



**International Co-operative  
Alliance – Africa**  
A Region of the International  
Co-operative Alliance

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**ICA – Africa President’s Message on the 100<sup>th</sup> International Day of Cooperatives.**

Dear Cooperators,

Happy centenary Cooperatives Day!

We join the whole world in celebrating cooperatives during this year’s International Day of Cooperatives popularly referred to as the - CoopsDay on 2<sup>nd</sup> of July, 2022. This year’s celebration is more important and a special one too, as we mark the 100<sup>th</sup> edition of CoopsDay since its establishment in 1923.

We acknowledge the role played by cooperatives in the Africa region hence we support and appreciate this year’s CoopsDay theme ‘*Building a better world through the cooperative enterprise model*’. This is evidenced by our way of life in Africa where cooperativism has acted as a formal human intervention across the region, as an engine of economic growth offering a dynamic and flexible business model in the production, marketing, service and consumption.

As a sustainable business model, cooperatives have been fostering social inclusion, giving a voice to the disadvantaged groups and mobilizing them to pursue their economic interests, so as to secure social protection. Formation of efficient and equitable cooperatives has tremendously transformed these communities into vibrant economies which cannot be understated.

Ladies and Gentlemen:

It is equally important to note that it is exactly a decade since the United Nations General Assembly declared the year 2012 as the International year of cooperatives, honoring the contribution of cooperatives to socio-economic development, particularly their impact on poverty reduction, employment generation and social integration.

***Our Vision:***

Social transformation and sustained economic development.

***Our Mission:***

To be the African leader in promoting a dynamic and democratic Co-operative movement and to provide effective and efficient services through partnerships and collaboration.

Cooperatives are important component of the Africa's Development Agenda namely the Africa Union Agenda 2063, and the United Nation's Sustainable Development Goals 2030. Due to their nature, identity and values, cooperatives are known to create an inclusive economy for the continent. It is likewise important for the cooperatives to align themselves to such initiatives and agenda for them to enhance long-term supply security, improve quality and yields, creation of new markets, stronger relationships with partners and greater transparency value chains.

This centennial celebration has reminded us of the development that we have witnessed in the cooperative sector and the communities at large. Giving us an opportunity to show case to the world how the cooperative business model is vital to building a better world for all. Notably, the economic growth realized in the African continent can, in part, be attributed to the role of cooperatives in our societies. We can call it the fruits of the cooperative business enterprise and how it has contributed towards a better world. Through the cooperative business model, we have witnessed cooperators in the agricultural sector get better services; contributed to reducing illiteracy level in the region indirectly or directly through cooperative institutions; improved the cooperators lives through cooperative banks, savings and credit cooperatives; the consumers and now the upcoming worker and platform cooperatives. For instance, the case study of Uganda shoe-shiners cooperative, the savings and credit cooperatives in Kenya, the artisans in Morocco, the agricultural cooperatives in Nigeria, Ethiopia, Ghana, Rwanda and Ivory Coast, the school cooperatives in Eswatini, the housing cooperatives in Zimbabwe and Egypt and many other examples.

Nevertheless, my fellow cooperators, despite the strides that we have made in our region, we are still being dragged back by diverse challenges facing our people. A part from the COVID-19 pandemic, our people are still experiencing the harsh conditions caused by climate change, wars, banditry, digitalization, limited access to capital, limited access to markets, inadequate and obsolete legislation; lack of attention from governments, among others. These challenges should drive us towards symbiotic collaboration with the aim of solving all the problems affecting us. The cooperative business model has once proven to be a tool that can help us tackle such challenges in our societies through empowering

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people, strengthening communities and creating jobs. We must equally engage our governments for adequate attention and for the creation of conducive environment for cooperatives to thrive.

In our recent engagement during the 9<sup>th</sup> Technical Committee of the Africa Ministerial Cooperative Conference, we deliberated around the power of working together as cooperatives. The 6<sup>th</sup> cooperative principle, 'cooperation among cooperatives' remains relevant during shocks while promoting social- economical aspect of our societies. This same principle will help us in bridging the technological gap and create a vast technological innovation and break-throughs into other sectors like platform, worker, health care and renewable energy cooperatives.

It is clear that with such approach, the cooperative enterprise will continue building a better world. These aspirations need to be supported so that we see our cooperatives thrive fully. A supportive environment from our governments and all stakeholders is of great importance to the realization of a better world through the cooperative enterprise model.

As ICA – Africa, we reaffirm our commitment in promotion of the cooperative business model and more importantly, to continue working with the cooperative movement in the other regions so as to improve on governance and service delivery. This will strengthen the movement so that it creates more jobs, provide social protection and give people a voice in the society.

Finally, let us all take part in making this world a better place for all. Cooperatives, for sure, build a better world. Let us embrace this unique business model for a sustainable society now and for the future. Get involved now!

Once again, I wish you all happy celebrations.

High Chief Oriyomi AYEOLA  
ICA – Africa President.

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