

APRIL 29 - MAY 1, 2018 | CONFERENCE REPORT

INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE

CO-OPERATIVES IN THE CHANGING WORLD OF WORK



PREPARED BY
INTERNATIONAL CO-OPERATIVE ALLIANCE
ASIA AND PACIFIC

APRIL 29 - MAY 1, 2018

ORGANIZERS



International Labour Organization



K E R A L A
STARTUP MISSION™



COOP Organización internacional de cooperativas en la industria y los servicios
Un sector de la Alianza Cooperativa Internacional



Co-funded by the European Union



APRIL 29 - MAY 1, 2018

LIST OF ACRONYMS

CCWW: Co-operatives in the Changing World of Work

CICOPA: International Organization of Co-operatives in Industry and Services

CITU: Centre of Indian Trade Unions

CSO: Civil Society Organization

IAS: Indian Administrative Service

ICA-AP: International Co-operative Alliance - Asia and Pacific

ICT: Information and Communication Technology

IIM-K: Indian Institute of Management Kozikhode

ILO: International Labor Organization

JWCU: Japan Workers' Co-operative Union

RIMT: Rajshree Institute of Management and Technology

SDG: Sustainable Development Goals

SEWA: Self Employed Women's Association

SIBM: Symbiosis Institute of Business Management

TISS: Tata Institute of Social Sciences

TRIFED: Tribal Cooperative Marketing Development Federation of India

ULCCS: Uralungal Labour Contract Co-operative Society



APRIL 29 - MAY 1, 2018

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



200
CONFERENCE DELEGATES

90
COOPATHON PARTICIPANTS

11
COUNTRIES REPRESENTED

The International Conference on ‘Co-operatives in the Changing World of Work’ was organised from April 29 - May 1, 2018 by **Uralungal Labour Contract Co-operative Society Ltd** in association with **International Co-operative Alliance Asia and Pacific, International Labour Organization, Indian Institute of Management Kozhikode**, with support from ICA-EU Partnership on Co-operatives in Development and ICA Domus Trust and others at IIM-K. Over 200 participants from 11 countries met in IIM-K to exchange ideas and discuss, on a multi-stakeholder platform, on how the changing notions of ‘work’ and ‘workers’ are having an impact on jobs, poverty, social protection, production systems and quality of work in the 21st century. How these factors will influence the fundamental principles of rights at work as well as the freedoms of association & cooperation in the near future were discussed. It emphasized how Co-operatives can play a key role in responding to some of the challenges posed by the changing nature of work in the modern context.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

CONFERENCE HIGHLIGHTS

The conference emphasized on facilitating multi-stakeholder perspectives on the issues being discussed, and invited participation from academia, co-operatives, development organizations & CSO movements, government & inter-governmental agencies, private sector, and groups representing youth, women and the marginalized & vulnerable sections of our societies.

The conference provided a platform where ideas from research and practice can complement each other to provide a better eco-system for co-operatives and like organizations.

The theme of Co-operatives in the Changing World of Work encouraged views on evolving structures of work and how co-operative structures can respond to the challenges and the changes in the world of work, with coordinated action and common vision to mitigate some the perceived adverse effects on workers especially in the context of four major trends of driving changes in the realm of work.

These trends identified by the ILO, include the economical, technological, demographical and environmental aspects of our world.

Co-operatives are membership-based enterprises, where members are owners and leaders, and they democratically decide on the major issues affecting the enterprise. Co-operatives have seen a renaissance amongst the workers in different sectors who are engaged in new forms of employment. The worker co-operative model has (re)emerged as an organizational model responding to the changes within the world of work. While co-operatives resemble many business organizations with respect to infrastructural facilities and management practices, the governance practices of co-operatives differ from others. As against the conventional model of an employee earning wages by his/her labour, the workers play an active role in managing the planning and execution of the work without a direct employer supervision.



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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

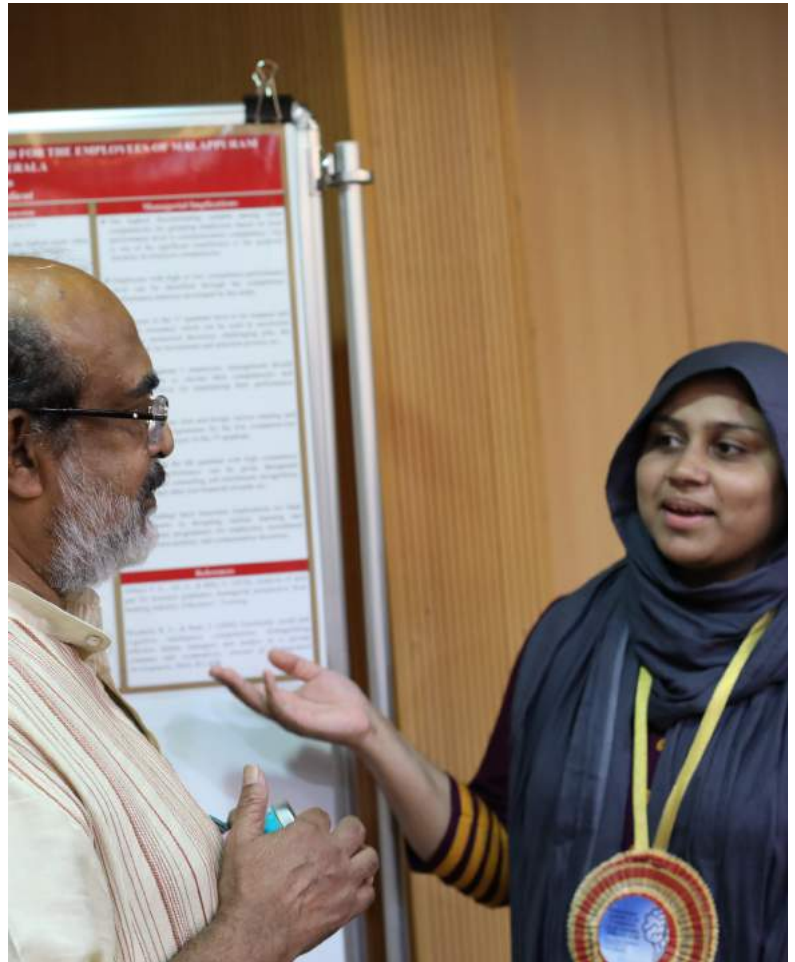
However, the combined role of being a worker as well as the owner is not without its challenges. The evolving industrial climate with an increasing role of ICT, automation, platform-based enterprises, growth of service enterprises etc. have created a major shift in global economies. Research about worker co-operatives is still evolving and it is important to discuss frameworks of successful worker co-operatives, the challenges they face and policy support required for their growth in the changing world of work.

The following sub-themes were also explored through paper presentations during the conference:

- Towards a common understanding of Worker Co-operatives - Notion of work and worker co-operatives
- Co-operatives & Work in Transition - the role of Co-operatives in ensuring 'decent' work and employment
- Worker co-operatives and Sustainable Development Goals
- Can worker co-operatives help industry turnaround?
- Co-operatives in Sunrise economy

In addition to the paper presentations, the conference also featured various thematic sessions with lectures and panel discussions on the various themes, delivered by international practice-research-policy experts. A Common Minimum Understanding was reached by the participants and recommendations were framed on how to move ahead on positioning co-operatives in the changing world of work.

