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PRESS RELEASE

USAID'S REGIONAL DIRECTOR VISITS ASHGABAT



On March 6, Regional Mission Director for the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) William M. Frej visited Ashgabat to review USAID's work in Turkmenistan. "I have watched the bilateral relationship between USAID and Turkmenistan expand and improve during the past year and a half of my work in Central Asia," says Bill Frej. "This is due to the active and constructive cooperation between our two countries and our respective staffs in Ashgabat."

This cooperation included the Interactive and Multimedia Learning Center, opened by USAID together with the Supreme Council on Science and Technology under President of Turkmenistan in Ashgabat in October 2008. In this Center, Supreme Council and USAID will explore new ways to develop the use of technology for education, science, and research in Turkmenistan. Similarly, in February 2009, the International Financial Reporting Standards

Center was opened by USAID and Supreme Council in Ashgabat to train university professors to introduce International Financial Reporting Standards into the Turkmen university accounting curriculum and serve as a resource facility for Turkmen professors' ongoing professional development.

USAID's partnership with the Turkmen organizations has also focused on drafting key legislation. Together with ICNL, USAID has recently worked with the National Institute for Democracy and Human Rights under the President of Turkmenistan on the Law on Public Associations and the Law on Mass Media. Meanwhile cooperation with the Institute for Strategic Planning and Economic Development focused on the Strategy for Private Sector Development.

In the health care sector, USAID has been working with the Government of Turkmenistan on the implementation of the TB treatment strategy DOTS which was expanded nationwide by the end of 2007. The USAID-funded CAPACITY project partnered with the Ministry of Health and Medical Industry of Turkmenistan and Youth Union of Turkmenistan opened the first Youth Center in Ashgabat last year and is planning the opening of yet another one in Dashoguz shortly. Through these centers, youth will receive information about HIV/AIDS prevention and other health issues, and participate in other age-appropriate activities.

"USAID is looking forward to continuing cooperation with the Turkmen Government and organizations," said USAID's Regional Mission Director. USAID is a leading donor organization in Turkmenistan. Since 1992, USAID has supported the development of the markets, health care sector, and community initiatives in the country.