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Peace Corps Volunteers Sworn in to Begin Work in Turkmenistan

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Forty-eight new Peace Corps volunteers were sworn in on November 6, 2002, in Ashgabat by Peace Corps Country Director, Sharon Sugarek, to begin their two-year service in Turkmenistan. The Peace Corps is resuming its full-scale operations in Turkmenistan after the withdrawal of volunteers from the region after September 11, 2001. Seven of the volunteers who had left Turkmenistan had already returned in April 2002 to finish up their two-year term in the country.

U.S. Ambassador Laura E. Kennedy welcomed the new volunteers in her remarks at the ceremony, "You will have the opportunity to witness the challenges of forging a new nation and developing crucial community institutions, and to participate in educating new generations of Turkmenistan citizens."

After the Peace Corps Oath was administered and 48 volunteers received their swearing-in certificates, they shared the experiences they have already had in Turkmenistan and their expectations in both Turkmen and Russian. "I am glad that I will work in Balkanabat for two years and will be able to learn about your traditions and rich history," said Charles Gussow speaking in Russian. Speaking in Turkmen, Jason Assir assigned to Yengish Peasants Association of Mary etrap said,



Ambassador Kennedy congratulates newly sworn-in Peace Corps volunteers while Peace Corps Country Director Sharon Sugarek presents their certificates



Peace Corps volunteers are sworn in by pledging an oath of service

"During the two months we have been here, we have made many friends with the very hospitable people of Turkmenistan".

Newly arrived Peace Corps volunteers will work in all five welayats of Turkmenistan; only three of them will serve in Ashgabat. Twenty-nine Education Volunteers will teach English while working with local teachers. They plan to conduct seminars on English teaching methods. Community Health Volunteers will work with the Ministry of Health to provide training in healthy lifestyles, reproductive health, and nutrition.

The Peace Corps came to Turkmenistan in 1993. Since then around 300 volunteers have served here. The mission of the Peace Corps is to help interested countries meet the need for skilled professional men and women and to promote better mutual understanding between Americans and local citizens.



Newly arrived Peace Corps volunteers will work in Turkmenistan for the next two years

U.S. President George Bush Sends Ramadan Greeting to Muslims Around the World

President of the United States George W. Bush extended greetings to Muslims around the world as the holy month of Ramadan began on November 6, 2002. U.S. Ambassador to Turkmenistan Laura E. Kennedy and the Embassy of the United States in Turkmenistan also extended warmest wishes to the Muslim citizens of Turkmenistan. On November 7, Ambassador Kennedy hosted an Agyz Achar dinner for invited guests to celebrate this holy time.

Here is the text of President Bush's statement:

I send greetings to Muslims in the United States and around the world as you observe the holy month of Ramadan.

Islam is a peace-loving faith that is practiced by more than one billion people, including millions of American Muslims. These proud citizens contribute to the diversity that makes our country strong, and the United States is grateful for the friendship and support of many Muslim Nations that are vital partners in the global coalition to fight against terrorism.

The Qur'an teaches that Ramadan is a time for fasting, prayer, worship, and contemplation. Muslims observe this month by renewing their dedication to caring for those in need, doing good deeds, and strengthening family and community ties. These actions reflect many of the values that Muslims share with people of other faiths across our Nation and around the world, including courage, compassion, and service.

America remains committed to freedom, justice, and opportunity for all people. During this season of reverence and examination, we continue to work together for a future of peace, tolerance, and understanding.

Laura joins me in sending our best wishes for a blessed time. May you be well during Ramadan and throughout the coming year.

Parthian Fresco Wall Painting Restoration Project Inaugurated at Nisa

The U.S. Embassy in Turkmenistan and the National Administration for the Preservation of Cultural and Historical Monuments inaugurated a project to preserve Parthian fresco wall paintings at the historical site of Nisa on November 25, 2002. The U.S. Embassy in Turkmenistan is sponsoring the project, which the Administration for the Preservation of Cultural and Historical Monuments will facilitate.

