



**THE 9TH ASIA-PACIFIC CO-OPERATIVE MINISTERS' CONFERENCE ON
ENABLING CO-OPERATIVE LEGAL AND POLICY ENVIRONMENT
FOR 'SUFFICIENCY ECONOMY'**

**IN ACHIEVING THE GOALS OF THE UNITED NATIONS (UN) INTERNATIONAL
YEAR OF CO-OPERATIVES - 2012**

CONCEPT PAPER

Contribution of Cooperatives in Asia-Pacific

- **Large segments of the population are members of co-operatives.**

The Co-operative Movement brings together over 1 billion people around the world. The United Nations estimated in 1994 that the livelihood of nearly 3 billion people, or half of the world's population, was made secure by co-operative enterprise. These enterprises continue to play significant economic and social roles in their communities.

Founded in 1895, the International Co-operative Alliance is an independent, non-governmental organisation which unites, represents and serves co-operatives worldwide. It is the largest non-governmental organisations in the world. ICA members are national and international co-operative organisations in all sectors of activity including agriculture, banking, fisheries, health, housing, industry, insurance, tourism and consumer co-operatives. Currently, ICA has 269 member organisations from 97 countries, representing approximately 1 billion individuals worldwide.

The International Co-operative Alliance (ICA) reached out to Asia and established the regional office in New Delhi, India in 1960. Since then co-operatives as well as ICA in the Asia-Pacific region (ICA-AP) have evolved a great deal and emerged as a major instrument of socio economic progress. At present, the ICA-AP serves more than 550 million cooperative members in 25 countries through 75 cooperative organizations operating in various sectors of economy and business. The co-operative business organizations are great survivors of more than a century. Co-operative enterprises have always emerged as a great force when nothing seemed to work and have pulled through major crisis.

In Asia-Pacific, 45.3 million people are members of a credit union. In Iran, there are over 130,000 co-operative societies with 23 million members or approximately 33% of the population. In Indonesia, 27.5% families representing approximately 80 million individuals are members of co-operatives. In Japan, 1 out of every 3 families is a member of a co-operative. In India, over 239 million people are members of co-operatives. In Malaysia, 6.78 million people or 27% of the total population are members of co-operatives. In Singapore, 50% of the population (1.6 million people) are members of a co-operative. In New Zealand, 40% of the adult population are members of co-operatives and mutuals.

- **Co-operatives are significant economic actors in national economies**



Iran co-operatives contribute 6% to the Gross Domestic Product (GDP). The Japan agricultural co-operatives report outputs of USD 90 billion with 91% of all Japanese farmers are members of co-operatives. Korean agricultural co-operatives have a membership of over 2 million farmers (90% of all farmers), and an output of USD 11 billion. The Korean fishery co-operatives also report a market share of 71%. The Kuwaiti Union of Consumer Co-operative Societies handled nearly 70% of the national retail trade in 2007. In New Zealand, 22% of the gross domestic product (GDP) is generated by co-operative enterprises. Co-operatives are responsible for 95% of the dairy market and 95% of the dairy export. They hold 70% of the meat market, 50% of the farm supply market, 70% of the fertilizer market, 75% of the wholesale pharmaceuticals, and 62% of the grocery market. Singapore consumer co-operatives hold 55% of the market in supermarket purchases. Vietnam, co-operatives contribute 8.6% of the Gross Domestic Product (GDP).

- **Co-operatives create and maintain decent employment**

Co-operatives provide over 100 million jobs around the world, -20% more than multinational corporations. In Indonesia, co-operatives provide jobs to 288,589 individuals. In Iran, co-operatives have created and maintain 1.5 million jobs, for example.

- **Co-operatives have faced fierce competition in globalisation and open markets**

However, they have survived in the world economic recession and the financial slowdown. In the recent past, the collapse of major banks etc. drove the corporate sectors to the brink with huge losses and job cuts. However, there have been no reports of drastic adversities, economic conditions or job cuts in the cooperative sector in the world. Co-operatives are the biggest of employers and have major shares in the economy of several countries in the world.

Cooperative Issues in Asia

Notwithstanding the known strengths and contributions of co-operatives to the economy and their proven sustainable business model, it is however a fact that historically co-operative in Asia have largely been the offspring of the respective governments, and in reality many of them have been protected and controlled enough to become high maintenance non-performing assets.

