



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

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ICA-AFRICA PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE ON INTERNATIONAL COOPERATIVES DAY, 4TH JULY, 2020.

To: Our Members, Governments, Partners and Cooperators;

Cooperative Greetings!

It is indeed grateful to see us again joining hands as cooperatives and other stakeholders in our region and globally in celebrating this year's International Cooperatives Day, focusing on 'Cooperatives for Climate Action'. The theme was derived from Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) number 13-Climate Action, thus cooperatives contribution in combating climate change.

Let me assert that this year is very challenging, and it is probable that most of us are not congregating to mark this great occasion. Equally, in my home country, it will be a bit hard for us to do the usual either than to adhere to the government directives on Covid-19. However, this does not mean we should stop caring for our environment but later heighten our efforts as cooperatives to the call of protecting the planet.

We have all seen and witnessed what global warming has done to our mother Earth, with significant negative effects to human beings, animals and the plants. Sadly, as we move forward the situation is becoming worse and climate change now is a priority topic in global tables than before. The gradual heating of the Earth for instance, does not just lead to destruction of habitats but it has severe consequences that will continue to impact the rising levels of pollution, the increasing number of infectious diseases and loss of wildlife as well as plants.

According to a study done by Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), in their report of 2017- The impact of disasters and crises on agriculture and food security; indicates that one of the

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most direct ways in which natural disasters affect the sector is through reduced production. This results in direct economic loss to farmers, which can cascade along the entire value chain, affecting agricultural growth and rural livelihoods. On a global level, the economic loss associated with such disasters now averages between USD 250 billion to USD 300 billion every year. In developing countries, an average of 260 natural disasters occurred per year between 2005 and 2016, taking the lives of 54,000 people on average each year, affecting over 97 million others and costing an average of USD 27 billion in economic loss annually (EM-DAT CRED).

Ladies and Gentlemen: The Covid-19 pandemic has brought about the most severe economic and social downturn. The spread of this virus is creating interdependence of people, livestock and wildlife, exposing the ecosystem clearer more than ever seen before. This challenge, compounded with the effects of climate change has rendered most countries exposed to even dire consequences of food insecurity. In addition, we cannot forget to mention the most recent floods in Eastern Africa and Southern Africa as well as the incident of the locusts' invasion in the Eastern Africa. The caller now is taller to us all as we reflect on this day.

As stated by the former United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon, while stressing on the importance of cooperation in tackling global warming, he highlighted that every coordinated effort, no matter how small, can contribute to and form a larger, more powerful response. Cooperatives are one of the most exciting and powerful vehicles through which our societies can confront such crises. We have long promoted inclusion and sustainable approaches to our social-economic development at all levels. This has seen cooperatives expanding their developmental efforts innovatively into areas like environmental sustainability and carbon neutrality as a way of adapting to climate change and also strengthening their resilience against its impacts. These are great efforts that have seen human beings live in harmony with nature as they carry on with their livelihood activities.

Ladies and Gentlemen: During this year's Desertification and Drought Day, ILO Cooperative Unit recognized cooperatives as an emerging critical economic actor in climate change adaption and mitigation from mutual insurance and renewable energy to forestry and waste management. This has been backed-up by a brief report on Transforming our world: A

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cooperative 2030 that was produced by the Committee for the Promotion and Advancement of Cooperatives (COPAC). In the brief, COPAC hopes to raise awareness about the significant contributions of cooperative enterprises towards achieving the 2030 Agenda in a sustainable, inclusive and responsible way.

Fellow Cooperators: In our region of Africa, we have seen a number of efforts by cooperatives towards tackling climate change. As shared by our members; these are some of the initiative that we thought it is good to share with you; the **Kenya Savings and Credit Cooperatives Union (KUSCCO)**, through the Central Finance Fund partnered with the Nature Conservancy to increase tree planting and sustainable wood supply in Kenya through small holder forestry initiatives. In South Africa, **Food-Energy-Water Tertiary Cooperative** has been championing re-cycling of plastic, coffee grounds and water. The **Cooperative Federation of Nigeria** reported some cases of smart farming from its members, synchronization of fish pond and poultry, eco-friendly fish smoking machine; all these contributing to reduction of human activities on the environment destruction thus equally contributing to food security.

The **Central Association of Cooperative Union in Zimbabwe** introduced forest conservation practices, agroforestry and forest-based enterprises for diversification of rural incomes. In Uganda, the **Uganda Cooperative Alliance** has partnered with the National Forestry Authority for cooperatives to conserve the environment and also make forestry a business, partnered with VI Agroforestry to help cooperatives, more so small-scale farmers to practice agroforestry, adopt soil and water conservation technologies and support them to adopt energy saving technologies. While in Ghana, the **Ghana Cooperative Agricultural Producers and Marketing Association (AGRIC COOP-GHANA)** are implementing a regional program (West Africa Agriculture Productivity Program - WAAPP) that aims at increasing farmer productivity level with different activities of mitigating the effects of climate change. Whereas, in Cameroon, **Coop-Cameroon** reported that they are using recycle organic fertilizer to boost the agricultural production and also promoting sustainable forest management with the fight against desertification and currently working on a project with an aim of planting 10, 000 trees per municipality.

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Ladies and Gentlemen: I understand that there are so many other efforts by cooperatives in fighting climate change- and we would desire to have them all documented and share the same with our secretariat at Nairobi for recording and publicity. I also take this opportunity to invite you to participate in the ICA-Africa Youth Network Go Green Campaign initiative that is scheduled to take place from 8th – 14th July, 2020.

Ladies and Gentlemen: Lastly, as quoted during the Cooperative Conference in Rwanda in 2019, Dr Vandana Shiva boldly stated that ‘this world is for all beings.’ As an individual as a Cooperative organisation, what action are you taking today that is positively contributing to keeping the environment safe?

Cooperatives for Climate Action! Together, let us create a more resilient future.

God bless you and stay safe!!!

Mr. Japheth A. Magomere
President
ICA-Africa

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