A major highlight was the Coopathon 2018, organized under the aegis of this conference. It allowed vibrant student minds to suggest implementable solutions that tackle 21st century socioeconomic challenges. The Coopathon was the first such Hackathon to be held in India that was centered around the Co-operative sector. Students were guided by experts and mentors to devise solutions to win prizes up to Rs. 60,000. The winners were encouraged to take their ideas further after the Coopathon.



OBJECTIVES OF CONFERENCE

- Enabling legal & regulatory environment
- Scaling up partnerships and working relationships on an international level, especially in the context of the Agenda 2030 and the SDGs.
- Sharing knowledge and Data for replication of good practices
- Activating social financing for social & solidarity economy space

APRIL 29, 2018 - DAY ONE

OPENING CEREMONY

KEYNOTE SPEAKERS

- Dr. Kulbhushan Balooni (IIM-K)
- Dr. Thomas Issac (Govt. of Kerala)
- Dr. Simel Esim (ILO)
- Mr. Balusubramanian Iyer (ICA-AP)
- Mr. Rameshan Paleri (ULCCS)



The International Conference was inaugurated by a Lighting of the Lamp ceremony by **Dr. Thomas Issac, Dr. Kulbhushan Balooni, Dr. Simel Esim, Mr. Balusubramanian Iyer and Mr. Rameshan Paleri**. This esteemed panel subsequently addressed the audience after the ceremony.

Dr. Kulbhushan Balooni of IIM-K welcomed the gathering. He expressed his pleasure in associating with the conference on behalf of IIM-K and gave a brief introduction of the institution and added that their mission is to think globally and act globally. He then introduced ULCCS as the host of the conference and emphasized its importance in the social context of Kerala. He used the example of Kozhikode city's growth in the past few years to explain the role of Co-operatives in productive changes. He welcomed all the participants and wished the success of the conference.

Dr. Thomas Issac, Minister of Finance, Govt of Kerala discussed his book, "Building Alternatives: The Story of India's Oldest Construction Workers' Co-operative." He started by taking the audience back to the advent of industrial revolution and explained how the occupational structure had changed all over the world as a result of this phenomenon. However, over time lack of equal distribution of work and access to equal opportunities as well as violations of human dignity had led to the rise of dissatisfaction amongst many which led to social, political and economic reformations all over the world. A similar revolution has evolved with information technology burgeoning all over the globe.

APRIL 29, 2018 - DAY ONE

OPENING CEREMONY

The international labour forces face intensive changes in the system of management and some IT advancements have led to alienation and insecurity in employment. The trust that co-operatives have gained so far will help to overcome these challenges.

Dr. Simel Esim from the Co-operative Unit of ILO, Geneva emphasized on the impact of labor movements. With regards to sustainable development goals, she said that co-operatives can contribute lot more to this. The co-operatives can work with collective action and thus means of pursuing social justice is easier for co-operatives. This reveals the need of expansion of co-operative power. Co-operatives increase standard of living as well as contribute to provision of decent jobs which in turn results in economic growth.

Mr. Balusubramanian Iyer, Regional Director at ICA-AP expounded on the current Co-operatives scenario of India with reference to commerce, resilience & development: Co-operatives in the Agenda 2030. He talked about the present state and future scope of co-operatives. He emphasized that resilience in the co-operative sector matters for achieving global changes. He suggests that resilience generated by co-operatives should focus on three areas namely disaster, insurance and ecosystems.

Mr. Rameshan Paleri, Chairman of ULCCS talked about the legacy of ULCCS and the factors that have contributed to its success, such as fair trade practices, quicker turnaround time, labor strength, etc. He said that growth is important, but it is also important to adhere to values of the organization.



#CCWW2018

“...The co-operative movement has always been destined to remain a modern movement, always at the forefront of promising social and economic innovations and bringing positive changes in communities and societies across the world of work.”

--- Dr. Thomas Issac

APRIL 29, 2018 - DAY ONE

CONFERENCE PROCEEDINGS

SESSIONS

- Panel Discussion: Co-operatives in the Changing World of Work
- Seminar 1: The Common Understanding of Worker Co-ops
- Seminar 2: Co-operatives and Work in Transition
- Seminar 3: Inside View: Industrial and Artisanal Co-operatives



Broadly the theme of the first day of the Conference was **Co-operatives in the Changing World of Work**.

After the opening ceremony, a panel discussion on the implications of **Co-operatives in the Changing World of Work** was led by **Mr.**

Balusubramanian Iyer, ICA-AP, **Dr. Thomas Issac**, Minister of Finance, Government of Kerala, **Dr. Simel Esim** from ILO and **Dr. T.P. Sethumadhavan** from ULCCS. This plenary discussion set the tone by providing a broad outlook on the co-operative scenario and the economic, social and environmental changes happening in the global work context.

A Seminar on the **Common Understanding of Worker Co-ops** was facilitated by **Mr. Hyungsik Eum** from CICOPA. He provided a conceptual understanding of co-operatives and various aspects of how they operate. **Ms. Soumya Rajan** from TISS presented how worker co-operative societies can be understood using Amartya Sen's capability approach. **Mr. Osamu Nakano** from JWCU, Japan presented the perspective of Japanese worker co-operatives, a sector which is extremely strong there. He explained how many of the demographic and social problems such as ageing population, disabilities, etc. were tackled with the help of worker co-operative societies. **Mr. Adhikari V.V. Subba Rao** from TISS talked about how informal employees can benefit from forming worker co-operative societies.

APRIL 29, 2018 - DAY ONE

CONFERENCE PROCEEDINGS

The second Seminar of the day was organized on the topic of **Co-operatives and Work-In Transition** and facilitated by **Prof. Anthony Jensen** from Newcastle University, Australia. In his talk, he expounded on the diversity of co-op movements and tried to identify the different clusters of Co-operative organizations that exist in different parts of Asia. **Dr. E. Kareem** from the CITU presented on how co-operatives can help mitigate economic inequalities and cited the example of some Kerala organisations that have successfully mobilized workers. **Dr. Indulekha** from the Institute of Management and Technology presented on how football clubs can be managed more successfully with the help of co-operatives. **Mr. Vergel Hilario** from Union of Labor Service Contracting Co-ops, Philippines talked about labor service co-ops and how this model can be applied in various contexts. This seminar session was concluded by **Mr. Chandan Kumar** from Rashtrya Hamal Panchayat, who pioneered the Mathadi Act, presented on how workers need to be organized in order to be successfully managed in co-operative organizations.

The third Seminar of the day revolved around the theme of **Inside View: Industrial and Artisanal Co-operatives** and was chaired by **Mr. Siddharth Maiti** from TRIFED. He illustrated the concept of Industrial Co-operatives and explained how the process of mechanization can help even the smallest of enterprises scale up. **Dr. Asha Nadig** and **Dr. Subramaniam** from SIDM presented their research findings on the challenges faced by traditional artisans at the grassroots level.