Ambassador Laura E. Kennedy spoke on the U.S. Government's commitment to assist Turkmenistan in the preservation of its cultural and historical sites. Ambassador Kennedy noted, "In addition to the valuable knowledge this project will add to the academic community of historians and archaeologists, the project will also allow for visitors to Nisa to view the restored and preserved paintings. In this way, visitors will be able to learn about Turkmenistan's place in world history." Director of the Administration, Mukhammet Mamedov talked about activities undertaken by the Administration to preserve the Nisa



Project facilitator Radmila Denega (right) shows one of the rooms at Nisa, where the restored frescoes will be exhibited, to (from left to right) U.S. Embassy Public Affairs Officer, Shannon Runyon, Cultural Assistant, Maya Meredova and Ambassador Kennedy

historical site and presented Ambassador Kennedy with a book on the history of archaeological research at Nisa by a leading expert on the project. Project facilitator Radmila Denega told the visitors about the history of Nisa and gave an extensive tour of the site.

The goal of the project is the restoration of chipped fresco wall paintings. Since the majority of the paintings are buried, excavation will be undertaken at the site. The fresco pieces will be matched together in order to restore the original pictures. Facilitators of the project will set up two show-rooms - one with the original ancient Nisa interior, and another reconditioned one exhibiting the restored frescoes. Information on the history of fresco art at Nisa will be available in the show-rooms. The project will also include the publication of booklets about fresco art at ancient Nisa.

This is the second joint cultural preservation project sponsored by the U.S. and Turkmen governments. Earlier this year, the U.S. Embassy and the National Administration for the Preservation of Cultural and Historical Monuments of Turkmenistan presented a completed mosaic restoration project at the Seit Djemaletdin Mosque in Anau. Funding was provided by the U.S. Department of State Cultural Preservation Fund.

The Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs has announced a call for proposals for the year 2003 Ambassador's Fund for Cultural Preservation Program. The Fund was established in 2001 to help developing countries preserve cultural heritage and to demonstrate U.S. respect for other cultures. The U.S. Embassy encourages submission of proposals to the Public Affairs Section by March 24, 2003.



Ambassador Kennedy with facilitators of the project

U.S. Embassy Marks International Human Rights Day

Reception for Non-Governmental Organizations of Turkmenistan

On the occasion of International Human Rights Day, December 10, 2002, Ambassador Laura Kennedy held a reception to honor the ideals set out in the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights promulgated in 1948, 54 years ago. She noted President Bush's message designating December 10 as Human Rights Day in the U.S.

Ambassador Kennedy took this opportunity to recognize the contributions of non-governmental organizations of Turkmenistan. In her remarks, Ambassador Kennedy stressed that non-governmental organizations play a vital role in building civil society, in promoting health, education, and the environment, and in publicizing campaigns against global threats such as narcotics, HIV/AIDS, and trafficking in persons. The United States Government recognizes the contributions these organizations make to their societies. The U.S. Government has discussed with the Government of Turkmenistan the importance of regularizing the registration and operation of such groups and hopes that this goal will be realized soon.

At the reception, attended by representatives from NGOs from across the country, the Mejlis, the media and the international community, the Ambassador presented awards to 27 non-governmental organizations for successful completion of their programs. The U.S. Government provides support to a number of non-governmental organizations throughout Turkmenistan and values the efforts of other governments and international funds such as the British Department for International Development, World Bank, and the United Nations, which also support NGOs in Turkmenistan.



Ambassador Kennedy presents an award to Ms. Maral Annanurova, director of "The Future Farmers" Club, for successful completion of the Club's program

IRC Presentation for Representatives from Ministries and Government Agencies

In addition to the reception, on December 10, 2002, the Information Resource Center (IRC) of the U.S. Embassy held a presentation for representatives of various ministries and government agencies of Turkmenistan featuring IRC resources and services such as traditional and electronic information resources, subscription and information retrieval services, and training opportunities available at the Center. Government officials representing the Ministry of Trade and Foreign Economic Relations, the Ministry of Social Welfare, the Ministry of Nature Protection, the Institute of Democracy and Human Rights, Turkmen State Information Agency, and the Chamber of Commerce of Turkmenistan attended the presentation.

