

15TH DECEMBER, 2016

Alliance Africa Oct-Dec Newsletter

INSIDE STORY

1. Co-operators support Umuganda
2. 2nd Africa Co-operative Conference
3. Board Elections
4. Pre-Conference Co-funded by the EU
5. International Course in Israel

Co-operators join hands in support of Umuganda

2nd Africa Co-operative Conference participants join their hosts in Umuganda activities before the start of their meetings on 29th October, 2016 Kigali-Rwanda.

The 2nd Africa Co-operative Conference was preceded by *Umuganda*, the monthly day of mandatory community service in Rwanda since this (29 October 2016) was the last Saturday of the month, where everyone 18- to 65-years-old is expected to do yard work in public parks or help the community in some other way between 08:00am and 11:00am. Conference participants from across Africa and also from around the world enthusiastically joined their hosts in, among other things, planting trees and cleaning public walkways.

Umuganda is a very African concept that brings together the village to get a job done. Cooperation among co-operators is one of the co-operatives principles seen for many years and a good practice when African societies call on family, friends and neighbors to tackle difficult task in the community together. During the *Umuganda*, morning traffic stopped, stores and other businesses closed; was an indication of how serious Umuganda is taken.



The activity also offered a chance for participants to tour the scenic capital city of Rwanda, Kigali. Leading the way in the tree planting session were Alliance Africa Board members, joined by the Regional Director Dr. Chiyoge B. Sifa accompanied by a number of government dignitaries including representatives from the Ministry of Investment, Trade and Industry – Botswana, Ministry of Trade and Industry, Co-operative Development-Rwanda, Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development- South Kivu-DRC, Ministry of Handcraft and Social Solidarity Economy-Morocco and Ministry of Small and Medium Enterprises and Co-operative Development-Zimbabwe.

The activity also served as a networking opportunity since co-operators from other continents were among the group. During the Alliance Africa Conference praises about the *Umuganda* shared, which was appreciated as a good practice worthy to be replicated across the continent. Mr. Samuel Hlatywayo, the Director of Co-operatives Development in Zimbabwe thanked the Rwanda people for a great learning experience and urged the countries present to replicate what Rwanda is doing.

The Alliance Africa Youth Conference and Gender and Research Conference

The region was pleased to organize the first Alliance Africa Youth and Gender & Research Conferences in Kigali-Rwanda on 29th and 30th October 2016 respectively. Co-operators from Africa and from other continents converged at the Lemigo Hotel in Kigali-Rwanda to have discussions around the overarching theme of ***Co-operatives in Africa Embracing Sustainable Development Goals***.



Following an interesting opening ceremony with inspiring speeches from Mr. Augustine Katarwa, Chairman NCCR (National Co-operative Confederation of Rwanda), Dr. Chiyo Sifa, Regional Director the Alliance Africa, Mr. Stanley Muchiri, President Alliance Africa and Mr. Charles Gould, the Alliance Director General that revolved around encouraging the 240 co-operators from 22 countries gathered, to use the co-operative togetherness to pool their energies and resources towards sustainable development, more so in the region. This message was buttressed by a video message from Ms Monique Lereux, President of the Alliance who stated that co-operatives are indeed catalysts for social inclusiveness, economic growth and sustainable development.

International experience shows that the sustainability of these enterprises contributes to poverty alleviation by generating employment and improved access to financial services were words from the Guest speaker Hon. Minister Francois KANIMBA; Ministry of Trade and Industry Rwanda that set the momentum for discussion.

During the Youth Conference, both the presenters and panelists focused on co-operatives promoting sustained, inclusive and economic growth for the Youth in the region. This was boosted by case studies on successful partnerships and lessons learnt from the best practices. Inclusion of young co-operators in conversations around the implementation of the sustainable development goals was the key message that was emphasized.

Good energies having been spent in the youth sessions, young co-operators agreed that they need to take advantage of available opportunities to aim high, and participate actively using the available resources to reach the ambitious goals; since they are not only key actors in advancing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, but they are also directly affected by the challenges that the SDGs seek to tackle.

If cooperatives are so natural to women, why is their participation low? This is a question that participants grappled with during the Gender & Research Conference after having been posed by the keynote speaker Ms. Irene Kinuthia during the gender session. She kicked off the session by doing some nice explanations on co-operatives and gender integration, co-operatives entrepreneurship and start ups. In order for the Agenda 2030 to be achieved; co-operatives should focus their energies on enhancing women's participation in leadership so as to achieve greater socio-economic growth.