Dr. Raveesh Agarwal and **Dr. Saket Agarwal** from RIMT presented the case of Zari and Zardosi workers in Bareilly and how these craftsmen are preserving their craft by working in co-operatives. **Dr. C. Pitchai** from Gandhigram Rural Institute also spoke on artisan co-operatives, more specifically on the pottery co-operatives in Mahabalipuram, Thanjavur, Kumbakonam and how they transformed their livelihoods by organising themselves into co-operatives. Lastly, **Prof. V.N. Babu** from the Institute of Co-operative Management spoke about how to mobilise and protect artisans at the Grassroots level.



#CCWW2018

"The greater contribution of co-operatives across the Asia Pacific is hampered by a lack of research and data into their contribution to society and the solving of social and economic problems."

--- Prof. Anthony Jensen

APRIL 30, 2018 - DAY TWO

CONFERENCE PROCEEDINGS

SESSIONS

- Global Commission on the Future of Work
- Blueprint to maximize Employment Generation
- Panel Discussion: Co-operatives in Development: Industry, Innovation & Infrastructure
- Seminar 4: Co-operatives in Sunrise Economy
- Seminar 5: Can Worker Co-ops help in Industry Turnaround
- Seminar 6: Formalizing the informal economy through co-operatives

The broad theme around which the 2nd day proceedings were centred around was Co-operatives as they relate to Development and Growth.

Ms. Reema Nanavaty, ex General Secretary of SEWA, India set the tone for the day's proceedings with her talk on the **Global Commission on the Future of Work**. She explained the role that different forms of organization play in the process of empowerment. She added that this shall be made possible with proper management of supply chains. In reference to the Global Commission on the Future of Work, she mentioned that the ILO will be bringing out a very strategic and action-oriented report on the Future of Work that aligns with the Sustainable Development Goals as a part of ILO's centenary celebrations.



The next speaker was **Mr. Rangan Dutta IAS (Retd.)** who expounded on the **Blueprint to Maximize Employment Generation**. He said that "New employment policy blueprint will be shaped by economic, social and labour policy interventions and is expected to incentivise employers to create more jobs, introduce economic reforms appealing to companies, along with supporting the medium and small-scale industries." He added that in liberalization there is no space for a specific sector. India should take it as a movement with proper business models. He explained about the joint and partnership models. He linked these with AYUSH and Adult Pension Yojana programs.

APRIL 30, 2018 - DAY TWO

CONFERENCE PROCEEDINGS

Later Mr. Rangan Dutta chaired a Panel Discussion on **Co-operatives in Development: Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure** which further explored factors that both contribute and impede development in the Indian context and emphasized how co-operatives can help in mitigating some of the factors that hinder its progress. Also contributing to this panel was **Mr. Siddharth Maiti** from the TRIFED. He added examples related to West Bengal and stated that the rise of co-operatives was with the need of the society. **Dr. Saji Gopinath** of Kerala Start Up Mission talked about some of the factual measures of co-operative development in India. Finally contributing to this plenary discussion was **Dr. Mridul Eapen** from the Centre of Development Studies, Trivandrum who explained the importance of drawing women into the workforce and how the co-operative model can aid in accomplishing this.

The first seminar had the theme of **Co-operatives in Sunrise Economy** and was facilitated by **Mr. Steven Deobald** from nilenso. He spoke about how the co-operative principles can be used to design technology and information systems. He touched upon practical challenges that prevent these models from being implemented. **Mr. G.V.P Rajan** from thinktosustain.com presented his research on Structural and Governance Challenges in Farmer Producer Companies. **Mr. T. Haridasan** and **Dr. G. Veerakumaran** also presented their research in this session. **Mr. G.V. Krishnagopal** from Access Livelihood Consulting spoke about the opportunities in Co-operative Incubation in India and how it can be facilitated by policy makers.

The theme of the second seminar session was, **Can Worker Co-op help Industry Turnaround?** **Ms. Bharati Birla** from the ILO facilitated the session. **Dr. XLX Wilson**, scholar from Ramkrishna Mission presented his research on the tea plantations in the Nilgiris and how co-operative tea factories have met with success in this region. **Mr. Satheesan K** from National Co-operative Development Corporation presented his research. **Dr. Thomas Paul Kattookaran** from St. Thomas's College presented his research on the Indian Coffee Board Workers' Co-operative Society and an evaluation of the Indian Coffee Houses that are run by the society. The last speaker, **Dr. G. Thangamani** from IIM-K spoke about the specific issues and risks faced by Co-operative Credit Institutions and proactive risk management techniques that can be used to mitigate such issues.



The third seminar session revolved around the theme of **Formalizing the Informal economy through Co-operatives.** **Dr. Simel Esim** delivered the key address and also facilitated this session. **Ms. Namya Mahajan** from SEWA Co-operative Federation, **Ms. Bharati Birla** and **Mr. Hyungsik Eum** presented on their respective research studies. **Ms. Sonia George** from SEWA, Kerala who presented on how co-operative structures can be organized around the care economy thereby providing more protection and increasing opportunities for domestic workers.

MAY 1, 2018 - DAY THREE

CONFERENCE PROCEEDINGS

SESSIONS

- Panel Discussion: New Generation Co-operatives: Co-operative and Legal Identity
- Panel Discussion: Co-operatives in Development: Industry, Innovation & Infrastructure



The last day of the conference consisted of Panel Discussions in the first half and the Valedictory and Closing sessions in the second half. The Panels in the first half were organised around the theme of New Generation Co-operatives.

The first Panel was on **New Generation Co-operatives: Co-operative Identity and Legal Environment**. The key address was delivered by **Dr. R. Trebor Scholz** from the New School, United States who spoke about Platform Co-operatives and explained how they are different from other co-operative structures. **Dr. Yashvantha Dongre** of University of Mysore spoke about Co-operative identity, context of emergence of new coops & the legal system to be conducive for coops. **Dr. Saji Gopinath** contributed with a talk on the importance of new-

generation co-ops and how co-ops are evolving in terms of both their structure and functions to cater to the needs of the youth. Later **Mr. Steven Deobald** discussed the future of co-ops and identified co-operative areas where innovations are happening. The session was capped off by video messages by **Mr. Richard Bartlett** from **Loomio Co-operative** in New Zealand and **Mr. Rylan Perry** from **CoLab Co-operative**, United States.

The second Panel Discussion centred around the theme of **Partnership for the Goals: Co-operatives in the Changing World of Work** took place. **Dr. Simel Esim** moderated this session and started it off by briefly explaining how the global production process is changing due to change in technology. **Mr. Santosh Kumar** from ICA-AP emphasized importance of promoting diversity in co-ops in terms of work and ownership. He spoke about the key partnerships that are required for sustainable development and the Common Minimum Understanding that has been reached on the basis of CCWW participants' position on the Future of Work. **Mr. Anand Kulkarni** from KPMG co-operative spoke about SDGs and how they can be achieved by co-operatives. **Dr. Anthony Jensen** discussed about partnerships within changing roles and systems of work. **Mr. Hyungsik Eum** explained how nation states are facing a time of risk and crisis but also of great opportunity so partnerships must be formed carefully especially in context of co-operatives. **Mr. Osamu Nakano** also emphasized the importance of careful consideration of the SDGs and how they can be partnered with co-operatives.

