

Angkasa's global ambition



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FOR more than half a century, Angkatan Koperasi Kebangsaan Malaysia Bhd (Angkasa) has nurtured thousands of cooperatives in the country.

Now, Angkasa wants homegrown cooperatives to go global.

To that end, Angkasa president Datuk Seri Dr Abdul Fattah Abdullah said the organisation has taken various measures to step up international engagement.

The International Cooperative Alliance (ICA) elective general assembly that was held in Seville, Spain, last month is a good case in point.

During the assembly, Angkasa signed a memorandum of understanding with the Indian Farmers Fertiliser Cooperative Ltd (IFFCO) to create more trade opportunities for cooperatives in agriculture and agro-based sectors.

"We also agreed to import environmentally-friendly nano-fertilisers from IFFCO for initial testing to boost our agricultural production."

The assembly also saw our board member, Datuk Kamarudin Ismail, securing a second term as an ICA board member for the 2022-2026 term.

"As an ICA board member, Malaysia has strongly advocated for palm oil after the European Union started to boycott the product."

"This is because most of our palm oil planters are members of cooperatives and their survival matters to us," he said.

Malaysia, he said, is well-positioned to benefit from the vast network of cooperatives across the globe.

Since November 2021, Abdul Fattah has been the vice-president of the International Cooperative Alliance Asia and Pacific (ICA-AP) and is currently chairman of the ICA-AP Malaysia Business Office (MBO) Council as well as chairman of the ICA-AP Trade and Business Committee.

The MBO serves as the ICA-AP regional office, which facilitates sharing of technical expertise and cultural exchange among youth cooperatives in the region.

Abdul Fattah said these portfolios had allowed Angkasa to push for various international collaborations involving local cooperatives, especially in the



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food sector.

"Currently, we are exploring cheaper options to produce chicken feed from cooperatives in Brazil, Argentina and Indonesia that can benefit our poultry farmers," he said.

Besides that, Abdul Fattah said Angkasa also offered consultations to countries that want to develop halal ecosystems.

This, he said, would create a wider market for Malaysian cooperatives to sell their halal-certified products.

In December 2018, Angkasa launched the OIC-Cooperative Union to bring together major cooperatives in Organisation of Islamic Cooperation member states under a single umbrella.

AMBITIONS FOR ASEAN

As the Asean Co-operative Organization president, Abdul Fattah aimed to develop a robust cooperatives ecosystem for the Asean region, a market comprising 681 million people that holds great prospects for local cooperatives.

Malaysia, he said, could serve as a successful role model to promote community-based cooperatives in the region.

"In Malaysia, cooperatives have become an integral part of our community."

"For instance, almost all schools in our country have cooperatives. In fact, some of our school cooperatives generate a turnover of RM1 million annually."

"So, Angkasa is planning to develop a cooperative model based on Malaysian



International Cooperative Alliance president Ariel Guarco (right) making a visit to Angkasa.

schools that schools in the region can adopt.

"Besides schools, Angkasa also hopes to develop a similar model to create cooperatives in mosques."

"Since Asean has a sizeable Muslim population, turning mosques into economic-building platforms will serve the community well."

"Once we develop similar ecosystems in other Asean countries, we can facilitate trade between them and our Malaysian cooperatives," he said.

Abdul Fattah said Asean countries also shared Angkasa's enthusiasm to nurture more cooperatives and spur intra-regional trade.

"Starting next year, Asean will hold a separate Asean Cooperatives Ministers' Meeting. And by the end of this year, we are planning to roll out the Asean Cooperatives App."

"The application will serve as an e-commerce platform for cooperatives across the region to market their products to a larger consumer base."

"In addition to that, preliminary work is under way to set up the Asean Cooperatives Development Bank."

"But, efforts on our part alone is not enough to take our local cooperatives to greater heights."

"They must upgrade their products and services to meet global standards as well as embrace digitalisation. Only then can they truly benefit from Angkasa's initiatives," he said.

As part of its internationalisation agenda, Angkasa and the Malaysia Cooperative Societies Commission under the Entrepreneur Development and Cooperatives Ministry organised Hari Koperasi Negara and Ekspo Koperasi Malaysia (EksKOM) 2022, its largest face-to-face event since the Covid-19 pandemic, from July 28 to 31 at the Mines International Exhibition and Convention Centre.

Cooperatives and private entities from other countries, namely Indonesia, Thailand, Cambodia, the Philippines, South Korea, Singapore and Hungary, are also participating in the event.

During EksKOM, Angkasa and the South Korea National Agricultural Cooperative Federation signed a memorandum of agreement to cooperate in the development of the dairy industry through the Heifer's Park Project to produce cattle breeds capable of producing more milk than the current supply in Malaysia.

Apart from sales exhibitions and talk shows, the four-day event includes workshops and offers daily essential items at subsidised prices to help ease the cost of living.

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DATUK SERI DR ABDUL FATTAH ABDULLAH
Angkasa president

Entrepreneur Development and Cooperatives Minister Tan Sri Noh Omar led a delegation of Malaysian cooperatives at the International Cooperative Alliance general meeting in Seville, Spain, from June 19-22. Present was Angkasa president Datuk Seri Dr Abdul Fattah Abdullah.

