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HEALTH STRENGTHENING PROGRAM IS LAUNCHED

SAN SALVADOR— Today the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) and the Salvadoran Ministry of Health (MOH) officially launched their program “Health Strengthening,” which seeks to expand and improve people’s access to health care, especially in the rural areas. USAID will donate \$29 million and MOH will provide \$8 million in co-sharing.

The program activities, designed using information from the 2003 National Survey on Family Health (FESAL) and other studies, will focus on priority care areas for women of child-bearing age, teenagers and children under age five.

Through this new program, USAID and MOH will strengthen the ministry’s financial planning capacity, improve financial management at the local level, support the logistic system and use of human resources, and establish alliances with the private sector.

Moreover, the program will focus on improving integral care on reproductive health, maternal and neonatal health, child survival and nutrition. The program will also seek to avoid and decrease hospital infection risks that affect women and their newborns, and prevent HIV/AIDS amongst high risk groups.

“I encourage everybody to coordinate their efforts in order to achieve our goal: that in 2009 the Salvadoran population enjoys improved health and wellness,” said Mark Silverman, USAID Mission Director, during the launching ceremony.

The ceremony was attended by the Minister and Vice Minister of Health, representatives from non-government organizations, other donors and the program implementing partners (Abt Associates and University Research Corporation –URC). Moreover, Minister Guillermo Maza presented Mr. Silverman with a plaque in appreciation for his hard work as USAID Mission Director for the past five years.

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