

PRESS RELEASE
Chennai, India – April 4, 2008

IDLO WORKS WITH LAWYERS TO BOOST MIRCOFINANCE IN SOUTH ASIA

Journalists are invited to the closing ceremony of the International Development Law Organization's (IDLO) two-week microfinance program in Chennai, India. The ceremony will be held on **Friday, April 11, at 3pm at the Raintree Hotel, Chennai, India.**

The program is designed to help lawyers, bankers, policy-makers and practitioners from across South Asia to navigate the legal issues surrounding the region's rapidly growing microfinance industry. Approximately half of the participants came from India.

IDLO training sessions and interactive workshops focus on the legal and regulatory issues related to microfinance in India and its neighboring countries including Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Nepal, the Philippines, Pakistan and Sri Lanka.

The program examines:

- Microfinance activities in South Asia and the relevant regulatory challenges, including the Indian Microfinance Bill and the Sri Lankan Microfinance Draft Law
- Public interest advocacy for women's rights and access to microfinance services
- Land ownership and the prospect for land reform
- International investment opportunities currently available to MFIs, future investment trends and the key legal issues related to cross-border transactions
- Consumer protection issues and tools for alternative dispute resolutions
- IT and telecom tools to support and promote microfinance, the opportunities and the regulatory implications

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IDLO's work in Chennai forms part of the Organization's three-year global microfinance project, funded by the Omidyar Network. This project aims to build the capacity of developing country legal professionals to enable them to take an active role in the microfinance industry. Beneficiaries include microfinance entities, NGO's, central banks, other bank regulators, think-tanks, borrower groups and government law and policy-makers.

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IDLO (International Development Law Organization) is an international, inter-governmental organization with a mandate to promote the Rule of Law and good governance in developing countries, countries in economic transition and countries emerging from post-conflict situations. Since its establishment in 1983, IDLO has contributed to the training of more than 17,000 lawyers, magistrates and officials from approximately 176 countries.

IDLO has its Headquarters in Rome, Italy and two Regional Offices; in Cairo, Egypt, covering Arabic-speaking countries and in Sydney, Australia, covering the Asia Pacific area. IDLO currently operates Project Offices in Afghanistan, Indonesia, Sri Lanka and Kyrgyzstan. IDLO is funded by contributions from its 19 Member States and other donors.

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