



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



GUIDELINES FOR THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE 13th AFRICAN MINISTERIAL
CO-OPERATIVE CONFERENCE (AMCCO)

CAIRO- EGYPT

17-20TH OCTOBER, 2022

ICA- Africa AMCCO 2022 Cairo, Egypt

THE 13th AFRICAN MINISTERIAL COOPERATIVE CONFERENCE (AMCCO)

1. BACKGROUND

In pursuance of collaboration between the African Governments and the Co-operative movement, in 1984, ICA-Africa initiated the Africa Co-operative Ministerial Conference (AMCCO), a forum for government and the cooperative movement to meet, discuss and map a way forward for the development of cooperatives. The Forum is held every three years to review progress and share experiences on the Co-operative Development Agenda for each member country. Some of the review areas of the forum include creating a conducive and an enabling environment for the development and growth of cooperatives within the region.

The 12th AMCCO was held in *Abuja Nigeria* in October 2018, where the Honorable Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development; **Hon. Audu Ogber** was elected the Chairman for the period 2018-2021. He has since been succeeded by **Hon. Mohammad Mahmood Abubakar** as the minister of Agriculture and Rural Development.

Prior to the 12th AMCCO in Nigeria, the previous AMCCOs had been held in Zambia (1989), Kenya (1990 and 2009), Tanzania (1993), Mauritius (1996), Swaziland (1999), Uganda (2002), Lesotho (2005), and Rwanda (2012) and Botswana in 2015. The geographical coverage was East, Central, and Southern African countries but it has since expanded to cover all 54 African countries.

The main objective of AMCCO is to provide a forum for co-operative policy makers in government and the co-operative movement to review past performance and provide direction for cooperative development in Africa.

AMCCO is preceded by the Technical Committee of Africa Ministerial Co-operative Conference (TCAMCCO) which is an ICA-Africa annual forum where the Co-operative Leaders and Co-operative Technocrats meet to deliberate on issues affecting the development of co-operatives in the Africa continent and forge collaborative efforts to tackle those issues. Therefore, the Cairo AMCCO is the adoption of the declaration for the regional co-operative development henceforth.

2. CAIRO AMCCO DECLARATION AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR REGIONAL CO-OPERATIVE DEVELOPMENT

The 13th Africa Ministerial Co-operative Conference was held in Cairo, Egypt from 17th – 20th October 2022, under the theme, ‘*Growing Africa Together: The role of African Cooperatives in accelerating Sustainable Development Goals (2030) and the Africa We Want (Agenda 2063).*’ It is expected that participants will find opportunity to engage, network and learn about latest developments in Africa, and deliberate on how best cooperatives could continue to contribute to the growth of Africa particularly in the achievement of SDGs 2030 & African Agenda 2063.

WE, the ministers responsible for cooperative development in Africa, committed to implement the 7-point recommendations as per the 12th AMCCO held in Abuja, Nigeria as follows:

- Improve access to markets for cooperatives in Africa
- Facilitate access to affordable financial services for cooperatives and cooperative members
- Facilitate access to affordable health services to promote well-being for all
- Facilitate access to affordable housing services for all
- Enhance access to know-how; technical, organizational, managerial and marketing
- Promote sustained and inclusive enactment of empowering cooperative development policies, legal frameworks and infrastructure and development
- Establish an effective monitoring and evaluation mechanisms

WE acknowledge the Technical Report on the progress of the 7-point recommendations stated above; and we note that there is need to continue the implementation and improve the performance.

HENCEFORTH, the future efforts for cooperative development in the Africa region as recommended by the cooperative leaders, technocrats, stakeholders and partners shall be dedicated to:

2.1 Cooperation among Cooperatives

Beneficial and sustainable networks and partnership are important for cooperative development. Members of cooperatives should be at the forefront of demanding, and leading

inter-cooperation and the spirit and principles of cooperatives should, however, be the overriding message;

The cooperative movement needs to develop a network of relationships desired to follow through on the integration process; leverage on the presence of cooperatives to draw members together and intensify training and information exchange among different cooperative sectors.

As government officials, we acknowledge that the benefit of cooperation among cooperatives is in the interest of African governments as the cooperative structure helps them combat the issues of employment generation, food security and the many other challenges faced by government.

WE, commit to help resolve some of the constraints to cooperation among cooperatives and help facilitate the potential areas for collaborations and partnerships.