In her opening remarks, PAO of the U.S. Embassy in Ashgabat Shannon E. Runyon congratulated the government officials on Human Rights Day and noted the availability of extensive resources and services at the IRC. IRC Specialist Azat Myradov introduced the Washington File and Electronic Advance Documents (ADSurls) Subscription Services and products of the Office of International Information Programs (IIP) at the U.S. Department of State, such as the IIP website (usinfo.state.gov), thematic electronic journals and the InfoUSA computer disk. Participants learned about books and publications available at the IRC library and commercial databases on the Internet. The presentation also covered selected online sources on U.S. and international legislature. The IRC Specialist demonstrated the Lexis and Thomas Law Databases and various websites, which contain information on international laws and treaties related to human rights, environment, trade, customs, and refugees. Materials about the American government and legal system, and life in the U.S. were also distributed to participants. Participants showed special interest in the IRC's services and resources and subscribed for several of the regular distribution services of the IRC.



IRC Specialist Azat Myradov gives a presentation on IRC resources and services

ACCELS and U.S. Embassy Hold International Education Week Activities in Turkmenistan



The American Councils for International Education (ACCELS) and the U.S. Embassy Ashgabat conducted numerous educational activities in Turkmenistan during International Education Week, November 18-22, 2002.

This year, as part of the International Education Week in Turkmenistan, ACCELS and the U.S. Department of State-funded Educational Advising Center held a variety of events throughout the country, including the opening of three regional American Corners, a banquet for university professors featuring a discussion on "Tolerance for Diversity and Critical Thinking in the Higher Education Classroom", a panel discussion on "American University", a workshop on "Education in the U.S." for winners of a nationwide high school essay-writing contest, a roundtable discussion on "U.S. Student Visas", and many other events. In addition to these, ACCELS administered a free sample TOEFL test for 120 people on November 30. Twenty-seven people participated in the "US Education System" quiz; and five of them received prizes from ACCELS.

American Corners Opened in Three Welayats

Representatives from the U.S. Embassy and ACCELS opened American Center branches in Turkmenbashi City on November 18, in Dashoguz City on November 20, and in Turkmenabat City on November 22, 2002. They will be called "American Corners" and will serve as a source of information about the U.S. for people living in these provinces. Educational fairs and presentations were held in Turkmenbashi, Dashoguz, and Turkmenabat right after the opening ceremonies of the American Corners. Materials about American colleges, U.S. Government-sponsored exchange programs, general information about the application process, standardized tests and financial aid opportunities were distributed to about 200 people in each city during the fairs. The newly opened American Corners also held small conferences for English language teachers and Teachers Excellence Award ceremonies.

Panel Discussion on "American University"

On Wednesday, November 20, 2002, the Educational Advising Center hosted a panel discussion, at which alumni of the Freedom Support Act Undergraduate and Muskie Graduate Programs answered visitors' questions about studying at an American university and shared their American college experiences. Nineteen young men and women who attended the discussion also learned about the leisure-time life of an American student and some university slang and traditions.

"Education in the U.S." Workshop

Winners of a nationwide high school essay-writing contest were invited to a special one-day seminar on November 20 on various aspects of education in the United States. High-school students wrote their essays on the topic "Educational Exchanges Between the U.S. and Turkmenistan: Bridges to the Future"; and

25 of them were selected to take part in the workshop. The program of the workshop included lectures and sessions on topics such as "U.S. Education System", "If You Want to Study in the U.S.", "American Universities in Eurasia", "Internet and E-mail for College Search", "Standardized Tests in Turkmenistan", and a sample TOEFL test. Workshop attendees participated in a discussion with guest speaker Craig Edelman, who is an English Language Fellow at the Azadi World Languages Institute. Seminar participants also received useful handout materials.



Educational Advisor Konstantine Augemberg conducts "Education in the U.S." workshop for winners of the nationwide high-school essay-writing contest

Roundtable Discussion on U.S. Student Visas

U.S. Vice-Consul in Turkmenistan, Jennifer Hall led a roundtable discussion on U.S. student visas in the banquet hall of the "Nissa" Hotel on Thursday, November 21. Prospective students had the opportunity to learn about new visa regulations, changes in the visa application process, and ask questions.

