Arcadia Co-op in Italy pledges to create ten jobs by 2030. The Valley Alliance of Worker Co-operatives in the New England region of the United States will support the creation of three jobs per year and one worker co-operative every two years up to 2030.

Others focus on skill development. The National Co-operative Bank Limited (NCBL) in Nepal wants to facilitate skills training to access microfinance and self-employment loans for entrepreneurs. The Kangrou Co-operative Agriculture Multipurpose Society in India commits to educate and train members in rural areas on self-employment. VICTO National Co-operative Federation and Development in the Philippines pledges to enhance the entrepreneurial

---

<sup>1</sup> CICOPA. *Co-operatives and employment: Second global report* (forthcoming in 2017).

<sup>2</sup> Birchall, Johnston; Ketilson, Lou Hammond. *Resilience of the cooperative business model in times of crisis*. International Labour Office, Sustainable Enterprise Programme. Geneva: ILO, 2009.

capacities of its members through gender-sensitive trainings that cover management, finance, marketing, and technical aspects of business.

Some co-operatives have pledged to improve workers' welfare. FasolMusic.Coop in Italy aims to protect labour rights and promote safe and secure working environments for entertainment workers. The co-operative is a signatory of the first national contract for the entertainment industry, which was adopted in November 2014. Credit union Vancity in Canada commits to a diverse workforce and leadership with equal pay for equal work. Catering co-operative CIR Food in Italy hopes to reduce workplace accidents and promote corporate welfare activities.

There are many co-operatives who commit to offering employment opportunities to more young co-operators: the Karachi Co-operative Housing Societies Union in Pakistan, Ike Oluwa Sagamu (Remo) Co-operative Multipurpose Union Limited in Nigeria, and Frassati Social Co-operative, La Collina Social Co-operative, Reset Social Co-operative, Politecnica Engineering and Architecture Social Co-operative, Cooperativa 19, Centoraggi, and Liet Motiv Co-operative in Italy. CONFECOOP, the national organisation for co-operatives in Guatemala, wants to integrate 100 young people into its co-operative by 2030.

CIC Insurance Group in Kenya has for more than three decades offered its members need-based insurance and financial services, even taking a stand in 2008 to pay claims related to post-election violence. To continue its role as a community builder, CIC Insurance Group has pledged through *Co-ops for 2030* a number of initiatives to assist young people:

- Support the secondary education of ten students from disadvantaged backgrounds;
- Enrol two trainees every two years (twenty trainees by 2030);
- Sponsor youth activities to increase co-operative membership right after completing university studies; and
- Lead mentorship programs for young people, with more emphasis on the forgotten boy child.

## SDG 9: Resilient infrastructure and inclusive and sustainable industrialisation

Achieving the SDGs will require modern and sturdy infrastructure to support development, and sustainable industrialisation that improves all people's lives in way that supports research and innovation.

Co-operatives are a valuable partner to achieve SDG 9, given their deep roots in local communities and understanding of people's needs. As discussed in the chapter on SDG 7 and energy, co-operatives can step in to fill gaps in basic goods and services where public and private investors are unable or unwilling to act. Examples include building roads, increasing access to financial services and markets, bringing technological advances to rural areas, and transitioning to environmentally sounds industrial methods.

What do co-operatives hope to achieve by 2030? Here's one example from Italy.

### *Co-operative implementation in action*

Social co-operative Formula Servizi in Italy provides many services for industry and business: cleaning, maintenance, logistics, construction, document management and archiving, event planning, cultural services, document restoration, and information technology. The co-operative has pledged to an annual fixed investment rate for research, equipment, and training equal to 3% of turnover. This increased investment will improve the technological capacities and efficiency of the enterprise's production processes and the quality of work.

## SDG 10: Reduced inequalities

No vision for 2030 can be realised without increased equality within and among countries. No future can be sustainable if it is not also inclusive.