2.2 Access to Markets and Coop to Coop trade

The Cooperative Movement shall work with national governments, to acquire inputs (fertilizers, seeds, farm technologies, technical training) to agricultural cooperatives and co-operators.

It's imperative for cooperative organizations, stakeholders, partners and governments to think of strategies to enhance access to markets for Cooperatives. Marketing services encompass a range of activities. Examples of marketing services are: informing the market about products available, and the other way round, informing members about customer preferences, price information services and branding. Cooperatives are urged to consider collective marketing avenues as selling together brings more benefits as opposed to selling individually. Efforts in finding markets (international-global, regional, national, and local markets) through market intelligence and building sustainable export-import linkages should be explored.

2.3 Inclusive Participation in Cooperatives

Increased inequality tends to depress the gross domestic product, decrease human capital and limit the number of people who can invest in the economy. As people-centred businesses, cooperatives have been at the forefront of efforts to use their business model to address critical societal issues such as empowering disenfranchised communities or ensuring people have access to essential infrastructure. Cooperatives ought to continue

promoting and applying gender mainstreaming approaches to encourage and foster fuller participation of marginalized groups in Cooperative activities. Cooperatives and other stakeholders need to lobby and advocate for gender responsive policies, entrepreneurial enabling policies among youth, home ownership for women through housing cooperatives, access to financial services and adoption of technology to improve the engagement of women, youth and other disadvantaged groups in cooperative activities.

2.4 Empowering Cooperative Development Policies and Legal Frameworks

The co-operative movement seeks a proper understanding by governments and policy makers of the economic and social benefits the model offers and an appropriate legal framework, which speaks to a broader diversity of ownership forms than is currently reflected in legal, fiscal, and regulatory policies. Governments should endeavour to provide contemporary laws and policies that ensures cooperative principles and values are continually promoted. All countries shall work with ICA-Africa to continue the ongoing efforts to lobby the Africa Union to enact the model cooperative development policies and legal frameworks including those of regional integration blocs in support of the role of co-operatives in development.

2.5 Climate Change

Africa needs to unlock the potential of green and smart technologies to improve energy security, provide economic growth and empower communities. Africa has abundant renewable energy resources yet, very little has been exploited. Consequently, many countries suffer from blackouts and low connections and high-power rates. Unlocking the barriers to full-scale exploitation of these resources by cooperatives is a solution that addresses both energy security and energy access.

Cooperatives should learn more about how renewable energies can be a game changer, what challenges still exist to unlock the potential and how local cooperatives can benefit from becoming active participants in the energy sector.

Cooperatives could collaborate in setting goals and take actions to reduce emissions, as well as transition to a sustainable economy.

2.6 Digitalization

Although information on cooperatives activities exist at organizational level and partly at national level, leveraging on information technology to implement a system of statistics and data collection could allow aggregation, systematization and analysis of this information on a

recurrent basis to ensure greater visibility, monitoring and analysis that contributes to evidence-based decision-making on cooperative development.

Digitalization can also enhance the cooperation among cooperatives by central agencies, management, membership enrolment, cooperative to cooperative trade, marketing of products among others.

2.7 Cooperative Entrepreneurship,

To ensure long-term sustainability of cooperative business in Africa, there will be need to support vivid, well connected cooperative start-up incubation hubs that targets pressing societal and environmental challenges such as the increase in plastic waste and lacking recycling infrastructure. In particular, cooperative business ideas and entrepreneurial thinking should be supported in a way that offers especially young, talented Africans the opportunity to actively co-create the implementation of activities supporting a Circular Economy in Africa.

2.8 Education, Skills and Knowledge

Despite increasing recognition of cooperatives, integration of cooperative values, principles and business model in learning institutions in Africa remains low leading to a general lack of structured knowledge about cooperatives and their important features/benefits. There is need to promote and integrate cooperative education into education programmes at all levels across Africa.

In addition, education and training shall continue to promote professionalism in the cooperative sector. Emerging and on-going efforts shall be stepped up to reach every spectrum of the industry, including leadership, members, management and support staff, and the general public. There is need to support cooperatives to provide training, foster innovation and development of services provided to members especially at the local level.

