



## **PRESS RELEASE FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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### ***High-Level Workshop for Officials of SME Development Institutions of African Countries, Malaysia and Thailand***

Petaling Jaya, 6 November 2006 – The United Nations Development Programme in partnership with the Government of Malaysia, Malaysian Industrial Development Authority (MIDA), Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) and the Government of Thailand, organised a High-Level Workshop for officials of SME development institutions, aimed at boosting and empowering participants in the skills necessary to bring about institutional reforms in SME policy upon return to their respective countries.

The training, held in Malaysia and Thailand from 6-21 November 2006, will enable participants from seven African countries to learn from the best practices of strong and effective institutions in Asia. It would also strengthen collaborative efforts for fostering trade and investments between Africa and Asia.

“The experience of developing countries has shown that Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (SMEs) are increasingly important in economic and human development and for achieving the Millenium Development Goals, especially eradicating extreme poverty and hunger,” said Dr Richard Leete, Resident Representative for UNDP Malaysia, Singapore and Brunei Darussalam.

“UNDP Malaysia is actively engaged in supporting national efforts in promoting interregional South-South Cooperation, particularly Asia-Africa partnerships to strengthen SME development,” he said.

For example, UNDP is currently working with the Development Bank of Malaysia to share good practices in Credit Analysis and Development Finance for SMEs in nine countries in Sub-Saharan Africa, he added.

“The training programme is expected to benefit African counterparts so that they will be able to formulate strategies and policies to improve SME lending practices in the participants’ countries.”

**END**

#### **NOTE TO EDITOR**

*UNDP is the UN's global development network, advocating for change and connecting countries to knowledge, experience and resources to help people build a better life. We are on the ground in 166 countries, working with them on their own solutions to global and national development challenges. As they develop local capacity, they draw on the people of UNDP and our wide range of partners. Its current priority is to help all countries achieve the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) by 2015.*

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