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## PRESS RELEASE

### **USAID OPENS SAFE DRINKING WATER PROJECT IN SARBAND**

**DUSHANBE** — U.S. Embassy Deputy Chief of Mission Sarah Penhune and USAID/Central Asian Republics Regional Mission Director Erin E. McKee met community members of Sarband Town during the opening ceremony for the USAID Tajikistan Safe Drinking Water Project. Community members assembled to celebrate this new system which will provide safe drinking water to 14,921 people. The ceremony included a performance by local schoolchildren on the importance of safe drinking water and good hygiene to stay healthy.

“Many villages lack safe drinking water, and the U.S. Government is very pleased to help solve this problem. Access to safe drinking water, and proper sanitation and hygiene are essential to preventing water borne diseases that can be deadly. After today’s celebration more hard work remains. The newly rehabilitated water supply system will require regular maintenance and close cooperation between community citizens and their local government,” Ms. Penhune told the audience.

Like the other 25 other partner communities where the USAID Tajikistan Safe Drinking Water Project is helping to provide access to safe drinking water, residents of Sarband did not have reliable access to safe drinking water. As a result citizens, especially children, were frequently the ill with infectious water-borne diseases. Today, 14,921 people in Sarband Town have improved access to safe drinking water and, as a result of USAID Tajikistan Safe Drinking Water Project training, many people, particularly children, have changed their health and hygiene practices.

The USAID Tajikistan Safe Drinking Water Project works in cooperation with the Government of Tajikistan to increase access to sustainable supplies of safe drinking water in rural Tajikistan, and enhance capacity among health officials, community leaders, and the private sector to promote health and hygiene behavioral changes in beneficiaries. The project has supported provision of safe drinking water in 25 communities in nine targeted districts. By September 2012, USAID expects to have supported provision of safe drinking water to more than 100,000 people in rural communities across Tajikistan.

The USAID Tajikistan Safe Drinking Water Project is one of the many development projects supported in Tajikistan by the United States Agency for International Development.

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