

# U.S. Embassy Newsletter

## October-December Issue

### TWO-DAY EXPO OF MCA-ARMENIA'S WATER TO MARKET ACTIVITY

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On October 13-14, the Water to Market (WtM) Activity of the Millennium Challenge Account - Armenia (MCA-Armenia) Program presented the results of its three years of project implementation in a unique exhibition that highlighted programmatic work through displays showing modern technologies and practices related to irrigation, production and post-harvest handling. Prime Minister Tigran Sargsian and the Am-

bassador Marie Yovanovitch attended the EXPO. Throughout the two days of

the EXPO the visitors had a chance to meet the befitting farmers, program experts and credit organizations, and to discuss many issues equally important to farmers, agribusinesses and policy makers .



## AMBASSADOR YOVANOVITCH PARTICIPATES AT YEREVAN-PRISTINA DVC

On October 14, Yerevan-Pristina digital video conference was organized in the Armenian Foreign Ministry between the members of the Armenian unit implementing their peacekeeping mission in Kosovo and their relatives. The DVC was organized within the framework of the NATO week in Yerevan. Ambassador Yovanovitch, highlighting the peacekeeping mission, noted that the government of the United States is proud of the service of the Armenian peacekeepers in Kosovo and is grateful to Armenia for supporting NATO in its important mission of establishing stability and peace. Virtually all TV stations covered the event, showing families shedding tears of happiness for the opportunity to see their husbands, fathers, sons.



## DAS KAIDANOW ADDRESSES ARMENIAN PUBLIC ON TV

DAS Tina Kaidanow traveled to Armenia October 19-21 and met President Sargsian, other senior officials, opposition figures and civil society representatives. The visit received wide press coverage, including an exclusive interview to Armenian Public TV that allowed her to explain directly to the Armenian public the advantages of normalizing Armenian-Turkish relations and the importance to regional stability of finding a settlement to the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict. She expressed support for the key role of the Minsk Group in the N-K negotiations and also highlighted the USG's large assistance program in Armenia.

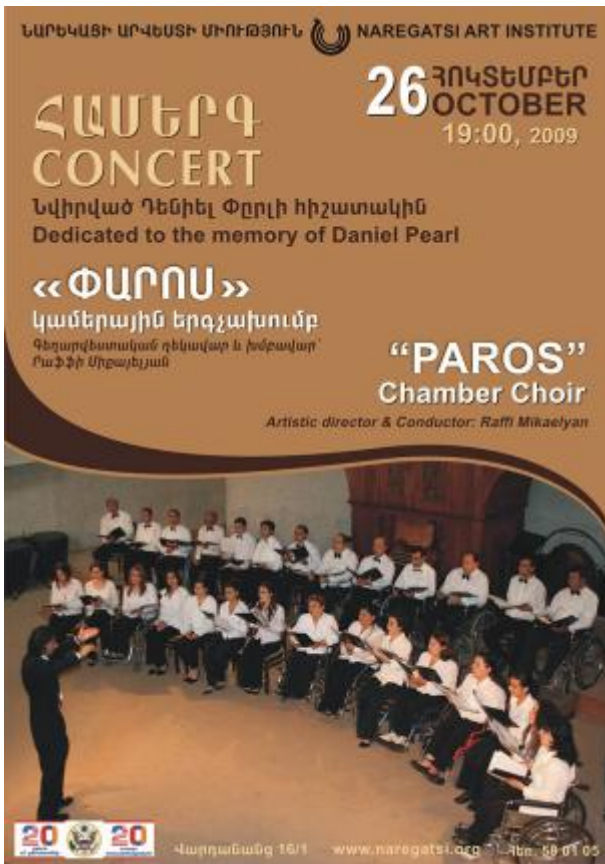


## AMBASSADOR SPEAKS ON ARMENIA-TURKEY

On October 28 evening, Ambassador Yovanovitch appeared on one of Armenia TV's most popular evening talk-shows to discuss the advantages of normalizing relations between Turkey and Armenia. She explained the importance the USG attaches to this process and emphasized that the establishment of relations must take place without preconditions and within a reasonable timeframe. The Ambassador also shared her positive impressions of Armenia a year after arriving in the country.



