

<Opening Address>  
For University and College Cooperatives

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**Appreciation to the Participants in Attendance**

Thank you, Mr. and Ms. Chairs. Good morning, ladies and gentlemen!

I am happy and indeed very grateful for getting this opportunity to deliver an address at the opening of the first ICA Global Workshop on University/Campus Co-operatives.

I am a sociologist, Professor Emeritus of University of Tokyo and currently hold the academic position of Professor of Global Citizenship Studies at Seisen University, Tokyo.

I am here in my capacity as President of the National Federation of University Co-operative Associations, NFUCA, of Japan, a position on which I am serving since December 2005.

The membership of University Co-operatives in Japan comprises of undergraduate and graduate students, faculty members and other staff and it has been a tradition that the post of the President is held by a faculty member.

I understand that almost one hundred participants from about 15 countries have enrolled for this workshop. I would like to express my appreciation to all of you, especially those from North America, South America and Europe, for making this long and tiresome journey to be here in Singapore.

On behalf of the host organization, I record my deep gratitude to all the participants. At the same time, I take this opportunity to congratulate and express my appreciation to SNCF, and the Campus co-operatives of Singapore for hosting this workshop.

Permit me, ladies and gentlemen, to use this opportunity to brief you on the objectives and the structure of this Workshop, the situation of University Co-operatives in the present era of globalization and my expectations about this Workshop.

## **Background and Objectives of our Workshop**

Let me begin by giving you the background and objectives of this Workshop.

There are a wide variety of student support or student service organizations serving the university/college students around the world.

In Europe, they are mainly Quasi-Governmental organizations, while in North America, such services are predominately offered as a business by the university itself in collaboration with the private sector.

In the Asian region, as in Japan, consumer co-operatives provide on campus student welfare and student support services.

In Asia, university co-operative system is quite advanced and contributes greatly towards facilitating higher education and development of students.

In recent years, youth participation in co-operatives has become a major issue. The need for creating successors through a new generation of co-operators lies in the background of this development. Therefore, in the ensuing ICA General Assembly, we plan to discuss the indispensability of sustained youth participation in co-operative movement. In order to promote this idea, ICA has co-opted a youth representative on its Board and there is already a youth committee in ICA, Asia Pacific Region.

I believe that University Co-operatives, whose membership comprise mostly of students, can play a very important role in promoting youth participation in co-operative movement.

This was the aim with which the ICA Consumer Sub-Committee on University/College Co-operatives for Asia and the Pacific was created in 1994, which includes India, Indonesia, Japan, Malaysia, Philippines, Singapore, Thailand and Vietnam as members.

This global workshop, which is the first one to be held in conjunction with ICA General Assembly, is organized by the Sub-committee.

The primary objectives of this workshop are to promote exchange and interaction between university co-operatives across the globe, to bring together on a common platform the students, faculty, university administrators, co-op staff and all those who are interested in

university/campus co-operatives activities, to learn from each other's experiences and facilitate expanding the university co-operatives in the world.

### **Program of Today's Workshop**

With this background, I shall give you a brief overview of today's program.

This inaugural would be followed by a Plenary Session, where we will hear experiences from Canada, Japan and Malaysia. Canadian presentation will be the experience of co-operative in educational institutions from Quebec region, Japanese presentation will focus on contemporary situation and the role of university co-operatives that came into vogue after the World War II, while Malaysian paper dwells on school co-operatives.

The second plenary which starts after the tea break will have brief country reports that help you understand the situation of university/campus co-operatives in different countries.

During the post lunch session, first you will have presentations on the three chosen topics viz., innovations in university/campus co-operatives, co-operative approach to youth problems, and participation of students in the management of University Co-operatives. After this, the participants will discuss the themes in three separate groups. Then the group reports will be presented in yet another plenary session and resolutions will be passed. The workshop will end with the presentation of certificates.

### **University Co-ops in Japan and its measures coping with the Globalization**

Dear friends, since I am the President of NFUCA, it may not be out of place for me to talk something on University Co-operatives in Japan.

Numerous University Co-operatives were established in Japan after the World War II.

Today, they together have a membership of 1,480,000 individual members and a turnover of over 200 billion yen. There are active cooperatives in almost all major public and private universities. We can say that, the practices of Japanese University Co-ops and citizen co-ops demonstrate that co-operatives can be alternatives to globalized market economies.

Japanese University Co-operatives carry on a great deal of international activities. They have exchange activities with Asian university

co-operatives as well as DSW and CNOUS in Europe, and NACS in USA.

We have learned a lot through our exchange programs with their student support organizations. We have also learned that Japanese and Asian University Co-ops occupy an important place at the global level in supporting students and serving their needs. We take pride with our role in the students' life in the campus.

## **In Closing**

Let me conclude my speech with some of my own observations.

Even though there is a lot of difference between developed and developing countries, I believe that it is possible to create co-operatives that match well and operate suitably in the conditions prevalent in different countries and universities.

The role of universities is to engage in high quality research and nurture talented people who would in turn contribute to the culture, society, country and the world at large. Many students blossom on humane values not just by curricular but also through extra-curricular activities. This is clearly visible among students taking active role in the university co-operatives.

We have many co-operative staff today who have grown into co-operative leaders because as students they took active interest in the activities of university co-operatives.

University co-operatives are, therefore, undoubtedly attractive organizations for nurturing future leaders in the field of cooperation.

We hope this workshop will help you to further understand the role of University Co-ops and facilitate expanding the scope of University Co-operatives in the world.

Thank you very much for your attention!