2.9 Access to Finance

Cooperatives present a financing mechanism that many countries use to fill the gap between central government transfer, allocation and local government finance needs. Cooperative financial institutions are important for financial inclusion and sustainability; hence they should be adequately and proportionally regulated. Effort should be made towards providing financial and technical support to cooperative credit unions in the field of financial technology in a way that expands the base of members. Additionally, providing suitable financial products for cooperative credit unions and establishing a unified continental cooperative platform such as the Africa Cooperative Bank would provide financial and technical support to African cooperatives and credit unions will be a boost to financial inclusion. This will help them gain access to the largest possible number of people on the continent contributing to the achievement of sustainable development goals and the development priorities of the African Development Agenda 2063.

2.10 Research and Innovation

Evidence-based decision making is critical in cooperative development. In particular, in the creation of new products and services as well as local innovations and practices which contribute to social transformations. Cooperatives in Africa in partnership with Universities and research institutions should seek to collectively satisfy the insufficiently-met human needs through research and innovation which helps build more cohesive social relations and sustainable communities.

2.11. Partnerships and Collaboration

Partnerships and collaboration is a key factor for achievement of sustainable development goals. Partnerships and collaboration can enhance capacity building programmes which can be implemented to strengthen and develop the capacity of cooperatives, especially those led by the poor, youth, women, persons with disabilities and other disadvantaged and marginalized groups.

Even more important for solutions as the world looks to build back better from the COVID-19 pandemic and tackle the impact of climate change and other crises confronting the world today. Collaboration in research and innovation offers numerous opportunities for cooperatives. Research institutes and universities should acknowledge the potential of collaboration and partnerships with cooperatives and thus set-up promising programs and plans.

3. IMPLEMENTATION OF THE CAIRO DECLARATION ON COOPERATIVE DEVELOPMENT IN THE AFRICA REGION

3.1 MINISTERIAL CONFERENCE

In order to make the implementation of the regional co-operative development realistic and practical, implementation committees, both at regional and national levels, shall be set up to ensure that the targets set in the Cairo Declaration on co-operative development in the region are accomplished within the set time frame.

The AMCCO shall be convened every third year and its functions will be as follows:

- To set policy guidelines
- To approve overall programmes
- To receive and discuss reports of the previous plan period
- To review and appraise progress made

The following organs shall be operative and responsible for the implementation of this declaration.

3.2 TECHNICAL COMMITTEE OF THE MINISTERIAL CONFERENCE

Composition: The committee shall be composed of commissioners and/or directors of co-operatives development and chief executives of national co-operative movements.

Functions: The committee shall meet annually, and immediately after the Registrars' Annual Meeting and its functions will be as follows:

- To carry out preparatory, technical and advisory roles to the Ministerial Conference.
- To implement the decisions of the Ministerial Conference
- To provide and implement the guidelines for the Ministerial Conference declarations.
- To review progress of the implementation of the Abuja Declaration on regional co-operative development at both regional and national levels.

The secretariat of the technical committee of the AMCCO shall be based at the ICA- Africa Head Office.

3.3 NATIONAL CO-OPERATIVE DEVELOPMENT COORDINATING COMMITTEE

Establishment: The National Co-operative Development Coordinating Committee (NCDCC) shall be established in each member country of the Movement in the region. The members of the NCDCC shall be appointed by the minister responsible for co-operative development in the country.

Composition: The committees shall be composed of representatives from ministries and organizations that are responsible for cooperative development, and shall include the following:

- Ministry for co-operative development
- Ministry of trade and industry
- Ministry of agriculture
- Co-operative training institutions
- Marketing boards/chambers of commerce/agriculture development authorities
- Relevant development/funding partners
- Alliance Africa regional office.

Meetings: the Committee shall meet as frequently as the needs dictate

Functions: The functions of the Committee shall include:

- To implement the decisions of the Ministerial Conference and the Technical Committee
- To formulate national programmes
- To align the cooperative agenda to National, Regional and Global covenants
- To appoint a competent and effective national co-operative task force/committee
- To provide guidelines to the national co-operative task force
- To collaborate and coordinate activities with the regional office
- To review the work of the national co-operative task force committee
- To mobilize resources for national co-operative programmes
- To report to the minister responsible for co-operative development and the technical committee.

4. RESOURCES FOR IMPLEMENTATION OF THE REGIONAL CO-OPERATIVE

Resources for implementation of the Regional Ministers' Co-operative Development Action plan at national and local levels shall be provided by the governments of the member countries, the movement and any other national sources, and international development partners.

5. CONCLUDING REMARKS

The tasks of national and regional co-operative committees are tremendous and shall require due consideration in allocation of resources.