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accu

news



ACCU Board: commencing governance review

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ACCU BOARD: (L-R) *Ranjith Hettiarachchi, CEO-Ex Officio, Dr. M. Letchumanan, Treasurer, Mr. Supachai Srisupaaksorn, President, Mr. Walis Pelin, 1st Vice-President, and Mr. Michael Koisen, Secretary*

Following the recommendation of the General Meeting to review the bylaws of ACCU, the 58th Board Meeting on March 12, 2006 approved the proposal of the management to engage a professional consultant for the governance review. "ACCU is a model for Asian credit unions and we should demonstrate that we are governing our organization professionally and in tune with the current business environment," said Mr. Supachai Srisupaaksorn, President.

The board recognizes that each credit union organization like ACCU, has to think carefully about today's realities and ask how a board can meet its responsibilities; given increased organizational murkiness and the changing business environment. Boards can

now think of strategies that will improve their governance system and improve efficiency at the same time.

It could be recalled that the last review of the bylaws was in 1996, well known as "ACCU: To be or not to be?" It was carried out by a Board appointed Overall Planning Committee composed of representatives from WOCCU, ICA-ROAP, one member of the Board, and a representative from a member organization.

Kelly Bottone, President of the Frameworks for Change, Canada is engaged by the Board. Bottone, an expert in the field of credit union governance, had also carried out same exercise for second tier credit union organizations. In 2005, Kelly did a governance review for two credit unions in the Philippines under CUBSEA (Credit Union Benchmarking Service in Southeast Asia), a project supported by the Canadian Co-operative Association (CCA). "I know Kelly will do a great job for ACCU," said CCA's Kathleen Speake. CCA supports the Board's initiative. In fact in a letter sent to ACCU, Speake praised the Board of Directors for their decision to submit the organization in the governance review.

"An efficient and effective governance structure will consider returns on management time, return on board time, organizational stability and leadership," said Ranjith Hettiarachchi, CEO. He continued saying that as membership continue to grow, expectations of the organization also grows. The review is now commencing and Kelly's report will be presented to the Board in September 2006.

president's corner

meet the new President of ACCU



Assuming the highest leadership role in Asian credit unions on March 2, 2006, Mr. Supachai Srisupaaksorn considered the responsibility more challenging and rewarding. A prominent credit union and community leader in Thailand, Mr. Supachai has more than 23 years involvement in credit union. His voluntary attachment to credit union started in 1983 when he co-founded Chumchon Klongchan Credit Union.

He had participated in several training programs of ACCU under the project of Institutional Development of Credit Unions (INDECUA). With an open mind, he accepted reforms introduced by the program. He led his Board to the vision of being the "Best of the Best" credit union in Thailand. As President of Chumchon

Klongchan Credit Union, Mr. Supachai introduced changes and modernization in management upgrading its rank to No. 1 in assets in 2005. Many credit union leaders in Asia had visited Chumchon and witnessed how the credit union has fulfilled its responsibility to members while maintaining professionalism, safety and soundness.

No doubt he earned leadership respect in Thailand and Asia demonstrated by having been elected to primary leadership role in the movement. He was the 1st Vice-President of the Executive Committee and Chairman of the Executive Committee of the Credit Union League of Thailand (CULT). He is the current President of CULT since 2003. He had since become ACCU Treasurer in 2000 and 1st Vice-President from 2004-2005 and elevated to the rank of President assuming the position vacated by Dr. Augustine K. Lim of Korea. Mr. Supachai is also a committee member of the Asian Women in Cooperative Forum.

In recognition of Mr. Supachai's outstanding community involvement, several awards were bestowed by the Royal Thai Government. Among others were the Outstanding Community Leader 1983; Excellent Service to Public 1984; Outstanding Youngest Head of Village in 1994 and Medal of Honor from His Majesty the King Bhumibol Adulyadej in 1987 and 1997.

Mr. Supachai is a Development Educator. He graduated from the Australian Development Education Program in October 2005. He earned a Bachelor's Degree on Arts and Law from Ramkhamhaeng University.

"I will do my best to support ACCU to ensure that best services are provided to members. As a President, I think it is important to have a professional and productive relationship with management and other directors," said Mr. Supachai.

editorial



Another exciting Asian Credit Union Forum awaits us in Sri Lanka this coming September 21-23, 2006. This year's theme is **The Challenges of Leadership in Credit Union Management**.

