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SPEECH BY
YABHG DATIN SERI DR SITI HASMAH BTE HAJI MOHD ALI
AT THE CLOSING CEREMONY OF THE
RSC-AP MICRO-FINANCE MANAGEMENT
DEVELOPMENT TRAINING WORKSHOP
AT THE NOVOTEL HOTEL, SG PATANI, KEDAH
ON SATURDAY, 9 AUGUST 1997
AT 4.00 PM

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First of all, may I congratulate each and every one of you for having enthusiastically participated for the past eight days and survived such a rigorous training programme on micro-finance management.

2. I am privileged indeed to be able to spend some time with you and be able to listen to your presentation on your home country plan of action to expand micro credit in your respective countries.

3. It is my sincere hope that you have gained as much knowledge and skills on micro finance management from this workshop. At the same time, hopefully, the sessions during the past eight days have enabled you to mutually gain from each other through the exchanging and sharing of experiences.

4. I have no doubt too that potential replicators have learned as much from the experiences of the practitioners, especially tips on the "do's" and the "don'ts" in implementing such programmes. To the practitioners, I hope the training has provided new inputs into your programme, especially the fast

have regained new strength and a higher level of commitment to continue the wonderful work that you have started in fighting for the eradication of poverty, especially among the rural women.

5. I am pleased to hear the wonderful plans of action to expand and to scale up micro credit programmes in your countries. As I listened to your presentation, I realised that a lot has been done by committed individuals, like yourselves, at the grass root level. Yet, this is only the beginning. We have greater challenges ahead of us - we have to reach and help alleviate 70 million of the poorest of the poor in Asia out of poverty by the year 2005. This calls for a united effort, at local, national and international levels, to mobilise resources and technical assistance for programmes to eradicate poverty.

6. There is a lot that each and every one of us could do. It is my hope that you could implement the micro credit or micro-finance programme, as planned in your country. The RSC-AP secretariat in Malaysia is willing to offer you further assistance by providing technical training programme and other assistance that you may need.

7. The Prime Minister of Malaysia has on numerous occasions expressed his desire to see that Malaysia share whatever expertise and experiences we have gained, particularly our successful poverty eradication and rural development experiences, with others elsewhere in this region, and in South-South cooperation.

8. Likewise, RSC-AP will strengthen our networking and collaboration with donor countries and financial institutions to mobilise as much resources to be channelled to micro-finance institutions in member countries. RSC-AP hopes to monitor the implementation of the plans of action of participants of this workshop and provide technical assistance for as long as they are required. Through our networking, we could assist you in

approaching donor institutions such as Grameen Trust, who could give you start up grants to establish micro-finance institutions. We also plan to hold a series of technical training workshops based on request from practitioners, either in Malaysia or in member countries.

9. As patron of this workshop, I would like to take this opportunity to express my special thanks and appreciation to individuals and organisations involved in making this workshop a success. To all the participants, sponsors, collaborators, resource persons, trainers, field facilitators, the organising committee members, the hotel management and staff, your effort and contribution has been commendable. Without your cooperation this workshop will not be a success. I am proud that the RSC-AP has been able to mobilise resources from the state and national governments, international organisations, the private sector and Non-government Organisations and the universities in order to organise such an important workshop. Our effort is a model of collaboration and cooperation for a common cause - the eradication of poverty among the poor, especially the rural women in the Asia Pacific region.

10. At this point, I would like to extend my sincere thanks to our major contributors:

- * The National and state governments for hosting this event; Special to be mentioned is the Chief Minister (Menteri Besar) of this State of Kedah, YAB Dato *Sad*. Sanusi Junid, who kindly officiated at the opening ceremony of this workshop. He is an advocator and implementor of various new ideas for improvement and developent of the rural people. Having worked as Minister of Rural Development and Minister of Agriculture, and now as the Chief Minister of the State, he has no problem of understanding the work we are doing, for it is as close to his heart as ours.

I thank him and his Government for the total cooperation and assistance accorded to the success of this workshop.

- * Resort World for their financial contribution in paying the air passages of participants from the Central, West and South Asia sub-region;
- * BAKTI i.e. the Association of Wives of Ministers and Deputy Ministers for Charity, in paying the passages of participants from Tonga, Malaysia and the overall finances of the workshop;
- * ASEAN Regional Canada Fund for financing the air passages of participants from ASEAN sub-region;
- * CIDA-Malaysia for undertaking the expenses of required training manuals;
- * UNDP for training expenses;
- * Southern Bank for sponsoring the formal dinner;
- * Bank Bumiputra Malaysia for sponsoring honorarium for trainers and facilitators;
- * And other organisations from the private sector, whose contribution has lightened the financial burden of the organising body, that is, the RSC-AP;
- * May I also extend my special thanks to the Centre of Policy Research/University of Science Malaysia, CASHPOR and Amanah Ikhtiar Malaysia for providing their expertise, experiences and field laboratory facilities.

11. Last but not least, I would like to acknowledge the most vital component of this workshop - you, our distinguished participants, who have come from near and far. Without your presence, your active participation and interaction, your commitment and especially your own personal programme of action to implement or to scale up micro-finance in your countries, this workshop does not bear any significance. I believe we shall witness the success of this workshop a few months after you return to your country, when you will send us feedback on your attempts to put into action what-ever knowledge you have acquired from this workshop.

12. RSC-AP awaits any kind of feedback from you. Good luck and thank you. We pray for your safe journey home.

13. On that note, I hereby declare the workshop on RSC-AP Micro-finance Management Development Training be closed.

Thank you.