It is also an open secret that the promotion and development of co-operative by the governments are heavily aligned with the agenda of party politics than the motive to empower people through resilient and autonomous cooperative business organizations.

The co-operative are expected to deliver and at the same time controlled to deliver under certain conditions. In spite of over hundred years of existence in most of the Asian countries, the excesses of support, protection and control of co-operative turned the co-operative into white elephants and put the Governments into a catch 22 situation.

Co-operative leadership on the other hand has enjoyed unbridled powers for long without accountability and maintaining the “status quo” serves their interest the best. In some cases where the cooperative law provides autonomy, the co-operative have ended up becoming the fiefdom of a few promoters/founders. In the name of pseudo-democracy, the elections are managed and same faces taking up leadership in rotation, and continue enjoying the benefits for years.

The co-operative on their part are so used to be taken care of by the restrictive guardians that by and large, they have lost their identity as self reliant entities. This vicious circle of “co-operative by the government for the unaccountable leadership of indifferent members” has left the real component- the member- far behind with no sense of belonging to the cooperative.

Even after more than 100 years of cooperative movement, the much has to be changed in the region. Most of the countries in the region are reeling under poverty, food scarcity, unemployment and inhuman living conditions. The co-operative could not help as expected.

Ratio of success in comparison of the huge number of co-operative and membership is astonishingly low. There is something amiss.

The best cooperative practices confined into pockets. Unprofessional staff and lack of leadership resulted into losses of business and trust of people. The government's policies and legal frame work, political clout and lack of legal protection against oppressive situations have resulted into crisis.

In view of the prevailing situation, it is essential that the governments and federations should provide enabling legal and policy environment to co-operative to realize its full potential as powerful business model for the socio-economic development of the region.

The ICA-AP is well aware of the situation and understands that the success can be achieved only through productive collaboration between governments and co-operative. The government should not only put in place enabling law and policy for operations but also appropriate judicial safeguard against any eventuality. Interestingly, some countries have been able to put in place the best legal system but the members lack capacity to utilize such system for want of awareness and often co-operative fall prey to the greed of democratically elected leadership.

The Co-operative Ministers' Conference

Therefore, in order to address these issues, the ICA-AP introduced the Cooperative Ministers' Conference in 1990 as an instrument to mobilize governments, cooperative leadership and other stake holders for creating enabling legal and policy environment for co-operative in the region and since then the cooperative ministers' conference is being organized periodically. The 8th Ministers' Conference on Coop Legislation and Policy was held in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia in 2007. 11 Co-operative Ministers and 314 delegates from governments and co-operative of 21 countries participated. The report of the conference along with Declarations and Recommendations of the Conference has been sent to all concerned.

The United Nations (UN) and International Labour organization (ILO), also acknowledged the importance of healthy relationship between co-operative and governments and recommended for creating supportive environment for development of co-operative.

The ILO recommendation No. 193 on the Promotion of the co-operative was adopted in 2002 and the guidelines aimed at creating a supportive environment for the development of co-operative adopted by the United Nations in 2001. UN Guidelines annexed to the 2001 Report of the United Nations Secretary General provide recommendations on policy regarding co-operative and the cooperative movement including the need for public recognition of co-operative, appropriate legal, judicial and administrative provisions, research, statistics and information, education on co-operative, the provision of public funds for support to co-operatives and the need for institutional arrangements.

The Legal Environment in and around Asia-Pacific

The Committee for the Promotion and Advancement of Co-operative (COPAC) reports about the following Policy and Legislation in Africa, Latin America and Europe.

- **Africa:** ACTE UNIFORME RELATIF AU DROIT DES SOCIETES CO-OPERATIVE:
Adopté le 15 décembre 2010 à Lomé

This Uniform Act is applicable to 16 countries, 14 countries in the CFA zone plus Comores and Guinea Conakry.

- **Latin America:** Framework Law for Co-operative in Latin America-2009

The framework law for co-operative in Latin America is a guide to policy makers on general cooperative law covering all types of co-operative. It contains 102 articles and is organized into chapters, beginning with general provisions, statutes, members, economic set up, social bodies and cooperative integration as well as dissolution and liquidation. The framework also addresses specific chapters, public authorities responsible for the oversight of co-operative as well as cooperative public policy. Originally drafted in 1998, the ICA Americas has updated the framework law. It was endorsed by co-operative in the region in 2008. Source: International Co-operative Alliance Regional Office for the Americas (ICA Americas).

