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NEWS RELEASE

News Release No. 2009/1/TR

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TURKISH HEALTH SYSTEM REVIEW LAUNCHED WITH THE WORLD BANK AND OECD

Ankara, February 18, 2009— The Government of Turkey, launched today a report analyzing the Health Sector of Turkey- that was prepared jointly by the OECD and the World Bank. Minister of Health, Prof. Dr. Recep Akdağ; Country Director of the World Bank, Ulrich Zachau; Social Policy Director of the OECD, John Martin attended the launch ceremony.

The joint OECD/World Bank review of the Turkish health system was undertaken at the request of the Turkish Ministry of Health and was supported by a financial grant from the ministry. It follows the OECD reviews of the health systems of Korea, Mexico, Finland and Switzerland.

The Review of the Turkish Health System outlines the major reforms implemented under Turkey's Health Transformation Program since 2003, against the backdrop of the earlier health system. The Review evaluates system performance against the main aims of health policy, namely access and equity, health improvement, responsiveness to consumers, value for money and fiscal sustainability. It assesses the recent reforms, including the transition to Universal Health Insurance coverage, and their potential impacts. Finally, the Review outlines where additional policies may be help strengthen Turkey's health system further.

During the launch ceremony of the report, in his opening remarks, Ulrich Zachau, Country Director of the World Bank: *"The World Bank's partnership with Turkey in the health sector supports the Government's innovative and successful Health Transformation program. The innovations and reforms under this program have produced remarkable improvements in the health sector—especially by expanding the access to and increasing the quality of health services for the Turkish people and by strengthening health insurance for the population."* He continued: *"Looking ahead to the continued implementation of the program over the next several years, in the context of the ongoing global economic crisis, Turkey will face challenges in continuing to improve health outcomes and access to health services, while focusing on greater cost-effectiveness of services. Its strong program and track record to date in modernizing its health system position Turkey well to address these challenges."*