



اللجنة الوطنية الأردنية  
لشؤون المرأة  
The Jordanian National  
Commission for Women



التعاونيات كوسيلة  
لتمكين المرأة اقتصاديا  
Cooperatives as a means  
for women's economic  
empowerment

# Towards Enhancing the Role of Women in Cooperatives

*Cooperatives as a means for women's economic Empowerment*

## Policy Paper

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December 2017

## Executive Summary

In its efforts to promote the role of women in the country's social, political and economic spheres, the Jordanian National Commission for Women (JNCW) has devoted itself to analysing the cooperative sector in Jordan, seeking ways to enhance the economic participation of women.

A report issued by the Jordanian Cooperatives Corporation (JCC), entitled "Jordan Cooperative Societies 2015" has shown that the number of cooperative societies within the Kingdom has reached 1,628, totalling roughly 145,000 members. Yet, simultaneously, over the past two decades, the levels of economic participation among women have hovered around 13.3% and female unemployment rates have averaged 24.1%. This prompted the JNCW to prepare a study on the organizational and legislative status of cooperative societies in Jordan as of 2016, from a gender-based perspective.

Based on the findings and recommendations of the study, the JNCW developed the present policy paper with the intent of bringing forth a set of alternative policies aimed at promoting the greater inclusiveness of women in the cooperative sector, which would empower cooperative societies to become more active promoters of sustainable development by improving the lives of people, in general, and of women, in particular.

Currently, the cooperative sector in Jordan faces numerous challenges which prevent it from becoming a more active player in development processes, notably in that which regards the inclusiveness of women. Such challenges include weak regulatory and administrative frameworks, inadequate policies and legislation, poor institutional performance, lack of attention to the issue among decision-makers, and the absence of a culture of cooperative work, even among workers within the sector itself.

As a whole, cooperative societies also suffer from a lack of independence in regard to the JCC and, at the internal level, commonly fail to comply with democratic standards. They

are often poorly managed. As for the role of women, it is for the most part negligible. Finally, it's become difficult for many to distinguish between cooperative societies from charities and for-profit organizations, generating confusion.

To address the abovementioned issues, and thus enable the cooperative sector to assume a meaningful role in the promotion of sustainable development, notably through the generation of employment and the empowerment of women, the following recommendations and policy alternatives were developed:

- 1) Lift governmental control over cooperative societies, as exercised via the JCC, by amending the Cooperative Societies Law No. 36/2016, namely Articles 3.a, 4.a, 19.d, and 29. Doing so would effectively abolish the requirement for prior approval by the JCC for the formation of cooperative societies and the changing of their internal systems, as well as the JCC's monitoring of their financial accounts.
- 2) Amend Article No. 5 of the Cooperatives Law No. 18/1997 in such a fashion that allows for more members of cooperative societies to integrate the JCC's Board of Directors. Though the internal regulations of new cooperative societies and federations may be subject to scrutiny by the JCC upon registration, it is of the essence that, in addition to fiscal monitoring, the JCC's role be limited to this process of verification of registrants; that it be granted no authority to approve or disapprove of the internal budget, or of possible amendments to the internal regulations of individual cooperative societies. It is urgent that the Cooperative Societies Law No. 36/2016 to allow societies to govern themselves freely.
- 3) Include additional articles in Cooperative Societies Law No. 36/2016 requiring that cooperative societies

decide on strategies and clear and logical action plans based on well-established principles of effective management. The JCC shall ensure that elections are held periodically and that the chairmen of the Assemblies are not eligible for more than two consecutive terms in office. Furthermore, independent and transparent governance within the JCC shall be guaranteed through the appointment of an independent auditor.

