



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

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ICA-Africa President's CoopsDay2021 Message.

Fellow Cooperators, Partners and Stakeholders!

We join hands on the 3rd of July to celebrate the 99th International Day of Cooperatives (CoopsDay2021). This year, cooperatives around the world are showcasing how they are meeting the COVID-19 pandemic crisis with solidarity and resilience and offering communities a people-centred and environmentally just recovery.

It is unfortunate that the COVID-19 pandemic is still with us and that it is still dictating on our way of life and having a crushing effect on the economies around the world. The response and recovery to these economic effects is heavily dependent on collaborations and partnerships. This should be a wakeup call to all and we should realize that the world is a mutual, that runs on interdependence and the cooperative enterprise can help us to build a noble environment.

Rebuild better together, the theme for this year's CoopsDay celebrations, entails the effective use of our existing cooperatives to enhance the social economic situation of our members at this very moment. It is a theme at the core of post-COVID-19 recovery. Some of the measures taken to cap the pandemic resulted from some cooperatives and members abstaining, or switching and substituting their activities to those adhering to Covid-19 protocols, especially in sectors like food provision, shopping, mobility and leisure who had lost track of their core goals. Therefore, the cooperative business model is best suited here as it prioritizes such human development and provide social justice within the workplaces.

This extraordinary situation has now provided evidence that building back is important to have sustainable systems in our cooperatives. Let us continue embracing the cooperative business model as the better form of business enterprise that can create employment for our youth, a model that is still fighting inequalities in our societies among the marginalized, a model that will bring hope to the larger society. Underpinned by the values of democracy, equality and solidarity paving the way for a more just and inclusive economic order.

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.

From the African region, on the plus side, cooperatives have been at the forefront in responding to the crisis as a show of concern to the communities. It is encouraging to see the initiatives that have been carried out by the cooperatives, governments and other actor/stakeholders in fighting the virus. As stated by Robert Kiyosaki, 'to gain more abundance a person needs more skills and needs to be more creative and cooperative'. My fellow cooperators, we acknowledge all the creative ideas and innovations that many cooperatives in the African region have embraced towards rebuilding better together. Some of these initiatives are collaborative effort between the cooperatives themselves, their governments and other actors. These initiatives for sure, have strengthened and extended partnerships among cooperatives hence, the collaborative synergies from the local, regional and at the global level.

Ladies and Gentlemen, rebuilding better together means that we have yet been given another chance to think harder on how we do our cooperative businesses. It is time to bring cooperative sectors and activities that will interest everyone regardless of their age and gender. There has been virtuous behavior or trend that we have seen during the pandemic which may lay the ground as we discuss on how to rebuild back. It is perfect time to have and promote different sectors of cooperatives like the worker, platform, health cooperatives and many others. This will enable us to tap the energy and brains of these young people who have the urge of rebuilding better together as a society innovatively.

In conclusion, as we celebrate this 99th International Day of Cooperatives, let us be reminded that the role of cooperatives in promoting international solidarity, economic efficiency, equality and world peace as stated by COPAC, is not a choice. Let us continue to strengthen and extend partnerships between the cooperative movement and other actors. Let us all revisit the UN General Assembly resolution 49/151 of 23 December 1994 that urged us to consider fully the potential of cooperatives for their contribution to the solution of economic, social and environmental problems.

It is time that we all row the boat so that we rebuild better together!

I wish you all Happy International Day of Cooperatives.

Mr. Japheth Magomere
ICA-Africa President

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