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‘Co-op. networks promote sustainable development’

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Health care by co-ops. helped their members: UN official

Cooperative networks are truly people-centred and planet-sensitive, and promote sustainable development across the world, said Daniela Bas, director of the Division for Inclusive Social Development, UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs.

She was delivering the inaugural address at the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women (65th Edition) virtual parallel event titled “Destitution to Global leadership: The Iconic Working Women’s Forum (India)”.

Held for the last 64 years from the UN headquarters, the Working Women’s Forum (India)-Indian Cooperative Network for Women (ICNW) made history by organising the virtual parallel event from Chennai for the first time. “During the COVID-19 pandemic, health care provided by cooperatives greatly helped their members. Cooperative networks are helping build the world back better and contribute towards sustainable development — socially and economically,” said Ms. Bas.

“Institutions like the Working Women’s Forum in India are critical for the sustainability of women-led cooperatives as they can provide a range of essential services such as legal advice, property management, training, and access to markets. They also advocate for the rights of women working in rural and informal economies, and advocate for their organisations with policy makers at the local and national level,” said Simel Esim, Head of the Cooperative Unit of the International Labour Organization, Geneva.

Nandini Azad, president, WWF and ICNW, said they would be setting up a virtual global resource centre for women informal sector workers. Chitose Arai, JCCU Vice Chairperson of the International Cooperative Alliance for Asia Pacific; Andreas Kappes, Secretary General, International Raiffeisen Union; Maria Peres, Chair of the Gender Equality Committee of the International Cooperative Alliance; Haruyoshi Amano, the Head of the International Division Tokyo of the JCCU; and Luisa Volpe, Policy Head of World Farmers Organization, were among those who shared their insights. Prof. Neerja Mishra, social activist, discussed the learnings from the WWF-ICNW.