We recognize that serving as a board member is one of the most challenging and rewarding volunteer assignments. While appointment or election to a board is an honor, board members have important legal and fiduciary responsibilities that require a commitment of time, skill, and resources. Prospective and current board members do themselves a service and show that they are serious about the commitments they make, but it is important to know some basic issues while in a credit union board. These basic issues board must be aware of are topics that would be discussed in the forum.

Attention to five key requirements for effective and efficient boards can make all the difference: the **information** furnished to directors, the **independence** with which directors can operate, the **commitment** of directors to the organization's needs, **processes** used in conducting the board's work, and the **competencies** of the board and each of the directors.

We encourage you to participate in the forthcoming Asian Credit Union Forum because stimulating discussions are anticipated.

ten-point recommendation

meant for the future of Asian credit unions



RELAXED MOOD: CEOs take time out at Batu Caves in Kuala Lumpur after the two days hard work.

The Workshop on Global Challenges of Credit Unions was another landmark for CEOs united move in responding the future realities. As the environment becomes more complex and competitive, credit unions need to seize a bold action to counter the negative effects to credit unions.

CEOs recognized that a system of governance must reflect and reinforce cooperation. Credit unions must continuously earn the loyalty of their members and the nature and evolution of the credit union's governance is critical to this development. They reiterated that a strong bond characterized by a trade association and business relationship at all levels should be present to ensure that benefits would trickle down to individual members guaranteeing sustainability of the credit union system.

Understanding, accepting and practicing the credit union difference and advantage was emphasized as key to the formation and the ongoing development and success of any credit union. The CEOs appreciated the credit union difference – that the structure of a credit union is unique and different from private and public business enterprises. In accepting the credit union difference, it logically follows that this uniqueness creates a credit union advantage.

It was realized that increasing competition is a major threat to credit unions and unless credit unions can meet this competition, they will end up in down-turn spirals of decreasing volumes of business, deteriorating profitability of their operations, reduced capacity to pay remunerative and competitive prices and provide useful services to their members, continued flight of members,

still further decline in volumes of business. It was clear in the workshop that there is no reason why a credit union should not be efficient and business-like. As a consensus, the CEOs agreed to demonstrate their commitment by working in spirit of unity and cooperation.

The ten point-recommendations culminated the two days brainstorming. The recommendations are: 1) establishment of stabilization fund 2) establishment of responsible corporate governance 3) promotion of the use of technology for efficiency 4) promotion of ACCESS Branding 5) professionalization of credit union operation 6) creation of monitoring unit at the national federation 7) development of product brand 8) promotion of Credit Union Directors Competency Course 9) development of Credit Union Managers Competency Course and 10) and forging strong partnership and solidarity among ACCU member organizations. In support of the initiatives, the CEOs signed a statement of recommendations subsequently shared with all the CEOs.

The CEOs Workshop on Global Challenges for Credit Unions was organized in Holiday Villas, Subang, Malaysia on March 9-12 hosted by the Workers Co-operative Credit Society Ltd. The CEOs normally meet in conjunction with Asian Credit Union Forum in September. The CEOs requested organizing additional workshop sometime between March-June as many issues need to be placed on the table.

CEOs recognized that a system of governance must reflect and reinforce cooperation. Credit unions must continuously earn the loyalty of their members and the nature and evolution of the credit union's governance is critical to this development.

CEOs' Workshop

"Global Challenges of Credit Unions"

March 10-12, 2006, Holiday Villa, Subang, Malaysia

RECOMMENDATION

We the participants of the CEOs Workshop on Global Challenges of Credit Unions held in the Holiday Villa, Subang, Malaysia on March 10-12, 2006 examined the challenges of credit unions in the present market environment and its negative impacts on the sustainability of credit unions in Asia.

The workshop hosted by the Workers' Co-operative Credit Society Ltd. was attended by the following member organizations of ACCU:

1. Cooperative Credit Union League of Bangladesh
2. Cambodian Community Savings Federation
3. Development Promotion Group
4. USC-Nepal
5. Workers Co-operative Credit Society
6. Vacoas Popular Multi-Purpose Cooperative Society
7. Philippine Federation of Credit Cooperatives
8. Credit Union League of Thailand Ltd.
9. Federation of Savings and Credit Cooperatives of Thailand
10. Credit Union League of the Republic of China

After attending the workshop, we recognized that a system of governance must reflect and reinforce co-operation. Credit unions must continuously earn the loyalty of their members and the nature and evolution of the credit union's governance is critical to this development.

