



## PRESS RELEASE

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### USAID and its partners commemorate World Tuberculosis Day

Ashgabat. On March 24, the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) will join the Ministry of Health and Medical Industry of Turkmenistan (MOHMIT) and international partners to mark World Tuberculosis (TB) Day. TB claims more than 1.6 million lives each year and is one of the three leading causes of deaths due to infectious diseases worldwide. The global theme for World TB Day this year is “**I am stopping TB**,” which seeks to recognize the people who are fighting this disease. World TB Day celebrates the lives and stories of people affected by TB: women, men, and children who have taken TB treatment; also nurses, doctors, researchers, and community workers - anyone who are working to stop TB.

In Turkmenistan, USAID has been working to prevent the spread of TB since 2000. Together with its grantee Project HOPE, USAID supports the implementation of the Turkmenistan National TB Program, adopted by the Government of Turkmenistan in 2005. USAID’s efforts focus on the cities of Ashgabat and Mary, as well as the entire Balkan velayat. USAID and Project HOPE train medical specialists, provide laboratory equipment and first-line TB medicines, and cooperate with local activists to raise community awareness about TB.

USAID has also assisted in the renovation and equipping of the TB training center at the Turkmenistan State Medical Institute, established an electronic library at the Central TB Hospital in Ashgabat, and developed a medical school curriculum that includes new TB DOTS treatment approaches. In 2004, USAID assisted in the government’s successful application to the Global Drug Facility, facilitating the urgent delivery of first-line TB medications. Since 2006, USAID has provided full supplies of much-needed reagents for TB diagnostics laboratories at DOTS pilot sites, and has donated 40 binocular microscopes to aid in accurate diagnoses. USAID and Project HOPE have trained over 2500 medical professionals, laboratory workers and community leaders since 2001, and continue this work through the present time.

“Even though a cure has existed for more than half a century, tuberculosis remains one of humankind’s greatest scourges,” said U.S. Charge d’Affaires Richard Miles. “The U.S. Government, through USAID, is fully committed to continuing its cooperation with the Turkmen Government and people to reduce TB rates in the country.”

### Factsheet

#### The USAID-supported TB awareness events throughout March

To increase awareness of TB and methods of prevention, a number of **USAID-sponsored** radio messages, public service announcements on television, and articles on TB are planned. USAID and Project HOPE, in cooperation with the MOHMIT Press Center, will distribute informational materials for patients and the general population and organize health education actions in educational institutions and military units in all five velayats.

**On March 17**, USAID, Project HOPE, and the TB Department of the Turkmen State Medical Institute will hold a **TB conference for medical students**. (10:00 AM, Training Center of the TB Faculty, 3<sup>rd</sup> Floor TB Prevention Center, Ashgabat)

**On March 18**, together with the Ministry of Education, MOHMIT, and other partners, USAID and Project HOPE will conduct **TB activities at the Ashgabat Children's Health Improvement School, for children who are on dispensary observation for TB.** (11:00 AM, Ashgabat Children's Health Improvement School "Aşgabat şäher sagaldyş tokaý mekdebi", Ashgabat)

**On March 19** USAID and Project HOPE, together with the MOHMIT Press Center and the medical department of the Ministry of Defense, will offer **a workshop for military medical professionals in Tejen.** (10:00 AM, Medical Professional Training Center, Military Department, Tejen)

**On March 24, a Scientific-Practical Conference for health care workers** will be held by USAID, Project HOPE, and MOHMIT. The conference will update participants on the current status of TB activities in Turkmenistan, as well as future plans. The conference **will also announce which of the Ashgabat policlinics has the best results in TB case detection.** (9:00 AM Conference Hall, Treatment and Consulting Center of Turkmenistan, Ashgabat)