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U.S. Secretary of State Colin L. Powell and U.S. Secretary of Education Rod Paige advocate the celebration of International Education Week each year. International Education Week is a joint initiative of the U.S. Department of State and the U.S. Department of Education to promote programs that prepare Americans for the global environment and attract future leaders from abroad to study, learn, and exchange experiences in the United States.

"People-to-people diplomacy, created through international education and exchanges, is critical to our national interests," says Secretary Powell. "Americans who study abroad expand their global perspective and become more internationally engaged. Foreign students and individuals who participate in citizen exchanges return home with a greater knowledge of our democratic institutions, and America's enduring values."

The International Education Week website provides useful resources about International Education Week activities throughout the world and may be found at <http://exchanges.state.gov/iew/>. Information about IEW activities in Turkmenistan is available at www.geocities.com/iewashgabat.

Embassy and Alumni Reach Out to Children in the Holiday Season

Thanksgiving Day at the "Start" Rehabilitation Center

On November 24, 2002, alumni of the "Teaching Excellency Awards" program celebrated the Thanksgiving holiday with members and constituents of the "Start" rehabilitation center, which attends to disabled people. TEA alumni served a special Thanksgiving dinner for disabled people, who regularly come to the rehabilitation center to meet friends and use its resources. Alumni talked about the traditions of the Thanksgiving holiday and shared their American cultural experiences with the group of disabled teenagers and adults. TEA alumni conducted a seminar entitled "How to Present Yourself", where the disabled students practiced basic communication skills, which will help them to overcome self-consciousness in speaking to other people. The seminar also helped them to determine their character traits and what kind of jobs would be most suitable for their personalities. During 2001, the U.S. Embassy in Turkmenistan supported the initiative of a group of disabled people by providing them a grant to set up the "Start" rehabilitation center.



Teenagers during the seminar at the "Start" rehabilitation center

Visits to the Abadan Boarding School/Orphanage

On Wednesday, November 27, the day before Thanksgiving, U.S. Embassy's Public Affairs Officer Shannon E. Runyon and Cultural Assistant Maya Meredova visited the Abadan Boarding School/Orphanage to contribute several hundred pounds of food, primarily fruits and vegetables to its children on behalf of the Embassy. Almost two years ago, Embassy staff members and FLEX alumni began supporting the Boarding School/Orphanage, providing it with food, clothes, and school supplies on a regular basis. Since that time, they have established friendly relations with the administration and students of the school.

On Monday, December 30, 2002, representatives of the U.S. Embassy and alumni of U.S. Government-sponsored exchange programs visited the Abadan Boarding School/Orphanage again to celebrate the New Year Holiday together. Guests from the Embassy and alumni brought New Year's gifts to over a hundred students and organized a New Year's party for them. Children enjoyed festive food and drink and participated in a New Year's show conducted by the alumni. Dressed in New Year's costumes, the children demonstrated their talents by performing various skits,



Children at the Abadan Boarding School/Orphanage

singing songs, reciting poems by heart and playing games.

This was the second joint celebration of the New Year by the U.S. Embassy staff members, alumni of U.S. Government-sponsored exchange programs and the children of the Abadan Boarding School/Orphanage. On January 8, 2002, eight alumni visited the school and organized a party to celebrate New Year 2002 with the children. The U.S. Embassy plans to continue its support of the Abadan Boarding School/Orphanage in the future.

Embassy Sponsors Children's Piano Festival

A Children's Piano Music Festival, sponsored by the U.S. Embassy in Ashgabat and the International Women's Club, held in the capital on December 7, 2002, gathered a large number of young musicians from all of the city's musical schools. The Festival, organized by the Department of Culture of the Ashgabat Hakimlik and the Central Children's Music School, was dedicated to the seventh anniversary of Turkmenistan's neutrality. According to the rules of the Festival, the participants, who were between 8 and 14 years old, each performed a piece by a Turkmen composer. Respectable jurors, including the U.S. Embassy's Public Affairs Specialist Ms. Anjela Begjanova and a member of the International Women's Club Ms. Stephanie Tansey, evaluated the young performers' skills. The audience also had a chance to choose their favorite performers by submitting votes into the "Audience's Preference Box". Coordinators of the Festival, including FLEX alumna Ayna Meredova, revealed their wonderful artistic abilities as well. During a short break, a group of violinists performed wonderful pieces of music, which made the Festival even more enjoyable.