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COOPATHON 2018

MENTORS

- Dr. Saji Gopinath (KSUM)
- Mr. Tom Thomas (KSUM)
- Mr. Santosh Kumar (ICA-AP)
- Mr. P. Jaysrinath (ICA-AP)
- Mr. CAV Sathish Kumar (Access Livelihood)
- Mr. Sangay Rinchen (Happy Green Co-op)
- Mr. Irshad Ali (ULTS)
- Ms. Preethi K. (NIT)



PROBLEM STATEMENTS

- Eradicating Poverty: How co-operatives can contribute to poverty reduction?
- Building a more Sustainable Food System: How co-operatives can better contribute to food and agriculture?
- Improving Access to Basic Goods and Services: How co-operatives can contribute to improved access?
- Protecting the environment: How co-operatives can contribute to environmental protection?

One of the key highlights of the Conference was **Coopathon 2018**, a Hackathon design event that was centred around co-operatives. 90 young participants took part in this event, which was held from April 29 - 30, 2018, running simultaneously with the other conference proceedings. This event was organized with the support from **ICA-EU Partnership, IIM Kozhikode, Kerala Startup Mission and UL Technology Solutions**. Coopathon, 2018 is the first such event to be organised in India where in students and participants learn how to tackle real, practical challenges faced by co-operative organizations and movements and design implementable solutions using technology and management concepts that would aid in co-operative functioning. The goal of this undertaking was to promote the involvement of youth and technology in co-operatives.

Objectives: Coopathon 2018 was designed as an opportunity for key stakeholders to discuss and deliberate, on a multistakeholder platform, the need to develop-promote-advocate concepts towards:

- Activating social financing for social & solidarity economy space,
- Sharing knowledge and data for replication of good practices
- Scaling up partnerships and working relationships in the context of the Agenda 2030 on Sustainable Development

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COOPATHON STRUCTURE

24 teams consisting of 90 young participants from across India enrolled in the Coopathon 2018. The structure of the event was designed so that the young minds could gain maximum guidance from the mentors in addition to the design and discussion components. Notable co-operative experts educated the students on different aspects of co-operative management. The discussions that arose from these sessions provided different contexts which were used by the students to expand the problems that would be tackled through their design projects.

After the sessions, the students started brainstorming on how co-operatives can contribute to four broad intervention areas: poverty reduction, building a more sustainable food system, improving access to basic goods and services and protecting the environment. Foreign delegates also visited the participants and helped shape-up their ideas.

The Coopathon was launched by **Mr. Jithin Chakkalakkal** from ULTS, who addressed the participants about the goals of the event. He emphasized the objectives of the Coopathon and hoped that the students would accomplish and learn much from the process.

Dr. Saji Gopinath, CEO, KSUM, stated how new ventures along with latest technologies can bring a face lift to the co-operative sector. He also pointed that with the increase in number of co-operatives, there is a development in the social structure as well.

Mr. Sangay Rinchen, addressed as the “Happy Farmer,” from The Happy Green Co-operative at Bhutan works with Bhutanese smallholding farmers and other dedicated people from different backgrounds to improve the condition of rural life in Bhutan and to provide opportunities for the young generation.

Mr Ganesh from Coopon, a Pondicherry based co-operative group explained how the technologies shall be used to mark the protest of common man and how the common man is exploited by the IT. The session was very interactive and the participants were encouraged to connect the concepts with situations that they face in their daily lives.



Mr. CAV Satish Kumar from Access Livelihood Consulting explained how his co-operative aimed to find effective ways to solve persistent problems faced by many economically marginalized communities. He gave examples of successful co-operatives and explained how even the smallest help by a co-operative can help to turn around the lives of the members associated with them

Mr. Santosh Kumar from ICA-AP emphasized the importance of co-operatives using many examples including Barcelona Football club, Snake Catchers' Co-operative, etc. He pointed out that despite significant achievements, there is a lack of trust from the part of the authorities regarding co-operative models, but that the co-operative sector has great potential to come up with many successful stories. He also presented the four problems that would be used by the students for their Coopathon designs. .

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COOPATHON OUTCOMES



[CLICK HERE FOR THE COOPATHON 2018 VIDEO!](#)

1ST PRIZE

TEAM INVENTO
Government engineering college,
Kannur

Altogether 24 teams participated in the Coopathon in efforts to win cash prizes upto Rs. 60,000 and a chance to be mentored by some of the best incubators in the region. The winning ideas were a smart shoe designed to track employees for attendance management, artificial intelligence for environment detection to empower the blind and a co-operative Uber model application for improved access to basic services.

2ND PRIZE

TEAM VASH
College of Engineering, Aranmula

The Coopathon was different from other Hackathons in the sense that even though the solutions were technology based, the focus was not on the coding or the technology aspect of the design, rather it was on the problems that were being discussed. It involved more debate, discussion and a fundamental understanding of the issues that were being tackled.

3RD PRIZE

TEAM COOPON
COOPON, Pondicherry

One of the key learnings that were derived by the students was the ability to work with and learn about multiple stakeholders, such as ILO, ULCCS, ICA-AP, IIM-K, etc. Dr. Thomas Issac spent considerable time with the students and later testified to how much he enjoyed these interactions. The mentor-participant interaction was an important component of this event and many students later testified that they learnt a lot from their mentors, an important achievement. However the most important outcome is that students realized the importance of working together to create a difference.

MAY 1, 2018

CLOSING CEREMONY

The Valedictory Session and the Closing ceremony of the Conference was conducted on May 1, 2018, the final day of conference proceedings.

The ceremony was facilitated by **Prof. T.N. Krishnan** from IIM-K who thanked all the partners, participants, guests and volunteers for their efforts. He also congratulated the success of the Conference and applauded the diversity of representation in the views that were presented.

The chief guest for the valedictory session was **Shri. T.P. Ramakrishnan**, Minister of Labour and Excise, Government of Kerala. He addressed the audience about the importance of co-operatives and how they have contributed significantly towards the upliftment of the labour force in Kerala.

The Key-note speaker for the Valedictory session was **Dr. V.K. Ramachandran**, the Vice-Chairman of the Kerala State Planning Board, who touched upon the importance of formalizing the informal economy in India, which consists of almost 90% of the Indian population. He explained how the informal sector was adversely affected by Demonetisation and GST and emphasized how co-operative structures can help mitigate a lot of the adverse effects. He ended his speech by stating that Co-operatives represent a higher and more humane form of organizations.

Mr. Rameshan Paleri, Chairman of ULCCS, also graced the occasion to launch the book **ULCCS: The Saga Continues** authored by **Mr. S.K. Sharma**.

Afterwards **Mr. Santosh Kumar** wrapped up the Conference proceedings by acknowledging all the speakers, panellists and participants of the conference as well as also summarizing some of the salient takeaways of the proceedings, on behalf of Mr. Balusubramanian Iyer.

Dr. Saji Gopinath presided over the prize distribution ceremony of Coopathon, 2018 and addressed the audience briefly on the rationale and outcomes of the Coopathon. The winning teams, which included Team Invento in First Place, Team Vash in Second place and Team Coopon in Third Place were felicitated by him on the stage.

Finally, the Vote of Thanks was delivered by **Mr. Shaju S.** from ULCCS and with this the three day International Conference on Co-operatives in the Changing World of Work came to a close.