- 4) Develop an integrated strategic plan for the cooperative sector as a whole to work on changing the models and mechanisms of cooperative work in Jordan, notably through the exchange of expertise in several areas, such as human resources, project coordination, and financial management. To that effect, it is encouraged that soft loans be provided, so as to boost the initial availability of funds, thus allowing for a more rapid initial expansion. Productivity is expected to increase, which, as several cases have shown, is prone to generating employment. The use of international funding has also been shown to play a key role in helping cooperative societies to network, foster cooperation, and improve their institutional frameworks through capacity-building programs. Societies run by women have particularly benefited from these initiatives. For its part, the government would be simultaneously empowering women but a cooperative societies as well is women's cooperatives were allowed access to the civil and military markets. This would also finally establish a clear distinction between cooperatives, for-profits, and charities.
- 5) Amend the bylaws contained in the Cooperative Societies Law No. 36/2016 to include quotas for female members in the societies' administrative bodies, provide facilities for women-led societies or those classified as women's societies, and allocate funds

to women's societies through the JCC. Finally, help to promote female-friendly work environments, which may women to form and participate in cooperative societies, which would contribute to increasing economic participation rates among women and reduced female unemployment rates.

## Introduction

Cooperative movements have their roots in the economic and social crises witnessed in Europe shortly after the Industrial Revolution, at the beginning of the nineteenth century. This period was marked by widespread unemployment, low wages, and poor living conditions (especially among farmers). These were the hardships cooperative movements were created to face.

Since those times, cooperative movements have sprouted, grown, and expanded, ever contributing to the improvement of the living standards of countless families in Jordan, notably by combatting unemployment, particularly among women. Within the movement, women's cooperatives began to be established in such sectors as the provision of care, then other services, then gradually expanded to cover nearly every economic sector – while not homogeneously – ever working to promote female economic participation.

Though the Jordanian cooperative movement dates back a few years earlier, the first pieces of legislation in Jordan pertaining to cooperative societies were passed in the early 1950s. Only in recent years, however, did issues such as the promotion of sustainable development and the inclusion and empowerment of women become part of the movement's main areas of focus. Here, we have cooperative action defined as the coming together of individuals of equal rights who pool their efforts for the benefit of all. Naturally, being a key economic player in numerous countries, the cooperative sector has been the object of much research and analysis. According to the definition put forth by the United Nations, cooperatives are independent groups of individuals who voluntarily and collectively work towards achieving the economic and social goals of a project or program within a democratic administrative framework based on justice, equality, and religious and ethnic impartiality.

At the international level, numerous standards have also been established, aimed at regulating conduct within cooperative societies. These are mainly composed of a set of fundamental principles, such as that of voluntary, open membership, democratically-elected leadership, independent management, and sustainable productivity. Ultimately, with the right management, cooperatives and cooperative federations may assume their roles as advancers of development, providing financial assistance to small-scale producers, and implementing large-scale and impactful projects in agricultural communities and remote regions.

In the course of the research carried out by the JNCW into cooperative societies in Jordan, it was found that number of such societies rounded 1,626, with a total of 145,000 members, distributed unevenly throughout the Kingdom<sup>1</sup>. All of these fall under the jurisdiction of the JCC.

This policy paper can be considered as a follow-up to the JNCW's study on the legislative and organizational status of cooperative societies in Jordan as of 2016 from a gender-based perspective – that is, on how the legal and organizational status of cooperative societies impact on gender dynamics.

Once the study was completed, a set of recommendations was drafted and agreed upon. These recommendations were aimed at improving the organizational and legislative environment for cooperative societies in such a way that would simultaneously address such gender disparity issues as the lack of female participation in the labour market (especially when compared to that among men) and female unemployment, and encouraging the engagement of women in cooperative societies.

At this point, it is worth mentioning, in passing, that the increase in female participation in cooperative societies is directly related with 5<sup>th</sup> Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) for 2030<sup>2</sup>

1 Department of Statistics (DOS), Statistical Yearbook, Amman, Jordan, 2017

2 <http://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/sustainable-development-goals/>

regarding the advancement of gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls. Similarly, the endeavours described above are also tightly linked to the 8<sup>th</sup> SDG, concerning economic growth and decent growth, as well as Goal 12, which focuses on the promotion of sustainable consumption and production patterns.