Co-operative enterprises drive equality in many ways. Through open and voluntary membership, allowing anyone, regardless of their background or socioeconomic status, to join if they can commit to the responsibility of being a member. Through active engagement of members in co-operatives' governance and operations, increasing people's representation and voice and inclusive business practices. Through increased wealth for members and their households.

In short, co-operatives put people at the centre of development, and equality is one of the resulting benefits.

How do co-operatives plan to achieve SDG 10? These pledges will demonstrate how they are working to leave no one behind.

### *Co-operative implementation in action*

In support of SDG 10, many co-operatives participating in *Co-ops for 2030* are pledging to increase their membership and make members more engaged in their co-operatives. The Valley Alliance of Worker Co-operatives in Connecticut in the United States hopes to increase worker membership by 50% and to double co-operative membership. Crédit Coopératif in France pledges to increase its number of clients with disabilities. Reset Social Co-operative in Italy aims to increase by 15% the participation of worker-members in governance activities (budget submitting and general assemblies). Italian energy co-operative Centoraggi is working to developing projects on job placement for refugees in the renewable energy field.

## SDG 11: Sustainable cities and communities

Co-operatives have proven to be excellent partners in making human settlements more inclusive, safe, resilient, and respectful of the environment. Housing co-operatives provide lodging for people in need and allow them to manage it according to their needs as tenants. Co-operative insurers and mutuals help people vulnerable to natural disasters and the effects of climate change to protect their homes and their livelihoods, often when other insurers are not willing to take the risk. With concern for community as a founding principle, co-operatives have the long-term vision for environmentally sound investments, such as energy efficiency, safe and sustainable building materials, and disaster resilience.

Beyond safe and sustainable communities, co-operatives are also shepherds of culture and heritage. In December 2016, UNESCO added the “idea and practice of organising shared interests in co-operatives” to its list of intangible cultural heritage.

Here’s how co-operatives have pledged to contribute to SDG 11.

### *Co-operative implementation in action*

Karachi Co-operative Housing Societies Union in Pakistan pledges to develop an affordable housing project for members by 2022, moving members into higher-quality lodging. Solidarité Pour Bâtir in the Democratic Republic of the Congo will help build and find housing for 15,000 Congolese families. Credit Union Vancity in Canada will fund the construction or renovation of housing units for community members in collaboration with housing providers.

Many culture co-operatives in Italy have pledged to preserve local heritage. For example, Copat Social Co-operative and Centro Studi e Restauro will continue to preserve works of art.

## SDG 12: Sustainable consumption and production

Environmental sustainability is a particular strength of co-operatives, given their shared principle of concern for community. Being values-based enterprises, co-operatives are committed to using natural resources in a sustainable way, and promoting sustainable practices to the community. They are also early adopters of sustainability reporting, with many co-operatives tracking and making available data on their environmental impacts.

Within the co-operative movement are so many examples of sustainable consumption and production: comprehensive recycling and reuse programmes, innovative ways in reducing food waste and food loss along the supply chain, and investment in sustainable packaging and transport.

Co-operatives are true pioneers in implementing SDG 12, as the following *Co-ops for 2030* pledges will show.

### *Co-operative implementation in action*

National Co-operative Grocers in the United States will engage all of its member co-ops in food waste reduction programs, such as food scrap composting and recovery of unsalable food.

The CBH Group in Australia commits to reducing its waste sent to landfill to zero by 2030.

In addition to these activities, a number of co-operatives have pledged to improve their annual sustainability reporting.



Co-op Italy is a system of consumer co-operatives, which operates the largest supermarket chain in the country. With environmental sustainability as a core activity of the co-operative, Co-op Italy has made a number of innovative pledges in support of SDG 12:

- Development of more organic and Ecolabel-certified own brand products;
- Use of own brand fruit cultivation methods that keep chemical residue below legal limits;
- Consumer education through recycling information on all own brand product packaging;
- Awareness raising and monitoring of Co-op brand production suppliers about their sustainability and resource use; and
- Application of the '3R' policy (reduction, reuse, recycling) for all Co-op brand product packaging, such as using recycled materials, minimising packaging, and setting up refill stations).



