



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

March 24, 2008

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## PRESS RELEASE

### USAID commemorates World Tuberculosis Day



On March 24, 2008, USAID joins the Government of Macedonia and international and local partners in commemorating World Tuberculosis (TB) Day. Worldwide, deaths from TB have gone down since 1990, but the disease continues to claim more than 1.6 million lives each year. With HIV/AIDS claiming over 2 million lives each year, and malaria killing more than 1 million, TB is one of the three leading causes of deaths worldwide due to infectious diseases.

Between 2000 and 2007, USAID provided nearly \$600 million for TB programs worldwide. In 2007, USAID provided \$5 million to the STOP TB Partnership's Global TB Drug Facility, an important mechanism that provides drugs to countries in need. The U.S. government also supports TB control worldwide through funding for the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, TB and Malaria. The U.S. government is the largest single donor to the Global Fund, with pledges exceeding \$2.1 billion through 2008. Seventeen percent of support for the Global Fund has been dedicated to TB work.

Macedonia is one of the direct beneficiaries of the Global Fund, having received \$3 million in grants from the organization. The U.S. Mission congratulates the Government of Macedonia for successfully completing the first phase of the grant (2006-2008) and receiving the second phase funding. Thanks to great work by the Ministry of Health and other key players, Macedonia has greatly improved the effectiveness of TB treatment, strengthened human resources capacity, and established new surveillance system and TB laboratory networks.

"Even though a cure has existed for more than half a century, TB remains one of humankind's greatest scourges," said Patricia Rader, USAID Mission Director. "Today, as we commemorate World TB Day we are correctly reminded that TB Anywhere is TB Everywhere. That is why I commend the Government of Macedonia's efforts in combating TB in this country."

#### NOTE TO EDITORS:

The American people, through USAID, have invested nearly \$500 million in Macedonia since 1993. USAID is implementing projects that create jobs, reduce corruption, and prepare Macedonian students for the workforce. These initiatives improve the quality of life and support Macedonia's transition to a stable and prosperous democracy. USAID provides economic and humanitarian assistance in more than 100 countries. For more information please visit <http://macedonia.usaid.gov>.