

CONCEPT NOTE

Building Bridges Through Communication and Advocacy: From Visibility to Influence

16 September 2026 | 14:45–17:15

Panama Convention Center - Room Americas 1 - 2

What can you expect

The cooperative movement stands at a pivotal moment. We have the stories, the impact, and the collective voice but **how do we turn visibility into real influence?** On 16 September 2026, the ICA invites communicators, advocates, and cooperative leaders to a **dynamic double session** that will equip you with the tools to **amplify our narrative, shape policies, and drive systemic change**.

In **"Building Bridges Through Communication: Speak Up, Scale Up!"** (14:45–16:00), we'll **explore the ICA Communications Strategy 2026–2030** through its **five actionable pillars**, showcasing **real-world examples** from ICA's regional and sectoral organizations. This interactive workshop features **lightning talks, peer exchanges, and live pitches**, empowering you to **apply the strategy in your own context**. By the end, you'll co-create **actionable recommendations** for the Conference Declaration.

But communication alone isn't enough. In **"From Visibility to Influence: Positioning Cooperatives for Peace and Sustainable Development"** (16:00–17:15), we'll turn communication into action by exploring how cooperatives can **influence policies, shape regional agendas, and engage in multilateral processes**. Featuring **keynotes, lightning talks, and interactive dialogues** with leaders from **GSEF, the UN, and the Pan-African Parliament**, this session will equip you with strategies to position cooperatives as key actors in global development and Positive Peace. By the end, you'll leave with **clear steps to amplify our collective voice** because influence starts with action.

Together, these sessions will show you how to **connect strategic communication with effective advocacy**, ensuring that cooperatives are not just seen and heard but **recognized as systemic, impactful leaders**. Whether you're a communicator crafting narratives or an advocate shaping policies, this is your chance to **learn, network, and take action**.

Join us on 16 September to speak up, scale up, and build bridges because **the future of cooperatives depends on our ability to turn visibility into influence**. Let's make it happen. Together!

COMMUNICATION SESSION (14:45–16:00)

Building Bridges Through Communication: Speak Up, Scale Up!

14:45 - 14:50 | **Welcome & Icebreaker** by Leire Luengo, ICA Communications Director

14:50 - 15:00 | **ICA Communications Strategy: The Roadmap: Shaping Global Narratives** by Iñigo Albizuri, ICA Communications Committee Chair

Dive into the **ICA Communications Strategy 2026 - 2030**, a **blueprint for positioning cooperatives as systemic, impactful leaders**. Discover how its **five pillars** (from systemic communication to digital governance) can **transform your approach** and amplify the cooperative voice worldwide.

15:00 - 15:25 | **Global Perspectives: Voices from the Field**, moderated by Rebecca Harvey, Co-operative News Chief Editor

Hear from **8 regional and sectoral leaders** as they share **real-world examples** of how the ICA Communications Strategy is being implemented. From **Africa to the Americas**, these **short, powerful interventions** will inspire you to **adapt and apply** these insights in your own context

Region/Sector	Speaker	Facilitator's Intro
ICA Africa	Della Waweru	From ICA Africa, Della Waweru on how neutrality builds trust. Morocco / Kenya (video)
ICA Asia-Pacific	Shivali Sarna	Shivali Sarna from ICA Asia-Pacific on winning the digital narrative.
Coops Europe	Pieter Jan Herman	Pieter Jan Herman on positioning cooperatives as systemic players in Europe. Bold Press Campaigns from several Banking Coops In France (video)
ICA Americas	Patricio Suarez	Patricio Suarez from ICA Americas on crafting a unified message.
CICOPA (Industry & Services)	Francesca Zaganelli	Francesca Zaganelli from CICOPA on democratic digital tools and cooperative identity. Example from Argentina
CHI	Andreea Nacu	Andreea Nacu on using stories to amplify cooperative housing.
IHCO	José Pérez	Advertisement campaigns in big health companies

15:25 - 15:35 | **Your Turn: Pitch Your Campaign** animated by Leire Luengo

15:35 - 15:55 | **Inspiration in Action: Success Stories**, moderated by Tom Ivey, DotCoop Community Development Manager

Explore **four real-world success stories** from cooperatives around the world. From **systemic positioning to digital innovation**, these stories will **empower you to replicate their success** in your own organization.