### **Identified Problem**

In Jordan, only 13.3% of women are currently estimated to be economically active, to 58.7% of men<sup>3</sup>. A similar gap can be found when analysing employment statistics: 24.1% of economically active women were unemployed as of 2016, to 13.3% of men<sup>3</sup>. The weak participation of women in the Jordanian economy continues to represent an immense loss of productive potential, holding the Kingdom's economy back, impeding development, and increasing dependency ratios. Accordingly, poverty has become rampant and living standards have steadily declined.

Throughout the world, the cooperative sector has proven to be an effective promoter of sustainable development, which indicates that it could also play an important role in helping to overcome Jordan's current developmental challenges. Yet, the Jordanian cooperative movement still faces sizeable challenges of its own, which have left it nearly powerless and greatly reduced the impact of individual societies. In Jordan, hundreds of societies have suffered losses over the past few years. Today, the sector continues to account for only 0.1% of GDP, and it still struggles to provide jobs, each cooperative employing, at most, 4,000 people. Underlining that only 145,000 people, or 5% of the population, are involved in cooperative societies, Jordan remains well behind its neighbours and international peers in what concerns the cooperative movement and its role in society.

As such, it is urgent that the Jordanian cooperative sector be empowered and supported, so that it may play its proper role as promoter of development. In this regard, two aspects are of particular import, and will therefore constitute the focus of this paper: Laws and regulations. These two elements have the potential to both hinder and promote the work of cooperative societies, and must be analysed as such. Following the drawing of conclusions, the recommendations and policy alternatives which have been developed taking into account the particular dynamics of the Jordanian socio-political environment will be presented. It is hoped that this will lead to the development of new ways of empowering cooperative societies to play meaningful roles in development processes while simultaneously encouraging the engagement of women in the national economy. In some of the world's countries, the percentage of women involved in cooperatives reaches 61%, while in Jordan it does not exceed 5%<sup>4</sup>. Additionally, 68% of the Kingdom's women's cooperatives have suffered losses over the past years and about 500 currently face the threat of liquidation over the coming months due to administrative and financial constraints.<sup>5</sup>

### **Analysis of the Problem**

The lack of impact of cooperative societies in Jordan and the country's low levels of female economic participation are both owed to a broad array of factors. An in-depth analysis of the challenges now faced will be required in order to determine what exactly is deterring the growth

3 Department of Statistics (DOS), Statistical Yearbook, Amman, Jordan, 2017

4 JNCW, "The Organizational and Legislative Status of Cooperative Societies in Jordan from a Gender Perspective", 2016

5 Trawerah, Radi, "The Reality of the Jordanian Cooperative", March 2017

of the cooperative sector, particularly the reasons why so few women are involved in cooperative societies.

The sources of the aforementioned lack of effective administrative structures in such cooperative societies will also be discussed. All research was carried out keeping in mind the fundamental principles for effectiveness and good performance in women's cooperatives, best recognized global practices, and international standards as established throughout the history of cooperative work.

### *First: Lack of Independence of Cooperative Societies:*

Perhaps one of the most important standards and best practices for cooperative action is the need for cooperative societies to be independent from formal institutions; in other words, they should be developed as autonomous and self-governed enterprises, as established by law. Yet, in practice, they all fall under the authority of the JCC – an institution consisting of government officials, threatening disinterestedness in decision-making – along with being subject to such constraints as minimum number of members and other requirements for registration, regardless of the fact that the right to freedom of association precludes the imposition of quotas on the number of founders. Another way in which Jordanian cooperatives are bound to the JCC is that they require the latter's approval in order to go through with any changes to their internal regulations<sup>6</sup>, which goes beyond those which should be the JCC's sole responsibilities, to wit, overseeing the registration process and monitoring the cooperatives' financial records. In this context, cooperative societies are incapable of working freely, and of venturing outside of the self-repeating discourse and focus of the powers to be, as it were. Finally, by controlling human resources, the JCC (that is to say, the central powers), completely deprives cooperatives of the space they require operate freely, to prosper, and to innovate.

