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PRESS RELEASE

DUSHANBE — The U.S. Embassy Deputy Chief of Mission Sarah Penhune participated in an agricultural fair in the Khatlon province of Tajikistan. It was organized by USAID and Mercy Corps' Tajikistan Stability Enhancement Program (TSEP). The fair introduced farmers from Shahritus, Qubodiyon, and N. Khisrav districts to suppliers of certified, high quality agriculture inputs including fertilizers, seeds, and pesticides. At the fair, USAID partners also presented successful agricultural practices including the proper application of agriculture inputs and new technologies.

At the event Deputy Chief of Mission Sarah Penhune noted: "the success of agriculture in Tajikistan is important to all of us: farmers, agro-businesses, government officials, and even the residents of this community."

Farmers in the Khatlon region currently cannot access the high quality products they need to make their farms succeed, and cannot market their crops to other parts of Tajikistan. The fair brought together farmers, input suppliers, micro finance institutions (MFIs) and civil society organizations in order to promote the sale and use of high quality, certified agricultural inputs.

A similar event was held in Asht, district of Sughd province on February 18, and another fair will be held in Garm, district of Rasht Valley on April 6, 2012. The fairs are a part of a larger TSEP agricultural program in Tajikistan aimed at strengthening the relationship between farmers, suppliers, traders, and transporters.

TSEP focuses on strengthening stability in rural Tajikistan by promoting improved governance and encouraging the participation of 'at-risk' or marginalized groups in economic and social revitalization. The program works with community members to meet challenges in 63 rural communities of Sughd and the Rasht and Tavildara Valleys, and Southern Khatlon province.

TSEP is implemented by Mercy Corps, which has actively partnered with communities throughout Tajikistan since 1994.

The Tajikistan Stability Enhancement Project is one of the many assistance projects supported by the American people through the United States Agency for International Development (USAID). Since 1992, the U.S. Embassy in Dushanbe has provided approximately \$984 million in programs that support Tajikistan's democratic institutions, health care, education, and economic growth.

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