Speaker	Organisation	Story
Rose Marley	Director, Cooperatives UK	The fact that Andy Burnham, with his Cooperative background, is now Prime Minister creates a unique opportunity to reflect on how cooperative values and ideas can move from the cooperative movement into mainstream public and political debate.
Fabiola da Silva Nader Motta	General Manager of the Organization of Brazilian Cooperatives OCB	Fabiola will share the SomosCoop experience and how they have worked to build a consistent narrative and brand for the cooperative movement in Brazil.
Ms. Zhang Xiaohong	Division Chief, International Cooperation Department, All China Coop Fed	Helen will share the case study of the recent Asia-Pacific Cooperative Youth Summit (APCYS) 5.0, and on examples of how interaction between the youth and more experienced layers of organisations can improve participation and democratic governance.
Godfrey Ng'urah	Managing Director, Coop Bank of Tanzania	Godfrey will share his perspective and offer learnings from the work being done in Tanzania. He will also share some examples of the IYC campaign led by the bank and highlight what cooperatives in Tanzania have been doing to strengthen their cultural and digital spaces.

15:55 - 16:00 | **Synthesis & Call to Action** by Iñigo Albizuri and Leire Luengo

ADVOCACY SESSION (16:00–17:15)

From Visibility to Influence: Positioning Cooperatives for Peace and Sustainable Development

16:00 - 16:05 | **Kickoff: From Communication to Advocacy** by Joseph Njuguna, ICA Director of Policy ICA

Join us as we bridge the gap between communication and advocacy, exploring how strategic messaging can drive policy influence, partnerships, and impact. This interactive introduction sets the stage for turning visibility into action.

16:05 - 16:20 | **Keynote: Social and Solidarity Economy as a Force for Lasting Peace** by Aude Saldana, GSEF Secretary General

Discover how cooperatives and SSE organizations are driving peace and sustainability through the **GSEF Declaration on Lasting Peace**. With **real-world cases from Zahle (Lebanon) and Fairtrade Lebanon**, this keynote will inspire you to **leverage cooperative values for global impact**.

16:20 - 17:00 | **Panel Discussion: Positioning Cooperatives for Greater Influence**

The panel will examine how cooperatives can strengthen their positioning and influence at national, regional and global levels.

- **Communicating Cooperative Impact - Thomas Blondeel, Chair, ICETT**
Presentation of the ICETT Cooperative Benefits Report and reflections on how cooperatives can better communicate their impact to members, communities, society and governments, strengthening their visibility and influence at the national level.
- **Positioning Cooperatives with the ILO – Maaret Cañedo Lohikoski, Regional Officer for Policy Coherence and Partnerships, ILO**
The ILO's work with cooperatives, including their contribution to peacebuilding and post-conflict reconstruction, and how cooperatives can strengthen their engagement with the ILO, make strategic use of ILO Recommendation No. 193 (R.193) on the Promotion of Cooperatives, and advocate for greater support from governments.
- **Positioning Cooperatives with the UN - Andrew Allimadi, Social Affairs Officer, UNDESA**
Reflections on cooperatives' engagement and positioning within the United Nations, including the International Year of Cooperatives, the Sustainable Development Goals, the High-level Political Forum, COPAC, Voluntary National Reviews and upcoming global processes, including the post-2030 agenda discussions and 2027 SDG Summit.
- **Cooperatives in the G20 and Multilateral Policy Processes - Doug O'Brien, President, NCBA Clusa**
Reflections on how cooperatives can strengthen their voice and positioning within the G20 and other multilateral processes and policy forums.

17:00 - 17:10 | **Interactive Dialogue: Your Turn to Shape the Future**

17:10 - 17:15 | **Synthesis & Call to Action: From Insight to Impact**