- **Europe:** The Statute for a European Cooperative Society -2003:European Council (EC) Regulation No 1435/2003.

This Regulation establishes a legal statute for a European Cooperative Society (SCE). This statute guarantees equal terms of competition between cooperative societies and capital companies. It contributes to the development of the cross-border activities of cooperative societies. permits the creation of a cooperative by persons residing in different European Union Member States or by legal entities established in different EU Member States.

- **Asia-Pacific:**

There is no such uniform legal policy documents/guidelines drafted or agreed upon by the Asia and Pacific Region. The ICA-AP is conducting study on cooperative law and policies of the countries in the region from time to time and the co-operative dialogue are being held periodically. ICA-AP is also organizing national cooperative conferences in the member countries regularly to mobilize the cooperative community and bringing all the stake holders on a platform to discuss the law and other issues. We also facilitate and participate in the process of law making in the member countries. Iran, India, China and Vietnam are some members who have reviewed there law in recent years for making the co-operative more vibrant.

However, unlike the other continents, this region is economically-socially, culturally and politically hugely diverse. Therefore, for better understanding of the cooperative system operations, a deep discussion should be held among the representatives from all the diverse regions such as Pacific, Far East, South East, South and Middle East and an agreeable Code of Practice could be arrived at covering broader fundamental issues such as 1) Democracy, 2) Establishment of Enabling Legal and Policy Environment, and 3) Support by governments with greater accountability on the part of co-operative.

Objectives

- **General**

The general objective of the conference is to bring together Governments, co-operative and other stake holders on a platform to discuss and resolve issues being faced by the co-operative which prevent this unique business model to realize its full potential.

- **Specific objectives are:**

1. Reiterate the fact that co-operative are the agents of social cohesion and have great potential for socio-economic development in diversity

2. Facilitate the governments and co-operative in Asia Pacific countries to integrate resources for developing and implementing enabling legal and policy environment and also introducing the instrument of judiciary for safeguarding the interest of the co-operative.
3. Facilitate exchange of information and contribute to mainstream cooperative affairs with socio-economic agenda of the governments

- **Expected results**

To arrive at an agreeable “**Uniform Code of Practice**” for the governments and co-operative in the region covering broader fundamental issues such as 1) Democracy, 2) Establishing Enabling Legal and Policy Environment and 3) Support by governments with greater accountability on the part of co-operative.

Goals of the UN International Year of Co-operatives

The United Nations General Assembly has declared 2012 as the International Year of Cooperatives, highlighting the contribution of cooperatives to socio-economic development, in particular recognizing their impact on poverty reduction, employment generation and social integration.

[The United Nations General Assembly Resolution A/RES/64/136](#) encourages all member States, the United Nations and all relevant stakeholders to take advantage of the IYC to promote cooperatives and raise awareness of their contribution to social and economic development and promote the formation and growth of cooperatives. The resolution A/RES/64/136 - Proclamation of 2012 as International Year of Cooperatives is available in all UN six official languages

[The United Nations General Assembly Resolution A/RES/65/184](#) Invites all Member States to consider taking action towards establishing national mechanisms, such as national committees, to prepare for, observe and follow up on the International Year of Cooperatives, in particular for the purpose of planning, stimulating and harmonizing the activities of the governmental and non-governmental agencies and organizations concerned with the preparations for and observance of the Year.

Goals of the International Year of Cooperatives

- Increase public awareness about cooperatives and their contributions to socio-economic development and the achievement of the [Millennium Development Goals](#).
- Promote the formation and growth of cooperatives
- Encourage Governments to establish policies, laws and regulations conducive to the formation, growth and stability of cooperatives

The Theme of the 9th Asia-Pacific Co-operative Ministers' Conference

A specific theme is recommended to provide the Conference with mission, focus and guidance. The theme “Enabling Co-operative Legal and Policy Environment for Sufficiency Economy” has been suggested as the outcome of the deliberation of the coop dialogue 2010 and suggestions received from the host country, Royal Government of Thailand.

