



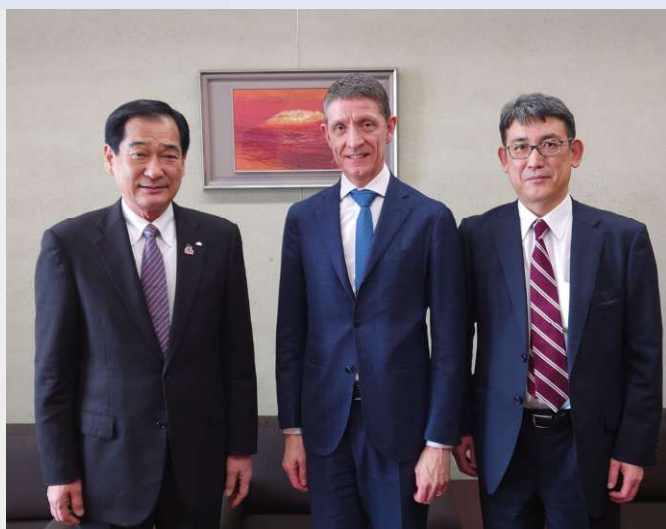
Vol. 122

# IDACA NEWS

JA Group

2024.5

## « Mr. Arnaud Petit (IGC) visited Mr. Yamano »



From left: Mr. Toru Yamano (President of IDACA),  
Mr. Arnaud Petit (Executive Director of IGC),  
Mr. Hirofumi Kobayashi (Executive Director of IDACA)

Mr. Arnaud Petit, Executive Director of the International Grains Council (IGC), which signed a partnership agreement with IDACA in January 2022, visited Mr. Toru Yamano, President of IDACA (also President of JA Zenchu) in March 2024. The details of his visit are reported below.

President Yamano warmly welcomed Mr. Petit's visit to Japan, stating, "Since 1963, IDACA has been instrumental in enhancing the capabilities of agricultural cooperative officials in Asia and Africa. This effort has resulted in the establishment of an extensive network, and we are delighted that this

network is proving beneficial to the international community through the IGC." He also expressed his concern regarding the global impact of COVID-19 and Russia's invasion of Ukraine, which have destabilized the world grain market, as well as the ban on Indian rice exports, contributing to rising prices.

Mr. Petit expressed his gratitude to IDACA for their cooperation and emphasized the importance of addressing the instability in global grain market prices and the imbalance between supply and demand. He highlighted the significant role of agricultural cooperatives in improving this situation and identified the major challenge as rectifying the imbalance between supply and demand. Additionally, regarding future IGC efforts, he elaborated on initiatives such as enhancing production and consumption, the importance of seeds in agricultural production and food security, efforts to mitigate the impacts of global warming and environmental degradation on crop production, and the implementation of digitalization in the production, distribution, and consumption of grains.

Mr. Petit expressed his wish to continue cooperation with IDACA, which was reciprocated by Mr. Yamano. Subsequently, the meeting concluded.

# -Business Reports-

## Online attendance at UN-sponsored symposium on improving the role of women

Dr. Nandini Azad (bottom photo, middle left), President of Working Women's Forum - Indian Cooperative Network for Women, held two symposiums on February 8 and March 20, 2024, as side events of the United Nation's 62nd session of the Commission for Social Development and the 68th session of the Commission on the Status of Women. Mr. Hirofumi Kobayashi, Executive Director of IDACA, attended online the following symposium as a panelist.

Name of UN Conference	Name of Forum
The United Nation's 62nd Session of the Commission for Social Development	Empowering for equality: Women's Crucial Role in Cooperatives as Catalysts for Transforming Social inequity and patriarchal practices
The United Nation's 68th Session of the Commission on the Status of Women	Building Leadership of Young Women in Cooperatives Towards 2030 Global Agenda

Mr. Kobayashi paid tribute to Dr. Azad's dedication to eradicating poverty and hunger and achieving gender equality in rural communities around the world, and stressed the importance of linking this to concrete actions.

