

Welcome address

**Microfinance regional workshop:
Sharing microfinance resources and knowledge in the Mekong region**

**Hotel Micasa, Phnom Penh, Cambodia
8 - 9 December 2004**

SON Koun Thor,

Chairman and CEO of the Rural Development Bank
Vice-Chairman of the Supreme National Economic Council
Coordinator of PASMf

Good morning,

- **Ms. Sharon Wilkinson, Country Director, Care International in Cambodia**
- **Mr. Pascal Marino, Program Coordinator for the Banking With The Poor Network**
- **Mr. Phan Ho, Director of the Bank Supervision Department, NBC, Cambodia**
- **Ladies and Gentlemen distinguished guests**

On behalf of the Rural Development Bank and the Coordination Office of PASMf, it is my pleasure and privilege to welcome you to this Workshop organized by CARE Cambodia in collaboration with the Banking with the Poor Network.

Today, it is a great opportunity for this workshop which was organized on the eve of the New Year 2005 to welcome the International UN Micro Credit Year.

Ministry of Economy and Finance, National Bank of Cambodia, Rural Development Bank, AFD, ADB, UNDP, CARE, USAID and a lot of National (Acleda, AMRET, Hatha Kaksekar, Seilanithih, CEB...) and International Organizations have collaborated for over 10 years for supporting microfinance's activities in Cambodia.

From time to time I have the honor to participate in several events of rural credit service such as the first Global Microentrepreneurship Awards for Cambodian credit agents and beneficiaries of the credit, organized by UNCDF, and the 5th Asia network Seminar, organized by SIDI and AFD and Credit Program for Fishery Sector, organized by FAO / APRACA / RDB. Therefore, we can conclude that national and international institutions have paid their attention for the human resources development and the environment of the microfinance which has taken on an increasingly important role in the rural economic development and has participated in the poverty alleviation. In many countries, microfinance is a fast growing industry, increasing its outreach among poor and middle class households.

We remain steadfast with our resolve to further develop and expand the scope of our microfinance operations based on three principles: **development, efficiency and sustainability.**

I hope that all the participants in this two-day workshop may contribute new ideas, concepts as well as thresh out experiences to further expand our pool of knowledge in microfinance in the region. Moreover, I believe that this workshop would serve as our venue towards strengthening a stronger microfinance sector in the Mekong region.

I would like to express my sincere thanks to CARE Cambodia and Banking with the Poor Network who are the organizers of this very important workshop.

I wish all of you, participants of the workshop, good success in your work.

THANK YOU.