



WSBI

## PRESS INFORMATION



World Savings Banks Institute /  
Government Savings Bank - Thailand

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### JOINT PRESS RELEASE

#### **Savings Banks in Asia are confident that their sustainable retail banking approach is a key asset to overcome the effects of the crisis**

**Bangkok** - Leaders from savings and retail banks throughout Asia are meeting this week to discuss the impact of the financial crisis and renew their strong commitment to responsible and sustainable retail banking activities.

The two-day meeting is being attended by leaders of savings and retail banks from throughout the region which are members of WSBI. *"We are honoured to be hosting this year's Asia Pacific Regional Group Meeting"* said Yongyuth Tariyo, Senior Executive Director of the Government Savings Bank of Thailand (GSB) and the President of WSBI Asia/Pacific Regional Group. *"As a national leader in the retail banking sector, we believe that cooperation and discussions with other banks from around the region can help advance the goal of improving people's economic and financial lives."*

The regional meeting takes place in the context of economic and financial turmoil. Chris De Noose, the WSBI Managing Director, points out that most WSBI member banks – including those in the Asia/Pacific region – have been generally resilient to the financial crisis. *"The focus on supporting local markets and the real economy leads to a long-term vision and partnership which greatly reduces the impact of the volatility of financial markets on the institutions such as GSB and other members gathered here"* said De Noose. *"At the same time, though, the economic crisis that has affected the world has of course had an impact on the activities and life of our core clientele –households and small entrepreneurs. Our banks do their utmost to provide support in these difficult times."*

The two day meeting, entitled *"Sustainable retail banking offer in a challenging financial environment"* will involve a number of discussions including:

- The impacts of the financial and economic crisis on savings and retail banks.
- The role and importance of savings as a core element of sustainable retail banking.
- How to strengthen banks' sustainability and outreach through the use of banking technology – using both innovation and traditional activities to strengthen access to finance.
- Ways in which the savings and retail banks can continue to be active responsible members in their communities – promoting the practice of acting as socially responsible companies.

*"We look forward to a positive discussion and sharing of ideas between the members of WSBI from the region"* said Tariyo. *"We know that GSB and other savings banks like it around the region are important to the sustained economic and social development of the region. We know that we can continue in this role which is especially important in the context of the global economic crisis."*

## Editors Notes

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## WSBI – The Global Voice of Savings and Retail Banking

WSBI (World Savings Banks Institute) is one of the largest international banking associations and the only global representative of savings and retail banking. Founded in 1924, it represents savings and retail banks and associations thereof in 92 countries of the world (Asia-Pacific, the Americas, Africa and Europe – via ESBG, the European Savings Banks Group). WSBI works closely with international financial institutions and donor agencies and facilitates the provision of access to financial sectors worldwide – be it in developing or developed regions. At the start of 2008, assets of member banks amounted to more than € 9,000 billion, with operations through more than 191,000 branches and outlets.

WSBI members are typically savings and *retail* banks or associations thereof. They are often organized in decentralized networks and offer their services throughout their *region*. WSBI member banks have reinvested *responsibly* in their region for many decades and are one distinct benchmark for corporate social responsibility activities throughout the world.

For more information, please visit: [www.savings-banks.com](http://www.savings-banks.com)

## The Government Savings Bank of Thailand (GSB)

The Government Savings Bank (GSB) was established in 1913 by King Rama VI to study and promote savings habits among Thai people. It is administrated under the supervision of a Board of Directors, who are designated by the Minister of Finance. GSB is now a state-owned bank under the supervision of the Ministry of Finance. As a state-run bank, GSB is committed to being a secure and reliable financial institution that provides essential savings, loans and investment for individuals, communities and national economic development projects benefiting the Thai people from all walks of life.

Today, GSB offers a wide variety of financial products to customers. It now has 599 branches nationwide, 164 service outlets, 32 mobile units, 1,169 ATMs and 3 foreign exchange booths. The Bank is further improving and developing its services and operations as it adapts to the current business climate to provide fully-fledged services and access to finance for all segments of customers.