



U.S. TRADE AND DEVELOPMENT AGENCY

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USTDA SPONSORS POLICY AND REGULATORY FORUM ON THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATIONS TECHNOLOGY SECTOR IN CENTRAL AND SOUTH ASIA

WASHINGTON, D.C. – Establishing a sound policy framework and effective government regulations to foster the emergence of a thriving information and communications technology (ICT) sector in Central Asia and South Asia is the goal of an upcoming USTDA-sponsored policy and regulatory forum April 3-5, 2007 at the Intercontinental Hotel in Almaty, Kazakhstan. Ministers and other senior government officials from eight Central and South Asian nations will discuss the current status of the sector in their countries and their planned initiatives with local and U.S.-based vendors, service providers and investors.

“Central and South Asian countries know that the right policy and regulatory environment is essential in promoting more rapid and coordinated ICT sector development, healthy competition, and increased domestic and foreign investment,” said USTDA Director Thelma J. Askey. “At the same time, experience has shown that communications infrastructure is also an important foundation of economic growth and development, impacting virtually every aspect of people’s lives. This infrastructure provides the connection that the private sector needs to compete effectively in the global economy and strengthens democratic institutions by increasing transparency and empowering citizens.”

The *Central and South Asia Regional Telecommunications Policy and Regulatory Forum* will provide U.S. company participants with insights into the varying country frameworks and how future sales or investment opportunities may be affected. Specific topics to be addressed include interconnection guidelines, regulations for major operators, and methods for addressing universal access.

Participants are expected to include Ministers and senior officials from Afghanistan, Azerbaijan, India, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Pakistan, Tajikistan, and Turkmenistan. Other participants will include representatives of the U.S. Department of State, the National Telecommunications Information Agency at the U.S. Department of Commerce, the Office of the United States Trade Representative, and the Federal Communications Commission, and Central Asian companies interested in partnering with U.S. firms.

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Prominent industry and international financial representatives present at the event will discuss current trade and investment structuring trends and potential. Corporate sponsors of the forum include Academy for Educational Development, Telecom/Telematique, and Cisco.

Each U.S. participant will receive a resource guide with detailed country profiles, including critical economic information, sector statistics, and a description of the current sector regulatory regimes. A series of networking breaks and evening receptions will afford participants ample time to interface with the senior Central and South Asian government decision-makers present. For more information or to register, visit the conference website at <http://www.onlinedts.com/almatyforum.cfm>, or call Indira Ahluwalia of Development and Training Services, Inc. by telephone at (703) 465-9388.

The U.S. Trade and Development Agency advances economic development and U.S. commercial interests in developing and middle-income countries. The agency funds various forms of technical assistance, early investment analysis, training, orientation visits and business workshops that support the development of a modern infrastructure and a fair and open trading environment. USTDA's strategic use of foreign assistance funds to support sound investment policy and decision-making in host countries creates an enabling environment for trade, investment and sustainable economic development. In carrying out its mission, USTDA gives emphasis to economic sectors that may benefit from U.S. exports of goods and services.

-30-

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