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2012 THE UN’S INTERNATIONAL YEAR OF COOPERATIVES.

Welcome to the United Nations. It’s your world.

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UN Cooperatives Photo
"Cooperatives are a reminder to the international community that it is possible to pursue both economic viability and social responsibility."

United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon

Welcome to the official website on the International Year of Cooperatives (IYC). Here you will find information on events planned throughout the year, as well as suggestions on how to get involved and participate.

International years are declared by the United Nations to draw attention to and encourage action on major issues. The International Year of Cooperatives is intended to raise public awareness of the invaluable contributions of cooperative enterprises to poverty reduction, employment generation and social integration. The Year will also highlight the strengths of the cooperative business model as an alternative means of doing business and furthering socioeconomic development.

For more information on the aims and objectives of the Year, please visit our "About IYC".

Panel Discussion on Youth Employment through Entrepreneurship: the Role of Cooperatives to be held on 2 February at the United Nations

The Role of Cooperatives in Poverty Eradication to be discussed on 1 February at the United Nations

Cooperatives central to fighting hunger, stresses UN agency

Canadian Prime Minister Stephen Harper has praised his country’s co-operative movement for its contribution to Canada’s “socio-economic strength”.

Welcome to 2012 – IYC Messages from around the world.

Australia produced a collectible coin to celebrate the launch of the year.

Mexico launches commemorative lottery ticket for the International Year of Cooperatives.

Rabobank Group has come forward as the first donor to the International Year of Cooperatives.

United Nations launched the International Year of Cooperatives (IYC) at the UN General Assembly Hall on Monday, 31 October 2011 | Programme | Photos | Videos | Summary of Events during the IYC launch

Jim Hightower, “Yes We Can Manage This Country without the Corporate Priesthood—the Cooperative Movement Shows Us How.” Hightower Lowdown (January 2012).


“Bill Moyers TV Farewell with Jim Hightower”

For full text: http://www.alternet.org/story/146698/bill_moyers_tv_farewell_with_hightower--
JIM HIGHTOWER: Yeah, exactly. But rather than seeing that this is our strength. And we have to organize that strength in strategic ways. And in tactical ways. To come to bear on these issues. You know, Jesse Jackson said something strong. He said, we might not all come over on the same boat, but we're in the same boat now. That's a powerful political reality. When people grasp that, they can see the possibility of getting together and doing something.

BILL MOYERS: So, what is a good populist to do in this regard? I mean, corporations are here to stay. They do employ millions of people. And many of them do good things in the country like supporting this broadcast. ... What do we do?

JIM HIGHTOWER: Well, you support those that support us. And there are corporations that do that. But you also do something else. And that is devise alternatives. There's a huge cooperative movement in America that you almost never hear about. There are some 72,000 co-ops operating today. Most of them are consumer co-ops. There are insurance co-ops. There are health care co-ops. There are food co-ops, of course. There are banking co-ops. There are all kinds of cooperatives out across the country. And those entities have 120 million people participating in them. Members.

You never hear about this movement. I've worked with a number of them. There's a great one, Madison Cab Company. Union Cab Company, Madison, Wisconsin. A bunch of cabbies going broke back in the '70s. Getting treated like Kleenex by the manager. And so, they formed a union. And the owner said, well, hell with that. I'm not dealing with any union. You know, I'll just sell the thing.

So, they said, well, what the hell. We do the work here. You know, we do the dispatching and the driving and mechanical work. We could run it. So, they created a co-op. And they had a lot of ups and downs. But over the next 30 years, they were able to make it. And it's the most successful cab company in all of Madison, Wisconsin. They get a high consumer approval rating.

And I learned about this, because I rode a cab to the airport there in Madison once. And the guy turned around, full body, by the way, to look at me in the back. And you know, you're in a union cab. And I said, well, no, I didn't. And then he told me the story. But he said, he was one of the original founders. And he had been able to put his two kids through college driving a cab. Because the owners were the workers themselves. And doing a great service to the
“Cooperative Power” by Dick Bennett

The Ozark Electric Co-op, Uark Credit Union, Farmers’ Co-op, Ozark Natural Foods, Harp’s Groceries, the Heartwood Art Gallery, a food buying club --Fayetteville nourishes the cooperative movement.

The movement is growing in the US: ACE Hardware, Best Western Hotels, Organic Valley, True Value Hardware are co-cops. Municipalities too: WACCO (Western Area City Council Cooperative), some three dozen municipalities in western Minnesota, pool their buying power. The 30,000 cooperatives in the US have 73,000 places of business, 130 million members, with $653 million in sales, and employing more than two million people (Hightower).

And it is a world movement. The CONACADO Co-operative of the Dominican Republic and the CACVRA Co-operative of Peru sell their organic foods through worker-owned fair-trade Equal Exchange. In Mexico, in 2002 seventy-two cooperative farms run by refugees circled the Calakmul Reserve for their livelihood and protection of the forest.

The several types of co-ops include those owned by workers (11,000 in the US, with 13 million worker-owners), by consumers, by producers, artists, communities. In a spirit of mutuality, they function in every sector of our economy.

Their political significance is also immense: cooperatives offer a starting point for a world politics based in cooperative rather than coercive power. They “do everything a corporation can do, but with a democratic structure, an equitable sharing of income, and a commitment to the common good of the community and future generations” (Hightower). They are the lifeblood of citizenship and citizens working together to make conditions of life better on every level—cities, states, and nation.

No wonder the United Nations named 2012 The International Year of Cooperatives (IYC).

References

Co-opoly: the Game of Cooperatives
New game created by The Toolbox for Education and Social Action (TESA), a worker-owned cooperative. The game is intended to promote worker solidarity during the UN’s IYC. Contact: http://coopolygame.com

More information:
Community Wealth. www.community-wealth.org
Food Co-op Initiative. www.foodcoopinitiative.coop
Green America (formerly Co-Op America), www.greenamerica.org
National Cooperative Bank, www.ncb.com
USDA Rural Cooperative Development Grant Program, www.rurdev.usda.gov/CA-BCPrograms.html
On Sat, Feb 11, 2012 at 1:18 PM, westwind <westwind@westwindstudios.net> wrote:
- show quoted text -