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CULTURAL VISITS



CULTURAL PROGRAM AT UL CYBER PARK

DAY 1



IIM-K BUSINESS MUSEUM VISIT

DAY 2

VISIT TO ULCCS, OLD AGE HOME AT UL FOUNDATION, SARGALAYA CRAFT VILLAGE

DAY 3



APRIL 29 - MAY 1, 2018

OUTCOMES



The following points of Common Minimum Understanding were derived after considering the multiple perspectives presented during the International Conference on 'Co-operatives in the Changing World of Work'. These points also address the challenges of the changing world of work, and drivers of Future of Work viz. technology, demography, climate change and economic globalization:

- Advocate for policies and strategies on the Future of Work to assess and take into account the role of co-operatives in pluralistic & community-based initiatives in growing sectors, particularly provision of care, renewable energy and management of natural resources.
- Promote the use of technology for Sustainable Development, Future of Work and co-operative development, and further promote exchange among technology spaces and co-operatives, particularly worker co-operatives with a conscious inclusion of young professionals.
- Promote Decent Work in co-operatives by enhancing value-based membership in enterprises and across value chains they operate in, with an aim to eliminate child labour, forced labour while advancing occupational safety and health, and gender equality.
- Promote diversity in ownership and control of co-operatives emerging in the sunrise economy, not only aspire to keep ownership democratic but also to commit to the co-operative identity statement in the labour practices of their enterprises.
- Advocate for Co-operatives to promote Decent Work & Economic Growth (SDG8) through the following:
 - Active engagement of Co-operatives in reaching out to women, youth and other vulnerable and marginalized groups.
 - Ensure producer and consumer co-operatives' supply chains are free from exploitative labour practices
 - Create an eco-system where established co-operatives actively create and support the initiation of co-operative start-ups, especially new generation co-ops.
 - Advocate for agile co-operative legislation to recognize and facilitate the registration of models like worker buyouts, employee owned co-operatives, social co-operative enterprises etc.
 - Promote active partnership among co-operatives and trade unions, and other movements like women's movements and youth movements

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FUTURE ACTION AND RECOMMENDATIONS



CCWW 2018 was an important milestone in the Asia-Pacific Research on Work and Ownership. Future steps in this endeavor will be taken on the basis of recommendations and insights derived from this conference. Following are the broad policy recommendations formulated by the ICA and ICA-AP as a response to the Inception Report on the Global Commission on Future of Work as well as on the basis of the learnings derived from the International Conference on Co-operatives in the Changing World of Work:

- Actively promote the co-operative model as a creator of quality jobs and collective wealth at the local, national and international levels;
- Change the conditions of access to social protection so that all workers can have access to it, independently from their work status;
- Approve legislation allowing for the monitoring of the proper functioning of co-operatives, including in the field of workers' rights;
- Strongly encourage dialogue and alliances between the co-operative movement and the trade unions.

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ANNEXURES



ANNEXURE 1
CONFERENCE PROGRAM

ANNEXURE 2
COMMON MINIMUM
UNDERSTANDING



International Conference on Co-operatives in the Changing World of Work

Indian Institute of Management, Kozhikode (Kerala, India)

29 Apr - 1 May 2018

Saturday, 28 th Apr 2018	
Afternoon	Arrival of Participants at the Venue
Sunday, 29 th Apr 2018	
08:30 am	Registration
09:00 am	<p>Opening Ceremony</p> <p>Welcome Address Dr. Kulbhushan Balooni, Indian Institute of Management Kozhikode, India</p> <p>Building Alternatives: Co-operatives in the Changing World of Work Dr. Thomas Isaac, Minister of Finance, Government of Kerala, India</p> <p>Co-operatives Promote Decent Work and Economic Growth Dr. Simel Esim, ILO Co-operatives Unit, Switzerland</p> <p>Commerce, Resilience & Development: Co-operatives in the Agenda 2030 Mr. Balu Iyer, International Co-operative Alliance (Asia & Pacific)</p> <p>The UL Legacy: 93 Years and Counting Mr. Rameshan Paleri, Uralungal Labour Contractor’s Co-operative Society Ltd., India</p>
10:00 am	<p>Panel on Co-operatives in the Changing World of Work</p> <p><u>Moderator</u> Mr. Balu Iyer, International Co-operative Alliance (Asia & Pacific)</p> <p><u>With</u> Dr. Thomas Isaac, Minister of Finance, Government of Kerala, India Dr. Simel Esim, ILO Co-operatives Unit, Switzerland Mr. T. P. Sethumadhavan, Uralungal Labour Contractor’s Co-operative Society Ltd., India</p>
11:00 am	15” Break



11:15 am	<p><i>Coopathon: Segment 1</i> The Co-operative Dilemma</p> <p><u>Facilitator</u> Mr. Mohit Dave, International Co-operative Alliance Asia & Pacific</p>	<p><i>Seminar: Track 1</i> The common understanding of Worker Co-ops</p> <p><u>Key Address & Facilitation</u> Mr. Hyungsik Eum, CICOPA, Belgium</p> <p><u>With</u> RP Ms. Soumya Rajan & Dr. Bino Paul, TISS, India Mr. Osamu Nakano, Japanese Worker Cooperative Union, Japan RP Mr. Adhikari V V Subba Rao, TISS, India</p>
01:00 pm	<i>60" Lunch Break</i>	
02:00 pm	<p><i>Coopathon: Segment 2</i> Design Clinics</p> <p><u>Facilitator</u> Ms. Preethi, National Institute of Technology TBI</p>	<p><i>Seminar: Track 2</i> Co-operatives & Work-in-Transition</p> <p><u>Key Address & Facilitation</u> Prof. Anthony Jensen, Newcastle University, Australia</p> <p><u>With</u> Dr. E. Kareem, Centre of Indian Trade Unions, India Mr. Chandan Kumar, Rashtrya Hamal Panchayat, India RP Dr. Indulekha, Institute of Management & Technology, India Mr. Vergel Hilario, Union of Labor Service Contracting Co-ops, Philippines</p>
03:45 pm	<i>15" Break</i>	
04:00 pm	<p><i>Coopathon: Segment 3</i> Technology Clinics</p> <p><u>Facilitator</u> Mr. Irshad Ali, UL Technology Solutions</p>	<p><i>Seminar: Track 3</i> Inside-View: Industrial & Artisanal Co-operatives</p> <p><u>Key Address & Facilitation</u> Mr Siddharth Maiti, Tribal Cooperative Marketing Development Federation, India</p> <p><u>With</u> RP Dr. Asha Nadig & Dr. Subramaniam, SIBM, India RP Dr. Raveesh Agarwal & Dr. Saket Agarwal, RIMT, India RP Dr. C. Pitchai, Gandhigram Rural Institute, India Prof. V. N. Babu, Institute of Co-operative Management, India</p>
05:45 pm	Feedback & Reflections	
7:30 pm	Cultural Program at UL Cyber Park followed by dinner	
Monday, 30th Apr 2018		
08:30 am	Registration of Participants at the Venue	
09:00 am	<p><i>Blueprint to Maximize Employment Generation</i> Mr. Rangan Dutta IAS (Retd.), India</p> <p><i>Global Commission on the Future of Work</i> Ms. Reema Nanavaty, Self Employed Women's Association, India (<i>Video Message</i>)</p>	