**Mr. Andreas Kappes**  
Secretary General, International Labour Office

**Mr. Hirofumi Kobayashi**

**Good morning, this is your friend Xiomara de Céspedes, President of the**

**COMMISSION for SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT**  
United Nations Headquarters, New York

**"Empowering for equality: Women's Crucial Role in Cooperatives as Catalysts for Transforming Social inequity and patriarchal practices" allocated to the Working Women's Forum - Indian Cooperative Network for Women**  
Date: 8<sup>th</sup> Feb 2024 & Time: 08:15 PM- 9:30 PM IST

**Revathy Vijayabaskar (41)** runs a Electrical shop in Katupakkam, Central Chennai. A member of 11 years, she is married to Vijayabaskar an Electrician. They have 2 children and the income of her husband was not enough to run the family. She came to know about the Indian Cooperative Network for Women (ICNW) and approached them. Took a training from the supervisors who advised her on loaning and repayment process without fail to receive higher loans. First loan was Rs.4,000/- (405) and now doing the spare parts business i.e., selling. Suddenly her husband died and she did not know what to do. The time ICNW gave her the courage to face the situation, with her childrens help and loan from the Sangam (Forum WWF) that made the children's education really son is B.Com., pass and daughter MBA. All credit goes to the President Dr.Nandini Azad.

**Umamaheshwari Chandrasekar**, 40 years is in Vegetable vendor in Meerabali Pettai Market, South Chennai. Has been availing loans for 9 years.

**Umamaheshwari**, an assistant in a vegetable shop. Her mother a member of the Indian Cooperative Network for Women (ICNW) and asked her to become a member too. She received the gender cooperative training and then received a loan from the WWF-ICNW office. She also started a vegetable shop and after continuously having repaid loans regularly and she expanded. With the income from the business, she educated her children, running the family. As their business flourished with higher loans, after the 5th loan she gave advance for a bigger shop. Her daughter is now a Physiotherapist. Her mother, husband all in her family are doing well with the loan received from ICNW, our sincere thanks to the Sangam and our President.

**Dhanalakshmi Jayaraman** runs a Tiffin, Snacks shop in Kancheepuram, Tamilnada with 20 year membership. Born and brought up in Kancheepuram, she married a person working in the press and has two children. But her husband does not contribute cash to run the family. Dhanalakshmi the ICNW Cooperative a member and received a first loan of Rs.4000/- and started the business by making rice cakes (idlis). When it became popular she expanded it into a snacks shop and then slowly repaid the loans one after another and started a tiffin shop. When there was heavy rain in Kancheepuram her shop and house were flooded. At that time our President came for the rescue and gave loans to buy a cart to keep the snacks and tiffin for the selling purpose. Magalir Sangam - ICNW is my mothers house as I received for my urging. They continuously help me giving loan. Nobody in my life but Sangam - Working Women's Forum. She received good orders from several people. Her business expanded. She had her daughter married and purchased a house.

# -Business Reports-

## Online attendance at UN-sponsored symposium on improving the role of women

At the symposium "Building Young Women's Leadership in Cooperatives Toward the 2030 Global Agenda", held under the United Nation's 68th session of the Commission on the Status of Women, Mr. Kobayashi noted the following five points as important ways to address the challenges.

1. Identify issues and set goals: Based on facts and figures, it is important to explore the best practices around. Instead of simply complaining about the current situation, a better plan of action should be considered.
2. Identifying barriers and developing strategies: A carefully thought-out strategy is essential for success. Innovation can require significant investment.
3. Consider funding options: Finding a conscientious funding source is critical.
4. Collaboration with other partners: Collaboration with national and international agencies and governments is essential for success.
5. Developing and publicizing an action plan: Need to build momentum within the region to move the action plan forward through collaboration with local media.

In closing, Mr. Kobayashi, on behalf of IDACA, a development cooperation organization established by the JA Group 60 years ago, pledged to continue the empowerment of rural women in Asia, and said he fully supports Dr. Azad's call for "empowerment for equality".