Winner of the Grand Prize D.Kakalyev

Turkmen NGOs Gain Access to Information on Good Practices of NGO Regulation

On Wednesday, November 20, 2002, the International Center for Not-for-Profit Law (ICNL), in cooperation with the US Embassy in Turkmenistan, the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), and the Academy for Educational Development (AED), held a seminar entitled "NGO Law in a Nutshell."

The seminar opened with comments by the United States Ambassador to Turkmenistan Laura E. Kennedy on the importance of a strong civil society in Turkmenistan. She was joined in her comments with a short address to the participants by OSCE Ambassador Paraschiva Badescu. During the seminar, ICNL's Program Director for Central Asia, Kevin Borrup, introduced participants to the rationale for the existence of NGOs, a rationale that is divided into economic and social reasons. ICNL presented information on studies showing that strong NGOs and an active civil society actually promote and support economic growth. It was noted that an active NGO community can be valuable in countries with political regimes different from those of North America or Western Europe, citing the example of China.

In addition, participants were given the opportunity to explore different means by which governments encourage the development of the NGO sector, including tax benefits. Participants explored such issues as the Lithuanian 2% income tax designation law and different schemes for treatment of NGOs under the VAT (value added tax) system of taxation. Participants were also introduced to good-practices and lessons learned from around the world for the registration of NGOs, specifically looking to the registration procedures of Turkey and Moldova's use of a certification commission. Participants also discussed their experiences with registration of NGOs in Turkmenistan. The conference concluded in a discussion of different kinds of support for NGOs including revenue from entrepreneurial activities, direct and indirect state support, and donations by corporations and individuals. This seminar will be followed by other events designed in response to requests from Turkmen NGOs and/or the government of Turkmenistan.

ICNL is an international expert organization providing technical assistance with the creation and improvement of laws and regulatory systems that permit, encourage, and regulate the growth of voluntary, independent, not-for-profit organizations in countries around the world. Positioning itself as an honest broker between the government and the NGO sector, ICNL works with NGOs, governments, parliamentarians, and law specialists to ensure proper development and implementation of legislation regulating the NGO sector in over 100 countries around the world. ICNL has been active in Central Asia since 1995.

Leading American Entrepreneurship Expert Lectures in Turkmenistan

A leading American author and entrepreneurship expert, Dr. Steven Strauss visited Ashgabat November 13-16, 2002, to meet and hold seminars and round-tables with students and professionals in economics and entrepreneurship. Coming on

the U.S. Department of State Speaker Program, Dr. Strauss gave lectures and held numerous seminars and discussions with various audiences, including students, teachers, private entrepreneurs, government employees, and journalists.

By covering various aspects of entrepreneurship in his seminars and lectures, Dr. Strauss focused on the entrepreneur's determined and passionate attitude toward his business. He used vivid examples, including some from Turkmenistan's history, to show that a small bright idea can be developed into a big successful business project.

At his lectures at Turkmen State University, Turkmen Agriculture University and Ashgabat's business schools, Dr. Strauss stressed the importance of having and developing certain attributes of the entrepreneur, such as risk tolerance, big dreams, perseverance, passion and others. During his meeting with employees of the State Service for Foreign Investments, Dr. Strauss talked about how the government can support entrepreneurial endeavors and answered questions about various aspects of entrepreneurship in the U.S. From local economists, he learned about the development of small businesses in Turkmenistan since independence. Dr. Strauss had a lively discussion with alumni of U.S. Government-sponsored exchange programs, during which they compared entrepreneurial economic environments in the U.S. and Turkmenistan.

Dr. Strauss shared his impressions of Turkmenistan in his weekly USA Today column. In his article, which he wrote while in Ashgabat, he noted the Turkmen people's openness to new ideas and their incredible kindness and hospitality. Mr. Straus was struck by the beauty of the capital of Turkmenistan and described it as a "city full of large parks, botanical gardens, and... fantastic flowing fountains of every imaginable shape and size."

