



Expert Group Meeting **Cooperatives in Social Development: Beyond 2012**

3-6 May 2011, Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia

Aide-Memoire

I. Background

The Division for Social Policy and Development (DSPD) of the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UNDESA), in collaboration with the Government of Mongolia is organizing an Expert Group Meeting (EGM) on “Cooperatives in Social Development: Beyond 2012” from 3-6 May 2011, in Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia.

The meeting is convened in the context of General Assembly resolution 64/136, which declared 2012 the International Year of Cooperatives (IYC) in recognition of the contribution of cooperatives to social development. The EGM is part of the preparations for the IYC which is scheduled to be launched on 31 October, 2011, in the 66th session of the United Nations General Assembly.

The United Nations has long recognized the importance of the cooperatives movement as an important partner in the implementation of the United Nations Development Agenda, defined by the UN global conferences and summits since the 1990s. Specifically, the UN recognized the role and contributions of cooperatives towards achieving the 1995 World Summit for Social Development goals of poverty eradication, employment creation and social integration. The UN drew the attention of Member States to what eventually was adopted as UN Guidelines of 2001 and the ILO Recommendation No. 193 on the promotion of cooperatives. The UN, along with ILO and FAO, was also instrumental in the formation of the Committee for the Promotion and Advancement of Cooperatives (COPAC), whose goal is to promote cooperatives through inter-agency collaboration. COPAC also serves as the Coordinating Committee for the IYC and is responsible for the effective coordination and planning of the activities for the IYC.

In light of the current global economic crisis, the IYC draws on the potential of cooperatives for job creation and income generation, local empowerment, and the linking of local populations to local and global markets. The IYC will give visibility to the contributions of cooperatives in addressing food security, social inclusion and gender empowerment. The IYC will also raise awareness of the strength and reach of cooperatives in both developed and developing countries. Such awareness is vital for promoting cooperative formation and growth which will help leverage cooperative contribution for development and the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).

The 2012 IYC is a concrete step towards promoting and strengthening cooperatives and recognizing their important contributions to socio-economic development. The IYC has three main objectives:

1. to increase public awareness about cooperatives and their contributions to socio-economic development and the achievement of internationally agreed development goals, including the MDGs;



2. to promote the formation and growth of independent and sustainable cooperatives for socio-economic empowerment; and
3. to encourage Member States to establish policies, laws and regulations conducive to the formation, growth and stability of cooperatives.

II. Objectives of the EGM

The objectives of the EGM are to:

- provide background information and substantive inputs to the Secretary-General's report on cooperatives in social development to the 66th session of the General Assembly in 2011;
- draft an international plan of action beyond 2012 to be adopted as an outcome of the IYC.

The draft plan of action for cooperatives beyond 2012, consistent with the objectives of the IYC, is expected to include principles and guidelines for good practices, an international research agenda and policy recommendations for Member States.

III. Methodology

The meeting is organized around four key themes: (1) Promoting research on cooperatives; 2) Identifying and Promoting Good Practices and Addressing Challenges faced by cooperatives; (3) Raising Public Awareness on cooperatives; and (4) Policy and Planning Beyond 2012.

In addressing these themes, the EGM will 1) highlight the strengths of cooperative enterprises in promoting social development; 2) identify important factors and practices important for the successful operation of cooperatives; 3) identify and assess ways and means to raise awareness about cooperatives; 4) understand the current state and gaps in research and information in support of policy formulation for cooperative development; 5) review prevailing policies and laws impacting cooperatives and identify strategies to create supportive policy environments for cooperatives; and 6) identify priority capacity-building strategies to promote and strengthen cooperatives.

IV. Organizational and administrative matters

The Meeting will be conducted at the Conference Hall of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade in Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia and is scheduled to take place from 3-6 May 2011. There will be approximately 35 participants from academia, cooperatives, governments and United Nations staff. The participants will meet in plenary as well as in working groups based on the programme of activities

At the conclusion of the meeting, participants will outline the major conclusions and recommendations of the meeting. In addition to any general conclusions and recommendations,



participants will contribute to a draft International Plan of Action for the International Year of Cooperatives 2012. A final report will be produced after the meeting.

V. Documentation and the Language of the meeting

The documentation of the meeting will comprise of relevant publications, documents, and materials related to the development and operation of cooperatives and their contribution to social and economic development, 5 – 10 page papers from the expert participants, and relevant United Nations documents that will be made available on the web site to be created for the meeting. Expert participants will be invited to provide their contributions in advance (to be submitted by **22 April 2011**), and to make brief presentations in the plenary.

The working language of the meeting will be English. Documentation for the meeting will be provided in English. All meeting documentation will be made available at <http://www.un.org/esa/socdev/social/meetings/eqm11/index.html>.

VI. Passports and Visas

Participants will be expected to make necessary arrangements with regard to passports, visa and health certificates for travel. An information note will be sent out to participants to assist them with travel arrangements.

All relevant correspondence should be addressed to:

Ms. Felice Llamas
Focal Point on Cooperatives
Division for Social Policy and Development
United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs
Room DC2-1348, 2 UN Plaza
New York, NY 10017
Tel.: +1-212-963-2924
Fax: +1-212-963-0111
E-mail: llamas@un.org

And copied to the following individuals:

Ms. Astrid Hurley
Room DC2-1374
Two United Nations Plaza
New York, NY, 10017
Tel.: +1-917-367-8009
Fax: +1-212-963-0111
E-mail: hurleya@un.org

Ms. Nimali Ariyawansa
Room DC2-13
Two United Nations Plaza
New York, NY, 10017
Tel.: +1-212-963-1371
Fax: +1-212-963-0111
E-mail: ariyawansa@un.org

