

Press Release

**Cooperatives and Sustainable Development: Maintaining momentum
and exploring new avenues**

The Permanent Mission of India to the United Nations, in collaboration with the Permanent Mission of the Republic of Kenya to the United Nations and the Permanent Mission of Mongolia to the United Nations organized a special commemorative event on theme “Cooperatives and Sustainable Development: Maintaining momentum and exploring new avenues” to mark the International Year of Cooperatives 2025 at the United Nations Headquarters on 28 July 2025.

2. The event brought together representatives of UN Member States, UN agencies, senior government officials, cooperative leaders, and other key stakeholders from around the world to celebrate the achievements of cooperatives and underlined their vital role in sustainable development, gender equality, economic empowerment, and social inclusion.

3. Shri Amit Shah, Hon’ble Minister of Cooperation delivered a message, through a pre-recorded video, highlighting the significant role of cooperatives in tackling national challenges of inclusive development as well as global challenges like inequality, climate, housing, financial inclusion and food insecurity. Recalling the mantra of "Sahkar Se Samridhhi" (Prosperity through Cooperation), given by the Prime Minister of India Shri Narendra Modi, he underlined that Cooperation is the force that brings together the strength of individuals and transforms it into the collective strength of society. Emphasizing the role of technological innovation in making cooperatives more inclusive, he mentioned that cooperative institutions are promoting models based on reuse, recycling, and collective use of resources.

4. Ambassador Parvathaneni Harish, Permanent Representative of India delivered the opening remarks, highlighting the vital role played by cooperative sector, since over 120 years, in India’s national growth. Mentioning the transformative steps taken by the Government of India to strengthen the cooperative sector, including the National Cooperative Policy 2025-45, he deliberated on the need of using new and emerging technologies including Artificial Intelligence to make cooperatives more effective and capable of facing emerging new challenges.

5. Sharing their national experiences and proposing steps to foster global collaboration for strengthening cooperative landscape, Ambassador Erastus Ekitela Lokaale, Permanent Representative of Kenya called for a greater role to cooperatives in achieving sustainable development; Ambassador Ankhbayar Nyamdorj, Permanent Representative of Mongolia underlined the need for involvement of young people in cooperative sector and use of new technological advancements to support cooperatives; and Ambassador Raúl Esteban Sánchez Niño, Deputy Permanent Representative of Colombia stressed on building solidarity and sharing of knowledge between cooperatives from different parts of the world. The speakers echoed the need to use international fora like the upcoming 2nd World Social Summit on Development to raise awareness about the socio-economic contributions of cooperatives and steps to further enhance their effectiveness.

6. Mr. Deepak Agarwal, Managing Director, National Agricultural Cooperative Marketing Federation of India Ltd (NAFED) made a detailed presentation on the Indian cooperative sector highlighting the spirit of collaboration and shared ownership. Speaking at the occasion, Ms. Cynthia Samuel-Olonjuwon, Special Representative to the United Nations and Director, ILO Office for the United Nations stressed on the need for promotion of cooperatives to achieve inclusive sustainable development.

7. Through a video message, Mr. Ariel Enrique Guarco, President, International Cooperative Alliance (ICA), emphasized the significant role that cooperative enterprises play in furthering economic development, poverty reduction, employment creation, and social integration.

8. The event was well attended and highlighted the achievements of cooperatives, promoting awareness of their socio-economic contributions, and exploring pathways to strengthen and sustain the cooperative movement in the years ahead.

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