Dr. Steven D. Strauss is a recognized U.S. business specialist, lawyer, author, and one of the world's leading entrepreneurial experts. He is a business columnist for USAToday.com, Franchisel.com, and Staples.com, among others. Dr. Strauss is the author of nine books, including the best selling "The Big Idea: How Business Innovators Get Great Ideas to Market", and the soon-to-be-released "The Business Startup Kit: Everything You Need to Start and Succeed in Your Business". His commentaries have been broadcast on CNN, the Bloomberg Television Network, MSNBC, ABC, Fox News, the BBC and over 200 radio stations. He has been written about on the pages of Time Magazine, USA Today, the Washington Post, the New York Post, and the Los Angeles Post, among others.



Dr. Steven Strauss lecturing to the students of the Turkmen-Russian School and the Polytechnic Institute's Business School

ABA/CEELI Conducts Law Trainings in Ashgabat

ABA/CEELI Provides Training for Lawyers and Entrepreneurs in Commercial Law

The American Bar Association's Central European and Eurasian Law Initiative (ABA/CEELI), a grantee of USAID, implements a commercial law program designed to create a more favorable climate for the growth of small and medium-sized enterprises and the development of a market economy in Turkmenistan. The program's primary objectives include training legal professionals and entrepreneurs on international business standards, and consulting with Turkmen authorities on commercial legislation reform. The program also facilitates and broadens the dialogue between governmental institutions and the private sector.

During November and December, ABA/CEELI held commercial law seminars in Ashgabat on subjects that included the Law of International Investments, International Arbitration under UN Model Law, International Secured Transactions, and the Development of Micro-Credit in Turkmenistan. The seminars were presented with the cooperation of international legal experts and the Turkmen legal community. Professor Rolf Knieper, a consultant for German Technical Cooperation Agency (GTZ) and a leading expert and consultant in the development of Turkmenistan's new Civil Code, spoke on international trade and investment law, as well as on commercial arbitration issues. ABA/CEELI also invited Attorney Karen Widess from the National Endowment for Democracy (NED) to speak on secured transactions in the Former Soviet Union, drawing on her ten years of legal experience in the region.

The discussion regarding the establishment of a micro-credit program in Turkmenistan focused on the necessity for reforms in banking law. Representatives from both the Turkmen government and from private enterprises agreed that an effective micro-credit system has been a valuable tool in other transitional economies, and would provide great opportunities for the development of small and medium-sized enterprises in Turkmenistan. Turkmen experts from the banking sector and private entrepreneurs discussed the creation of agricultural cooperatives similar to the micro-credit cooperatives existing in other countries.

The seminars brought together participants from various Turkmen governmental agencies, such as the Ministry of Trade, Ministry of Justice, Ministry of Finance, Central Bank, Foreign Investment Agency, and Institute of Democracy, in addition to private legal practitioners, academics, and representatives from other international organizations. The seminars presented opportunities for frank, open, and productive discussions between local legal practitioners and representatives from government institutions on the issues facing the business community of Turkmenistan. The development of such business relationships furthers understanding and cooperation between the government and business enterprises, and reduces distrust and suspicion. Following the seminars, ABA/CEELI will draft and distribute a monthly commercial law newsletter drawing on the lessons learned during the presentations, discussions, and debates.

ABA/CEELI and AED/START Hold Street Law Conference

ABA/CEELI, in collaboration with the Academy for Educational Development/START Program, conducted a three-day Street Law Conference in Ashgabat during November. The Street Law Program in Turkmenistan trains law students and educators to deliver basic human rights education in secondary schools. Each participant of the conference will assist in expanding Street Law into schools throughout the country in the coming year. The participants included twenty-two law students from the state university, and ten teachers and professors from Ashgabat secondary schools and the state university's law school, including its dean.

Three experienced trainers of Street Law programs in Kyrgyzstan, Victor Kim, Elena Pahomova, and Aigul Egember-dieva, accepted the invitation of ABA/CEELI to train the Turkmen participants in the methods and practical applications of Street Law. The conference included training in interactive educational methods, providing necessary skills for developing lessons tailored specifically for Turkmenistan, and the creation of working groups of law students, law professors, and schoolteachers.

