



International Year of **Microcredit** 2005

Fact Sheet

International Year of Microcredit 2005 **Around the World**

People around the world are engaged in diverse activities and programmes to celebrate the International Year of Microcredit and the spirit of entrepreneurship. Nearly fifty countries have confirmed their participation in the Year and are in the process of establishing National Committees to lead country-wide and regional activities. National Committees are central to the success of the Year, and the Year Secretariat encourages Committees to engage and include a broad range of country-level actors, including microfinance clients, local governments, Central Banks, UN Country Teams, private sector leaders and the NGO community.

Following are some highlights of national activities:

Belgium

The Minister of Development Cooperation of Belgium has officially approved a range of initiatives in support of the Year of Microcredit, and a launch event will be held in November 2004. Led by the Ministry, a conference in February 2005 will examine the challenges of building financial sectors that will assimilate people who have historically been excluded. Among the three substantive initiatives to follow the conference is a partnership with a West African country.

Germany

In collaboration with civil society, the Ministry of Economic Cooperation and Development is planning a number of activities that will focus on the linkages between microfinance and economic development. These will include: joint high-level events involving relevant implementing agencies, the Federal Ministries and banking institutions, a meeting on “New Partnerships for Innovation in Microfinance” together with international organizations and an exhibition on microfinance.



Indonesia

The Coordinating Ministry of Economy of Indonesia has initiated meetings with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, universities, Bank Rakyat Indonesia (BRI) and several other institutions to develop a National Committee for the Year of Microcredit. The Year will also be featured in the panel "Trends and the Future Direction of Microfinance" at BRI's conference in December 2004. A range of projects devoted to increasing broad-based participation in the financial system are also in development. BRI is promoting the power of microfinance and the International Year of Microcredit 2005 through an international seminar in Bali, scheduled from 1 to 3 December 2004. The seminar will present numerous microfinance experts from around the world who will explore the future challenges and development of microfinance. To celebrate entrepreneurship with the aim of promoting microfinance programmes and helping achieve the Millennium Development Goals, Indonesia is participating in the Global Microentrepreneur Awards. Winners of this competition will open the Jakarta Stock Exchange on 18 November 2004 to ring in the year.

Kenya

Activities in support of the Year will coincide with the work of the Association of Microfinance Institutions in Kenya. A broad range of 22 organizations representing

government, microfinance institutions and informal sector umbrella organizations support the Kenyan National Committee. Plans include the mapping of country-wide microfinance institutions to determine areas that require stronger, better services and village level activities with "open days" to promote microfinance institutions in regions where there is the most need. To raise awareness, newspaper supplements in *The Nation* and *The Standard* will publicize the work of microfinance institutions and other relevant stakeholders. To celebrate the launch of the Year, provincial capitals will host guest speakers and exhibitions where microfinance institutions can explain microcredit schemes and facilitate the opening of new accounts. Throughout the Year, workshops, conferences and school-based programmes will promote knowledge about microfinance and awards will be given to institutions with innovative practices in the microfinance sector.

Mauritania

A national forum on the challenges facing the growth of microcredit is being convened in Mauritania. Promotional activities such as radio and television programmes on the development and management of microenterprises are also being developed. These will target rural and semi-urban areas and women workers who have recently been laid off in the textile industry.

National Committees are currently being established in the following countries:

Afghanistan	Gabon	Mali	Rwanda
Angola	Germany	Mauritania	South Africa
Australia	Guatemala	Mexico	Sweden
Belgium	Honduras	Monaco	Switzerland
Bosnia and Herzegovina	Indonesia	Mongolia	Tanzania
Brazil	Italy	Mozambique	Thailand
Cambodia	Jordan	Nepal	Turkey
Cape Verde	Kazakhstan	Netherlands	United Kingdom
China	Kenya	Nigeria	Venezuela
Croatia	Korea	Norway	Zambia
Dominican Republic	Luxembourg	Pakistan	
France	Madagascar	Philippines	

Mongolia

Mongolia is planning a conference on the national microfinance landscape that will also spotlight the microentrepreneur award winners from the region. Outreach and training programmes for university students are also part of plans to observe the Year. The National Committee will hold a launch event with 1,000 invited participants from all parts of the country and all sectors of society. The four-day event is designed to be a celebration of national accomplishments.

