

## International Year of **Microcredit** 2005

### National Committees

*“ ...The Challenge before us is to address the constraints that exclude people from full participation in the financial sector. The International Year of Microcredit offers a pivotal opportunity for the international community to engage in a shared commitment to meet this challenge. Together, we can and must build inclusive financial sectors that help people improve their lives.”*

*United Nations Secretary-General Kofi Annan*

#### What is a National Committee?

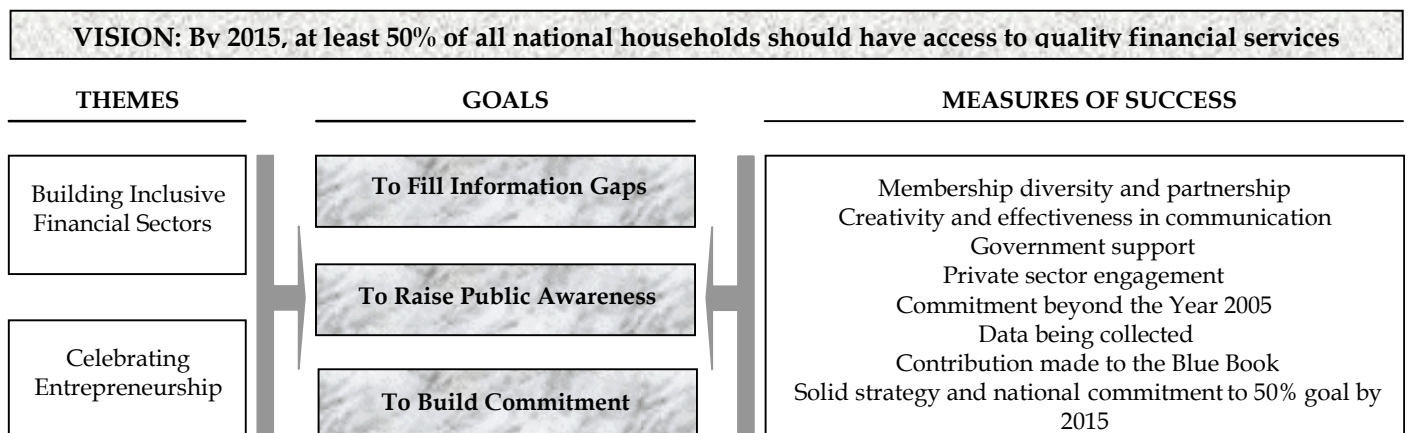
The General Assembly of the United Nations invited all Member States to establish National Committees or Focal Points to promote activities related to the preparation and observance of the Year. A National Committee should include a broad range of country-level actors, including local governments, Central Banks, UN Country Teams, private sector leaders, the NGO community, and microfinance clients.

#### What is a National Committee supposed to do?

Each National Committee should assess the challenges that face poor people in accessing financial services in its country and decide upon its own activities and initiatives. Ideally, a National Committee should aim to create a dialogue on best practices to build a more inclusive financial sector in the country. The Committee should focus on the vision of ensuring that by 2015, at least 50% of all national households have access to quality financial services. Committees should develop a strategic action plan for the vast availability of quality financial services (savings, credit, insurance, remittances) to poor and low-income people. This strategy should include numerous awareness-raising campaigns, based on good information, to promote the activities of the Year, which will result in the necessary commitment and action amongst government, private sector, UN agencies, multilateral organizations and donors, NGOs, academic and civil society.

The Year of Microcredit is a starting point to engage countries in aligning their financial sectors to achieve the Millennium Development Goals by 2015. National Committees can be a driving force in spurring country commitment and action forward to 2015.

One vision, two strategic themes, three concrete goals, and eight measures of success should guide the activities of the National Committee:



## What is a National Committee supposed to do? (Cont.)

The objective of the National Committees is to build commitment of:

- Governments: to ensure that their legal, fiscal and regulatory systems encourage rather than stunt microfinance.
- Multinational agencies and donors: to treat microfinance as a critical part of the financial sector and not as a development project.
- Private sector and NGOs: to provide financial services to the poor and low-income people primarily as a business concern not as a charitable act.

## Who should be part of the National Committee?

One of the criteria of success of the National Committees is the diversity of its membership. The wide national constituency for microfinance should be represented in the composition of the National Committees, and in the planning and observances of the Year. The Committees should engage and include a broad range of country-level actors, including: heads of states, local governments, Central Banks, UN Country Representatives, private sector leaders, the NGO community, microfinance clients, and civil society. National Committees are also an opportunity to engage high-level power brokers, spokespeople, community leaders, the poor and low-income people this Year is meant to serve, and new, yet important voices, to a call for action.

The National Committee may wish to include senior representatives from:

Government	Ministry of Economic-Development Ministry of Finance Ministry of Education Ministry of Communication Ministry of Foreign Affairs Central Bank
Multilaterals and donors	UN Agencies World Bank IMF Regional Development Bank CGAP Donor Agencies
Private Sector, and NGOs	Financial Institutions Microfinance Banks (commercial, private and governmental) Bank Associations Microfinance Networks Credit Union Associations Private Sector Companies
Academia and Civil Society	National Figures (film, television, music, sports heroes) Media Universities Volunteers

## Budget for the National Committee

As with all international years and observances declared by the General Assembly, financing for activities is voluntary. The Year Secretariat is sponsored by four core private sector sponsors: Citigroup, the ING Group, VISA International, and the United Nations Foundation. The Secretariat has sought to bring into microfinance new private sector actors and avoid siphoning financial support from current donors. As such, donor countries, multilaterals, foundations, governments, and others should be committed to supporting the important work of National Committees. National Committees should seek support for their activities.

We actively encourage the National Committees of donor countries to offer substantive support and collaboration to the National Committees of developing countries, particularly least developed countries. National Committees are encouraged to use the Year as an opportunity to engage private sector partners and sponsors. The Secretariat is actively fundraising at a global level to secure support for the activities of the National Committees. Global funds have been successfully raised for a number of core activities around media and public awareness; however, National Committees will need to take an active role in building support, particularly locally.

## What is the role of the Secretariat with respect to National Committees?

The role of the Secretariat is to provide support, general coordination, and global guidelines to all National Committees/Focal Points around the world for the celebration of the International Year of Microcredit 2005.

Mark Malloch Brown, United Nations Capital Development Fund Administrator and Jose Antonio Ocampo, Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs have been designated as joint coordinators for the Year.

Christina Barrineau has been designated as the Chief Technical Advisor for the Year of Microcredit 2005. Chrstitina can be reached at [christina.barrineau@undp.org](mailto:christina.barrineau@undp.org) or at (212) 906-6203.

Carola Saba, has been designated, within the Year Secretariat, as the focal point for the coordination of the National Committees for the Year. Carola can be reached at [Carola.Saba@undp.org](mailto:Carola.Saba@undp.org) or at (212) 906-6308.