

**Opening speech, Pascal Marino, BWTP Network Program Coordinator**

Mr Burhanuddin Abdullah, Governor of Bank Indonesia,

Mr Bambang Ismawan, Secretary General of the Gema-PKM

Estimated guests,

It is a real pleasure for me to open this important workshop, co-organised with Gema-PKM (Gerakan Bersama Pengembangan Keuangan Mikro), the Indonesian Movement for Microfinance Development, here in Jakarta.

We here today to expand and contribute to the Asia Resource Centre for Microfinance (ARCM), based on dialogue and information exchange at national and regional levels in South and Southeast Asia. The ARCM constitutes a one-stop learning and information hub for Banking with the Poor Network (BWTP) members and other microfinance organisations internationally.

The ARCM promotes increased outreach and efficiency of financial services for the poor in South and Southeast Asia, and has two main objectives:

- To encourage partnerships and cooperation in Asia
- To build a knowledge management platform accessible to all microfinance actors in the Asia region

The ARCM, was established as a virtual knowledge center in microfinance in early 2004 with activities in Pakistan and Nepal, and is now extended to Indonesia with activities taking place in August and September 2004. In each location, a stakeholder workshop, such as this one, is organised with local partners, following a comprehensive review of the microfinance sector through individual consultations with key microfinance organisations.

In this second phase of expansion of the ARCM to Southeast Asia, BWTP will organise individual meetings with key microfinance stakeholders in Indonesia, in the coming days.

This workshop is an opportunity for participants from Indonesia to share experiences in specific domains: practices and standards, innovations, linkages with the banking sector, and regional cooperation.

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Finally, I would like to thank Gema PKM, and especially Mr Bambang Ismawan and Mr Riza Primahendra, for your support in co-organising this event.