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**UPDATE: 02/2007**

**AMFISA INTERNET BULLETIN**

**05/02/2006**

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**A GENERAL UPDATE**

1. We would like to welcome all of you to this great and challenging year and wish all our readers and members the best of year, 2007!
2. The AMFISA was invited in January 2007 to attend the Sa-Dhan conference titled “greater Inclusion: Possibilities and Prospects”. The Sa-Dhan is an Indian association of community development finance institutions. It is more than 10 years old and has over 109 members.

The purpose of the visit was driven by discussions earlier in 2006 within AMFISA and other external stakeholders to build bridges between microfinance networks in India and South Africa. These discussions were driven by the primary recognition that poverty is a universal phenomenon and that therefore requires universal responses from those concerned with its eradication.

Mr. Mangaliso Williams (Executive Director – AMFISA) and Mr. Ben Nkuna (Managing Director – Womens Development Businesses) represented AMFISA in India at the Sa-Dhan Conference and visited Basix; Friends of Womens World Banking, India; SEWA Bank and Insurance; APMAS ( Mahila Abhivruddhi Society, Andhra Pradesh). The two representations were in India from the 15<sup>th</sup> to 26<sup>th</sup> January 2007.

The AMFISA representatives succeeded in building partnerships and in the process shared the South African experience of Microfinance. The Sa-Dhan and AMFISA have agreed to develop south to south cooperation and in due course the Sa-Dhan will send two of its representatives to South Africa.

The AMFISA has promised to host our counterparts from India and invest in building and solidifying the relationships between the two countries so as to build the platform for our memberships to work together and capacitate one another.

The AMFISA will circulate the visit report soon and during the regional consultative visits, information will be shared with our members.

3. On the 30<sup>th</sup> January 2007, the AMFISA attended the Inter-Governmental Seminar titled “Cooperation for Development” organized by the Ministry of Foreign

Affairs of the Republic of Chile and the Embassy of Chile in South Africa. The Discussions were led by Government representatives from Angola, Brazil, Chile, Mozambique and South Africa. The objective of the meeting was to create the opportunity for discussions on diverse problems such as Good Governance; Human Security; Human Rights; the Environment; Cooperation; Science and Technology; Mining and Energy from the points of view of stakeholders attending and their future perspectives.

4. The AMFISA requested the Chilean Ambassador to host a similar workshop to encourage interaction between civil society organizations in the represented countries in recognition of the fact that poverty requires all stakeholders to equally participate in finding solutions. The Ambassador has agreed and therefore further discussions will ensue on the issue.
5. On the 31<sup>st</sup> January 2007, AMFISA met with ABSA Bank representatives in Flexi-Banking led by Mrs. Mapule Cheela. The meeting was to brief one another on progress and challenges both in the banking fraternity and microfinance sector.

The meeting agreed that changes were taking place in the Banks and the microfinance sector and that collaborations and partnerships were very possible.

The meeting also agreed that continuous regular meetings will be held from now onwards especially with AMFISA to ensure that all stakeholders were regularly briefed and up to date with the sector changes.

6. The terms of reference for the Baseline study have been circulated to the Board of Directors and we are aiming to start the study in March 2007. It is envisaged that local consultants will undertake the study due to budget limitations.
7. The AMFISA would like to remind its members to register for the University of Soutthen New Hampshire courses in March 2007. Members are requested to register as soon as possible as spaces for the training may be taken up. Kindly visit the AMFISA website for more information.
8. The AMFISA will also be commencing its preparations for the Seep Network NCAT assessment in 2007. Members and other stakeholders of AMFISA are request to assist in the evaluation of AMFISA. More information will be circulated soon.
9. Finally, the AMFISA is currently planning to meet the leadership of SAMAF in preparation of the Industry workshop post the SAMAF workshop. Members will be updated soon.
10. There will be a 3 day workshop in Cape Town from the 12<sup>th</sup> to 14<sup>th</sup> March 2007 titled "Making Markets work for the Poor in Southern and Eastern Africa. Kindly visit [www.amfisa.org.za](http://www.amfisa.org.za) for more information.

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