“**Sufficiency Economy**” is the philosophy initiated by His Majesty the King of Thailand since 1974. "It is a philosophy that suggests the guideline for the populace how to lead their life in proper way by means of "moderation, reasonableness and risk management. His Majesty has called upon the countrymen to practice sufficiency economy in their lives to fulfil basic needs and use it as a tool to get through the economic crisis due to globalization and various changes. Such a practice could be used to strengthen the efficiency in running the co-operative businesses.

CONFERENCE PROGRAM

Theme: Enabling Legal and Policy Environment for 'Sufficiency Economy' in Achieving the Goals of the UN International Year of Co-operatives-2012

26 February (Sun) - Day 0

Arrival of Honourable Ministers, Cooperative Leaders and International Delegates

14:00 – 18:00 Registration of Participants at the designated conference hotels.

27 February (Mon) - Day 1

08:00-09:00 Registration of delegates at UNCC

09:00 – 10:00 Inauguration of the Conference

- Welcome Address: Honourable Minister Theera Wongsamut, Ministry of Agriculture and Cooperatives, Kingdom of Thailand
- Appreciation: Mr. Li Chunsheng, President of the ICA for Asia- Pacific
- Special Address: Dame Pauline Green, President of the International Co-operative Alliance (ICA)
- Inaugural Address: Her Excellency Yingluck Shinawatra, Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Thailand (to be confirmed)

10:00 – 10:30 Key-note Speech

- Keynote Speech on the Theme of 'Sufficiency Economy and Cooperatives' -by Honourable Minister Theera Wongsamut, Ministry of Agriculture and Cooperatives, Kingdom of Thailand

10:30 – 10:50 Tea/Coffee Break

10:50 – 11:30 Statutory Proceedings

(Agenda)

1. Election of Conference Chairperson(s)
2. Adoption of Rules and Procedures
3. Election of Drafting Committee for the Joint Declaration & Recommendation
4. Report on the Conference: Dr. Chan Ho Choi, ICA Regional Director
5. Award Presentation to Mr. Shil-Kwan Lee, former Regional Director of ICA Asia-Pacific
6. Presentation of the Draft Joint Declaration

11:30 – 12:30 Speeches by International Agencies

- Mr. Charles Gould, Director General of the International Co-operative Alliance (ICA) on "Vision and Activities of ICA in the UN International Year of Co-operative"
- ILO – "How to Achieve the Objectives of the UN International Year of Co-operatives" By Rakawin Leechanavanichpan, ILO, Bangkok
- FAO – "Relevance of Cooperative Institution for Agricultural Development and Social Inclusion" by Hiroyuki Konuma, Assistant Director-General and Regional Representative, FAO Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific, Bangkok

12:30 – 14:00 Lunch

14:00 – 18:00 Ministers' Statements and Cooperative Stories - Session 1

- Statements by Honourable Ministers on 'Enabling Legal and Policy Environment for the Formation and Growth of Cooperatives'
 - Presentation of Success Stories by Cooperatives - (15 minutes each)
1. Statement by Honourable Vice Minister Mr. Shuji Yamada, Ministry of agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries, Japan
 2. Statement by Mr. Enkhbold Nyamaa, Deputy Speaker of the Mongolian Parliament and President of National Association of Mongolian Cooperatives
 3. Presentation of Success Story "the Ur Jims Cooperative - "Cooperative Enterprises Empower Women" by Ms. Tsendsuren, Director, NAMAC, Mongolia
 4. Statement by Honourable Mr. Harish Rawat, Minister of State for Agriculture, India
 5. Presentation by Dr.CPS Yadav, President of the National Cooperative Union of India (NCUI) on the " Role of NCUI and presentation of case study on successful cooperatives in India".
 6. Presentation by Mr. Chan Tee Seng, Chairman of the Singapore National Cooperative Federation Ltd. (SNCF) on " The Cooperative Movement in Singapore and IYC Celebrations -2012"

(15:30 – 15:50 Tea/ Coffee Break)