Nepal

A workshop organized by the United Nations Development Programme and the Centre for Micro Finance (Pvt.) Ltd. was held to establish a National Committee in Nepal that represents the government, the private sector, civil society and NGOs. In addition to reaching a consensus on the importance of inclusive financial systems, discussions focused on the challenges of meeting the financial needs of the rural poor. The emphasis of the activities of Nepal's National Committee for the Year will also be on creating a favourable environment for the promotion and support of microfinance.

Netherlands

Financial institutions, universities, NGOs and consulting firms in the Netherlands are involved in supporting the microfinance sector in developing countries. Thirteen funding organizations make up the Dutch Microfinance Platform, created in 2002: Hivos, Cordaid, Icco, Novib, Triodos, FMO, Oikocredit, ASN, ABN Amro, Doen Foundation, Rabobank Foundation, Ministry of Foreign Affairs (DGIS) and Interpolis. The Platform, originally formed to enhance the effectiveness of microfinance, will coordinate the activities for the Year of Microcredit and act as the Dutch National Committee. Activities will emphasize attracting new participants into the microfinance sector, transferring know-how and expertise and strengthening partnerships between institutions within the Netherlands as well as with institutions in developing countries.

Nigeria

Nigeria plans to hold a national microcredit conference in 2005 to commemorate the Year, and will launch campaigns to solicit the support of local governments and the private sector. There are plans to establish a Central Bank-Donor Community Microfinance Consultative Forum that will harmonize and focus donor community support for microfinance projects in the country as a follow-up to the recently developed microfinance policy and regulatory guidelines created in 2003.

South Africa

The Department of Trade and Industry along with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and other stakeholders from the microfinance industry will lead the activities in South Africa in support of the Year. A seminar to take place in Pretoria with the participation of the Departments of Economic Development and Tourism will address the challenges faced by microfinance institutions and share success stories and best practices. Workshops will be organized to train young people, women and students.

Sweden

The Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA) has recently produced its new microfinance guidelines and intends to disseminate them widely in Sweden during 2004 and 2005 to ensure further expansion of Sweden's support of microfinance. In observance of the Year, SIDA will consider making funds available for the Swedish Microfinance Network, a consortium of Swedish NGOs working in microfinance, to support activities in raising public awareness and knowledge about microfinance.

Turkey

A proposed bill on microfinance institutions aims to establish an adequate legal framework and regulatory principles for the operation of microfinance institutions. After the bill comes into force, Turkish microfinance institutions will participate in a conference to scale up the provision of financial services.

United Kingdom

The Year was kicked off with an event featuring Muhammad Yunus of the Grameen Bank, attended by more than 60 people from across the corporate, NGO and government sectors, including the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Department for International Development. The Chair of the All Party Parliamentary Group on Microfinance, which has been coordinating activities by organizations across the country in support of the Year, announced that the Secretary of State for International Development had officially designated the Group as the UK National Committee. The meeting emphasized that the activities planned for the Year must be designed to carry on after the close of 2005.

Venezuela

Venezuela will increase the number of small loans to vulnerable groups; the State Industrial Bank has dedicated \$65 million to financing microcredit in 2005. In addition to awareness-raising initiatives to promote the Year, a special publication on microcredit will be issued.

Zambia

Activities in Zambia in support of the Year are focusing on the development of the microfinance and rural banking sector. Initiatives will highlight the inclusion of microfinance in all development and poverty reduction programmes, the adoption of legal reforms aimed at facilitating the growth of the sector and a promotional drive that includes a microfinance week and a national microfinance summit.

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For updates on national activities, please visit:

www.yearofmicrocredit.org