According to Cooperatives Law 36/2016 Art. 19(a)<sup>7</sup>, the General Union of Cooperatives, along with its branches, associated unions, and cooperative societies of all kinds and areas of focus are to be considered as independently and democratically managed civil bodies. However, the establishment of unions is also subject to the approval of the JCC, which also holds the power to appoint an interim Board of Directors of the General Union<sup>8</sup>. This clearly undermines the independence of cooperative federations, inevitably subjecting them to the government's agenda and rendering them powerless. Based on performance, the JCC divides Jordanian cooperative societies into four categories: Active, faltering, frozen, and under liquidation<sup>9</sup>.

### *Second: Poor Governance within Cooperative Societies:*

The administration of cooperative societies is often found to be careless, which weakens the institutions, leading to the repetition of mistakes and a lack of improvement, development, and innovation.

As per regulations, each administrative body of a cooperative society may remain in office for three terms. Yet, since these, along with the president of the organization, are often elected by acclamation, there is substantial lack of oversight and accountability mechanisms within cooperatives, which once again damages the institutional integrity these societies<sup>6</sup>.

In addition, the majority of cooperatives do not follow specific plans and strategies, and possess

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6 Cooperative Law, No. 36/2016, Art. 13

7 Cooperative Law, No. 36/2016, Art. 19(a)

8 Cooperative Societies Regulation No. 166/2016, Art. 10(a)

9 Majali, Issam, "The Cooperative Sector and its Low Achievements". Available at: <http://www.maqar.com/?id=23197>

no clear foundations, to such an extent that the rights and duties of their members are often unclear<sup>6</sup>. Accordingly, most tasks regularly end up being relegated to those in management positions, with

most authority ultimately resting upon the cooperative's president – a concentration of power which once again threatens the institution's degree of oversight and transparency<sup>6</sup>.

The majority of cooperative societies have also been found to lack basic management policies and procedures, such as procurement policies, financial policies, etc. Due to the voluntary character of cooperative work, there is also a lack of will among members to run for managerial positions, since all gains are eventually distributed evenly. Beyond that, there is also a lack of public awareness, which discourages members from attending meetings. In turn, this absenteeism poses a series of obstacles to the democratic making of decisions, becoming particularly problematic when urgent decision-making is required.

In terms of equipment, the use of information technologies within and among cooperative societies remains limited – managerial software, for instance, is rarely, if ever, used<sup>6</sup>. In part, this may also explain the lack of coordination between cooperatives at the regional or provincial level.

### *Third: Disharmonious Cooperative Work Model:*

Part of the insufficiencies common among Jordanian cooperative societies stem from their belief that they're dependent on grants and donor funds, which is contrary to the principle of solidarity, which is at the foundation of the cooperative movement: For individuals to come together and create self-sustaining production projects benefiting, at most, from public and international technical/financial support in their incubation phase. Yet, in reality the majority of corporate societies do little more than seek grants for the financing of new and ongoing projects<sup>10</sup>. This has proven to be an almost inevitably fatal strategy, as hundreds of projects carried out by cooperatives – approximately 500 – have recently resulted in losses. Also related to their poor capacity is the threat many of them now face of disappearing: About one-third of cooperatives are currently in process of liquidation. More than ever, cooperatives require government support in several areas, such as access to raw materials and equipment at competitive prices, which presently puts them at a disadvantage against large companies, which do have access to such benefits. It is also important that they be assisted in setting up basic IT systems, later to be upgraded.

### *Fourth: Loss of Distinction between Cooperative Societies and For-Profit Organizations:*

Cooperative societies enjoy no tax exemptions or lower fees, though reportedly there have been discussions within government circles regarding tax exemptions for cooperative societies<sup>11</sup>. Though for-profit organizations enjoy no such benefits either, they operate under a much more favourable legal and regulatory environment, for, unlike them, cooperatives continue to be subject to heavy regulatory and financial control by the Societies Law and Register.

Nevertheless, cooperative societies may receive administrative, financial and technical support at the time of incorporation – a right they share with for-profits. As a result, politically- or socially-minded people who would've otherwise founded a cooperative society might have opted to register their organization as for-profit to avoid being subject to central control.

