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PRESS RELEASE

U.S. GOVERNMENT OPENS PRIMARY SCHOOL IN SUGHD

ASHT, SUGHD — The U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) through its Tajikistan Stability Enhancement Program (TSEP) handed over a newly constructed primary school in Marhamat village of Asht district. The newly constructed primary school, consisting of 4 classrooms, can accommodate roughly 200 first to fourth grade students and will provide regular employment to 4 teachers and a school principal.

Previously, children had to walk over 1 km to the nearest school. In winter, due to snow and road conditions, it was difficult for children to attend school. Through TSEP's Community Action Committees, the community and the head of the jamoat prioritized the construction of this school.

During her speech at the handover ceremony, Ms. McDonald said, "No country has achieved high growth rates and reduced poverty without a well-educated youth. Therefore, we have to make sure that children get a quality education. This is especially true for girls, who need to be not only active citizens, but also who need to be educated mothers to raise educated children." The Chairman of Asht district, Mr. Azizov Azimboi, and the head of the Oshoba jamoat, Mr. Muminov Abdulhai, parents, children, and community members also participated in the event.

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 one of the many assistance projects supported by the American people through USAID. Since 1992, the American people have provided over \$1 billion in programs and humanitarian aid that support Tajikistan's democratic institutions, health care, education and economic growth.

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