We reiterated that a strong bond characterized by a trade association and business relationship at all levels should be present to ensure that benefits would trickle down to individual members and that would assure sustainability of the credit union system.

We emphasized that understanding, accepting and practicing the credit union difference and advantage is the key to the formation and the ongoing development and success of any credit union. The CEOs appreciate the credit union difference – that the structure of a credit union is unique and different from private and public business enterprises. In accepting the credit union difference, it logically follows that this difference creates a credit union advantage.

We realized that increasing competition is a major threat to credit unions and unless credit unions can meet this competition, we will end up in down-turn spirals of

decreasing volumes of business, deteriorating profitability of their operations, reduced capacity to pay remunerative and competitive prices and provide useful services to their members, continued flight of members, still further decline in volumes of business.

We also realized that there is no reason why a credit union should not be efficient and business-like. As a consensus, we agreed to demonstrate our commitment by working spirit of unity and cooperation.

We, the CEOs after attending the Workshop on the Global Challenges of Credit Unions concluded that ACCU and its member organizations in Asia work in spirit of cooperation and solidarity to counter the effects of the challenges brought by the competitive market environment. In this regard, the CEOs unanimously adopted following recommendations:

1. Forge a strong brand name with solidly shared vision and a clear member-oriented mission. In this respect, application of ACCESS Branding will be started at the national federation with the mind of consistent promotion to the member credit unions.
2. Establish responsible corporate governance to ensure the financial stability of member credit unions. ACCU and national federations will work closely to establish the Stabilization Fund program.
3. Promote the use of technology to provide excellent service to members by cooperating with other credit unions in establishing Information Technology center. The national federation seeks every opportunity to identify cost effective strategy on IT application.
4. It is crucial for credit unions to undertake regulatory responsibility by creating Monitoring Unit at the national federation. ACCU and its member organizations focus on this area to prepare framework and operational standards in monitoring credit unions.
5. Professionalization of management operations by putting in place policies, systems and procedures for operations of credit unions.
6. Develop and repackage products and services of credit unions ensuring that they meet the needs of members.

This would mean an active promotion and advocacy of the compelling promise of the benefits of the credit union's products and services using internal and external communications. ACCU and national federations would work closely to emphasize the credit union difference and promote brand names of credit union products.

7. Develop knowledgeable and involved Boards through the Credit Union Directors Competency Course (CUDCC) and continuing professional education program. The review of the CUDCC modules is vital to ensure that the course is evolving according to the needs and current situation.
8. Develop competent Managers of credit unions through the Credit Union Manager's Competency Course (CUMCC). ACCU with inputs from members develops training manual to standardize the course, while the national federation would ensure its consistent

application to their respective movements.

9. Provide platform to national federation to continuously lobby with the regulators for enabling policy environment of credit unions.
10. Cooperate with other federations through ACCU to forge cooperation in undertaking that promotes safety and soundness of credit unions i.e. technology, insurance, guarantee scheme and human resource development.

In demonstration of our commitment, solidarity and renewed spirit of our dedication to credit union development, we the participants of the CEOs' Workshop on the Global Challenges of Credit Unions in Asia affixed our signatures in the above recommendation on this 12th day of March 2006 in Subang, Malaysia.

Twenty Credit Union Professionals in CULT turned IT Smarts

The twenty participants (10 CULT and 10 credit union staff) turned IT smarts gladly shared their learnings to their board and managers at the closing program of the 100-day IT@coops training held from October 10, 2005 to March 25, 2006 in CULT Thailand. The main objective of the training was to qualify members of cooperatives in the field of ICT, establish ICT Business Development Center (ICT-BDC) and establish virtual network of cooperatives under the umbrella organization.

The 24-module training curriculum was divided into Technical Skill and Soft Skill training conducted by the English and Computer College (ECC), a well known training institute in Thailand. The participants gained skills in all Microsoft applications, Data base management, Web Design and development, Web Applications, E-learning, Introduction to E-commerce, PC hardware/software maintenance, advance hardware and software maintenance, and setting up local area network. The soft skill training provided participants broader knowledge on IT concept, training, gender, Business Development Center, technology exchange and management of BDC-ICT.