The following table will allow for a clearer comparison between cooperative societies, for-profit

10 Tarawneh, Radi, "The Reality of the Jordanian Cooperative", March 2017

11 Tarawneh, Radi, "Government directives to exempt cooperatives from income taxes", Al Rai Newspaper, 2017

Type of Institution	Financial Independence	Income Tax Exemption	Good Governance Monitoring
<b>Cooperative Societies</b>	No financial independence; full control by the JCC	No exemption	No control over the application of good governance practices
<b>Charities</b>	No financial independence; full control by the Societies Register	Exempt from income tax	Some monitoring and pressure for the application of good practices.
<b>For-Profit Organizations</b>	Full financial independence	No exemption	No control over the application of good governance practices

### *Fifth: The Slow Spread of Cooperative Work in Society:*

One of the main reasons why cooperative work remains such a feeble actor in Jordanian society is that there is a general lack of awareness among both the general public and political actors about the importance of cooperative engagement. Together with other challenges, this has brought engagement rates to a figure lower than 5%.

Likewise, many decision-makers remain unaware of the potential of the cooperative sector as a promoter of sustainable development and as a generator of employment. Thus, the sector remains marginalized, to the point that one of the cabinets even discussed the possibility of dissolving the JCC.

### *Sixth: The Lack of Effective Participation of Women in the Cooperative Sector:*

In spite of the fact that women make up 62% of all cooperative society members in Jordan, and that 6.5% are so-called women's cooperatives, with women-only memberships, women are rarely seen in managerial positions. This can be explained by the fact that the existing cooperative societies were been founded by these women's fathers, grandfathers, male siblings, uncles, male cousins, etc. If necessary, other males would join in to satisfy the minimum number of persons required to found a cooperative society, 15. Thus, the predominance of a patriarchal worldview amongst the founders of the cooperatives has contributed to an alienation of women from the cooperative movement.

Even today, women continue to be alienated, at a time when an official ILO recommendation insists that women should be empowered to become engaged in the cooperative movement at all levels, particularly in managerial and leadership positions, emphasizing that gender equality should be promoted in all cooperative projects and activities<sup>12</sup>. Yet, nowhere in Jordanian legislation concerning cooperative action the membership of women is encouraged, nor is there mention of woman-led cooperatives.

In this climate of decline for the Jordanian cooperative movement at large, women's cooperative societies are among those which have suffered the greatest impact. 68% such cooperatives have suffered losses. On the social side, female members' families often don't approve of them working – especially in occupations involving manual labour – or impose strict curfews. Community contexts sometimes contribute to develop dependence among some women. This is necessarily reflected in their involvement in cooperative work. The principle of cooperation is

12 ILO, Recommendation No. 193/2002 on Strengthening Cooperatives, Arts. 7(c) and 8(c)

then exchanged for immediate profit, and the values of interdependence and burden-sharing vanish. This weakens both the cooperative movement in general and the position of women within it as well.

## Proposed Policy Alternatives and Recommendations

### Policy No.1: Amendments to Legislation Impacting on Cooperative Action

In order to allow Jordan’s cooperative sector to flourish, enable it to play a role in promoting sustainable development, and contributing to the creation of jobs, it will be essential that women be encouraged and empowered to engage in cooperatives and assume managerial and leadership positions.

The main policy alternatives and recommendations may be synthesized as follows:

The current text of Cooperative Societies Law No. 2016/36	The reasons presented for the amendment of certain articles included in Corporate Societies Law 2016/36	The powers of the amendment and the party concerned with the reforms
Article 3(a) : The Cooperative Society shall be founded by at least fifteen persons.	<i>To facilitate the establishment of cooperative societies, we propose a reduction of the number of founders required to form any cooperative society focused on: Promoting the establishment of cooperative societies, taking into account the nature of the cooperative sector – the more the sector relies on intellectual and cognitive abilities, the lower the required number of founders should be.</i>	Cabinet, JCC, Civil Society Organizations, Cooperative Societies
Article 4(a): The Director-General of the JCC, or his Authorized Representative, shall examine all documentation, including the registration application, the establishment contract and the proposed rules of procedure. These will then be discussed with the members of the preparatory committee or its assignees for this purpose. The Director-General shall issue his decision within a period not exceeding thirty days from the date of the application. In all cases, the application shall be considered approved if the Director-General does not issue his decision during that period	<i>To promote the independence of cooperative societies and facilitate their establishment with the principles of freedom of association and cooperation, we propose:</i> *The Cooperative Society shall be registered upon satisfaction of the requirements stipulated by law, thus complying with the principles of freedom of association set forth in the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, ratified by the Government of Jordan. *These measures will increase demand among citizens to form cooperative societies. *Allow cooperatives to work and think without being tied to the government’s approach; allow them to innovate.	Cabinet