# YEREVAN CELEBRATES DANIEL PEARL WORLD MUSIC DAYS



Daniel Pearl World Music Days were marked in Yerevan by a performance of the Paros Chamber Choir. Performing before a packed house, the internationally-renowned choir sang traditional and classical Armenian songs that celebrate life and our shared humanity. Ambassador Yovanovitch introduced the choir, made up largely of people with physical disabilities, and explained to the audience the history and significance of the Daniel Pearl World Music Days.

## STOP VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

On Wednesday, November 25, 2009, the Gyumri American Corner, the U.S. Embassy in Yerevan and the Gyumri-based Ajakits NGO organized a roundtable discussion dedicated to the “International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women.” U.S. Embassy Resident Legal Advisor Steve Kessler was invited to the Gyumri American Corner to discuss this issue with an interested audience. Mr. Kessler presented information about domestic violence laws in United States, as well as local government support and response. He mentioned that in U.S., there are special shelters for domestic violence victims. Another discussion theme covered mandatory psychological counseling for perpetrators of domestic violence. NGO representatives discussed domestic violence in Gyumri, noting that in many cases, Armenian women are hesitant to report instances of abuse to authorities. They mentioned that adopting a special law on domestic violence in Armenia would improve current conditions and assist in the protection of victims.



## U.S. EMBASSY ASSISTS RA POLICE COMBAT ILLEGAL MIGRATION

On November 27, 2009, the U.S. government boosted the efforts of the Armenian police to combat illegal migration through the donation of computer equipment and two vehicles, worth a total of about \$70,000. The donation ceremony was attended by Deputy Chief of Mission Joseph Pennington on behalf of the U.S. Embassy and, on behalf of the Government of Armenia by Deputy Chief of Police Hovhannes Hunanyan. The new equipment and vehicles will assist the Division on International Cooperation and Combat against Illegal Migration to effectively and speedily implement operations and searches in the field; analyze, compile, process, and preserve sensitive information and databases on the cases and offenders; as well as prevent people from engaging in document fraud and illegal crossing of borders. It will also contribute to effective cooperation between the National Police and other interested parties, including foreign diplomatic representations in Armenia, in joint efforts against illegal migration and related crimes, such as illegal stay in other countries, illegal labor migration, etc.



## U.S. DEFENSE OFFICIAL MEETS TOP OFFICIALS IN ARMENIA

Dr. Celeste Wallander, Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Russia, Ukraine and Eurasia Policy, met with President Serzh Sargsian, Defense Minister Seiran Ohanian, and Minister of Economy Nerses Yeritsian and others today. They discussed security cooperation between the United States and Armenia. The Deputy Assistant Secretary visited Armenia's peacekeeping brigade. "The United States values its partnership with the Republic of Armenia, which has made contributions to NATO and coalition efforts in Kosovo, Iraq, and soon in Afghanistan," said Dr. Wallander. During the meetings, Dr. Wallander discussed U.S. support for the Minsk Group process and the Obama Administration's commitment to a peaceful resolution to the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict, emphasizing the guiding principles of non-use of force, territorial integrity, and equal rights and self-determination of peoples.



## AMBASSADOR DISCUSSES PRESIDENT OBAMA'S SPEECH ON AFGANISTAN WITH ARMENIAN TV STATIONS



Ambassador Yovanovitch discussed the speech of President Obama in Afghanistan with two leading Armenian TV stations – Public TV and Armenia TV. Ambassador stressed that 30 000 additional troops that will be deployed to Afghanistan, will target the insurgency and secure key population centers. She noted that international community including Armenia and other countries of this region will contribute to

this effort by providing peacekeepers. Ambassador reiterated the words of President Obama who said, "Taken together, these additional American and international troops will allow us to accelerate handing over responsibility to Afghan forces, and allow us to begin the transfer of our forces out of Afghanistan in July of 2011."



## DEDICATION OF THE SECOND BUILDING OF THE NATIONAL BUREAU OF EXPERTISES



On December 8, 2009, the U.S. Embassy in Armenia and the Government of the Republic of Armenia dedicated the second building of the National Bureau of Expertises, a State Non-Commercial Organization, which was renovated with U.S. Government assistance. U.S. Ambassador Marie L. Yovanovitch officially transferred the facility to the Prosecutor General of the Republic of Armenia, Aghvan Hovsepyan. The U.S. Government, through the U.S. Embassy's International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs Office, invested over



\$1,275,000.00 to complete renovations of the facility. The renovation project was carried out by U.S. Army Corps of Engineers using the expertise of local construction company CESCO Ltd.