The closing program featured exhibition of projects completed by the participants such as website designs, e-commerce and various graphical designed marketing materials. The staff of the credit unions indicated that their first project was website development of their own credit union.

Participants remarkably shared that they have discovered the power of technology in communicating to their members and



CULT's IT SMARTS: Twenty graduates of the IT@coops training proudly display their certificates at the closing program of the training on March 25 in Bangkok.

improving the business of the credit union. The participants will now serve as trainers to multiply the skills to other credit unions. "CULT will provide support to participating credit unions in establishing the ICT-BDCs," said the General Manager of CULT, Sahaphon Sangmek.

The training was sponsored by the Asian Women Cooperative Forum (AWCF) with the financial support of InWent in Germany. The same training was also carried out with AWCF's members: National Confederation of Cooperatives in the Philippines and Formasi in Indonesia.

*By Ms. Wandee Panyavannasiri
IT Coordinator, CULT.*

Promising Credit Union Movements: Continuing quest for knowledge



PARTICIPANTS with the guests of the opening program: ACCU President Supachai Srisupaaksorn (3rd from left); ACCU Recognition Awardee, Dr. Amporn Wattanawongs (4th from left); FSCT, Dr. Sawat Saengbangpla (5th from left); and FSCT GM Anan Chatrurachewin (6th from left)

It may not be called a developing movement but rightly can be described as promising credit union movements are taking double time to advance their development. For four consistent years, ACCU has given priority to provide learning opportunities to these credit union movements.

The fourth Indo China Advance Training program was organized in Thailand on January 23 to 27, 2006 attended by twenty-five participants from 8 countries such as Iran, Pakistan, Mauritius, Myanmar, Lao PDR, Mongolia, Cambodia and Russia. Along with Cordaid, the Netherlands, the Federation of Savings and Credit Cooperatives of Thailand (FSCT) provided financial support to the program. FSCT President, Dr. Sawat Saengbangpla, speaking at the opening of the workshop said it is their commitment to care for other credit union movements.

The training was focused on developing the human resource of Credit Unions in economies in transition. Iranian and Mauritian participants from large credit unions wanted to learn from the other Asian counterparts. The diversity of experience and knowledge stimulated learning besides the inputs provided at the workshop, said Ranjith. The participants were inspired and motivated in the field visit to Chumchom Klong Chan Credit Union, FSCT and the Credit Union League of Thailand (CULT).

Sri Lankan Leaders Visited Thai CUs

Ten leaders from SANASA-Sri Lanka participated in the Exposure Program in Thailand on February 4-9. Professional management, innovation of products and services and growth strategies were among the best practices shared by



the host credit unions and federations (CULT and FSCT). Thamassat Savings & Credit Cooperative and Chumchon Klong Chan Credit Union were among those that played hosts to the study tour.

Philippines:

Replace Director who Fails to Undergo CUDCC

"I wish to commend ACCU for providing us with the Credit Union Directors Competency Course (CUDCC)," indicated by the Chairman of the Philippine Federation of Credit Cooperatives (PFCCO) to a letter sent to ACCU. He said his involvement in the Metro South Cooperative Bank, a leading cooperative bank in the Philippines introduced him to banking discipline, a strict ordinance imposed by the Central Bank of the Philippines. The ordinance requires bank directors to submit themselves to Good Governance and Risk Management Course conducted by an accredited institution. Failure to do so will empower the board to replace the director who fails to fulfill such requirement.

Fr. Arenas shared the General Assembly of his credit union unanimously approved when he proposed the same rule of the bank for directors. This move was approved by the Cooperative Development Authority (CDA), the regulatory body for credit cooperatives. "I echoed this development to all our member leagues and primaries as well as to other federations and unions, and now their General Assemblies have approved such measures to be implemented," said Fr. Mar. "For this reason, I believe it will now be easy for us to implement CUDCC because it fills the need for such course," continued Fr. Mar.

PFCCO and NATCCO are seeking accreditation to conduct the compulsory course for credit union directors from CDA. Under the draft Savings and Credit Cooperative Regulation, directors of credit cooperatives must undergo a compulsory director course and that failure to comply is a ground for removal.

PFCCO and NATCCO have gained extra mile by implementing CUDCC before the execution of the regulation.