The current text of Cooperative Societies Law No. 2016/36	The reasons presented for the amendment of certain articles included in Corporate Societies Law 2016/36	The powers of the amendment and the party concerned with the reforms
<p><i>Article 19:</i> The JCC shall review any society's financial records at least once a year in accordance with the provision of Art. 4(b) within three months from the end of the fiscal year.</p> <p>The JCC shall monitor and follow up on societies' budgets, which will be submitted for approval once a year. The decision will be made taking into account the service allowance determined by the Council.</p>	<p><i>To promote the independence of cooperative societies and facilitate their establishment and conformity with the principles of cooperation, we propose that:</i></p> <p><i>*The financial statements, records and accounts of cooperative societies be audited by an independent legal auditor registered with the Association of Jordanian Accountants. This would allow the society to keep functioning while being audited, and all documents would be made available.</i></p>	Cabinet.
<p><i>Article 19: The Director-General of the JCC may liquidate any society, provided that the decision is published in the Official Gazette and in two local, widely-distributed newspapers. According to the classification approved by the Department of General Supplies, which is issued on the first day of each year, such a decision may be taken in the following cases:</i></p> <p><i>a) The number of members of the society falls below the limit specified by Law.</i></p> <p><i>b) The society has undergone an unauthorized activity.</i></p> <p><i>c) The General Commission decides to dissolve the society during an extraordinary meeting.</i></p> <p><i>d) The society fails to perform any activities after it's been registered for a period of a year.</i></p> <p><i>e) The society repeatedly violates the law, or the internal procedures or regulations of the JCC.</i></p> <p><i>f) The society fails to cease or perform an activity under instruction of the Director-General for a period of a year.</i></p> <p><i>g) The Director-General finds that the society has become unable to fulfil its objectives and serve the purpose of its establishment, and is thus unable to resume its activities. This shall be supported by a report carried out by a special ad hoc commission.</i></p>	<p><i>To promote the independence of cooperative societies and preclude mere repetition government discourse, we suggest that:</i></p> <p><i>*Any cooperative society that violates the regulations and instructions shall be referred to the judiciary for consideration of its compliance with the law and appropriate decision-making.</i></p>	Cabinet.

## Policy No. 2: Restructuring the Board of Directors of the JCC

In order to foster and expand the cooperation movement in Jordan, and increase its impact, it is hereby suggested for consideration that the number of representatives of the cooperative sector in the Board of Directors of the JCC be altered as shown below:

Current text of Cooperative Law No. 1997/18	Reasons for amendment to the Cooperative Law No. 1997/18	Powers of amendment and concerned party
<p><i>Cooperatives Law Article No.5(a):</i> The Board of Directors shall be composed of the following leadership:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. President of the Council: Chairman</li> <li>2. Director-General: Vice-Chairman</li> <li>3. Secretary-General of the Ministry of Agriculture:</li> <li>4. Secretary General of the Ministry of Finance: Member</li> <li>5. Secretary-General of the Ministry of Planning: Member</li> <li>6. Director-General of the Agricultural Credit Institution: Member</li> <li>7. Director-General of the General Organization for Housing and Urban Development: Member</li> <li>8. Chairman of the Jordanian General Cooperative Union: Member</li> <li>9. Chairman of the General Union of Jordanian Farmers: Member</li> <li>10. Three members of associated cooperatives appointed by the Council of Ministers upon the recommendation of the President of the Council for a period of four years renewable.</li> </ol>	<p><i>In order to increase the nature of cooperative work, we propose:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* To Increase the number of cooperative representatives in the Board of Directors, and allow them greater independence from, and even greater influence over, the JCC. To promote democratic practice within cooperatives and their unions by having elected leaderships, thus ensuring greater shielding from governmental influence.</li> </ul>	<p>Parliament, Cabinet, Legislation And Opinion Bureau ( LOB )</p>