## SDG 13: Climate action

With global temperatures rising and extreme weather events more and more frequent, it is clear that climate change is one of the most pressing challenges created by humanity.

Guided by long-term goals, co-operatives can foster the buy-in necessary for the sacrifices necessary to address climate change. Whether that be paying more for renewable energy, ending the use of plastic bags, or stepping in to support communities vulnerable to disaster, co-operatives are ready to act.

They also help people find local solutions to problems created by environmental change, such as redefining land and resource use or diversifying activities to support greener ventures.

See some of the excellent initiatives of co-operatives to achieve SDG 13 below.

### *Co-operative implementation in action*

Many co-operatives want to reduce their emissions. Cooperativa Biklö in Costa Rica and Politecnica Engineering and Architecture Social Co-operative in Italy will reduce their carbon emissions by 30% by 2030. Ogun State Youth Co-operative Multipurpose Society in Nigeria will reduce its carbon emissions by 20%. In Canada, credit union Vancity will reduce its staff's carbon footprint by 25%, and The Co-operators will do so by 100% by 2020. Co-operative Group Limited in the United Kingdom will reduce emissions from its operations by 50% by 2020, compared with 2006.

Sustainability technology co-operative Cooperativa Inspirare in Chile would like to create by 2030 a network of more than 5,000 professionals and producers whose work relates to protecting the biosphere, in order to improve collaboration on such environmentally sound projects.

The Federation of Thrift and Credit Co-operative Societies (SANASA) in Sri Lanka has pledged to create 100 smart villages in the country by 2020, improving the energy efficiency of many communities.

The Happy Green Co-operative in Bhutan commits to eliminating household air pollution from cooking and heating fuel usage in the country by 2030 through its sustainable products.

The Department of Agricultural Marketing and Co-operatives within the Ministry of Agriculture and Forests in Bhutan aims to maintain the country's carbon negative status and strengthen resilience and adaptive capacity to climate-related hazards and natural disasters.

## SDGs 14 and 15: Water and land

Co-operatives exist to meet the needs of their members, but they also know that their members' needs cannot be met if the natural environment is not protected. Operating in all sectors of the economy, co-operatives work around the world to preserve the oceans, freshwater sources, forests, and biodiversity.

How can this be achieved through a co-operative? Fishery co-operatives train their members to avoid overfishing and adopt sustainable practices. Forestry co-operatives harvest wood in a way that protects and replenishes the area being used, educates the community, and promote love of forest ecosystems.

Co-operatives have made pledges to achieve SDGs 14 and 15. Here are some of the initiatives at work.

### *Co-operative implementation in action*

CoopSoliDar in Costa Rica focuses on marine conservation through the lens of human rights. They are developing actions to strengthen coastal communities through local governance and implementation of the Voluntary Guidelines for Securing Sustainable Small-scale Fisheries in the Context of Food Security and Poverty Eradication, adopted by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) Committee on Fisheries in 2011. The co-operative is also putting in place fishery management plans and promoting responsible fishing.

The Maldives Fisherman's Association commits to educating and certifying 30% of Maldivian fishing skippers by the end of 2020 to build a more sustainable industry.



Costa Balenae in Italy is a co-operative made up of biologists and naturalists experienced in the fields of marine biology, environmental education, and

ecotourism, in particular whale watching. The co-operative is dedicated to sustainable tourism of marine areas.

For land ecosystems, Los Diaz Co-operative in Argentina pledges to reduce degradation in forest, wetland, and estuary areas through silvopastoral practices (combining forestry and animal grazing in a sustainable way). The co-operative will increase the number of hectares cultivated with non-genetically modified seeds and the number of animals under silvopastoral systems.

The Albergo Diffuso Comeglians co-operative in Italy pledges to work for protection of mountain ecosystems and their biodiversity, through promoting local culture, products, and conservation activities.

The CBH Group in Australia pledges to protect and enhance local biodiversity.



