



MARKING THE CO-OPERATIVE WEEK 2017 AND THE 23rd UN INTERNATIONAL DAY OF CO-OPERATIVES

“Co-operatives ensure no one is left behind”

A. Background

The international co-operative alliance has adopted this year’s theme for the international cooperative day thus; - *“Co-operatives ensure no one is left behind”*. This theme is in tune with the global sustainable development goals (SDGs) and the increasing realisation that the current neo-liberal economic policy framework has increased inequalities in the world. In his farewell speech to the UN General Assembly in September 2016, President Barack Obama of the United States of America said “a world where 1% of humanity controls as much as the bottom 99% will never be stable”. Oxfam international in a series and reports on the growing inequality in the world recognised that by 2015 while global wealth had hit a staggering \$255 trillion over 50% of this wealth is in the hands of 1%. Eight men own the same wealth as the poorest half of the world.

In a similar Oxfam report on inequality in Uganda released in 2017, glaring inequalities exist and are increasing. The report dubbed *“Who is Growing”* found out that while Uganda has experienced an average GDP growth of 6% per annum since 1990, income inequalities has increased tremendously since 1990 to the extent that the richest 10% of the population of this country enjoy 35.7% of national income while the poorest 10% claim a meagre 2.5% and the poorest 20% have only 5.8% income. The growth is mainly in industry and services often financed by foreign direct investments. While agriculture employs about 70% of the population the same sector contributes only 25% of the GDP. The country is having a non-inclusive growth in which the majority does not benefit from the said growth. No wonder the country collects most of her revenue from urban centres like Kampala Capital City and Wakiso districts. The implication is that the money economy of Uganda is largely limited to urban centres, leaving the majority rural folks in desperate poverty.

By the very nature co-operatives worldwide are private businesses that promotes inclusive growth through mobilisation of members to take collective responsibility, increase production, saving and investments for the good of the members and the community they live in. Therefore, the cooperative movement is probably the one most relevant infrastructure for actualising inclusive, equitable economic development as expressed in the United Nations Agenda 2030 for sustainable development. Cooperatives are governed by popular values and principles that recognizes and promotes the active participation of and adding value to the livelihood and

wellbeing of member cooperators and their families. Below are the seven international principles of the cooperative movement.

The 7 International Co-operative Principles:

1. Voluntary & Open Membership
2. Democratic Member Control
3. Member Economic Participation
4. Autonomy and Independence
5. Education, Training & Information
6. Cooperation Among Cooperatives
7. Concern for Community

Over the last three years The Uhuru Institute for Social Development in partnership with the Uganda Cooperative Alliance conducted training of trainers in all 15 sub-regions of the country attended by local government officials, cultural and religious institutions, and cooperative societies.

Following these Training of Trainers, the first ever cooperatives week of mobilisation activities was launched in June 2016 with the aim of making it an annual event. This year the cooperative week will be marked between 23rd June - 1st July 2017 as detailed below:

B. Marking the second Co-operative Week in Uganda (23rd June – 1st July, 2017)

Following the successful June 2016 as the Co-operative Week of mobilisation activities, the tradition is picking up and a number of activities is lined up this year 2017, to increase community awareness on co-operatives on the revitalisation of the cooperative movement up till the international cooperative day to be hosted by Bugisu Cooperative Union under the theme: “*Cooperatives ensure no one is left behind*”.

1. 23rd-25th June, 2017: National prayers for the spirit for voluntarism, servant leadership and integrity in the cooperative movement.

As was the case in 2016, the co-operative fraternity will dedicate the future into the hands of God in all houses of prayers namely, Friday 23rd June, 2017- Muslims; Saturday 24th June 2017- Seventh Day Adventists; Sunday 25th June, 2017- Orthodox, Catholics, Anglicans and Pentecostals respectively in supporting the growth and development of the co-operative movement in Uganda.

2. Monday 26th June, 2017: The annual cooperatives blood donation drive.

In fulfilling our commitment to the 7th International co-operative principle - “**Concern for Community**”, Uganda Cooperative Alliance, member Cooperative Unions and Primary Societies in collaboration with the Uganda Blood Transfusion Service, the Ministry of Trade, Industry and Co-operatives, The Uhuru Institute for Social Development, CSOs, and development partners shall mobilise cooperators in particular and the community at large to donate blood at the 7 regional blood banks.

3. Tuesday 27th June, 2017: Cooperatives #Plant-a-Coop-Tree for inclusive green growth

In 2016, cooperatives planted a cooperative tree at district headquarters in the country to signify the rebirth of the cooperative movement in Uganda. This year we are mobilising cooperatives to plant cooperative trees as an investment option and for promoting inclusive green growth. Cooperatives will be expected to mobilize their own seedlings and plant in a piece of land of their choice but most especially on the compound or besides the stores of Agricultural Marketing Cooperative Societies on the 27th June, 2017.

4. Wednesday 28th June, 2017: submit the Cooperative Movements position on the Cooperative Societies (Amendment) Act, 2014 to the Parliamentary Committee on Tourism, Trade and Industry.

