

In the name of God, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful

“Technical and Strategic Prerequisites in Government Policymaking on Cooperatives”

**His Excellency, Mr. President,
Distinguished Directors from ICA,
Honorable Cooperative Ministers from Asia Pacific Region,
Ladies and Gentlemen,**

I would like to extend my warmest greetings and best regards on behalf of the Cooperative Sector of the Islamic Republic of Iran. It gives me a great pleasure to represent my country's cooperative sector here in the 10th Asia and Pacific Cooperative Ministers' Conference in formulating laws, regulations and the road map towards achieving SDGs, uprooting poverty by 2030, and promoting peace and global justice. Let me first start by giving a brief statistics-free account on the role of Iranian cooperatives in national economy and policymaking; to be followed by a precise theoretical analysis on Government and cooperatives' experimental dimensions; how such dimensions contribute in innovation, as well as State strategic objectives in realizing more effective government-cooperative relationship.

Cooperatives and their role in employment generation, creation and re-creation of wealth and social-economic opportunities have always been taken into government's consideration in national development plans. The emphasis the Constitution of the Islamic Republic of Iran lays on cooperative economy as the second economic sector is an indicative of such importance. Currently, more than 95,000 cooperatives run active businesses at country level in various economic sectors and sub-sectors, with a significant share, particularly in the field of agriculture, development, transportation, industry, services and consumer.

The unique cooperative potentials have increasingly attracted attention of the incumbent Administration in the two main priority areas of its policymaking, that is employment and production by people and for people, mainly through networking for small enterprises, such as promoting development and urban development cooperatives, industrial clusters supplier cooperatives, tourism cooperatives, handicraft cooperatives and women cooperatives. Growth of such cooperatives has brought about concrete results; number of tourism cooperatives is rapidly increasing, especially within the recent couple of years, and in addition to domestic tourists, they have been receiving a growing population of foreign tourists from different continents in the world that has effectively turned away traditional poverty of native residents in favor of thriving businesses. Women, particularly female-headed households, have also shown great interest to act in form of cooperatives while becoming familiar with the momentum gained by shaping their cooperatives. There are smart and pioneer female entrepreneurs emerging in cooperative sector who show the path to empowerment and the way out of the plight of poverty to other women.

The Ministry of Cooperatives, Labour and Social Welfare of the Islamic Republic of Iran, particularly during the recent years, has been well aware of the importance of this issue by reviewing theoretical and experimental records, and in order to create a conducive environment to establish any participatory affiliation with cooperatives, has adopted and implemented “seven critical strategies to evolve Iranian cooperative sector of economy”. The aim of the first and second strategies- “promoting cooperative culture” and “developing management and empowering cooperative human resources”- is to shed light on cultural and conceptual dimension of cooperative development requirements for real and legal entities. The strategy on “promoting cooperative culture” deals with providing social groups and enterprises with useful information on concept, principles, values, advantages, opportunities and procedures of cooperative enterprise. As per the second strategy- developing management and empowering cooperative human resources- necessary measures are being taken to foster technical and skill capabilities of cooperative human resources through training and promoting efficiency and effectiveness of cooperative management in order to provide members and management with required internal tools to make a true cooperative work.

To further define government-cooperative bonds, it is worth noting the link with other public agencies in charge of public variables including economy.

Making cooperative sector’s strategic goals a reality in development plans requires interaction among public sector’s components. The key issue of strengthening inter-agency collaboration- as one of the main strategic goals- has been emphasized by Deputy Office for Cooperatives of the My respective ministry of the Islamic Republic of Iran. In order to influence ministries macro and cross-cutting variables; My respective ministry systematically reinforced its communication with public agencies including Ministries of Industry and Mine, Agriculture, Education, Statistical Center of Iran, universities, governor’s offices and other institutions in form of agreements and pursuing their provisions.

**Honorable Cooperative Ministers,
Ladies and Gentlemen,**

Nowadays, cooperatives have proved their ability, in theory and in practice, to attain innovative means by nature, and consequently, to enable individuals to be organized in form of cooperatives and to gain required technical competencies in order to enter into markets. And as long as they succeed to market their cooperative advantages in the light of value-based and efficient management, they will be able to expand their presence in systematic networks and to extend the positive economic social outcomes of their activities to the cooperative themselves, and in favor of their families and community at large where they operate. Whereas, the standard liberal model offers little hope about improvement of such individuals’ life and it suggests that the pressure of such individuals makes economic, social and human indicators of society and government worse and worse. Cooperatives give new opportunities to the victims of a fragile system of opportunity distribution to experience a better life. These are cooperatives’ organic innovations in various

fields backed by abundant experimental evidence that leaves no room for doubt about theoretical and practical success of this mechanism.

Thank you for your attention.