

PRESS RELEASE

United Nations Development Programme

Afghanistan Country Office, Shah Mahmood Ghazi Watt, Kabul



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

United Nations International Year of Microcredit comes to Afghanistan

Kabul, Afghanistan 14 November 2005: As part of the activities for 2005 International Year of Microcredit, declared by the United Nations, the Afghan winners of the Global Micro-entrepreneurship Awards will be selected on Saturday, Nov. 19, 2005 at a ceremony at the Serena Hotel in Kabul.

The Afghan GMA programme has been coordinated by the United Nations Development Programme, the Afghan Microfinance Association, and MISFA (Microfinance Investment Support Facility for Afghanistan).

The International Year of Microcredit seeks to promote the building of more inclusive financial sectors, particularly those that serve small businesses. To mark the year, small business owners throughout Afghanistan have had their opportunity to participate in national business competitions called the Global Microentrepreneurship Awards (GMA).

This global awards programme has been taking place in over 30 countries alongside Afghanistan. The goal of the GMA Programme is to promote micro-enterprises and increase awareness on their needs for financial services, in what is broadly known as "micro-financing." More importantly, the aim of this initiative is to put the spotlight on local microentrepreneurs who are helping to lift the economic fortunes of their communities, and bringing more capital into their developing economies.

In Afghanistan, participating microentrepreneurs have presented their business success stories to microfinance experts, political and business leaders. After the preliminary round of selection, a shortlist of 12 finalists have been identified. The competition and judging process will climax on November 19 when the winners will be announced at the awards ceremony at the Serena Hotel in Kabul. Prizes will be awarded in the following categories: agriculture, war widows, ex-combatants, alternative livelihoods, businesses outside Kabul and return/refugee.

While the world galvanizes around microcredit in 2005, the Global Microentrepreneurship Awards will ensure that the small business owners throughout Afghanistan are celebrated for their efforts in creating a sustainable business.

All media are invited to attend the awards ceremony:
November 19, 13.30
Serena Hotel
Kabul

If you would like to learn more about the GMA Programme or would like to attend the ceremony, please contact Mustafa Eric
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