The second session of the Alliance Africa Gender and Research Conference majorly focused on Transforming Co-operatives in Africa through Research, Practice and Education: The Blue-print Agenda for Sustainable Co-operative Development. Fruitful discussions were had on how regional co-operators should appreciate research as a source of new knowledge and enhance gender integration in co-operative development for sustainable development.

Good recommendations, commitments and resolution were reached so as to support co-operative development in the region hence the road to achieving of the SDGs.

12th Regional Assembly and Board elections

The Regional Assembly is the highest decision making authority of the Alliance Africa. It is a central policy making and representative body that brings together all Alliance Africa members once every two years, providing them a platform for discussing multiple issues concerning development and growth of the co-operative movement, as well as giving members an opportunity for networking and forming alliances for mutual benefit.

The 12th Regional Assembly was held on the 31st of October 2016 during which elections for a new Board were held. The Alliance Africa Board has tenure of 4 years, and 2016 was an election year for the Board.

Exciting moments was witnessed when a 6-member Alliance Africa Elections Committee took over the election process, chaired by Prof. Douglas Shitanda, Acting Principle of the Co-operative University of Kenya. Both a manual and electronic voting system was used whereby the electronic voting system was piloted and results from this used to validate the manual voting. Mr. Muchiri was re-elected to the position of President. He was unopposed.



Other Board members elected were; Eng Abuja Jibrin Bala (Cooperative Federation of Nigeria- Nigeria), Mr. Micah Duru Reketayi (Zimbabwe National Association of Housing Co-operative- Zimbabwe), Mr. Magomere Japheth Anavila (CIC Insurance Group Ltd. - Kenya) and Mr. Salia Mahamane (Federation de Co-operatives Maraicheres du Niger - Niger). To top it all off, Ms. Hilda Ojall (Kenya Union of Savings and Credit Co-operatives Ltd - Kenya) was elected as the new President of the Alliance Africa Youth Network. As a young lady, Ms. Hilda is confident that her election will be an inspiration to young people to join the co-operative movement, and aim at leadership positions as a means to advocate for issues affecting young people at that level.

The Alliance Africa Secretariat and Members warmly welcome the elected Board to these new positions and very much look forward to working with them to advance the cause of African co-operative movement.

Hearty congratulations.

Pre-Conference Activity Co-funded by the EU



This consultative meeting sought to formally introduce the EU-ICA project to stakeholders from the Africa region, and have an in-depth discussion on the region's priorities, implementation modalities and workplan for the next 4 years.

The meeting drew participants from affiliated entities specifically mentioned in the project document who are specifically called upon to provide specialized services, members of the Alliance Africa Gender and Research Committee who will take lead in ensuring that all research activities implemented are quality assured, and also ensure that all activities are engendered, members of the Alliance Africa Legal Committee who will take lead in looking at legal frameworks around the co-operative movement in Africa and providing support to lobby and advocacy efforts to push for an enabling legal environment for co-operative strengthening, members of Alliance Africa Youth Network Committee to ensure that the youth are included in the co-operative movement, Alliance Africa Focal Point persons charged with ensuring that agreements are followed up with national governments and information effectively disseminated within the national co-operative movements in Africa. Other interested stakeholders also participated.

By the end of the meeting, a draft resolution matrix was produced to be shared and further populated, detailing research priorities as well as policy advocacy actions needed in order to strengthen the co-operative movement in Africa.

International Course in Israel – 6th to 30th November

Co-operatives allow people to convert individual risks into collective risks thus reducing vulnerability both on an individual and household level. People throughout the world have organized cooperatives in order to meet their needs in a wide variety of endeavors. MASHAV, AJEEC-NISPED together with The Alliance Africa, joined hands to support co-operators from the Africa region to participate in the second phase of a course entitled ***“Cooperating Out of Poverty - Cooperatives and Enterprise Promotion in Africa”*** in Tel-a-Viv, Israel.



Training is one of the major requirements for members of co-operatives so that they are adequately prepared to effectively face emerging challenges in business ventures. The course mainly focused on establishing and managing co-operative / SME enterprise development. The course content was drawn from the Israeli rural development experience, as well as examples of international best practices, and analyzed systems that can be developed in terms of their adaptability to participating country representatives.

The course delivered on methods that are highly participatory involving; group discussions, group projects, audio-visuals, field tours as well as lectures. Participants were given adequate time to share their countries' experiences on topics of discussion as scheduled and the program met most participants' expectations.

The knowledge transfer is expected to be delivered through mentorship programs within implementing partner organizations and co-operatives, and through colleagues and it is expected to bring about improved governance and leadership in co-operative management, increased membership and member services, increased awareness of the role that cooperatives play in development and development of profitable business models for co-operative enterprises.

*Written by:
The Alliance Africa December 2016*

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