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SERBIA

MEDIA ADVISORY

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USAID CELEBRATES 10 YEARS IN SERBIA, 50 YEARS WORLDWIDE, & LAUNCHES A SHOE CLUSTER LINKING 14 LOCAL MANUFACTURERS

VRANJE – U.S. Ambassador to Serbia Mary Warlick and the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) are marking a decade of assistance in Serbia, 50 years of service worldwide, and the launch of a confederation of 14 Serbian footwear manufacturers at a reception at the Pržar Hotel in Vranje at 12 noon on January 24. The media is invited to attend the launch and reception.

USAID officially opened its Mission in Serbia in 2001 and has since invested more than \$662.5 million to stimulate economic growth, strengthen the justice system, and promote good governance. It works in partnership with Serbia's Government and its citizens to build prosperity and a better quality of life for all.

U.S. President John F. Kennedy founded USAID, the U.S. Government's primary assistance agency, on November 3, 1961. During the past 50 years, USAID has strived to save and improve lives around the world, increase global stability, advance American values, and strengthen emerging markets.

The Kostana Shoes Cluster is a consortium of 14 South Serbian companies with 1,062 workers, more than two-thirds of whom are women. Their premium-quality products are sold throughout the Balkans and in Russia. They also produce footwear for leading French and Italian brands.

- WHO:** U.S. Ambassador Mary Warlick, USAID Mission Director Susan K. Fritz, Vranje Mayor Miroљub Stojcic, and the heads of 14 South Serbian shoe manufacturing companies that have bonded to build their capacity, share best practices, and express their common goals.
- WHAT:** The Cluster's launch and a reception marking USAID's 50/10 anniversary.
- WHEN:** 12 noon, Tuesday, January 24. **Journalists covering the event should arrive 15 minutes ahead of the event.** Please note that speakers will be available for media statements at the conclusion of the event.
- WHERE:** Pržar Hotel, Vranje
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***Since 2001 USAID has invested more than \$662.5 million to stimulate economic growth, strengthen the justice system, and promote good governance in Serbia.
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