# -Business Reports-

## International Grains Council (IGC) and IDACA joint project Workshop held in London

On February 7, 2024, a joint project of the International Grains Council (IGC) and IDACA held a workshop in London (UK), following a workshop in Bangkok (Thailand) with the contribution of the Japanese government.

The joint project is a survey of grain producers, cooperatives, traders, food processors, and consumers in Asia, Africa, and Oceania who are affected by price hikes and market disruptions after 2022, including how much access they have to food market information.

A survey was conducted on how supply chain participants collect market information on maize, wheat, barley, and canola, and the results of the survey were discussed among attendees at the workshop. A total of 30 participants from 17 countries attended the workshop, including both in-person and online attendees.

In April, we gave an endowed lecture at the University of Environment and Sustainable Development (UESD) in Ghana. We will report on this lecture in a future.

### <What is International Grains Council?>

Headquartered in London, the IGC is an organization of 28 countries and the European Union whose purpose is to promote cooperation and facilitate trade in international grain trade. Activities include the calculation and publication of the Grain and Oilseed Price Index (GOI), preparation of reports on grain markets, and organization of grain conferences.



# -Business Reports-

## Recruitment of foreign nationals with specific skills by the National Chamber of Agriculture (Countries: India, Indonesia and Philippines)

“The Agriculture Skill Assessment Test” is being developed to assist foreign nationals in obtaining residence status for specific skills. As part of the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries' subsidized “Comprehensive Support Project for Accepting Foreign Human Resources”, the National Chamber of Agriculture held explanatory sessions in three overseas countries. In this project, IDACA managed various tasks including onsite support, travel arrangements, venue and interpreters coordinating, as well as liaison with local cooperative agencies.

Country / City	Schedule	No. of Participants (including online)
India / New Delhi, Guwahati	November 26-27, 2023	259
Indonesia / Jakarta	January 20, 2024	200
Philippines / Manila	March 22, 2024	250

The first session of this project was held in India. Japanese language school students, university students, government officials, and others actively participated, eagerly asking questions about the agricultural skills assessment test, working conditions, and employment opportunities in Japan. Meanwhile, agricultural managers who attended the session expressed appreciation for the valuable opportunity to engage with raw opinions, culture, and perspectives in India.

In Indonesia, a technical intern trainee system briefing and recruitment consultation meeting was held at Polytechnic Bogor, with Ms. Mie Katsuno, Deputy Director-General of the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries, delivering the opening speech.

Meanwhile, in the Philippines, the briefing was hosted at the Sheraton Manila Bay. Many attendees were students studying Japanese at local institutions, and participating farmers expressed their happiness at engaging with Filipino students' perspectives.

IDACA will continue to support this project in the future, with information sessions scheduled to be held in five countries in FY2024.



**Consultation in Groups  
(Philippines)**

**General Information Session  
(India)**



# -Business Reports-

## Exchange views on International Cooperation with the Korean National Agricultural Cooperative Federation

On March 14, 2024, IDACA welcomed Mr. Lee Wook, General Manager of Global Strategy Office, National Agricultural Cooperative Federation (NACF) of Korea, who visited Japan for the annual meeting of the Asian Farmers' Group for Cooperation hosted by JA Zenchu, and three others including the Director of NACF's Japan Office.

We provided information on our management and experience in training programs to NACF, who is considering training programs as a first step in promoting cooperation among agricultural cooperatives in various countries, and exchanged opinions on the possibility of mutual collaboration and cooperation.

IDACA has hosted training programs for officials and employees of Korean agricultural cooperatives and federations organized by NACF in the 2000s, and even at present, Korea has the second largest country in terms of number of participants IDACA has received after Thailand (approximately 600 participants). With the changing times, the targets of IDACA trainings have shifted to Southeast Asia and Africa, and contact with the NACF hasn't been much than before. However, as the reestablishment of the NACF's Japan office last year, we expect to cooperate in various areas in the future.



