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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

U.N. names 2012 International Year of Cooperatives

Washington, D.C. (Jan. 18, 2010) – The United Nations General Assembly has declared 2012 as the International Year of Cooperatives. This honor recognizes the contributions of cooperatives to global economic development, and the impact of that work in reducing poverty and creating new opportunities. The General Assembly voiced special appreciation for the role of cooperatives in improving the quality of life in rural communities and among indigenous peoples.

“The Overseas Cooperative Development Council and its member organizations welcome this recognition,” says Rob Nooter, OCDC executive director. “We believe that cooperatives are one of the most effective ways to help people in developing countries improve their economic situation, gain local, grassroots control over the services they need and practice the principles of democracy through cooperative governance. We have urged the U.N. to recognize the role cooperatives play and look forward to enhanced cooperative-development initiatives in 2012.”

The United Nations Department of Public Information reported that the cooperative sector, worldwide, has approximately 800 million members in 100-plus countries, accounting for more than 100 million jobs. In an attempt to measure the global cooperative impact, the International Co-operative Alliance estimated that the top 300 cooperatives alone are responsible for an aggregate turnover of \$1.1 trillion, equivalent to the 10th largest economy in the world.

To commemorate the 2012 International Year of Cooperatives, the United Nations, member states, governments and international organizations are encouraged to not only promote cooperatives, but to work together to build capacity and support financing for cooperative initiatives, as well as raise public awareness of the widespread social and economic contributions of cooperatives.

OCDC brings together eight organizations committed to building a more prosperous world through cooperative development. OCDC's mission is to champion, advocate and promote effective international cooperative development. Its members are: ACDI/VOCA, AAC/MIS, CHF International, Communications Cooperative International, Land O'Lakes International Development, National Cooperative Business Association, NRECA and the World Council of Credit Unions.