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## U.S. TRADE AND DEVELOPMENT AGENCY

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:**

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### **USTDA AWARDS GRANT TO PROMOTE AVIATION SAFETY IN AZERBAIJAN**

WASHINGTON, D.C. (May 6, 2009) – Today, USTDA awarded a grant to the State Civil Aviation Administration of the Republic of Azerbaijan (SCAA) to bolster aviation safety standards in meeting the country’s increased demand for aviation transportation services. The grant will provide technical assistance to the SCAA that will assist Azerbaijan in meeting International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) standards in the areas of aviation safety and security oversight, thereby creating opportunities for U.S. exports of U.S. manufactured goods and services.

“Today’s grant is a step forward in the effort to establish direct air travel routes between Azerbaijan and the United States,” said USTDA Acting Director Leocadia I. Zak. “In addition, the grant will significantly increase the capacity for trade and tourism between our two countries.”

The \$310,200 grant was conferred during a signing ceremony held at USTDA’s offices in Arlington, Virginia. Acting Director Zak and SCAA Director General Arif Mammadov signed the grant agreement on behalf of the U.S. and Azerbaijani governments, respectively. Mr. Ashraf Shikhaliyev, Counselor (Economic) at the Embassy of Azerbaijan in the United States, witnessed the signing of the grant agreement.

Azerbaijan’s economy has grown at double-digit rates for the past nine years. As prosperity has improved, demand has increased for international air traffic. Azerbaijan Airlines and Silk Way Airlines – the national passenger and cargo carriers, respectively – have responded by placing orders for long-haul Boeing aircraft, one of the main objectives being direct flights to and from the United States. In order to help the Azerbaijanis achieve this goal, the USTDA grant awarded today will provide guidance to the SCAA on improving its civil aviation safety regulatory system and complying with ICAO guidelines.

The SCAA has selected The Wicks Group PLLC of Washington, D.C., as the U.S. contractor that will carry out the USTDA-funded assistance. In addition to the USTDA grant, Azerbaijan Airlines and Silk Way Airlines will contribute additional funds toward the completion of the technical assistance program.

(More)

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.

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