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Ban highlights role of cooperatives in tackling youth unemployment

International Day of Cooperatives 2011



2 July 2011 –

[Secretary-General](#) Ban Ki-moon today highlighted the role that cooperatives can play in social and economic development, especially in tackling youth unemployment.

In a message for the International Day of Cooperatives, observed annually on 2 July, Mr. Ban notes that youth unemployment is at an all-time high in the wake of the global financial and economic crisis.

“Expanding opportunity through youth entrepreneurship is one way to address this challenge,” he stated, noting that the cooperative model enables young people to create and manage sustainable enterprises.

“Through their distinctive focus on values, cooperatives have proven themselves a resilient and viable business model that can prosper even during difficult times,” Mr. Ban said. They have also continuously provided reliable access to credit and other financial services for small business operators and promoted self-reliance, he added.

In 1992 the General Assembly proclaimed the first Saturday of July each year to be the International Day of Cooperatives, honouring the centenary of the founding of the International Cooperative Alliance.

The theme of this year's observance – which falls during the International Year of Youth – is “Youth, the Future of Cooperatives,” which the Secretary-General noted highlights the enormous value of engaging the energy and drive of young people.

“The active inclusion of young women and men in social and economic development helps reduce social exclusion, improve productive capacity, break cycles of poverty, promote gender equality and raise environmental responsibility,” he stated.

As the world community moves into the International Year of Cooperatives, which will be launched in October, Mr. Ban invited young people to explore the benefits of pursuing cooperative enterprise and other forms of social entrepreneurship, and encouraged the cooperative movement to engage with youth.

“Let us recognize young women and men as valuable partners in strengthening the cooperative movement and in sustaining the role of cooperatives in social and economic development,” he stated.

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