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**ALBANIA**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## PRESS RELEASE

### **USAID, Community Support Environmental Clean-up**

**GRAMSH, MARCH 05, 2010** Dozens of citizens, civil society organizations, businesses, and students have volunteered to join the city of Gramsh and USAID, in a city-wide cleanup effort to jump-start the city's new service improvement action plan.

With the support of USAID's Local Governance Program in Albania (LGPA), the Municipality of Gramsh has embarked on an effort to improve public services for the community, particularly in waste collection and disposal.

In cooperation with engaged local citizens, the city developed a Service Improvement Action Plan (SIAP) for improving solid waste collection and disposal services that established for the first time a set of performance indicators based on recent public opinion surveys. The new and improved services have been approved in the current municipal budget.

With USAID support, the city reached out to local high schools to increase awareness of the economic, social, and health costs of environmental degradation. In his remarks at the event, USAID representative Stephen Herbalby underlined the important role citizens should play to keep their community safe, clean, and beautiful.

The city-wide cleanup was made possible with the support of local government, the private sector, and several U.S. government agencies. USAID contributed over \$15,000 for large trash bins for the city and several local businesses donated products to support the cleanup effort. Banka Popullore donated almost \$10,000 for 120 park benches and 100 trash receptacles for the park. USAID, Peace Corps, and community volunteers installed new benches and built over 100 meters of walking paths in three public parks. In addition, the U.S Embassy's Office of Defense Cooperation contributed \$120,000 to repair outdoor recreational facilities at the Shefqet Guzi high school.

USAID's Local Governance Program in Albania (LGPA) works with ten municipalities throughout Albania to foster local economic growth, improve local governance, and strengthen civic and private sector engagement in local development. LGPA's partner municipalities are: Fier, Fushe-Kruje, Gramsh, Elbasan, Korçe, Kukës, Lezhe, Librazhd, Pogradec and Shkoder.

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