Bangladesh Credit Union Forum: Embracing CUDCC & ACCESS

The Cooperative Credit Union League of Bangladesh (CCULB) in collaboration with ACCU, Federation of Savings and Credit Cooperatives of Thailand, Credit Union Central of Canada (CUCC) and Rabobank Foundation organized the Credit Union Forum in Bangladesh on the theme Branding Credit Unions on February 25 to 27 in Cox's Bazaar. Three hundred seventy five delegates from across Bangladesh attended the conference. ACCESS Branding and the Credit Union Directors Competency Course were presented at the conference by ACCU.

The Forum culminated with the signing of the Cox's Bazaar Declaration aimed at strengthening credit unions in Bangladesh. The declaration stated that leaders have realized there is no reason why a credit union should not be efficient and business-like. As a consensus, leaders agreed to demonstrate their commitment by working in spirit of unity and cooperation. It is noteworthy that PEARLS-GOLD, CUDCC, and ACCESS are among the 10 major areas given priority in the declaration. The Annual General Meeting of CCULB was also held in conjunction with the Forum on February 28 approving the national policy for CUDCC as a requirement for elected boards and adopting ACCESS as widely accepted brand for Bangladesh credit unions.

International guests at the forum: 1st Vice-President of the Credit Union Central of Canada and Director & Immediate Chairman of WOCCU, Bobby McVeigh; FSCT President, Dr. Sawat Saengbangpla; FSCT General Manager, Anan Chatruracheewin; ACCU CEO, Ranjith Hettiarachchi; Manager Member Services, Leni San Roque; Rabobank Foundation Frank Bakx and Wilfred Klaassen hailed the leadership's decision to adopt CUDCC as compulsory training for all credit union directors. They said there is no reason for credit unions not to succeed. Setting the tone for bringing progress to the movement is a big step for CCULB, said ACCU CEO, Ranjith Hettiarachchi. CCULB President, Jonas Dhaki thanked the leaders for their overwhelming support in approving major transformations for the movement.



BDC GIFT: Business Development Center coordinator, Krisna presents a token of appreciation to Bobby McVeigh while CCULB President, Jonas Dhaki looks on. CCULB has also established BDC to support entrepreneurial poor businesses.

McVeigh emphasizes value of prudential regulation

The 1st Vice-Chair of CUCC and Director & Immediate Chairman of WOCCU, L.R. Bobby McVeigh emphasized the importance of prudential regulations for savings and credit cooperatives (SACCOS) during a brief meeting with the regulators in Nepal. He indicated that enabling policy environment was one of the key success factors in the Canadian credit union system. "The short visit to Nepal (March 1-5) helped me better understand the environment ACCU is serving," said McVeigh. During his term as President of WOCCU, he visited



McVeigh thanking a little girl who presented him a bouquet of flower in one of the visits to SACCOS.

member organizations of ACCU such as Hong Kong, Thailand, and Taiwan. He was in Bangladesh prior to the Nepal trip. Addressed as Canadian credit union Ambassador, a title given by leaders of credit unions in Asia, McVeigh has demonstrated his commitment to support the Asian credit unions. "You just have to ask for it," said McVeigh. McVeigh has two scheduled trips to Asia for the 8th DE Workshop in June and the Asian Credit Union Forum in Sri Lanka in September 2006.

more than a year after earthquake and tsunami:

Credit Union Offices Built in Nias Island



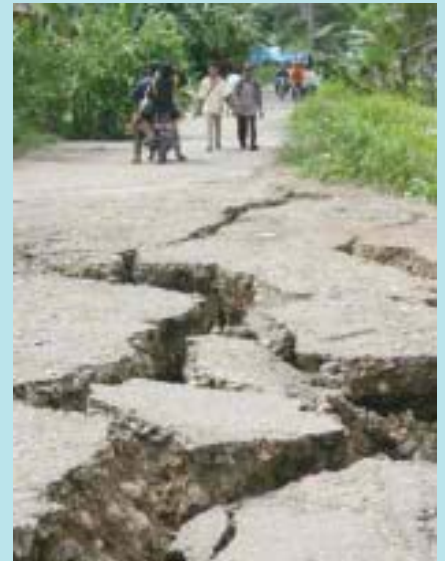
ROLE TO PLAY FOR CUs: *Fater Hems, coordinator of the Rehabilitation program, Abat Elias, CUCO General Manager and P.M. Sitanggang, CUCO President acknowledge the big role of credit unions in rebuilding lives in Nias Island.*