**Mr. Hirofumi Kobayashi (IDACA) & Mr. Lee Wook (NACF)**



**IDACA staff welcomed NACF staff**

# -Reports on Training Courses-

## JICA Training Course on Value Chain Building in the Surrounding Area of Integrated Agro-Industrial Parks



**At a processing plant of Beishin Ishikawa Inc.**

This is the second training program organized based on an ongoing project in Ethiopia. Six central and local government officials from the county were invited to the program which was held in Tokyo and Ishikawa prefectures, following last year's program.

As the country aims to commercialize agriculture, the project has been designed for promotion of agricultural production in an organized manner by making farmers groups with small-scale farmers through

improving cultivation techniques, providing guidance for the right crop in the right place, the formation of production areas, which are expected to ensure a stable supply of agricultural products and increase farmers' income. This year's program was focusing on the value chain featuring rice.

The participants learned about the value chain for rice from infrastructure development, cultivation technology, organizational farming support to marketing, in cooperation with the prefectural government and its related organizations, i.e., JA Group organizations (the prefectural union, ZEN-NOH Ishikawa, JA Komatsu City, JA Kanazawa City, and JA Agri Hakui), land improvement district as an organizational approach to irrigation, and organizations involved in processing and marketing.

At the end of the training program, the participants worked on preparation of their action plans. In order to make the action plan more feasible, they had their plans checked online by and exchanging opinions with local experts in Ethiopia before finalizing and presenting the plans.

They showed a strong interest in “hamlet-based farm management system” and “the roles of agricultural cooperatives in production and marketing,” and will to further study and deepen their understanding of actors and resources involved in the value chain.



**At a community hall as they visits Takamine Farm**

**The participants at the evaluation meeting with JICA**



# -Reports on Training Courses-

## ICA Training Course on “Capacity Building of Farmers to Respond to Challenges through Development of Agricultural Cooperatives in FY2023”



**JA Tomisato-shi, Carrot farmer  
(Mr. Minagawa)**

Five participants from the African region came from member organizations of World Farmers' Organisation (WFO), and one each secretariat staff from International Co-operative Alliance Asia-Pacific (ICA-AP) and WFO. After completing a two-week training program in Thailand, the participants came to Japan, with the aim of strengthening the organizational management and

business operations of farmers' organizations.

The training was based in Machida city from January 21 to February 3 (14 days). During the field visits, they visited Chiba pref., where they learned about "Organization, farm Guidance and Commodity-wise Group" at JA Chibamidori and "Initiatives to promote Marketing Business for more value addition and income" at JA Tomisato-shi. They also had the opportunity to interact with farmers, and learned about organic farming, Agricultural-Welfare Collaboration, packaging, grading, and smart farming, which gave them new insights.

During their stay in Japan, the participants enjoyed the Japanese food and contact with Japanese people during their stay in Japan. Above all, they said that learning about Japanese agriculture was very helpful and that they would definitely like to put it into practice when they return to their own countries.

**At JA Chibamidori  
Observing how the products  
are packed**





# -Reports on Training Courses-

## ICA Training Course on “Capacity Building of Farmers to Respond to Challenges through Development of Agricultural Cooperatives in FY2023”

### <Message from the participant>

The IDACA, ICA-AP, MAFF, and, WFO dedication to fostering agricultural development and cooperative empowerment is truly inspiring. All participants appreciated the opportunity to participate in the training “Capacity Building of Farmers to Respond to Challenges through the Development of Agricultural Cooperatives”.

The lectures and field visits were very informative and relevant to our various organizations. We learnt a lot about cooperative development; sustainable development practices; the sixth industrialization concept - 3x2x1 (increasing farmers’ income through value addition); and, the transformation of farming into a viable business (agribusiness).

We developed friendships that left an indelible mark on our professional and personal lives. We returned to our countries, equipped with newfound knowledge, skills, and memories of the rich Japanese culture.