## FORUM MARKS INTERNATIONAL ANTI-CORRUPTION DAY IN ARMENIA



An anti-corruption forum, organized by the USAID Mobilizing Action Against Corruption (MAAC) Activity in cooperation with the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) Office in Yerevan and the Prosecutor General's Office of RA marked International Anti-Corruption Day on December 9 at Armenia Marriott Hotel in Yerevan. Over 150 representatives of the Armenian government, civil society, private sector, and international organizations attended the forum. In his opening remarks, Prime Minister Sargsyan emphasized the critical role of the Government's 2009-2012 Anti-Corruption Strategy and Action Plan, adopted in October 2009, in fighting corruption in the country. In turn, Ambassador Yovanovitch noted the successes of the Advocacy and Assistance Centers (AAC) in combating corruption countrywide. "Here in

Armenia, within the last year, there is a rapidly growing number of examples in which local people working together, exercising their rights, and demanding that government officials be held accountable are making a real and tangible difference in the fight against corruption," she said, "In the last year, over 2,000 people have come to MAAC-supported Advocacy and Assistance Centers and MAAC grantee-NGOs for help, and the Centers, working with prosecutors and the courts, are achieving real and positive results." The AACs, established with the support of USAID/MAAC between 2008-2009 in all marzes of Armenia, represent NGO-run citizen complaint offices where victims of corruption can receive free legal advice and assistance.





## ***AMBASSADOR YOVANOVITCH LAUNCHES WOMEN'S MENTORING PROGRAM WITH AUA***

On December 8, Ambassador Yovanovitch and AUA Provost and Vice President Dr. Lucig Danielian launched a women's mentoring program for 45 American University of Armenia students. Armenian women leaders met with their mentees at the Ambassador's house to provide career advice, share their experiences, and serve as role models for the promising young students. Keynote speeches were delivered by Ambassador Yovanovitch and Dr. Danielian. The event was covered on one of the most popular TV stations, as well as three newspapers and a popular magazine. The newspapers quoted Ambassador Yovanovitch saying, "Around the world, women's input is vital for effectively addressing the issues that confront us. We need the benefit of women's life experiences and expertise."



*Photos Credits: Yerevan Productions / Hayk Melkonyan*

## ***THE UNITED STATES EMBASSY IN YEREVAN MARKED INTERNATIONAL HUMAN RIGHTS DAY***



The United States Embassy in Yerevan marked International Human Rights Day by presenting the Armenian Freedom Defender award to Edik Baghdassarian at a reception given by Ambassador Marie L. Yovanovitch at the Embassy. Mr. Baghdassarian is the founder of the Association of Investigative Journalists and the popular HETQ news agency. In the words of Ambassador Yovanovitch, Mr. Baghdassarian "has shown great courage in tackling and writing about some of the sensitive and challenging issues facing Armenians as they move their country toward greater democratization. His daunting work has exposed cases of corruption, human rights abuses, illegal business practices, and the indignities of human trafficking."

## ***BRAILLE PANELS FOR ARMENIAN MONUMENTS***

Multilingual Braille panels will soon be installed at major Armenian monuments throughout the country. The presentation and preview of the first panels were held on Friday, December 11, at the site of the 7th century Zvartnots Temple in Armavir. The event was organized by the Armenian Monuments Awareness Project (AMAP) NGO, the International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS) Armenia, and the Ministry of Culture through financial support from the USAID Competitive Armenian Private Sector (CAPS) project, VivaCell-MTS, and the Honorary Consul for Italy in Gyumri Antonio Montalto. U.S. Ambassador Marie L. Yovanovitch, AMAP co-founder John Hughes and Chief of Party Rick Ney, and Ambassador of Italy to Armenia Bruno Scapini welcomed event participants, noting the significance of the project in enabling sight-impaired and blind visitors to read about the Armenian monuments on site in their own alphabet. Prepared in Braille – the read-by-touch alphabet for the blind – through special printing machine and produced by specialists in Italy, information for the Braille panels has been drawn from texts that summarize the standard visitor information panels installed by AMAP at the Zvartnots site. Five languages have been used for the panels: Eastern Armenian, English, Russian, Italian and French.

