

International Co-operatives Day celebration
2 July 2011
Jan Smuts stadium, East London, Eastern Cape
09:00 – 17:00
Free entrance

1. Background

The International Co-operatives Alliance (ICA) first celebrated International Co-operative Day in 1923. The celebration of International Co-operatives Day was endorsed by the United Nations in 1994 and proclaimed to be celebrated on the first Saturday of July each year in 1995. The UN then requested all its members' governments to support their co-operative movements to celebrate the day. Co-operatives are acknowledged as a form of business that can play a significant role in the economic, social and cultural development. Co-operatives are especially important in alleviating poverty, particularly in rural areas and in both less developed and developing countries. In South Africa co-operatives are increasingly being recognized as a preferred form of business for entrepreneurs, particularly in rural and semi-urban areas.

2. 2011 THEME

The theme for the celebration of International Co-operatives Day is set by the International Co-operative Alliance (ICA) and the United Nations (UN) through the UN Committee for Promotion and Advancement of Co-operatives (COPAC). The 2011 theme is *"Youth the future of Co-operative Enterprise"*

For 2011, the event is aimed at raising awareness to young people about co-operatives as an alternative form of enterprise model which young people can use for their economic, social and cultural development, as well as the attainment of their aspirations. It is important to note that cooperatives can create massive employment opportunities, thus reduce unemployment and underdevelopment amongst youth in the country.

The 2011 theme is specifically relevant for South Africa because unemployment is a major challenge and young people are the largest unemployed population group. During the 2011 budget speech the Finance Minister indicated that 42% of young people between the ages of 18 and 29 are unemployed and Stats SA recently announced that the unemployment rate has increased to 25%.

4. Nature of the 2011 event

International Co-operatives day will be celebrated on the 2 July 2011 at Jan Smuts stadium in East London. There will be an exhibition where co-operatives will get an opportunity to showcase their products and services. Preference will be given to youth-owned co-operatives because of the 2011 theme.

In addition, organisations that support cooperatives, including the partners who are hosting the event, will also exhibit and offer on-site services.

3. Partners hosting the event

The National Youth Development Agency (NYDA), The Department of Trade and Industry (dti), the South African National Apex Tertiary Cooperative (SANACO) and Eastern Cape Province have partnered to host the event.

The partners' involvement is informed by the following:

- The dti has a responsibility to regulate and support cooperatives and cooperatives movements

- The South African National Apex Tertiary Cooperative (SANACO) has a responsibility given to it by cooperatives to represent their interest and defend the cooperative identity from any form of abuse
- The Eastern Cape Province has volunteered to co-host the event
- Given its mandate of supporting entrepreneurs, including co-operatives, and the 2011 theme which focuses on youth, the NYDA has also agreed to partner with the stakeholders

5. Objectives of International Co-operatives Day celebrations

The celebration is designed to bring together co-operatives, young people, government departments and agencies offering support services to co-operatives, and influential persons with the aim of increasing awareness and supporting the optimal development of co-operatives. The following are some of the key objectives of the 2011 International Co-operative Day celebrations:

- Promote the cooperative model among youth as a form of enterprise that they can use to drive their ideas and aspirations
- Strengthen relations between co-operatives and government to work towards an integrated approach in the development of co-operatives
- Create a platform for dialogue amongst co-operatives and representatives from the different tiers of government across the country for a collective effort in advancing and promoting co-operatives through assistance to enhance compliance to regulatory requirements and improved competitiveness of co-operatives
- Contribute to the empowerment of co-operatives, especially youth-owned co-operatives, by creating a public platform for acknowledging the importance of co-operatives
- Provide opportunities for co-operatives to exhibit their products and services
- Join governments and co-operatives across the globe in celebrating International Co-operatives Day.