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PRESS RELEASE

3rd Annual Armenian IT Competitiveness Conference to Take Place in Yerevan

Analyzing the Opportunities and Challenges; Defining Priorities

Yerevan, Armenia. The USAID-funded Competitive Armenian Private Sector (CAPS) Project will host the **3rd Annual Armenian Information Technology (IT) Conference** on November 24 in Yerevan. The event is being organized in collaboration with industry representatives, including the Ministry of Economy, Armenian Development Agency, Microsoft Armenia, Enterprise Incubator Foundation, D-Link, Arminco and IT business associations, and aims to bring the industry together on pressing issues.

Despite the declines in sales and investment due to the global economic crisis, the Armenian IT industry had a number of achievements during the past year, such as improved tax and customs procedures as a result of successful public private sector cooperation; entrance of the third mobile operator into the telecommunication market, number of local and regional IT expos and forums securing business deals for Armenian IT firms; and ArmTech Congress in Silicon Valley showcasing Armenia's high tech capabilities in one of world's largest high tech economic centers.

While in light of the latest political and economic developments, The conference aims to analyze the current opportunities and challenges and define IT industry priorities for the future. The conference will raise and seek solutions to Armenia's telecommunication sector development, will highlight how academic partnerships can result in competitive educational curricula, and how the creation of venture capital funds can support the development and expansion of high tech businesses.

"The competitiveness of the Armenian IT industry is highly dependant on a fast transfer of new technologies into the country, adoption of international best practice, availability of Armenian information and creation of a sound educational environment. The conference provides an excellent opportunity to bring the cluster together to discuss ways for improved management of these processes," Armen Abrahamyan, CAPS IT Cluster Coordinator says.

The conference is open to all IT stakeholders, professionals and those interested in Armenia's IT industry.

The event will take place on **Tuesday, November 24, 10:00AM in Ani Plaza Hotel**. For further information, please see the draft conference agenda below.

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The USAID-funded Competitive Armenian Private Sector (CAPS) Project provides technical assistance to the Armenian private sector to help them better compete nationally, regionally and internationally. CAPS is currently working with the growing Armenian information technology, tourism, pharmaceuticals and the engineering services clusters to identify globally competitive products and services, and to build robust companies around those products and services. CAPS technical assistance takes many forms and includes: firm level consulting, business association capacity building, policy research, pubic education, work force training and development of public / private initiatives.

3RD ANNUAL ARMENIAN INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY COMPETITIVENESS CONFERENCE

24 NOVEMBER 2009

DRAFT AGENDA

09:15 **REGISTRATION**

10:00 – 10:30 **OPENING REMARKS**

Nerses Yeritsyan, Minister, RA Ministry of Economy

U.S. Embassy or U.S. Agency for International Development representative

Artak Ghazaryan, Chief of Party, CAPS Project

10:30 – 11:30 **OVERVIEW OF IT CLUSTER DEVELOPMENT**

MODERATOR: BAGRAT YENGIBARYAN, DIRECTOR, ENTERPRISE INCUBATOR FOUNDATION

CAPS Commitment to IT Cluster Development

Armen Abrahamyan, IT Cluster Coordinator, CAPS Project

ArmTech Congress 2009: A Platform for Global Growth of Armenia's Knowledge-Based Economy

Robert Harutyunyan, General Director, Armenian Development Agency

IT Industry Development Challenges

Bagrat Yengibaryan, Director, Enterprise Incubator Foundation (EIF)

Questions and Answers to Presenters

11:30– 11:45 **COFFEE BREAK**

11:45 – 13:00 **GOVERNMENT IN IT SECTOR DEVELOPMENT**

MODERATOR: VAHE DANIELYAN, RA DEPUTY MINISTER OF ECONOMY

Government Programs in Support of IT

Vache Kirakosyan, Head of High and Information Technologies Development Department, RA Ministry of Economy

“PC” for All Program Update

Norayr Vardanyan, Senior Specialist, Enterprise Incubator Foundation

Venture Fund for Armenia's Financing of Innovative Technology

Francis J. Skrobiszewski, CAPS International Private Equity and Venture Capital Consultant, USA

Cloud Computing as the Next Frontier of IT Innovation

Hovhannes Avoyan, CEO, Sourcio

Creative Development: Present and Future

Garegin Chugaszyan, Bureau Member, Council of Europe, Steering Committee on Media and New Communication Services

Questions and Answers to Presenters

COMPETITIVE ARMENIAN PRIVATE SECTOR PROJECT (CAPS)

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13:00 – 14:00 BUFFET LUNCH

14:00 – 15:30 MARKET DIFFERENTIATION IN ARMENIA'S TELECOM SECTOR

MODERATOR: AVETIK QALANTARYAN, CHIEF COMMERCIAL DIRECTOR, ADC

Regulation of Armenia's Telecom Sector

Gevorg Gevorgyan, Head of Telecommunications Department, PSRC

Armenia's National Broadband Program

Pegor Papazian, Director, Competitiveness Foundation of Armenia

Orange Armenia, Vahe Hovhannisyan, Advisor and Interconnection Coordinator

Armenia's Telecom Sector Development Solutions

Martin Taschdjian, CAPS International Information and Communications Consultant, USA

Questions and Answers to Presenters

15:30 – 15:45 COFFEE BREAK

15:45 – 17:00 MODERN ICT EDUCATION AND R&D

MODERATOR: GRIGOR BARSEGHYAN, DIRECTOR, MICROSOFT RA

ICT Integration in Schools

Armen Kulakhszyan, Deputy Director, National Center for Education Technologies (KTAK)

Collaboration between Private Sector and Educational Institutions

Karen Vardanyan, Executive Director, Union of IT Enterprises

New Competitive IT Curricula: Academic Partnership between Russian-Armenian (Slavonic) University and Virginia Tech University

Vladimir Yeghiazaryan, Dean of Applied Mathematics and Informatics faculty, Russian-Armenian (Slavonic) University

ICT Educational Portal

Grigor Barseghyan, Director, Microsoft RA

Questions and Answers to Presenters

17:00 CLOSING REMARKS