

November-December Edition
2012

ICA-AP Women's Committee Meeting

Various committees meetings were held in conjunction with the General Assembly. On November 27th the women's committee exchange meeting was held at KICC attracting 38 participants from 10 countries in the region.

At the exchange meeting, reports from various business disciplines such as forestry, fishery, agricultural co-operative associations and the co-operative activities in the Hyogo prefecture were given.



The following day, a tour to Co-op Kobe product inspection center was made by 70 participants where they were introduced to the food safety concept of co-op.



Finally, the participants experienced Japanese tea ceremony, Japanese traditional art (origami) and interacting through traditional dancing.



ICA-AP Regional Assembly and the Co-operative Forum held in Kobe, Japan

The ICA-AP in collaboration with the Japan Joint Committee of Co-operatives (JJC) hosted the 10th Regional Assembly and related meetings in Kobe from November 26-30 at the Kobe International Conference Center (KICC).

Leaders from the Co-operative Movement in the ICA's Asia-Pacific region came together to discuss how co-operatives could build a secured society and also discuss the region's achievement during the international year of co-operatives and its post activities.

The assembly was participated by 209 co-operators from the region.

In his opening address, Mr. Li Chunsheng, President of ICA-Asia and Pacific mentioned that co-operatives in the region have not only contributed to its members in areas such as food, water, shelter, health, job, finance, insurance and the environment but also for their societies, and have also often served as a partner for government policy programs.

He also added "especially in times of crisis and disasters, co-operatives genuine role appears as apparent."

He commended the effort of co-operators in the region for their outstanding effort in promoting the visibility of co-operatives through the international year and appealed to all to take a massive step forward and lead the growth of the movements in the region.

The co-operative forum, which was attended by about 500 co-operators from 18 countries, discussed the role, which the co-operative played during the Great East Japan Earthquake, the floods in Thailand, Philippines, Indonesia and Sri Lanka.

ICA-AP Regional Assembly held in Kobe **P.1**

The Birth of Co-op "Mirai" **P.2**

Co-op's Environmental Donation **P.3**

News in Brief **P.4**

this issue



Scene at the forum

In a subsequent panel discussion chaired by ICA President Dame Pauline Green, panelists exchanged ideas about "what needs to be done to strengthen the ability of co-operatives to respond to disasters in the region" and the necessity for collaboration between various organizations and the government.



Finally, a special lecture was given by Mr. Uchihashi Katsuhito on behalf of IYC national committee, reminding participants to consider the meaning of "building a better society" and stressed the need to share roles in realizing the vision.

Yamanashi Pal System received family-friendly company award

Yamanashi Consumer Co-operative Pal System has a family-friendly human resources policy that offers employees far-reaching terms allowing them to establish a better balance between their career and their family life.

The aim is to promote a positive working climate as part of its commitment to social and civic responsibilities.

On 9 November 2012, the company was honored by the "2012 family-friendly award" as being a model company in the family-friendliness stakes at an event hosted by the Yamanashi Labor Bureau Chief.

The main reasons for the decision for the award are as follows:

That Yamanashi Pal System provides;

1. Childcare leave system for employees with young children.
2. Reduced working hours for male parents with pre-school children.
3. Promotion of male maternity leave.

The award was given by the Minister of Health, Labour and Welfare who mentioned that the effort of Pal System serves as a model for other companies in the region to embrace the idea, and that being family friendly can be good for business.

Pal System concluded that presently the male child-care leave acquisition rate is over 50% and hope to encourage young families to make use of the facility without hesitation. This way we will fulfill our responsibility in the region.



ICA General Assembly 2012 held in Manchester

On October 31, 2012, the Extraordinary General Assembly of ICA was held in Manchester, UK under the theme Co-operative United 2012. More than 80 countries participated in the assembly.

The priority discussion on the agenda was centered around the Blueprint for a Co-operative Decade, the possible refinements to the membership subscription formula and the discussion on relocation of the seat of ICA to Brussels, Belgium.

At the opening address the ICA President, Dame Pauline Green mentioned the need to further strengthen co-operative activities in order to demonstrate its sustainability since cooperatives has been the focus of worldwide attention.

