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ԱՇԽԱՏԱՆՔԻ ԵՎ ՍՈՑԻԱԼԱԿԱՆ  
ՀԱՐՑԵՐԻ ՆԱԽԱՐԱՐՈՒԹՅՈՒՆ

MINISTRY OF LABOR & SOCIAL  
AFFAIRS OF ARMENIA



ԱՄՆ ՄԶԳ ՍՈՑԻԱԼԱԿԱՆ  
ՊԱՇՏՊԱՆՈՒԹՅԱՆ ՀԱՄԱԿԱՐԳԵՐԻ  
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USAID SOCIAL PROTECTION  
SYSTEMS STRENGTHENING

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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Public Information: (+37410) 542 610

Email: aramm@tsginc.com

**SPSS Press Release 2007-1**

## **SOCIAL PROTECTION SYSTEMS STRENGTHENING PROJECT LAUNCHED**

**YEREVAN, ARMENIA** – At a press conference on March 23, 2007, at 11:00 AM, RA Minister of Labor and Social Affairs Aghvan Vardanyan and US Embassy Charge d'Affaires Anthony Godfrey announced the launch of USAID's Social Protection Systems Strengthening (SPSS) project, 2006-2011--a flagship project aimed at strengthening Armenia's social protection system.

The event celebrated the cooperation agreement signed recently by the RA Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs, represented by First Deputy Minister Araik Petrosyan, and the USAID Social Protection Systems Strengthening project, implemented by The Services Group, Inc., represented by Dr. Amy Ramm, Chief of Party.

USAID's SPSS is among the largest social reform contracts to date awarded by the Government of the United States through USAID in the South Caucasus to help improve Government of Armenia's institutional and human capacity in the field of social protection, and to enhance the capacity of social services NGOs.

The project will provide technical assistance in four key social protection areas – social insurance, employment services, occupational safety and labor code implementation, and social assistance programs for vulnerable populations. The aim of the project is to facilitate citizens' transition to self-reliance and sustainability, while reducing their dependence on public support to meet their basic needs. "A unique set of components is included in this project, so that it maximizes the interplay between the labor market and social protection," Dr. Amy Ramm emphasized.

During his speech, U.S. Charge d'Affaires Anthony Godfrey said, "This Project is another important milestone in the Armenian government's continued commitment to modernizing social protection systems for its citizens. In the past, we have done a great deal of work together – nearly \$20 million worth over the last six years. But much work remains to be done to create a truly sustainable social protection system."

For more information about USAID SPSS Project, visit [www.usaid.am/](http://www.usaid.am/) and <http://www.mss.am/>.