Eighteen strong credit unions are operating in Nias Island. Not surprisingly, these credit unions were severely affected by the earthquake and tsunami. ACCU and CUCO Indonesia representatives met Fater Hems Adrinus, a volunteer spiritual leader in the Island who is coordinating the rehabilitation program for credit unions. He was able to mobilize funds, including the contributions from ACCU's member organizations to construct four credit union offices. The first release of the funds from ACCU was able to finance the construction of one credit union office.

"The damage in the Island is extremely heart breaking. There were buildings practically swallowed by the earth," said the ACCU CEO Ranjith Hettiarachchi. After the visit, ACCU has released the

balance of the approved grant for CUCO. "The funds will be used to build another credit union office and acquire office equipment for 6 credit unions," said the General Manager of CUCO, Mr. Abat Elias. The support of the Asian credit union movement is a great help to rebuild credit unions continued Abat. The President of CUCO, Mr. P.M. Sitanggang, who also joined the mission, said credit unions can play a major role in rebuilding people's lives in the disaster stricken Island.

The December 26, 2004 tsunami devastated lives on Nias Island. Three months later the 700,000 residents were further subjected to a horrific earthquake measuring 8.7 on the Richter Scale. This disaster accentuated the already frail communities, killing 850 people, injuring 16,992 and destroying or badly damaging 39,142 houses. The islands of Nias and Simeulue off the western coast of Sumatra bore the brunt of the quake, which was only 100 miles from the epicenter of the horrific Dec. 26 earthquake.



Two New Affiliate Members Join ACCU Family

Applications of two Affiliate Members were approved by the Board of Directors in its March 12 board meeting in Malaysia.

Samen-Al-Aemeh Credit Cooperative is Iran's largest credit cooperative with total assets of US\$ 555 million and 320 branches across Iran. Samen is one of the founding members of the Central Credit Cooperatives Union of Iran, also an affiliate member. By implementation of modern E-banking system in all branches, Samen CC provides financial services to more than 2 million depositors through its branches. Up to March 2005, Samen has created 1,636 job opportunities for people. In respect of sustainable human resources, Samen CC has facilitated high-education opportunities to its more than 700 employees.

SAMEN became the third Affiliate Member of ACCU in Iran after

Mol-Movahedin Credit Union and Central Credit Cooperatives Union of Islamic Republic of Iran.

Mauritius Cooperative Savings and Credit League Ltd. (MACOSCLE) is the secondary organization for credit unions. MACOSCLE provides high quality education and training services well regarded by its members. Vacoas Popular Multi-Purpose Cooperative, an Affiliate member, affiliated with MACOSCLE endorsed the membership bearing in mind that the learning they would gain from networking with ACCU would enhance the development of credit unions in Mauritius.

The roster of Affiliate membership of ACCU has risen to 17 after the acceptance of Samen-Al-Aemeh Credit Cooperative and MACOSCLE. Unlike regular members (only for national federation), Affiliates can participate at the Annual General Meeting without voting rights.

The Philippine Setting Co-op Branding

The Philippine Federation of Credit Cooperatives (PFCCO) and the National Confederation of Cooperatives (NATCCO) are launching the cooperative branding for their network on April 27-28 and May 26-28, 2006 respectively.

The PFCCO launching, entitled *Benchmarking towards Branding: Cooperative Business Excellence Solutions* is aimed at introducing the ACCESS brand and share best practices of cooperatives adopting world class strategies for safety and soundness. The annual education program usually draws more than 300 attendees from PFCCO network according to PFCCO General Manager Dave Pajaron, Jr. For the last 45 years, the forum received good response from PFCCO members.

Meanwhile, NATCCO would be welcoming co-op leaders, staff members, partners and friends to the 18th National Co-op Leaders' Congress and 29th NATCCO General Assembly to be held in Cebu City. The theme of the congress is *Branding Asian Savings and Credit Cooperatives: the Philippine Setting*.