10:00 am	<i>Panel on Co-operatives in Development: Industry, Innovation & Infrastructure</i>	
	<u>Moderator</u> Mr. Rangan Dutta IAS (Retd.), India	
	<u>With</u> Mr. Siddharth Maiti, Tribal Cooperative Marketing Development Federation, India Dr. Saji Gopinath, Kerala Start-up Mission, India Dr. Mridul Eapen, Centre for Development Studies, India Lt. Cdr S. Arun (Retd.), UL Cyber Park, India	
11:00 am	<i>15" Break</i>	
11:15 am	<i>Coopathon: Segment 4</i> Prototype Building	<i>Seminar: Track 4</i> Co-operatives in Sunrise Economy
	<u>Facilitator</u> Mr. Tom Thomas, Kerala Startup Mission	<u>Key Address & Facilitation</u> Mr. Steven Deobald, nilenso, India
		<u>With</u> RP Mr. G. V. P. Rajan, ThinktoSustain.com, India Mr. T. Haridasan, Kerala Co-operative Hospital Federation, India Dr. G. Veerakumaran, Kerala Agricultural University, India Mr. G. V. Krishnagopal, Access Livelihood Consulting, India
01:00 pm	<i>60" Lunch Break</i>	
02:00 pm	<i>Coopathon: Segment 5</i> Mentor Feedback	<i>Seminar: Track 5</i> Can Worker Co-ops Help Industry Turnaround?
	<u>Facilitator</u> Mr. Sangay Rinchen, Happy Green Co-operative	<u>Key Address & Facilitation</u> Ms. Bharti Birla, International Labour Organization, India
		<u>With</u> RP Dr. XLX Wilson, Ramakrishna Mission, India Mr. Satheesan K., National Co-operative Development Corporation, India RP Dr. Thomas Paul Kattookaran, St. Thomas' College, India RP Dr. G. Thangamani, IIM Kozhikode, India
03:45 pm	<i>15" Break</i>	
04:00 pm	<i>Coopathon: Segment 6</i> Pitching for Change	<i>Seminar: Track 6</i> Formalizing the informal economy through cooperatives
	<u>Facilitator</u> Mr. Tom Thomas, Kerala Startup Mission	<u>Key Address & Facilitation</u> Dr. Simel Esim, ILO Co-operatives Unit, Geneva
		<u>With</u> Ms. Namya Mahajan, SEWA Co-operative Federation, India Ms. Bharti Birla, International Labour Organisation, India Mr. Hyungsik Eum, CICOPA, Belgium Ms. Sonia George, SEWA Kerala, India

05:45 pm	Feedback & Reflections
7.30 pm	IIM Business Museum Visit
Tuesday, 1st May 2018	
08:30 am	Registration of Participants at the Venue
09:00 am	<p><i>Contributions to Global Commission on the Future of Work</i> Mr. Santosh Kumar, International Co-operative Alliance (Asia & Pacific)</p> <p><i>Panel on New Generation Cooperatives: Co-operative Identity & Legal Environment</i></p> <p><u>Key Address</u> Dr. R. Trebor Scholz, The New School, United States <i>(Video Message)</i></p> <p><u>Facilitation</u> Dr. Yashvantha Dongre, University of Mysore, India</p> <p><u>With</u> Mr. Steven Deobald, nilenso, India Dr. Saji Gopinath, Indian Institute of Information Technology and Management, India Mr. Richard Bartlett, Loomio Co-operative, New Zealand <i>(Video Message)</i> Mr. Rylan Perry, CoLab Coop, United States <i>(Video Message)</i></p>
10:45 am	<i>15" Break</i>
11:00 am	<p><i>Panel on Partnerships for the Goals: Co-operatives in the Changing World of Work</i></p> <p><u>Moderators</u> Dr. Simel Esim, ILO Co-operatives Unit, Switzerland</p> <p><u>With</u> Mr. Anand Kulkarni, KPMG Co-operative, India Prof. Anthony Jensen, Newcastle University, Australia Mr. Hyungsik Eum, CICOPA, Belgium Mr. Osamu Nakano, Japanese Worker Co-operative Union, Japan Mr. Santosh Kumar, International Co-operative Alliance (Asia & Pacific) Mr. Vergel Hilario, Union of Labor Service Contracting Co-operatives, The Philippines</p>

12:00 pm	<p><i>Valedictory</i></p> <p><u>Facilitation</u> Prof. T. N. Krishnan, Indian Institute of Management Kozhikode, India</p> <p><u>Chief Guest</u> Shri. T. P. Ramakrishnan, Minister for Labour and Excise, Government of Kerala, India</p> <p><u>Key-note Speaker</u> Dr. V. K. Ramachandran, Vice-Chairman, Kerala State Planning Board, India</p> <p><u>Book Release by Chief Guest: ULCCS “The saga continues” (Author S.K. Sharma)</u> Mr. Rameshan Paleri, Uralungal Labour Contractor’s Co-operative Society Ltd., India</p> <p><u>Conference Summary and Declaration</u> Mr. Balu Iyer, International Co-operative Alliance (Asia & Pacific)</p> <p><u>Brief Report on Coopathon & Prize Distribution</u> Dr. Saji Gopinath, Kerala Startup Mission, India</p> <p><u>Vote of Thanks</u> Mr. Shaju S, Uralungal Labour Contractor’s Co-operative Society Ltd., India</p> <p><u>National Anthem</u></p>
01:00 pm	<i>60” Lunch Break</i>
02:00 pm	<p>Excursion</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – ULCCS headquarters, Vatakara – Old-age home at UL Foundation – Cultural Program at Sargalaya Craft Village followed by dinner
Wednesday, 2nd May 2018	
Pre-Noon	Departures

#CCWW2018

[International Conference on the Changing World of Work]
April 29 – May 1, 2018 | Indian Institute of Management, Kozhikode (Kerala, India)

Part I

Common Minimum Understanding

The International Conference on ‘Co-operatives in the Changing World of Work’ led by the multi-stakeholder group of organizers including co-operatives, worker movements, Government, inter-governmental agencies, and academia, and other strategic development groups, present the following as their response to highlight the role of co-operatives and collectives in the changing world of work, and in addressing the challenges of Future of Work, as highlighted in the [Inception Report of ILO Global Commission](#) on the Future of Work.

Having noted the response ([Position Paper](#)) of the International Co-operative Alliance to the Inception Report and its Policy recommendations based on the ILO Recommendation 193 on Promotion of Co-operatives 2002, to:

1. Actively promote the co-operative model as a creator of quality jobs and collective wealth at the local, national and international levels;
2. Change the conditions of access to social protection so that all workers can have access to it, independently from their work status;
3. Approve legislation allowing for the monitoring of the proper functioning of co-operatives, including in the field of workers’ rights;
4. Strongly encourage dialogue and alliances between the co-operative movement and the trade unions.

The Participants of the #CCWW2018 consider the following as the Common Minimum Understanding, to enhance the role of co-operatives and collectives, in meeting the challenges of the changing world of work, and in addressing the mega drivers of Future of Work viz. technology, demography, climate change and economic globalization:

- A. Advocate for policies and strategies on the Future of Work to assess and take into account the role of co-operatives in pluralistic & community-based initiatives in growing sectors, particularly provision of care, renewable energy and management of natural resources.