7. Statement of Honourable Minister of Fiji by Mr. Shaheen Ali, Permanent Secretary for Industry and Trade
8. Statement by Mr. Yang Berhomat Pehin Orang Kaya Seri Utama Dato Seri Setia Awang Haji Yahya Bin Begawan Mudim Dato Paduka Haji Bakar, Hon'ble Minister of Industry & Primary Resources, Brunei
9. Speech on "Japanese consumer co-op movement" by Mr. Takahisa Nishikawa, Head of Office of Consumers' Cooperative Societies, Community Welfare and Services Division, Social Welfare and War Victims' Relief Bureau, Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare of Japan.
10. Presentation on "The Charter of Co-operatives" by Mr. Akira Banzai, President of JA-Zenchu, Japan
11. Presentation on "The basic cooperative Law in Korea" by Mr.Lee Dae Joong, Director, Ministry of Strategy and Finance, Govt. of Korea

17:35 – 18:00 Open Forum - (25 minutes)

19:00 – Reception Dinner Hosted by Ministry of Agriculture and Cooperatives, Royal Thai Government at Plaza Attenev, Lumpini, Pathumwan

28 February (Tue) - Day 2

09:00 – 09:30 Presentation : "The 4th Critical Study on Co-operative Legislation and Policy Reforms" by Mr. Rangan Dutta, Sr. Consultant, ICA-AP

09:30 – 12:30 Ministers' Statement and Cooperative Stories - Session 2

12. Statement of Honourable Minister Dato' Sri Ismail Sabri Bin Yaakob, Minister of Domestic Trade, Co-operative and Consumerism, Government of Malaysia
13. Statement by Honourable Minister Theera Wongsamut, Ministry of Agriculture and Cooperatives, Kingdom of Thailand
14. Presentation by Mr. Vitoon Naewpanitthe, President , Cooperative League of Thailand (CLT) on “ Development and Advancement of Co-operative Movement in Thailand: Uniform Code of Practice”.
15. Presentation of Success Story by Ms. Oh Mi-Yeh, Chairperson of the iCoop Korea on “Consumer Cooperatives build Organic Farm Clusters in Korea”

(10:30 – 10:50 Tea/ Coffee Break)

16. Statement by Honourable Minister Syarifuddin Hasan, SE, MM, MBA , Ministry of Cooperatives & SMEs, Indonesia
17. Statement by Honourable Syed Asraful Islam, Minister for local Government, Rural Development and Co-operatives, Bangladesh
18. Statement by Honourable Minister Mr. Johnston Fernando, Ministry of Co-operatives and Internal Trade Affairs, Government of Sri Lanka
19. Presentation of Success Story by the National Co-operative Council of Sri Lanka (NCC) on “Youth and Women Empowerment by Co-operatives”
20. Presentation by Mr. Zhangwangshu of the All China Federation of Supply and Marketing Co-operatives (ACFSMC) on the ‘Circular Economy Business’

12:05 – 12:30 Open Forum - (25 minutes)

12:30 – 14:00 Lunch

14:00 – 18:00 Ministers' Statements and Cooperative Stories - Session 3

21. Presentation by Mr. Hj. Idris Ismail, Chief Director the Cooperative College of Malaysia on “Cooperative Training and Education in Malaysia”
22. Presentation of Success Story by Mr. Emmanuel M. Santiaguell, Chairman of the Co-Operative Development Authority (CDA), Philippines on “Agrarian Reform Beneficiary Cooperatives in Mindanao, Philippines”
23. Country Statement by Ms. Bernadette Puyat, Undersecretary, Dept. of Agriculture, Government of Philippines
24. Presentation by Ranjith Hettiarachchi on ‘ACCESS Brand: Preserving the Distinctive Value of Credit Unions/co-operatives in Asia’.
25. Presentation of Success Story by Mr. Mohammed Sharif Bhaiji, President of The Karachi Co-operative Housing Societies Union Ltd., Pakistan

(15:30 – 15:50 Tea/ Coffee Break)

26. Statement by Honorable Minister Reza Sheykholeslam, Ministry of Cooperatives, Labor and Social Welfare, Islamic Republic of Iran
27. Statement by Honourable Mr. Seyed Nezamaldin Sajadi, Deputy of Jihad-e- Agriculture Minister, Islamic Republic of Iran
28. Presentation of Success Story of the Iran Oilseeds & Vegetable Oil Processing Co-operative (FARDA)