Cooperatives are undertaking regional consultations across the entire country on the proposed Bill to amend the Cooperative Act, Cap 112. In each region about 50 cooperative leaders are meeting to review the Bill. Each of the 20 regional consultations is being hosted by a local cooperative society or union in the region and facilitated by a cooperative leader who participated in the national consultative meeting which was hosted by Uganda Cooperative Alliance on 17th March, 2017. The result of this consultation will be compiled and submitted to the Parliamentary Committee on Tourism, Trade and Industry as the position of the cooperative movement on the Cooperative Societies (Amendment) Act, 2014.

5. Thursday 29th June, 2017: Launch of Cooperative Trade Exhibition in Mbale Municipality.

Cooperatives often bring their products for exhibition on the cooperative day itself which often gets disrupted by the ceremonial protocols and security arrangement of the cooperative day itself. This has negative impact on the networking, product marketing and the potential accompanying deals that come with it. The proposal here is to give cooperatives two days (Thursday 29th June and Friday 30th June, 2017) for exhibition. This will make the International Cooperative Day celebrations on 1st July, 2017 more focused and adding value to cooperatives products.

6. Friday 30th June, 2017: I.K Musaazi Memorial Lecture: “Cooperatives and the struggle for inclusive economic development”

The I. K. Musaazi Memorial lecture will be held at the St. Austins Social Centre under the topic: “*Cooperatives and the struggle for inclusive economic development*”. The 2017 I.K. Musaazi Memorial Lecture shall explore the crisis of non-inclusive growth in Uganda over the last thirty years and discuss how cooperatives in Uganda have over the years contributed to promoting inclusive socio-economic development as evident by their establishment across the entire country and reach to all socio-economic levels of the people. This is in line with this

year's International Cooperative Day theme: "Cooperatives ensure no one is left behind". The lecture will make specific recommendations on what should be done to enable an effective cooperative movement strengthen inclusive growth.

7. 1st July 2016: International Co-operative Day: "Cooperatives ensure that no one is left behind".

The events of the Cooperative Week 2017 will climax into the International Co-operative Day celebration under the theme; "*Co-operatives ensure no one is left behind*" in marking this important day in the global co-operative calendar. This will include the mobilisation of cooperatives from around the country to take part in the cooperative day celebrations in Mbale Municipality hosted by Bugisu Cooperative Union. The Uhuru Institute Field Assistants will work closely with the District Local Governments especially District Commercial Officers, Cooperative Societies and Unions, religious and cultural institutions to mobilise active participation of the entire cooperative fraternity in this very important week and day. This is a strategy for strengthening better organisation of cooperatives to create wealth, protect rights of members and promote democratic practice for an inclusive economic growth and development in Uganda and Africa as a whole.

PROPOSED ACTIVITIES TO COMMEMORATE THE CO-OPERATIVE WEEK

[Friday 23rd June – Saturday 1st July, 2017]

No.	Activity	Date	Venue	Responsible Person(s)
JOINT PRESS CONFERENCE MONDAY 19th JUNE, 2017				
1. 23rd-25th June, 2017: National prayers for the spirit for voluntarism, servant leadership and integrity in the cooperative movement.				
	Muslim Prayers	<i>Friday 23rd June</i>	all districts	District Khadis
	Seventh Day Adventists	<i>Saturday 24th June</i>	all field offices	Bishops
	All Other Christian Faiths	<i>Sunday 25th June</i>	all dioceses	Bishops and Pastors
2. Monday, 26th June, 2017: The annual cooperatives blood donation drive				
	Blood donation drive by members of cooperatives and the general public	<i>26th June 2017</i>	All regional Blood Bank Centres	Uhuru, Blood Bank, UCA, MTIC, Cooperators

3. Tuesday 27th June, 2017: Cooperatives #Plant-a-CoopTree for inclusive green growth				
Cooperatives Unions and DCOs to mobilize leaders in local governments to spearhead tree planting in every coop. society.	27 th June, 2017	Land where stores of Primary Coop. Societies are situated	Committees of registered Primary Coop Societies	
4. Wednesday 28th June, 2017: submit the cooperative movement's position on the Amendment of Coop. Act Cap.112 to the Parliamentary Committee on Tourism, Trade and Industry.				
The team of cooperative leaders that were selected at the 17 th March 2017 meeting in UCA boardroom to present the views to the parliamentary committee.	28 th June, 2017	Parliament of the Republic of Uganda	UCA and TUI	
5. Thursday 29th June, 2017: Launch of Cooperative Trade Exhibitions in Mbale Municipality				
Cooperatives that have registered to exhibit their various products and network with potential markets.	29 th – 30 th June 2017	Cricket grounds, Mbale	UCA, BCU, Cooperative Societies and Unions	
6. Friday 30th June, 2017: 2017: I. K. Musaazi Memorial Lecture				
Lecture on “The Cooperative struggles for inclusive development in Uganda”.	30 th June 2017	Mbale SS Main Hall, main campus, Mbale	Uhuru, UCA	
7. Saturday 1st July 2016: International Co-operative Day: “Cooperatives ensure no one is left behind”.				
Speech by The Chairman, Uganda Cooperative Alliance that explores the state of Cooperatives in Uganda and points out an agenda for the future.	1 st July 2017	Hosted by Bugisu Cooperative Union in Mbale	UCA and District Cooperative Unions	