### Recommendations

#### 1. To promote good governance practices in the work of cooperative societies, particularly those focusing on women

. Such can be achieved by amending and expanding Cooperative Societies Law No. 36/2016, to provide for the following:

- \* Compel cooperative societies to prepare strategies and subsequently develop action plans, policies, and procedures.
- \* Require cooperative societies to procure a certified auditor from the Jordanian Accountants Association.
- \* Include in the society's bylaws a set of procedures for elections and the clearly-stated principle that chairmen of cooperative societies shall not be eligible for more than two consecutive terms.
- \* Allow the members of administrative bodies of the cooperative societies to work for wages, with the aim of compensating them for their efforts in the management of the affairs of the society, in addition to receiving the usual profit proceeds.

\* Prohibit the presence of more than two first or second-degree family members in the General Assembly of any cooperative society, so as to ensure good governance practices.

## *2. To ensure that cooperatives are reliant on the combined strengths of their members and improve their overall work model,*

and to ensure that cooperatives are capable of designing and carrying out successful projects, the following steps should be taken:

- \* Request the conduction of an economic feasibility study for the cooperative society project.
- \* Open a financing window at the JCC in order to provide cooperatives with easy access to loans, linking the limit of the loan size with productivity of the requesting cooperative. Greater access to funding would then allow for expansion, which would continue to contribute to growing employment.
- \* Encourage more citizens to establish cooperative societies by way of providing such incentives as soft loans, tax exemptions (notably on income taxes and sales taxes, along with customs reductions) and link it to the cooperative's performance, so as to encourage expansion and greater productivity, which will then generate new jobs. This is especially true of women's cooperatives.
- \* The government should allow cooperative societies into the civil and military markets, if only to underline the difference in nature between a cooperative and a business or for-profit organization.
- \* Establish a cooperative institute dedicated to the provision of capacity-building workshops to members of cooperatives, once more emphasizing the importance of having women participating in the programs. In addition, there is also the sharing of administrative, financial and technical support.
- \* Providing administrative, financial and technical support to the cooperatives when necessary – such as at the beginning – and after, only when proven necessary, and not to give out grants to cooperative societies haphazardly.

## *3. To promote the spread of cooperative work among citizens and raise **awareness of its importance.***

In order to achieve this, the Jordanian Government itself will have to realize the importance of the sector to the country's economy. Then, it must launch a series of informative media campaigns, presenting success stories and showcasing the benefits of forming or joining a cooperative society.

## *4. To boost women's involvement in the cooperative sector.*

This will require making some changes to the rules of procedures for societies, notably including quotas in society memberships and administrations. This should be accompanied by the development of a basic database by the JCC to monitor gender-related indicators at the national and individual cooperative level. Providing facilities for those classified as women's organizations would also facilitate the integration of women into the cooperative movement, and through the JCC funds could be channeled to assist women's cooperatives and promote woman-friendly cooperative environments.

### *5. To strengthen the roles of cooperative societies and to establish new cooperatives.*

To achieve this, it is recommended that a comprehensive strategy be prepared for the whole of the cooperative sector by the JCC (while allowing for the involvement of all parties), taking into account that the cooperative sector must prioritize expansion and the promotion of employment, especially for women, by generating jobs. In this light, cooperatives exhibit the qualities both of charities and of profit-focused enterprises.

### *6. To build the capacity of cooperative societies.*

For this to be achieved, cooperatives will have to work together on joint projects, benefiting from each other's experiences, so as to produce higher-quality work through the sharing of knowledge.

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