We express our profound appreciation to the organizers and all the partners for making this training course a resounding success.

May we continue to grow and foster sustainable agricultural practices and resilient farming communities worldwide.



**Ms. Brenda Jepchirchir Sakong**  
Technical Assistant to the Chief Executive Officer  
Kenya National Farmers' Federation (KENAFF)

# -Reports on Training Courses-

## Promotion of Sustainable Agriculture and Improvement of Farmer's Income through Development of Agricultural Cooperatives



At JA Fuji Izu Wasabi Farm

ICA-MAFF (Japan) Training Course on “Promotion of Sustainable Agriculture and Improvement of Farmer's Income through Development of Agricultural Cooperatives in FY2023” was conducted from March 16 to March 29, 2024.

This training is a traditional training course with the main objective of strengthening agricultural cooperatives and farmers' organizations. Seven participants from Bhutan, Cambodia, Fiji, Indonesia, Philippines and Thailand came to Japan after preliminary training using on-demand video and conducting third country training in Bangkok.

The participants visited JA Fuji Izu to observe the development of farm management and marketing business, strawberry and wasabi production fields. And they visited JA Machida-shi to observe the development of financial business. The participants also had a chance to see examples of JA Youth and JA Group Kanagawa. They learned about the importance of communication methods and public relations activities to strengthen the organization and revitalize member activities. Furthermore, as measures for sustainable agriculture, they learned the sixth industrialization initiatives



The participants at the evaluation meeting with JICA

# -Reports on Training Courses-

## Promotion of Sustainable Agriculture and Improvement of Farmer's Income through Development of Agricultural Cooperatives

in Shizuoka and Nagano prefectures and saw organic farming at Shiawase Vegetable Farm. At Iino Farm, they saw a 300 years old World Agricultural Heritage Site, where the soil is improved with fallen leaf compost. On the travel day, they also experienced a real tea ceremony at the Tea Museum and were able to see the beautiful Mt Fuji.

This time, the training was conducted smoothly under the leadership of Mr. Ashok Kumar Taneja, ICA-AP, and all the participants were able to help each other and deepen their friendship. Participants also commented that they had gained a lot from visiting Japan and being able to broaden their knowledge at each of the places they visited. Based on these findings, they made and presented an action plan to strengthen the organization, and promised to implement the plan in their own countries. After completing the training program, they returned home safely.

### <Message from the Lecturer>

Thank you for coming to Kawagoe. I hope we were able to share a little bit of agriculture, Japanese culture and customs with you. I was stimulated by the group discussions during Leadership Lecture of JA-Youth. I wish you all the best for the promotion of agriculture in your home countries and for your success.



**Mr. Yoshihiko Iino,  
Iino Farm**

## Introduction to IDACA office area

It has been almost two years since the IDACA office moved from Takao to the Machida station area. So, this time, we would like to show you what is going on around Machida station.

From the south exit area of Machida station where commercial facilities and restaurants are concentrated, to the north exit area, where art museums where you can enjoy works by local artists are located, the area offers a wide variety of enjoyment.

If you want to enjoy nature to the fullest, Serigaya park, located about a 13-minute walk from Machida station, is the place for you. The park has cherry trees that are in full bloom in spring, a multipurpose plaza for running around and playing, a lawn area, and a waterside playground, which can be enjoyed by both children and adults. In a corner of the park is the Machida City Museum of Graphic Arts, a rare art museum in the world that focuses on prints and printmaking, which will refresh your body and soul.



on May 11-12, “Festa Machida” was held, featuring a group performance of Eisa”, a traditional performing art that is popular in Okinawa and Kagoshima’s Amami islands during the Bon Festival. The dynamic dance using drums, hand dances, flags, etc. was a great success.

These spots are attractive places to enjoy the culture and nature around Machida station. We hope you will visit Machida and spend a fulfilling time.



**View of Serigaya park**

**IDACA office in Morino,  
Machida city**

