



Declaration of the **First International Meeting of Funeral Cooperatives and Mutual Enterprises – Québec 2012**

Whereas the United Nations has proclaimed 2012 the International Year of Co-operatives and recognizes the cooperative business model as a major player in the sustainable development of communities;

Whereas the first article of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights states that “all human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights ... and should act towards one another in a spirit of brotherhood”;

Whereas every human being, upon his or her death, has the right to be treated with dignity, through quality, meaningful funeral services that respect his or her values and economic condition;

Whereas funeral cooperatives and mutual enterprises meet these needs while relying on the values of fairness and solidarity as well as the seven cooperative principles adopted by the International Co-operative Alliance;

Whereas the educational mission of funeral cooperatives and mutuals surrounding death and bereavement includes the promotion of practices and rituals imbued with humanity and respect for the environment;

Whereas funeral cooperatives and mutual enterprises have an important positive impact on their local funeral market, resulting in less expensive and better quality funeral services for the entire community;

Whereas it is our common desire to see funeral cooperatives and mutual enterprises assume an increasing place in the global funeral market;

Now, therefore,

We the undersigned, as participants in the First International Meeting of Funeral Cooperatives and Mutual Enterprises held October 7 and 8, 2012 in Quebec City, Canada, affirm the importance of developing and promoting the funeral cooperative and mutualist movement the world over, so as to ensure that every human being is treated with dignity upon his or her death and to curb the commercial exploitation of death.

To these ends, the participants, in a spirit of inter-cooperation and mutual respect, undertake to:

1. Promote funeral cooperatives and mutual enterprises at the local, national and international levels.
2. Unite with funeral cooperatives and mutual enterprises the world over in a spirit of inter-cooperation, so as to create a global network which shall be mandated to:
 - continue the analysis of funeral cooperatives and mutual enterprises undertaken in the study titled *The Contribution of Funeral Cooperatives to Build a Better World*, submitted at the Québec 2012 meeting;
 - facilitate encounters and exchanges among funeral cooperatives and mutual enterprises the world over;
 - create tools which enable funeral cooperatives and mutual enterprises to communicate so as to share information and tools of common interest;
 - publicize the funeral sector within the cooperative movement.
3. Create a committee to follow up on the First International Meeting of Funeral Cooperatives and Mutual Enterprises – Québec 2012, composed of representatives from North America, inviting representatives from the other continents to join as well.
4. Promote to the International Co-operative Alliance the importance of recognizing the funeral industry as a full-fledged sector of the cooperative movement.

(Signed at Quebec City, October 8, 2012)