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NUTRITION FOR HEALTH

“There can be no real growth without healthy populations. No sustainable development without tackling disease and malnutrition... And no hope for the spread of freedom, democracy and human dignity unless we treat health as a basic human right.” – Gro Harlem Brundtland

Malnutrition contributes to more than 50 percent of all infant and child deaths in Ethiopia. The damage caused by malnutrition during the first 1,000 days—from the start of a woman’s pregnancy to her child’s second birthday—is usually irreversible in terms of its negative impact on the child’s health, cognitive development, physical growth, and school and work performance later in life. In Ethiopia, the major causes of malnutrition are persistent food insecurity, poor maternal and child feeding practices, high incidence of infectious diseases, and limited access to quality nutrition services. Household wealth, education, and family planning are also key drivers of children’s nutrition. Twenty-seven percent of women in Ethiopia are thin or malnourished and 38.4 percent of children suffer from stunting. Ethiopia’s lowland pastoral areas and densely populated, food-insecure highland *woredas* (districts) suffer frequent droughts, complicating access to and consumption of nutritious foods.

PROGRAM GOALS

USAID is committed to investing in multi-sectoral nutrition programming in Ethiopia, which focuses on good maternal nutrition, optimal breastfeeding, and appropriate complementary feeding to reduce the numbers of stunted children and malnourished women. To keep food safe and families healthy, we educate households about the importance of key hygiene actions. We also invest in agriculture and food systems to improve the availability, accessibility, and consumption of nutritious food. If disaster strikes, we are on the ground with our partners delivering therapeutic foods to reduce the incidents of malnutrition.

IMPROVED NUTRITIONAL STATUS OF WOMEN, CHILDREN, AND THE CHRONICALLY ILL

To reduce poverty and promote sustainable livelihoods, we coordinate with the Government of Ethiopia to implement its multi-sector National Nutrition Program II and expand market-based agricultural development. Combining the U.S. Government's Feed the Future initiative's dual focus on agriculture and nutrition with efforts of the U.S. Global Health Security Agenda, we created the five-year Growth through Nutrition activity to improve the nutritional status of women and young children in the Amhara, Oromia, Tigray, and Southern Nations, Nationalities, and People's regions.

Other Feed the Future work links the development of agricultural market activities to increasing access to and demand for nutritional foods that can be grown and sold in local markets, including poultry, livestock, dairy, and produce.

Through the U.S. President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR) and the Nutrition Assessment, Counseling and Support programs, we provide technical assistance in nutrition training and in reviewing and updating national nutrition policies and guidelines. PEPFAR also advances the nutritional status of food-insecure individuals living with HIV/AIDS and supports economic strengthening activities for HIV-affected households.

INCREASED FOOD QUALITY

We have partnered with private sector companies through the New Alliance for Food Security and Nutrition to improve the quality of seeds, agriculture technology and food products in Ethiopia. In the Advanced Maize Seed Adoption Program, we teamed with DuPont Pioneer to provide improved varieties of maize seed and technical assistance to farmers. We also support food quality projects focusing on fortified chickpea-based foods through a partnership with Ethiopian producer GUTS Agro Industry, and on products like soy milk powder, fortified wheat flour, pasteurized milk, and yogurt through the Solutions for African Food Enterprises, implemented by TechnoServe. Through this public-private partnership agreement, we, and Partners in Food Solutions, bring expertise, knowledge and resources to expand the availability of affordable and nutritious foods.

When humanitarian crises occur, we provide supplemental food aid to save lives and help victims recover. To mitigate negative impact, USAID's Office of Food for Peace and partners distribute nutritious food items to those affected by climatic shocks and refugees from neighboring countries. Additionally, USAID's Office of Foreign Disaster Assistance provides therapeutic feeding and ready-to-use-foods for emergency feeding centers and victims of disasters. Under the Government of Ethiopia's Productive Safety Net Program and through our Development Food Security Activity, we support activities that raise awareness of healthy nutrition, improve water and sanitation practices, and support management of moderate and severe acute malnutrition.