



**December 1, 2005
St.Petersburg**

Results of the Global Microentrepreneurship Awards Competition Announced

Today, the awards ceremony of the Global Microentrepreneurship Awards Competition, held in Russia from August to November 2005, took place in the framework of the launch of the IV National Conference "Microfinance in Russia: Successful Strategies for Economic Growth".

The competition was organized by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the Citigroup Foundation and the Russian Microfinance Centre (RMC). It was held under the auspices the Council on the International Year of Microcredit 2005 at the Ministry of Economic Development and Trade of the Russian Federation.

These competitions are aimed at highlighting achievements of the most successful micro-entrepreneurs and the most effective microfinance programmes, and at drawing the attention of public and authorities to the sphere of microfinancing.

The jury of the competition received over 100 applications from microentrepreneurs and more than 40 applications from microfinance organizations. The applications came from different parts of Russia - from St.Petersburg to Kamchatka, and from Kalmykia to the Primorsky region.

The jury included representatives of the Chamber of Commerce and Industry of the Russian Federation, Higher School of Economics, the United Nations Development Programme, ZAO KB Citibank, OAO Vneshtorgbank, New Eurasia Foundation, Women's Microfinance Network, OPORA of Russia, League of Credit Unions, Union of Agricultural Credit Cooperatives, Resource Centre for Small and Medium Enterprises, National Union of Financial Support Organizations, Russian Agency for Small and Medium Enterprises.

The first prize winners in the main nominations are:

- Best microentrepreneur among trade enterprises
Aleksanin Vasily Aleksandrovich, Kaluzhskaya oblast, Kirovsky district, Berezhnki village;
- Best microentrepreneur among non-trade enterprises
Kim Veronika Grigorievna, Nakhodka, Promorsky krai;
- Best employer in the area of microentrepreneurship among trade enterprises
Vorobieva Zinaida Valerievna, Republic of Chuvashiya, Cheboksary;
- Best employer in the area of microentrepreneurship among non-trade enterprises
Shushkov Vladimir Ivanovich, Leningradskaya oblast, Kirov.

Loan officers who worked with the winners among microentrepreneurs also received prizes. Prizes for microfinance organizations were awarded in the category "The most effective microfinance programme to support entrepreneurship."

State Duma deputy Mr. A.G.Aksakov, UNDP Resident Representative in the Russian Federation a.i. Mr. Ercan Murat, Board member of the Russian Chamber of Commerce and Industry Mr. V.P. Ermakov, Vice President of Citigroup Russia Ms. N.Y. Nikolaeva, and Deputy Chairman of the Federation Council of the Federal Assembly of the Russian Federation Mr. M.E. Nikolaev took part in the winners awards ceremony.

Mr. Ercan Murat opened the ceremony by saying that "microfinancing can really help change the life of people to the better, especially of those who need it most. They will be given an opportunity to earn and save; they will stop fighting for survival and begin planning for the future. In other words, microfinancing enables people to break out of poverty."

Vice President of Citigroup Russia Ms. N.Y. Nikolaeva noted: "We are glad that the first Global Microentrepreneurship Awards competition held in Russia has attracted many participants. It was not an easy task for the jury to select winners among so worthy candidates. We hope that this competition will become annual and will draw more attention next year."

The United Nations General Assembly has declared 2005 the International Year of Microcredit in order to highlight the impact of microfinance on poverty alleviation. In November 2004, to commemorate the launch of the International Year of Microcredit, the United Nations Capital Development Fund, the Citigroup Foundation, and a group of students from a number of universities united to organize business competitions for microentrepreneurs. In 2004 the "Global Microentrepreneurship Awards" competition for the first time was held in 8 countries. This year the microentrepreneurs were awarded in 30 countries.