The law students and educators were trained to provide lessons on basic legal rights, including the right to life, the right to education, the right to family life, and the role of law in Turkmen society. The norms and laws presented were taken from both international agreements of Turkmenistan and Turkmen legislation. The development of Street Law lessons in Turkmenistan require law students to further develop their knowledge in different areas of the law and improve their presentation skills. All participants were involved in activities focused on creative thinking, such as brainstorming, role-playing, case studies, and situation modeling. The law students and educators also participated in a mock trial during the conference, and were trained to organize court proceedings in a school classroom setting.

The Street Law program encourages civic participation among the future legal professionals of Turkmenistan by demonstrating to law students the need and hunger for knowledge by the youth of the country. Students and educators participating in the lessons not only increase their knowledge of their legal rights, but how they are protected under the rule of law. ABA/CEELI will continue to promote and support the professional development of law students, and the growth of Street Law programs in Turkmenistan.



2nd year law student Aigul Ataeva makes presentation during Street Law Conference

USAID's NRMP Program Expands Assistance to the Government of Turkmenistan

Training on Public Service Announcement Development for Government Agencies and NGOs of Turkmenistan

On November 18-19, 2002, in Ashgabat, the Central Asia Natural Resources Management Program (NRMP) funded by the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) conducted a training course on the development of Public Service Announcements (PSAs) for representatives of government institutions and non-governmental organizations of Turkmenistan.

The NGO sector continues to develop in Turkmenistan and Central Asia, promoting public participation in various issues concerning social development and preservation of nature. There are a number of international donor organizations such as Counterpart Consortium providing funding and grants for NGOs. However, even with financial support, NGOs face the problem of a lack of accessible means to promote public interest and participation in important issues.

PSAs have proved to be an effective tool in implementing public awareness campaigns and changing public opinion in the West. PSAs are social advertisements utilizing commercial marketing techniques to promote a public good or social benefit. They have become part of the mass media culture in the West and are quickly developing in the New Independent States. Governments of many countries legally ensure free broadcasting for PSAs and encourage their agencies to produce PSAs.

NRMP public affairs specialists explained the concepts of PSA production, outlined the history of PSA development in the USA, showed best examples of PSAs and shared their experience in producing PSAs in NIS countries. The training covered the issues of pre-campaign research and analysis, as well as message and scenario development. The participants also broke into teams to develop their own messages and PSA scenarios concerning pollution prevention and clean technology issues in the oil and gas sector, and evaluated each other's results.

For the training, the NRMP gathered representatives of the Ministry of Nature Protection, the Oil and Gas Research Institute, Turkmen NGOs working on environmental protection and natural resources management issues, and journalists.

For over two years the NRMP has been providing technical assistance, training, and expertise to assist the Central Asian states in improving the management of critical natural resources, primarily water and energy. This training is yet another step in promoting efficient use of natural resources.

USAID Installs Automated Weather Station At Turkmen Hydromet Center And Organizes Training

Irrigation and the water supply in Turkmenistan depends on external sources of water, mostly from the Amu Darya River. Timely weather forecasts and data exchange with upstream countries is of crucial importance for the agriculture sector of Turkmenistan. As part of its effort to improve the capacity of all Hydromets in Central Asia, U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) through the Central Asia Natural Resources Management Program (NRMP) installed a new automatic meteorological station at Turkmen Hydromet's center in Bekrova. This solar-powered weather station is equipped with user-friendly sensors, data recorders and software that can automatically measure and process weather parameters in real-time mode. This electronic data can be transmitted instantaneously from the automated station to the hydromet office using small wireless radios.

NRMP installed the new automatic weather station at the Hydromet Center of Turkmenistan on December 5, 2002. In addition, Hydromet staff received training from December 9-13, 2002 on how to operate a computer and download meteorological data from the automated station.

During the five-day training program, Hydromet staff learned new computer skills with an emphasis on spreadsheet development so they can develop their own software to analyze data collected from the automated meteorological stations as well as analyze and report other hydrometeorological data that are now processed manually. Presently at the Turkmen Hydromet, parameters are registered manually and kept in handwritten logbooks. This new automated system will improve communication and promote data exchange and sharing.