29. Statement by Honourable Deputy Minister Mr. Nguyen Dang Khao, Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development, (in charge Cooperatives Development) Government of Vietnam
30. Presentation of Success Story of the “Rach Gam Cooperative in Serving Transportations in Vietnam” by Mr. Nguyen Van Bie, Vice Standing President of Vietnam Cooperative Alliance (VCA)

17:35 – 18:00 Open Forum - (25 minutes)

19:00 –Welcome Dinner Hosted by Cooperative Promotion Department and Cooperative League of Thailand at Lebua at State Tower Hotel, Silom, Sathorn

29 February (Wed) - Day 3

09:00 – 10:45 Ministers' Statements and Cooperative Stories - Session 4

31. Statement by Honourable Minister Dr. Pema Gyamtsho, Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry, Royal Government of Bhutan
32. Statement of Honourable Minister of Social Affairs and Labour, Ministry of Social Affairs and Labour, Government of Kuwait by Dr. Jasem Mohammed Ashkaran, Assistant Under Secretary, Cooperatives
33. Statement by H.E. Dr. Phouangparisak Pravongviengkham Vice Minister of Agriculture and Forestry, MAF, Government of Laos
34. Statement by Honourable Minister Nandan Kumar Datta, Minister of Agriculture and Co-operatives (MOAC), Nepal

10:00-10:30 Open Forum (30 minutes)

(10:30 – 11:00 Tea/ Coffee Break)

11:00 – 12:30 Concluding Session

- Report of the Drafting Committee
- Adoption of the report of the conference
- Adoption of the Joint Declaration and Recommendation
- Closing speech by CPD
- Vote of thanks by Dr. Chan Ho CHOI

19:00 – Farewell Dinner Hosted by Ministry of Cooperative Promotion Department at Royal Thai Navy Convention Hall, Bangkok Noi

1st March (Thu) - Day 4

- Field Visits organised by Co-operative Promotion Department, Ministry of Agriculture and Co- operatives, Thailand to co-operatives in Petchaburi Province.
- 10.00 – 11.30 hr. - Tayang Agricultural Cooperatives
- 13.30 – 15.30 hr. - Demonstration Center under Hubkrapong Royal Project

2nd March (Fri) - Departure

VENUE & HOTEL

Ministers' Conference Organizers

The Conference has been organized by the ICA-Asia and Pacific in collaboration with member organizations. The Cooperative Promotion Department (CPD) of Ministry of Agriculture and Cooperatives (MOAC), Kingdom of Thailand has kindly agreed to host the conference.

Venue of the Ministers' Conference



United Nations Conference Centre (UNCC), Rajdamnern-Nok Avenue, Bangkok 10200, Thailand:
<http://www.unescap.org/uncc>

Hotels

The following hotels have been engaged with special rates for the stay of the Delegates/ Participants of the Conference. The Delegates /Participants can directly make room reservations online.

1. Siam Kempinski Hotel

991/9 Rama 1 Rd., Bangkok 10330, Thailand
Tel: 662-162 9000 Fax: 662-162 9009



Website: www.kempinski.com/bangkok
Reservations surporn.pirom@kempinski.com

2. Four Seasons Hotel

155 Rajadamri Rd., Bangkok 10330, Thailand
Tel: 662-126 8866 Fax: 662-253 9195



Website: www.fourseasons.com/bangkok
Reservation: sarochinee.napawong@fourseasons.com



3. Siam City Hotel

477 Si Ayutthaya Rd., Pathumwan, Bangkok
10330, Thailand
Tel: 662-247 0123 Fax: 662-247 0165



Website: www.siamhotels.com
Reservation : sadanith@siamhotels.com

4. Royal Princess

269 Larn Luang Rd., Pomprab, Bangkok 10110,
Thailand
Tel: 662-281 3088 Fax: 662-280 1314



Website: RoyalPrincessLarnLuang.com
Reservation : benjarat@royalprincessslarnluang.com

The Official Website of the 9th Ministers' Conference

It also gives all the relevant information on registration and booking of the hotels:
<http://www.cpd.go.th/cpd/cmconference/> .

Participants and Observers

The Co-operative Ministers of the Asia-Pacific countries, Senior Government officials, International Agencies, Stakeholders, Leaders of the cooperative movements and observers from all ICA member countries in the Region.

Contact Persons:

In case you have any query or enquiry to make, please feel free to contact,

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Encl: Conference Registration Form