

**Ambassador Talking Points**  
**Wineries Tour in Telavi District, Kakheti Region**  
**29 February 2008**

- It is a pleasure to be here today attending the bottling process for the export of Tsinandali Old Cellar and Vinoterra wines to the U.S. to be sold in one of America's largest supermarket chains, Whole Foods Market.
- The U.S. Government is pleased to have supported these wine producers through USAID's AgVantage project, helping them to increase domestic and international sales.
- The technical assistance USAID provides to such firms has proved vital in increasing the international competitiveness of Georgian products. For these wineries here today, USG assistance to improve business processes, introduce international processing, bottling and labeling standards, and develop linkages with international importers was necessary for them to compete in this US, and indeed world, markets.
- Over the last 5 years, USG efforts have helped agribusinesses generate over \$34 million in sales and expand into 37 new markets worldwide.
- Agribusiness development is a USG assistance priority in Georgia, especially as agriculture constitutes 12% of GDP and over half of the Georgian population derives some income from the sale of agricultural products.
- It is essential to the Georgian economy that Georgian businesses, including the wine industry, continue to strengthen their business prowess so as to develop and expand both domestically and into new world markets.
- Future USG assistance will continue support to enterprises with an emphasis on adherence to international standards, increasing productivity through increased competitiveness, developing business support services, and promoting investment in business expansion and development.
- We look forward to close cooperation with the Government of Georgia to build Georgia's economy and raise its agricultural output to international levels of competitiveness.
- Again, it is a pleasure for me to be here today. I extend my congratulations to both Tsinandali Old Cellar and Vinoterra wineries and wish them great success.