Generating accurate and reliable data is essential for water and agriculture managers, hydrology specialists and meteorologists to make effective planning decisions. The new weather stations and related computer training will allow the Hydromet staff to gather, transfer and analyze hydrometeorological data more efficiently. This will promote more rational use of water resources and will contribute to overall economic growth of Turkmenistan.

**If you have any comments on the newsletter,
please contact us at
myalikhulyevwk@state.gov**

Alumnae of U.S. Academic Programs Conduct a Seminar for Teachers

Alumna of the Contemporary Issues Program Jamilya Sarjayeva and Fulbright program alumna Valentina Kardashova organized a seminar on teaching methodology for teachers of English, Turkmen, Russian, and German languages on December 20, 2002. Seventeen people attended the seminar, which featured modern interactive methods of teaching language. Jamilya Sarjayeva shared the information she obtained at the Sixth National UzTEA Conference titled "New Trends in Teaching English" held in Tashkent, Uzbekistan. Valentina Kardashova made a presentation on "How to compose tests for students of English." Craig Edelman, Senior English Language

Fellow teaching at the Azadi Institute of World Languages, engaged participants in an interesting and lively discussion after his presentation on "New Methods in Teaching." In addition to local teachers, Peace Corps Volunteers Katrina Fink and Lance Frideriksen also participated in the discussion. The seminar created great opportunities for the teachers to expand their knowledge and skills, meet their counterparts and share their ideas and experiences with each other. The positive feedback generated by the seminar has created the impetus for the design of future seminars on the topic.

U.S. Embassy Takes Part at the Oil and Gas Exhibition

Commercial Assistant Irina Begjanova and Information Resource Center (IRC) Assistant Azat Myradov represented the U.S. Embassy in Turkmenistan at the Seventh International Exhibition titled "Oil and Gas of Turkmenistan 2002" on December 16-18, 2002, in Ashgabat. Various materials displayed at the U.S. Embassy's booth proved to be very popular and were picked up by many attendees. The Embassy presented and disseminated well-illustrated and informative catalogs from 49 American oil and gas companies and publications from the Foreign Commercial Service (FCS) and the Business Information Service for the Newly Independent States (BISNIS). Representatives from the Ministry of Oil and Gas and Mineral Resources, State Turkmen Oil Company, State Turkmen Gas Company, and State Turkmen Oil and Gas Trade Company received separate complete sets of the catalogs. The Public Affairs Section of the Embassy distributed publications in Turkmen, English, and Russian about the U.S. economy, America's trade relations with the CIS, and a series of publications titled "Prosperity Papers" (economic reports) and "Green Papers" (environmental reports). Turkmen Government employees, local and foreign businessmen, and students had the most interest in

the materials offered by the U.S. Embassy. The IRC Assistant consulted interested visitors on finding materials regarding oil and gas producers and exporters. Alumni of U.S. Government-sponsored exchange programs assisted during the exhibition by helping visitors out with materials, answering their questions, and collecting their business cards.



Alumni of U.S. Government-sponsored exchange programs help visitors out with materials available at the U.S. Embassy booth.

CLOTHING AND BOOK DRIVE!!!

Make a practical difference, more than just money!

American Councils for International Education (ACCELS) invites you to participate in the clothes drive that will be held from January 6 until January 30, 2003. The collected items of clothing and footwear will be delivered to the Orphanage for Visually Impaired Children in Ashgabat. The preferable sizes for clothing are between 30 and 48, and for footwear - between 30 and 42.

American Educational Advising Center is also looking to expand its library, and kindly asks you to donate any books, magazines, newspapers, and video and audiotapes. The collected items will be distributed between Educational Advising Center in Ashgabat and three newly established American Corners in cities of Turkmenabat, Dashoguz and Turkmenbashi.

Your consideration and donations will be highly and sincerely appreciated! Please bring the items to the ACCELS main office in Ashgabat, which is located on 78 Magtymguly Ave., 1st floor, American Center. You may also contact us by telephone - 39 53 28/32 or e-mail: ugradfellow@online.tm (clothing) and eacashgabat@online.tm (books).

Thank you very much in advance!