- B. Promote the use of technology for Sustainable Development, Future of Work and co-operative development, and further promote exchange among technology spaces and co-operatives, particularly worker co-operatives with a conscious inclusion of young professionals.
- C. Promote Decent Work in co-operatives by enhancing value-based membership in enterprises and across value chains they operate in, with an aim to eliminate child labour, forced labour while advancing occupational safety and health, and gender equality.
- D. Promote diversity in ownership and control of co-operatives emerging in the sunrise economy, not only aspire to keep ownership democratic but also to commit to the co-operative identity statement (Definition, Values and Principles) in the substance and labour practices of their enterprises.
- E. Advocate for Co-operatives to promote Decent Work & Economic Growth (SDG8) through the following:
- (i) Active engagement of Co-operatives in reaching out to women, youth and other vulnerable and marginalized groups, to effectively address their socio-economic needs and cultural aspirations through joint ownership and democratic values,
 - (ii) Ensure producer and consumer co-operatives' supply chains are free from exploitative labour practices, and that co-operatives advance toward decent work practices and integrate calls on eliminating of worst forms of child labour forced labour and discrimination, in their work,
 - (iii) Create an eco-system where established co-operatives actively create and support the initiation of co-operative start-ups, new generation co-operatives like innovative worker co-operatives and social co-operatives,
 - (iv) Advocate for agile co-operative legislation to recognize and facilitate the registration of models like worker buyouts, employee owned co-operatives, social co-operative enterprises etc.
 - (v) Promote active partnership among co-operatives and trade unions, and other movements like women's movements and youth movements, in developing response strategies to secure livelihoods of members in the changing world of work and for upholding the fundamental principles of rights at work.

PART II

Thematic Reflections Received from Key Partners

The characteristics of co-operatives are particularly relevant when considering the ILO's Inception Report on Future of Work observations regarding today's high unemployment and underemployment levels, particularly among the youth, stagnating ratios of employment to the population, increased job insecurity and flexibility,¹ deterioration of social protection, widening inequalities, and the fact that the organization of work and of the production of goods and services is experiencing profound changes that may strongly alter the way in which we work and the future of work itself. To prepare the above text, the Conference received the following thematic reflections from its key partners.

1. Dr. Reema Nanavaty, Member, ILO Global Commission on the Future of Work

The Global Commission on Future of Work of the ILO, will be bringing out a very strategic and action oriented report on the “Future of Work” that aligns with the Sustainable Development Goals as ILO's centenary celebration. The Global Commission has 28 Commissioners. One of the very important areas that the Commission has recognized for Future of Work is the informal economy workers, especially rural workers – women workers. The Future of Work Commission has already had Policy Dialogues on Life Long Learning for the workers, so that the workers can enhance, upgrade skills and prepare themselves for transition. Also a policy dialogue on Rural Workers and Future of Work was held, especially looking at agriculture for small farm holders, agriculture workers and the Role of technology. As we all know 50% of the work force is in the Global South, and 48% depends on agriculture as their major occupation. The Commission will also explore mechanisms to safeguard rural workers against climate shocks and market shocks. The Commission will also explore technology which is labour augmenting and not labour displacing. The role of different forms of organizing of informal economy workers such as Unions and Co-operatives will play a central and crucial role in enabling workers access to life-long learning, create worker owned and managed supply chains, play a role as aggregators to access technology and plug into global supply chains.

2. Dr. Simel Esim, Chief ILO COOP Unit, Geneva

The world of work is undergoing major changes that will continue, and potentially intensify, in the future. To better understand and to respond effectively to these new challenges, the [International Labour Organization \(ILO\)](#) has launched a “[Future of Work initiative](#)” that looks at the “mega drivers of change” – technology, demography, climate change and economic globalization. In 2016-17 all ILO members states were invited to undertake national “future of work” dialogues structured around four “centenary conversations”. Following the national dialogues, a [Global Commission on the Future of Work](#) was launched in 2017 for an in-depth

¹ According to the ILO, the employment to population ratio has even fallen marginally between 1991 and 2016; see ILO (2017) *Inception Report for the Global Commission on the Future of Work*; Geneva: ILO, p. 1

examination of the future of work that can provide an analytical basis for the delivery of social justice in the 21st century. The 28-member commission held its first meeting in October 2017 discussing the main forces shaping the world of work, and the opportunities to be leveraged and the challenges to be addressed for a future of work with social justice. The [ILO views cooperatives](#) as important in improving the living and working conditions of women and men globally as well as making essential infrastructure and services available even in areas neglected by the state and investor-driven enterprises. Cooperatives have been seeing a renaissance to meet the expanding and increasingly complex needs of members, providing services, advancing livelihoods and creating jobs in many parts of the world. Looking at the mega-drivers of change, cooperatives in many parts of the world have reported growth in membership and business volume in a range of sectors from banking to housing and the platform economy during recent times of economic and financial crises. Financial cooperatives have generally fared better than the investor-owned banks due to their combination of member ownership, control and benefit. Cooperatives are also proving to be well positioned to respond to demographic changes including ageing societies in some cases and the youth bulge in others along with the refugee crises across regions. They have been engaging in the [provision of care](#) among diverse populations including for children and the elderly. The growing interest in social cooperatives, including among youth and migrant populations, has also been noted by local and national governments alike. With [environmental changes, cooperatives](#) are involved in adaptation – such as mutual insurance for crops, or agricultural cooperatives supporting diversification of crops and mitigation – such as renewable energy and agroforestry. In urban areas, cooperatives exist in waste management, such as waste-picker cooperatives in countries such as India, Colombia and Brazil. These provide much-needed services and help their members to formalise and access health, training, and financial services.

[Platform cooperatives](#) are being formed by gig economy workers in response to the challenges they are facing, including low pay, the quality of work, and lack of voice and representation. Yet, despite their demonstrated resilience, viability and potential, cooperatives are not mainstream economic players in majority of the economies because of internal (lack of governance know-how) and external (legal and regulatory) impediments. The co-operative model may not provide a comprehensive response strategy to the changes in the world of work, but it is one of the diverse set of economic actors that can help achieve more sustainable futures, as noted in the [2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development](#). Cooperatives need to be developed with an eye for the rights and protection of workers, members and users. The cooperative movement has a role to play in supporting the emerging sectors and populations adopting the cooperative model and transmit their know-how.

The financial tools and intermediaries that are best suited to support the expansion and replication of good cooperative practices need to be developed by financial cooperatives. A better understanding on cooperatives requires their inclusion in education and training curricula. Representation of the cooperative movement needs to be strengthened for effective engagement in the future of work debates and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. International guidelines on coop statistics need to be activated to assess the impact of cooperatives and to conduct comparative analyses on the advantages and

disadvantages of different governance models. These and many and other issues will be discussed during this international event on cooperatives and the changing world of work in Kerala, India. We welcome researchers, activists, practitioners who are thinking about these issues to come and join us in this important exchange.

