



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**For more information contact:  
Paul Hazen, executive director  
(202) 957-9298**

June 28, 2017

### **International Day of Cooperatives: No one left behind**

(Washington, D.C.) Cooperatives embody the values of self-help, self-responsibility, democracy, equality, equity and solidarity. These values ensure that people from all walks of life have an opportunity to improve their lives by working together — that no-one is left behind.

According to the International Cooperative Alliance, “Inclusion not only captures the people-focused nature of cooperative enterprises, but also echoes the cooperative principles of voluntary and open membership, democratic member control and member economic participation. Co-ops provide a space where all people, regardless of race, gender, culture, social background or economic circumstance, can meet their needs and build better communities.”

While other organizations were “discovering” inclusion, cooperatives have quietly been making it happen for decades. And nowhere more dramatically than in the sphere of international development, with project often funded by the USAID-funded Cooperative Development Program, which promotes public-private partnerships to cooperatives in the developing world.

On July 1, nations around the world will celebrate the International Day of Cooperatives, with its 2017 theme of “Cooperatives ensure that no one is left behind.” The U.S. Overseas Cooperative Development Council (OCDC) and its members invite you to join in.

“OCDC members’ cooperative development projects reach those who are often the most marginalized in their societies, from people living with HIV-AIDS to poor, smallholder farmers to women and youth,” says Paul Hazen, OCDC executive director. “These projects offer sustainable opportunities for them to pull themselves out of poverty, while improving food security, introducing them to the principles of democracy and boost economic development.”

Use the stories in our [International Co-op Development Inclusion Toolkit](#) to spread the word to your members, readers, users, audiences, colleagues – not just on July 1 but in the months to come. They’re “plug-and-play” or you can tailor them to your audiences.

OCDC brings together organizations committed to building a more prosperous world through cooperatives. Its mission is to champion, advocate and promote effective, sustainable international cooperative development. OCDC members are global leaders in cooperative development in Africa, Latin America and Asia. With projects in over 70 countries, OCDC members implement the largest portfolio of cooperative development programs in the world. Members are: ACDI/VOCA, Cooperative Resources International, Global Communities, HealthPartners, Land O'Lakes International Development, National Cooperative Business Association/CLUSA, NRECA International and the World Council of Credit Unions.