



## **MicroVest Receives First Mutual Fund Investment**

*MicroVest I, LP attracts the Meritas Jantzi Social Index Fund as its first mutual fund investor*

Bethesda, MD, December 21, 2006- MicroVest is pleased to announce its first mutual fund investment, a USD 300,000 note subscription in MicroVest I, LP by the Meritas Jantzi Social Index Fund.

Both parties share common social standards and hope this partnership will set a precedent among like-minded SRI funds. Gerhard Pries, Vice Chair of MicroVest, sees Meritas' investment as a "win-win situation for Canadian mutual fund investors and small entrepreneurs around the world." He says MicroVest believes that business solutions can become the preferred method of poverty elimination. This is an example of a dignified inclusion into the formal economy of historically marginalized populations.

The Meritas Jantzi Social Index Fund is managed by Cambridge, Ontario-based Meritas Financial Inc. The Jantzi Social Index Fund, one of Meritas' seven funds, is based on the composition of Canadian equity securities within the Jantzi Social Index®. The fund seeks to provide competitive financial returns and positive social returns to their investors.

Gary Hawton, Chief Executive Officer of Meritas Mutual Funds, explains that Meritas is committed to investing up to 2% of its mutual fund assets into community development investments. "One benefit of investing in community development organizations is they tend to produce immediate and positive social impacts," notes Hawton. Meritas was introduced to MicroVest by the Mennonite Economic Development Associates (MEDA), a founding member of MicroVest, and has been monitoring its development for several years.

This ground breaking news marks the end of a particularly successful year for MicroVest marked by over 60% growth in assets and steadily increasing profitability.

### About Meritas:

Meritas Financial Inc. is devoted solely to creating and marketing socially responsible investments under the brand name Meritas Mutual Funds. Committed to all three aspects of Socially Responsible Investing (SRI), Meritas uses positive and negative screening guidelines, shareholder activism and community development investments to help people align their investments with their social, ethical and environmental concerns.

### About MicroVest:

MicroVest I, LP (MicroVest) is a \$25 million private equity fund providing debt and equity capital to microfinance institutions in emerging markets. As the first private microfinance investment fund in the United States, MicroVest's goal is to link capital markets to the entrepreneurial poor by expanding the capacity of profitable MFIs throughout the world. MicroVest is based in Bethesda, Maryland and was founded by CARE, MEDA, and the Seed Capital Development Fund—three non-profit organizations with longstanding credibility and investments in the microfinance industry.