3. Dr. Trebor, Scholz, professor for Culture & Media at The New School in NYC

Equitable Pioneers for the Digital Economy

Almost thirty years after the inception of the World Wide Web, platform ownership is more concentrated than ever. It didn't take Facebook's massive data compromise or Care.com's unsustainably low wages to understand that a more diversified and democratic digital economy is more needed than ever. How can especially workers on the edge of society respond to the numerous "disruptions" on the horizon including automation and algorithmic decision making as well as unanticipated and unpredictable changes? The new generation cooperativists propose an economic, political, and cultural alternative that responds to these challenges by driving the economic domain into more humane and equitable directions. Four years ago, platform cooperative phenomenon which is Internet based on broad-based platform ownership and democratic governance was introduced. This activist research project supports the integration of cooperatives into the digital economy. Work with platform co-ops in India, Germany, Spain, Italy, Australia, Columbia, Brazil, the UK and the United States, demonstrates that a democratically-owned People's Internet is not only possible but that it already exists. Silicon Valley loves a good disruption; let's give them one.

4. Mr. Osamu Nakano, Board Member, Japanese Worker Co-operative Union (JWCU)

The conference is an opportunity to learn more about the diversity of “co-operatives in industrial and service sectors of which principle objective is to serve members’ employment or business activities” (ICA-AP/CICOPA “Call for Research Paper”). There are various types of cooperatives in this category, and/but it is necessary to make clear the similarities and differences between them. In this regard, it is also necessary to rethink the relationship between cooperatives in this category and labor/trade unions. Indeed, some labor contract cooperatives, or self-employed producers’ cooperatives seem to be similar to trade/labor unions through which, for instance, freelancers are organized for the purpose of collective bargaining. This sort of comparative approach should be adopted not for narrowing the definition of cooperatives in this field but precisely for widening or developing the conceptual/theoretical possibility of the cooperatives.

While exploring the diversity of cooperatives in this field, as the same time, it is necessary to discuss the fundamental significance, or the essence of cooperatives in this field together with rethinking the meaning of “work” for human beings. As the ILO’s “Inception Report” reveals, the majority of people (particularly in developed countries) today is thinking that work is NOT just a way of earning money. I also think that work is not just a way of earning money but a certain practice through which human beings could develop her/himself. In other words, work is a certain kind of socio-ontological practice through which human beings subjectivize

her/himself. Working at private (capitalist) companies—employed work—thus means that human beings, as commodities of labor power, are deprived of this socio-ontological practice, and thus of their subjectivity itself. By contrast, working at workers' cooperatives means that human beings regain the subjectivity of their own at work.

In this regard, however, it is also important to recognize that human beings cannot grasp their subjectivity without the relationship with others, or the social relationships. In other words, we could subjectivize ourselves at work through the relationships with our colleagues, i.e. by working cooperatively with them. In this sense, workers' cooperatives are the social, ethical and ontological spaces in which human beings become the free independent subject by “working together” with others, i.e. through “associated work”. This sort of argument might sound too idealistic, but at any rate I would like to discuss the essence (or the distinctive characteristic) of workers' cooperatives while exploring their diversity. I think this sort of discussion is very crucial in order to keep the fundamental agreement among us about the definition of workers' cooperatives (in a broad sense) within the rapidly changing circumstances in political, legal and technological senses, surrounding “work”.

In addition, I would like to discuss “the future of work” for workers' cooperatives (in a broad sense) in relation to the rapid technological developments such as AI, robotic technologies and particularly digital platform. This is because the market value of various works seems to change in the near future due to the technological developments. For instance, the value of care works in a broad sense (including elderly care, childcare, care for people with disabilities, etc.) will increase, whereas the value of most office works will decrease due to the development of AI. At the same time, it is absolutely important for cooperatives to deal with platform economies in order to oppose platform capitalism. Thus I am thinking that workers' cooperatives should play a crucial role in the field of care works in local communities more than before, while developing platform cooperativism on a global economic scale. I hope we could exchange information and opinions on this kind of issues in the conference.

5. Prof Krishnan TN, Organizational Behaviour & Human Resources, Indian Institute of Management, Kozhikode

Research has highlighted that Work that provides a sense of identity, meaningfulness and connectedness with others enhances engagement and commitment at work. The Inception report for the global commission on the Future of Work brought out by ILO underlines the fact that due to lack of income and social security during unemployment, job seekers could be propelled to take up a job not matching to their interests or capability or in worse case undertake vulnerable employment. These could affect job quality and earnings dependability due to the often temporary and non-standard forms of employment. As work becomes increasingly fragmented and short term in nature, the opportunities to experience a sense of identity, meaningfulness and to make social connections reduce. This is all the more consequential for emerging and developing economies such as India. A second concern as per the Inception report is that the labour productivity growth has outpaced the growth of real wages. This has two implications – one, the benefits of work has increasingly accrued to the capital investors, and second, those at the top of the income distribution gain much further exaggerating the income divide. It is in this context, the role of co-operatives

especially worker co-operatives become very significant. While co-operatives are commercial organizations, they operate within a broader set of values and principles not focusing per se on maximising economic returns, but on meeting the needs and aspirations of their members. Business enterprises on the other hand predominantly follow the economic rationale of maximising shareholder wealth, wherein they could decide to relocate their operations or engage in flexible, non-standard forms of employment based on the financial results, with a possible negative consequence on the number, form and quality of employment. With the employee based ownership of worker cooperative organizations, the care for workers and employees is inbuilt in the ownership-governance structure providing for increased voice to workers and reduced income divide amongst employees. Furthermore as Co-operatives are strongly embedded in the local economy in the form of ownership, employment and even customer base, the stakeholder concerns are very much a part of their operations. The Conference is an opportunity to deliberate on ways and means to provide an enabling policy environment and address some of the challenges that confront Cooperatives.

6. Mr. Balasubramanian G. Iyer, Regional Director, ICA Asia and Pacific

Thematic Reflections on Conference hosts, ULCCS (India)

The International Labour Organization (ILO) as part of its Centenary Initiative is focused on the Future of Work, and within this context, has prepared the Inception Report for the Global Commission on the Future of Work. According to the report, workers around the globe, with some variation across country-income groupings, value the contribution of a job to their individual experiences (interesting job) and appreciate the opportunity to help other people through their work (jobs which allow someone to help others). Work remains important because of the social networks that are forged and maintained, the contributions to community that can be made and because it is a source of personal identity and meaning. However, in most countries, there is a chasm between desire and reality. A worker co-operative is a worker owned and managed economic enterprise. Worker-owners in such enterprises work “under conditions determined by them collectively” and share benefits, risks and losses collectively. I had the opportunity to visit the conference hosts, the Uralungal Labour Contract Co-operative Society in 2016 and see first-hand the practice of democracy, collective deliberation, and self-management. This goes back to ULCCS’s roots in 1925 when the co-operative was formed through shared community background, spiritual inclinations, commitment to a just world, and spirit of idealism. This continues to remain strong 93 years on and a bedrock of the co-operative that has diversified and modernized without compromising on its principles. In India, where 52% of unorganized workers are employed as construction laborers, with hardly any regulations in regard to sustainability of their livelihood, earnings and work conditions; ULCCS has shown that it is possible to provide workers dignity, create solidarity, and empower members to meaningfully participate in the life of the cooperative. The worker cooperative model is highly relevant to India’s aspirations to build a modern, sustainable and egalitarian society.

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