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PRESS RELEASE

USAID-Supported Concert Highlights Information and Education Campaign on the Prevention and Control of Tuberculosis

On March 27, U.S. Ambassador Tracey Ann Jacobson and First Deputy Minister of Health of the Republic of Tajikistan Saida Jobirova opened a concert at the Jomi Concert Hall in Dushanbe. The concert, attended by more than 700 people, marked World Tuberculosis (TB) Day and raised awareness of TB in Tajikistan. The event was organized by the National TB Center and the U.S. non-governmental organization Project HOPE with the support of the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) and the Global Fund to Fight HIV/AIDS, TB, and Malaria. The slogan for the day was "I can stop TB!"

The concert was devoted to attracting the community's attention to this potentially deadly disease, and educating the public on how TB can be prevented. In addition to performances by popular musicians, the concert included a quiz on TB with prizes for the winners. Concertgoers included university students, medical workers from Dushanbe city medical facilities, and local NGO representatives.

"TB can be cured with medications that are available free in Tajikistan thanks to the joint efforts of the Ministry of Health and the combined international community," Ambassador Jacobson said. "But people must know to seek out these medications, and understand the importance of their treatment. Encourage your families and neighbors to be tested if they might have TB. It is important not just for their own lives, but for entire communities as well."

During the opening ceremony, First Deputy Minister Jobirova said "the focus of the fight against TB now must be on the young population of Tajikistan. Young people working in Russia or other countries unfortunately sometimes return home with positive TB results, and the rate of these infections is increasing."

The concert was part of the 2009 World TB Day educational campaign. This year's World TB Day focuses on celebrating people affected by TB, including the women, men and children who have taken TB treatment as well as the nurses, doctors, researchers, and communities that help them.

The TB Control Program implemented by Project Hope is one of the many development projects USAID supports in Tajikistan. Since 1993 the American people through USAID have provided more than \$300 million in assistance programs that support economic growth, democratic institutions, health care, and the education system of Tajikistan.

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