The closing event of the International Year of Co-operatives 2012 was also held. Dame Pauline Green emphasized the need to ensure that the momentum of the Year is captured for longer impact, through the Blueprint, the Co-operative Decade (2011-2020) that highlights on the achievements of IYC and marks the beginning of a worldwide campaign to take the co-operative way of doing business to a new level.

In response to the call in the Blueprint for a Co-operative Decade, the ICA President emphasized the need to strengthen cooperatives through expanding participation among cooperatives, members and stake holders.

She also stressed the importance to seek to the improvement and the development of legal system relating to cooperatives.

Delegates to the Assembly from Japan include ASADA Katsumi president of JCCU and BANZAI Akira chairperson of the Central Union of Agricultural Cooperatives (JA Zenchu).

The JCCU President acknowledged the effort of Planning Work-Group for bringing together the 10-year Co-operative Draft Plan and emphasized that JCCU remains committed in working towards its realization.

He also expressed thanks to ICA and its member organizations around the world for the large amount of donation contributed towards the recovery of Japanese co-operatives in the disaster-hit areas.



Announcement of the birth of Co-op "Mirai"

On March 21, 2013, Japan's largest consumer's co-operative with membership 2.9 million and business turnover of 350 billion JPY will be born in the Tokyo metropolitan area through the merger of Co-op Tokyo, Saitama Co-op and Chiba Co-op.

At an extraordinary General Assembly of each Co-op held on November 16, 2012, the merger bill was respectively passed.

Consumer Co-operative Co-op "Mirai" is scheduled to start business operation from March 21, 2013 after the approval of the Government Ministry.

For over a period of three years, two opinion survey questionnaires had been sent to members to seek their views in connection with the merger and to ask their endorsement. The two surveys received reply from 800,000 and 760,000 members respectively.

Co-op "mirai" is the official given name. "Mirai" is a Japanese word meaning "future" and this was decided by public offering.



Foreign delegates paid a visit to Co-op Kagoshima

With the support of JICA (Japan International Co-operation Agency) and KITA (Kitakyushu International Techno-Cooperative Association), 11 delegates from 8 countries visited Co-op Kagoshima on October 23, to learn about energy savings efforts in store operation. They are government and technical officials from the energy sector of Algeria, Indonesia, Egypt, Jordan, Morocco, Philippines, Saudi Arabia and Turkey.

The purpose of the visit was to learn about Japanese policy of energy saving, technology trends and its pace as well as the actual condition of promotion.

After visiting Fukuoka Prefecture Environmental Administration, they visited Co-op Kagoshima, inspected the store, machinery room, and the rooftop. They were greatly impressed especially about the method of saving energy without carrying out new capital investment etc. that the Co-op is tackling. The participants shared common view that the system could be replicated in their respective countries.

For four years Co-op Kagoshima has been promoting the idea of "Eco-hand" which is a recommended energy-saving measures, while maintaining effective use of the facilities that are currently not costly.



Co-op Sapporo Receives Award on its contribution towards improving Japan's food self-sufficiency ratio

In 2008, the Japanese Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries instituted "Food Action Nippon" which is deployed to improve the food self-sufficiency rate of Japan.

Many organizations through their business practices have been working towards the realization of this goal and an effort rewarding award "Food Action Nippon Award 2012" was organized in Tokyo on November 2, 2012 to recognize the best organization who has contributed positively towards the ministry's goal.

This year is the fourth time the award ceremony has been organized and Co-op Sapporo, a consumer co-operative, who has been producing ration for livestock taken advantage of fallow fields in Hokkaido won the grand-prix. For some years the feed for livestock breeding has depended on the imported grain from foreign country.

In this fiscal year, 862 applicants across the country participated in the competition.

A spokesman of Co-op Sapporo commented that "we will contribute to the reconstruction of food and agriculture in the affected areas of the Great East Japan Earthquake".

GUNJI Akira, Minister of Agriculture and Forestry who was present at the ceremony mentioned that "the food self-sufficiency ratio of Japan is changing at 40%, and the stable supply of food is the duty of the country".



Co-op's environment donation campaign through sale of laundry detergent

In 2011, "Co-operative Environment Campaign Fund" was established by Japanese Co-operatives to support domestic and international environment activities.

Under the theme 'Co-op's environment donation campaign' JCCU and member Co-ops raised an amount of 5 million JPY in 2011 through the sale of laundry detergent produced by Co-op Clean Co., Ltd. a subsidiary company of JCCU to support national and international environment preservation organizations.

