



Aavishkaar India to receive World Business Award on May 10, 2006

May 5, 2006

"We cannot reach [the Millennium Development Goals] without support from the private sector. Most of all, we cannot reach them without a strong private sector in the developing countries themselves, to create jobs and build prosperity."

~ Kofi Annan, UN Secretary-General

"Aavishkaar India is confident that it will be a catalyst for positive change."

~ Dr. V. Anantha Nageswaran, AIMVCF Management Board

The World Business Awards constituted by the United Nations Development Program (UNDP), the Prince of Wales International Business Leaders Forum (IBLF) and the International Chamber of Commerce (ICC) have selected Aavishkaar India Micro Venture Capital Fund among the top ten business models in the world that serve towards fulfillment of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).

The World Business Award (WBA) has identified 10 awardees out of 77 entries received from over 33 countries around the world. Aavishkaar India Micro Venture Capital Fund (AIMVCF) has qualified to be one among them, the only one from India and only the second Indian recipient in the history of World Business Awards, preceded only by ITC. The award will be presented on May 9th and 10th at the United Nations Headquarters in New York where the work done by AIMVCF and some of its projects will be showcased.

Aavishkaar is a social venture capital fund set up in the year 2001 to provide early-stage capital to micro and small enterprises that lack access to conventional financial institutions. Aavishkaar's co-founder and CEO, Vineet Rai, believes that the World Business Award is an acknowledgement that small initiatives have a critical role to play in meeting challenging global issues such as those enshrined in the Millennium Development Goals. Aavishkaar has been able to bring together a new blended-value asset class by merging mainstream venture capital principals of risk capital and intensive hand holding to achieve scale with the need of nurturing sustainable businesses that address rural development issues.

Today, Aavishkaar, through its 6 investee companies, reaches out to hundreds of thousands of people providing them with resource efficient products or solutions that enhance livelihood options in a sustainable manner. Aavishkaar has approved 9 equity investments till date in the range of Rupees 10 lakhs to Rupees 50 lakhs (US \$20,000 to \$100,000) from its fund corpus which represents the collective assets of more than 80 independent investors.

What is unique about Aavishkaar according to Arun Diaz, the Fund's Trustee, is that "Unlike many organizations with a social upliftment agenda, Aavishkaar India instills a measure of accountability in the Fund's administration, while at the same time involving its managers in the day-to-day operations of the Fund". AIMVCF is now in the process of expanding its fund size and is aggressively engaged in identifying new investment opportunities in innovative rural initiatives and start-up microfinance service companies that enhance commercial and social value.

➤ For more information on Aavishkaar, please visit www.aavishkaar.org or contact

Ajit Singh or Nicole Lawrence at ajit@aavishkaar.org, nicole@aavishkaar.org

➤ For a full list of the 2006 World Business Awards recipients, please visit www.iccwbo.org/wba

➤ For detailed information on the MDGs, refer to the website www.undp.org/mdg

New York, 9 May at 13:30: Awardees will present projects in an open forum in the Dag Hammarskjöld UN Library.

This event is open to the press. Journalists who wish to attend will need to be accredited by the UN

(<http://www.un.org/media/accreditation/require.htm>).

Please allow 24 hours for accreditation and contact one of the people listed therein for help.