"We aim to encourage savings and credit co-ops to undergo branding – a business process that is planned strategically focused and integrated throughout the organization," said NATCCO Chief Executive Officer, Cris Paez. He underscored that ACCESS branding NATCCO would be introducing to its members gives careful attention on reaching the best practices on the key success factors, such as, financial viability, operational efficiency, knowledgeable and involved board, competitive position, employee

and member satisfaction. It may also be recalled that in 2005, PFCCO and NATCCO joined hands in organizing just one educational forum. It was warmly supported by credit unions in both federations. Pajaron and Paez are still looking for the best opportunity of organizing a single forum in the future.

Launched in 2005, ACCESS (A-1 Competitive Choice for Excellence in Service and Soundness) is a brand developed by the Asian credit union movement. PFCCO and NATCCO were the second to launch the brand after Bangladesh. The Credit Union League of Thailand (CULT) is also making preparations for a workshop intended to orient leaders on ACCESS Brand reported CULT General Manager Sahaphon Sangmek. Sahaphon said it would be followed by an ACCESS diagnostics of CULT and four pilot credit unions.



Agriterra Upholds Higher Quality Financial Planning & Reporting

Agriterra, a development organization in Netherlands, organized the FinBase Follow-up Workshop for its Asian partners on February 14-15 in Thailand. The immediate objective of the workshop is an improved understanding by partner organizations of their present financial management position and ways to improve them. In the short term, this result to improved planning and financial procedures and a higher quality of financial planning and reporting according to national and/or international standards. Being efficient and effective organization requires an unambiguous mission, a tight planning of actions, and a skilful monitoring of activities, people and results. At the same time it is required that it develops suitable instruments for planning, monitoring and evaluation, both the financial as the substantial or real work part of it.

The program's long-term objective is to strengthen the financial (and resource base) of farmers' or people's organizations by means

of the implementation of phased action plans and the mobilization of adequate human and technical resources. ACCU CEO Ranjith Hettiarachchi and Leni San Roque, Manager Member Services were co-facilitators with Agriterra Projects Officer Erni Wingerden during the two days workshop.



Erni Wingerden

Agriterra's goal is to promote, facilitate and support lasting cooperation linkages between rural people's organizations in the Netherlands and in developing countries. Agriterra is ACCU's development partner since 1998. For its contribution to credit union development in Asia, ACCU bestowed Agriterra with Recognition Award presented at the Asian Credit Union Forum in Korea in 2004. Agriterra also supports NEFSCUN Nepal and CCSF Cambodia.

Partnership:

CCA-ACCU 2-decade partnership



L-R: Jim Barr, CCA Volunteer, Ranjith Hettiarachchi, ACCU CEO and JoAnne Fergusson, CCA Director, International Development in the recent visit to ACCU office in Thailand.

The consultation meeting with Ms. JoAnne Fergusson, Senior Director, International Development and Mr. Jim Barr, Volunteer of the Canadian Co-operative Association (CCA) on February 13 discussed the Asian Credit union issues and development as well as the on-going partnership with ACCU.

CEO Ranjith Hettiarachchi made a presentation on the credit union system in Asia, their challenges and the assistance provided by ACCU. “Jim is now aware of the strong co-ordination among Asian credit union organizations and the contribution that ACCU makes to their on-going development,” said Ferguson. She informed Ranjith that CCA is encouraging their staff and volunteers to stopover ACCU whenever they are visiting Asia. It is a way of educating them of the important role ACCU is playing in the region and the tremendous assistance to Asian credit unions.

On January 28, CCA’s Program Manager Bohdan Kozy was in ACCU discussing the current project on Benchmarking Service in Southeast Asia (CUBSEA). Meanwhile, CCA’s Program Officer Sarah Shima also stopped over to ACCU on March 14. “It is a great opportunity for ACCU to receive CCA staff. It has mutual benefits that ultimately trickle down to our members,” said Ranjith. Shima is planning to organize an exposure program for CCA’s Indian partners to CULT’s Business Development Center.

CCA and ACCU have long outstanding partnership of more than 20 years. Three technical persons from CCA will be participating as speakers in the forthcoming Asian Credit Union Forum. In 2002, ACCU bestowed the Recognition Award to CCA for its on-going contribution to credit union development in Asia.