## SDG 16: Peace, justice, and strong institutions

Co-operative enterprises are democracy workshops. Through active member participation and “one member, one vote” governance, they help people develop their skills as fair decision-makers and become leaders.

As spaces without discrimination, co-operatives are also a forum for people to strengthen their interpersonal and intergroup relationships. They exist during political turmoil, economic crisis, displacement, and violence, and can help people find peace with their neighbours and rebuild their societies.

Co-operatives are therefore sources of positive social capital that foster a sense of community, empowerment, and inclusion. Here is how they are pledging to achieve SDG 16.

### *Co-operative implementation in action*

Penabulu Co-operative in Indonesia is working to promote information and communication technology. The co-operative wants to provide access for all co-operatives in Indonesia, and by connecting them through technology, increase transparency by 50% by 2020.

The Mining Supervision Co-operative for Former Soldiers (COMEDCOM) in the Democratic Republic of the Congo hopes to increase its membership among as a way to facilitate peace and national unity through social and economic inclusion.



## SDG 17: Partnerships

The founding principle of co-operation among co-operatives ensures that the global co-operative movement is a vast network with shared goals. Co-operatives work together to strengthen the overall movement. For example, consumer co-operatives in Europe work with agricultural co-operatives in Africa to source products for their shoppers, increasing their trade opportunities.

But co-operatives know that they are not the only forces at work when it comes to sustainable development. For that reason, co-operatives are working with governments, civil society, and the UN system to achieve the SDGs.

### *Co-operative implementation in action*

In 2016, the International Co-operative Alliance began a five-year partnership with the European Commission to develop its communication, advocacy, research efforts, and civil society networks, as a means of strengthening the co-operative movement as a key development actor. Through the partnership, the global office and four regional offices (Africa, Americas, Asia and the Pacific, and Europe) are collaborating more closely than ever before.



The Alliance also has individual partnership agreements with the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), the International Labour Organization (ILO), and the International Trade Centre.

Since 1971, the Alliance has been a founding member of the Committee for the Promotion and Advancement of Co-operatives (COPAC), a multi-stakeholder partnership of global public and private institutions that promotes and

advocates for people-centred, self-sustaining cooperative enterprises, guided by the principles of economic, social and environmental sustainable development. The other members of COPAC are the UN Department for Economic and Social Affairs, FAO, ILO, and the World Farmers' Organisation.

COPAC collaborates on the annual observance of the International Day of Co-operatives, held on the first Saturday of July of every year, to raise awareness about co-operatives and on projects of mutual interest to advance co-operatives, such as improving the quality of co-operative statistics.

## Taking co-operative engagement to the next level

*Co-ops for 2030* is tracking the many contributions of co-operatives to the SDGs. It is clear that co-operative enterprises are an important means of making sustainable development a reality.

But co-operatives can do more with the support of the UN system and governments.

What do we ask of policymakers to strengthen co-operative enterprises as drivers of sustainable development?

- Help promote co-operatives as essential drivers of sustainable development – in your communities, at your workplace, and before your governments.
- Include co-operatives in relevant discussions on sustainable development and invite them to participate in policy-making processes.
- Consult co-operatives when developing national implementation plans for the SDGs, and reference and support their contributions to the SDGs.
- Work towards a more enabling legal and regulatory environment in which co-operatives can be established and flourish.
- Provide assistance, training, and education about co-operation to encourage interest in the model.
- Make available funding opportunities for co-operatives to be incubated or to scale up their activities.

As this report has shown, only the surface has been scratched of what the co-operative movement can achieve. Through increased support and awareness, we can fully mobilise co-operatives' power to act, for even greater contributions to the SDGs.





# CO/OPS

*for 2030*

[www.coopsfor2030.coop](http://www.coopsfor2030.coop)



A project of



International  
Co-operative  
Alliance

International Co-operative Alliance  
Avenue Milcamps 105  
1030 Brussels  
Belgium  
[www.ica.coop](http://www.ica.coop)