This year also the campaign was executed from April 21, 2012 to October 20, where for every purchase of a particular laundry detergent one yen was donated to the fund.

118 Co-ops nationwide joined in this campaign and an amount of 5 million JPY was raised during the six-month-long campaign.

Co-op Clean also contributed one million yen bringing the total to 6 million JPY.

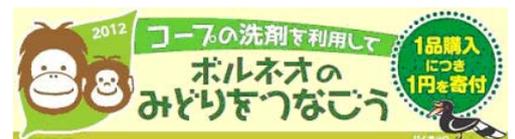
The amount would be donated to environmental groups in and outside Japan.

The Borneo Conservation Trust (BCT) Japan, an NPO would receive funding from this campaign to purchase about 4 hectares of land in Borneo for wildlife conservation.

Part of the last year's donation went to BCT, which was used to secure 2 hectares of land in Borneo to support the conservation project.

This brings to total 6 hectares of land, which has been purchased through the Co-op's environment donation campaign for wildlife conservation in Borneo since 2011.

JCCU has adopted an environmental policy, which expresses concern about the state of the environment; typical example being the positive spread of eco-mark goods, and called upon its member organizations to join in local, national, regional and international efforts to address the issues of environment and development.



Co-op detergent "Sefter-E"

JCCU delegates visit the International Labour Organization (ILO)

On October 29 2012, four Executive Officers from the Japanese Consumers' Co-operative Union (JCCU), including the Managing Director, HAGA Tadashi paid a day visit to the ILO headquarters in Geneva, Switzerland to meet with Jose Manuel Salazar Xirinachs the Director General of ILO and three other officers to exchange opinions with regard to the promotion of co-operatives in the developing countries.

First, the Director General of Employment offered words of gratitude to JCCU for their continuing support to the running of the "COOP Africa" ILO study tour for African Co-operative Leaders in Japan which has been held for three consecutive times since 2010 with joint collaboration between ILO office in Japan and JCCU.

A report on the current status and issues of promotion of cooperatives in developing countries by ILO was given and the way forward in its advancement was discussed.

Finally, JCCU reported on the activities of support being extended to the running of the COOP African program.

The study visit exposes the African Co-operative Leaders to the Japanese Co-operative Movement, covering many sectors of the economy including consumer, agriculture, insurance, banking, fishery, housing, health, forest-owners, schools and university.

The name of the program is likely to be changed from COOP Africa to Africa Co-operative support program from 2013.



News in Brief

Round-off International Year of Co-operatives 2012

Events to end IYC2012 were held throughout the nation.

One of the most outstanding one was the IYC festival held on November 4 in Chiba. The major aim was to promote exchanges between various groups of co-operatives in Japan and to raise co-ops visibility in the region.

The festival attracted more than 12,000 participants including stakeholders and the general public. The local news corporation (NHK) also helped to promote the festival over the airwave.

A similar event took place on September 8 in Iwate Prefecture at the Cultural Hall in Morioka which was also attended by over 1,000 participants.

Attractions, including music performance by "Warabiza", booth exhibitions and others were staged to raise funds to support the victims of the earthquake disaster areas. An amount of 3 million JPY was realized.



Delegates from Malaysia KOJADI visit JCCU

Twenty delegates from KOJADI Co. Ltd. a consumer co-operative credit organization from Malaysia consisting of members of the board, and senior management staff paid a day visit to JCCU on December 14, 2012 to get familiarized with the business and management activities of the Japanese Consumer Co-operatives.

KOJADI operates on co-operative principles and extend loan facilities to students who require financial assistance.

They were received by SATO Koichi a staff of the International Department of JCCU, who gave a brief welcome note followed by detail explanation of consumer co-operative movement covering many sectors including consumer and banking. They were also honored to receive lectures from the Labor Bank explaining to them various forms

of banking systems and loan facilities given to its members.

Delegates were impressed about the various credit facilities in Japan.



Delegates pose for a group picture

Season's Greetings to all our readers

As this is the final newsletter before the New Year, it seems a good opportunity to thank you all for your interest and reading of JCCU News over the past years.

In this season of gratitude, we are thankful for your friendship and support.

All of us at JCCU especially the International Department join in saying "Thank you" and wish you all a Happy Holiday and Fruitful New Year.

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