MOCCU CEO Turns Credit Union Regulator

“I am writing you that I have been honored to be invited as head of the Policy & Regulatory Department of the Financial Regulatory Commission (FRC) of Mongolia, which I have accepted,” said the Mongolian Confederation of Credit Unions’ CEO, Jargalsaikhan. Established by the decree of the Parliament of Mongolia on January 25, 2006, the department intends to support financial and market regulation. FRC’s main activities are licensing, regulating and supervising non-bank financial institutions including insurance, capital market and leasing services provider companies, non-bank financial institutions and savings and credit cooperatives.

“As you may imagine, this was not an easy decision, as the contact person of ACCU in Mongolia and my involvement in cooperation with ACCU were extremely rewarding and challenging experience,” said Jargal. “I wish to express my gratitude for the excellent relations we established throughout these years and to all the support I got from you,” indicated

Jargal in his letter to ACCU. Jargal believes that his relationship with ACCU will continue to grow with his new position as regulator for savings and credit cooperatives. “I see lot of room for continuing relation in my new capacity. I will continue to work with credit unions and support them on behalf of the government and state of Mongolia,” affirmed Jargal.

MOCCU, an affiliate member of ACCU, is a young credit union movement started in 1998. ACCU is consistently offering training opportunities and technical assistance to professionalize the operation of credit unions.





OUTSTANDING CONTRIBUTION FROM CEOs



Greetings My Friends:

Congratulations regarding another successful CEOs workshop on behalf of Credit Union members throughout Asia, I have long respected the outstanding contribution from the ACCU CEOs and these recommendations reflect your dedication to the future of credit unions in Asia.

We have just had the pleasure of Baigalmaa attending Aussie DE and she tells me that the Manual for CUDCC has been translated into Mongolian language and they are ready to go forward with Director Training. We hope that by now all of the National Federations will have taken steps to commence the course so that we have Directors qualifying themselves for the responsibilities of member representation. I am looking forward to traveling to Bangkok in June for Asian DE and the CUDCC Workshop.

Kindest regards: Bill Field-DE and ALMI

INVITATION FROM INDIA



Dear Mr. Ranjith,

Let me thank you, Ms. Leni and other members of ACCU and all the CEOs for the excellent co-operation and also I especially thank you and Ms. Leni for conducting the CEO's conference meticulously. This is the first time I attended the CEO's conference and hereafter, I have decided to attend the same whenever the same is held. I now

invite your kind attention to the open request which I placed in the meeting to all the CEO to hold the 2007 meeting at Chennai. I do hope you will agree with me and get it approved in the next CEO's meeting at Sri Lanka. **Thanking you with kind regards,**
R. Bhakther Solomon, Executive Director-Dev't Promotion Group

NEW DEVELOPMENT EDUCATOR



Dear Ranjith,

First of all thank you very much for giving me a chance to attend the Australia DE Workshop this March. I had a wonderful time during the training and learned a lot from my fellow members of the groups. Also I had a lot of sight seeing with Uncle Bill after the workshop. By the way I played golf in Jubilee Golf Club in

Wangaratta and people still remember you. You left a lot of memories. I returned home safe and sound on 29th of March and now having meetings, meetings and meetings. I would like to inform you that I am asked by International Labour Office to make a presentation at the Stakeholders Meeting of United Nations to be held in Shanghai in May. So my DE workshop was just in time. Now I am working on my presentation on Rural Unemployment and Cooperatives in Mongolia. Regarding CUDCC training we have finished the translation of materials to Mongolian and now on editing stage, the first pilot training is scheduled on 14-18 April in Darhan province. Daria will do the training together with me.

Best regards, Baigalmaa-DE, Mongolia

CUDCC TRAIN THE TRAINERS



Dear Friends,

It is good to hear from you people! Regarding the CUDCC, we in PFCCO through Mabel and Charlie have successfully completed the CUDCC Trainers Training. We have 37 trainers who can assist the two master trainers in the conduct of CUDCC in the Philippines. We will be implementing the program in concurrence with the

new rules and regulation in our country which requires all elected directors to undergo training. It is indeed very timely to have CUDCC. Rest assured that we will be always grateful to ACCU and to Mr. Bill Field for finalizing such an important development (CUDCC Trainers Manual).

Thanks and more power,

Dave Pajaron, Jr.-PFCCO General Manager

The Association of Asian Confederation of Credit Unions is an alliance of national credit union leagues, federations and promotion centers of Asian countries. ACCU works in partnership with members to strengthen and promote credit unions as effective instruments for socioeconomic development of the people.

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