



FARMER-TO-FARMER PROGRAM LAUNCH

USAID Ethiopia Mission Director Dennis Weller

Tuesday April 1st, 2014

Radisson BLU Hotel, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

It is a great honor and pleasure for me to be here today with all of you. I wish to congratulate Catholic Relief Services for being chosen as the new implementing partner of USAID's Farmer-to-Farmer Program in East Africa. The USAID offices here in Ethiopia as well as in Kenya, Uganda, and Tanzania are glad to welcome CRS in this new role.

The Farmer-to-Farmer Program was first authorized by the U. S. Congress in 1985 to provide voluntary technical assistance to farmers, farm groups, and agribusinesses in developing and transitional countries. In 2008, the U.S. Congress designated the Farmer-to-Farmer program the "John Ogonowski and Doug Bereuter Farmer-to-Farmer Program" in honor of one of the pilots killed on September 11, 2001, John Ogonowski, and of former Congressman Bereuter, who initially sponsored the program.

The Farmer-to-Farmer program has been a mainstay in agricultural technical assistance provided by USAID since its inception. The program is unique in its ability to engage American farmers, agricultural businessmen and women, and educators, and link them directly to their counterparts throughout the developing world. The fruits of this exchange are economic empowerment, growth in the agricultural sector, and an increased understanding of how people in different cultural settings live and work.

The Farmer-to-Farmer program is a unique part of USAID's Feed the Future Initiative in Ethiopia in its ability to engage American farmers, agricultural business people, and educators, and link them directly with their Ethiopian counterparts. The fruits of this exchange are increased productivity and incomes, and a greater understanding of how we live and work in different settings that is mutually beneficial to Americans and to Ethiopians.

CRS' Farmer-to-Farmer program supports USAID's Feed the Future's overall goal of increasing food security and economic growth in the region. Taking into account both Ethiopia's and Feed the Future's priorities, the Farmer-to-Farmer program will improve the livelihoods and nutritional status of about 5,000 low-income households through three strategic objectives:

Broaden the participation of the rural poor in established commodity value chains as producers and service providers;

Strengthen the resilience of communities in marginal areas to adverse events such as droughts and floods that affect their livelihoods;



Preserve and enhance the natural resources upon which most rural communities depend.

Through the Farmer-to-Farmer program, CRS will also increase the American public's understanding of international development programs and foster increased cross-cultural understanding between Ethiopians and U.S. volunteers.

Farmer-to-Farmer volunteers are drawn from all over the United States. They are individuals who have domestic or international careers, farms, and agribusinesses, or are retirees, all with a desire to contribute to efforts in other countries to improve agricultural livelihoods. CRS is partnering with five institutions to tap into the rich diversity of the U.S. agriculture community. These five institutions are: the National Catholic Rural Life Conference, the Foods Resource Bank, the National Association of Agricultural Educators, American Agri-Women, and the University of Illinois' College of Agricultural, Consumer and Environmental Sciences.

In order to increase food security and broad-based economic growth in the agricultural sector, the Farmer-to-Farmer Program in Ethiopia will target commercially viable value chains in the four USAID's Feed-the-Future and Agricultural Growth Program target regions of Ethiopia, namely the Oromia, Tigray, SNNP, and Amhara regions. The Farmer-to-Farmer program will initially focus on the grains value chain followed next year by horticulture and thereafter specially selected activities in the livestock sector.

Over the five year span of the Farmer-to-Farmer program, CRS will field 125 U.S. volunteer experts who will provide over 2,000 days of technical assistance to over 30 host organizations. These volunteers will reach more than 5,000 direct beneficiaries and a total of 50,000 indirect beneficiaries.

Given the key role that women play in the agricultural sector in Ethiopia, over 50% of all beneficiaries, both direct and indirect, will be women. As with all CRS programming, the Farmer-to-Farmer program is gender-responsive, designed to address the different needs of men and women in the agricultural sector while benefitting both men and women.

USAID will continue to offer its technical support to the CRS Farmer-to-Farmer (F2F) program in Ethiopia to realize its goal of increasing agricultural productivity, food security and economic growth as stipulated in the Feed the Future strategy and the Agricultural Growth Program of the Government of Ethiopia.

Let me close by giving a hearty welcome to Dr. James V. Worstell, our first American volunteer for this new round of the Farmer-to-Farmer program. Dr. Worstell will be telling you about himself and his new assignment shortly. We are glad he could join us here today.