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FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

## Agribusiness Market Development: Five-Year Retrospective

Remarks by USAID Mission Director Dennis Weller

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*(as prepared for delivery)*

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Good morning!

It's wonderful to be here as we collectively celebrate the accomplishments of USAID's Agribusiness Market Development activity. This activity has really served as a flagship activity of U.S. Government's [Feed the Future](#) initiative in Ethiopia.

Rooted in country leadership, partnerships across sectors, and achieving results, the Feed the Future initiative emphasizes support for smallholder farmers, particularly women, to reduce hunger, poverty, and malnutrition.

Since 2011, the U.S. Government has invested more than 50 million dollars through the Agribusiness Market Development activity in six strategic agriculture sectors to improve food security and build throughout the food value chain in Ethiopia. The sectors we are working in...maize, coffee, honey, sesame, chickpea, and wheat...align perfectly with the areas where the Ethiopian Government also sees strong growth potential.

I have witnessed this growth and successes of our cooperation in these areas firsthand, from starting the renovation of ECX coffee laboratories, to the inauguration of the blended fertilizer plant in Becho Woliso.

I was on hand when USAID launched the country's first Women in Agribusiness networking group, and I participated as DuPont Pioneer made a massive investment in Ethiopia to bring hybrid maize seed to farmers.

Just last year, I visited a private sector factory, AgroProm, which partnered with USAID to install the country's first industrialized chickpea processing plant in Adama.

And, I have seen Ethiopia's farmers learn how to best market their products on international markets.

As a result, Ethiopia has the potential to become a regional and world leader in many food products. In the world coffee market, Ethiopia's role today is stronger than ever and will host an international coffee conference next month. Ethiopia is Africa's number one exporter of sesame and largest honey producer. The potential for Ethiopian chickpea is also tremendous.

For Ethiopia to maintain its footing in these markets, the ability to add value to these crops has never been more important than now!

USAID's investment includes cost-sharing agreements to support the establishment of warehouses, the procurement of industrial processing machinery, and the introduction of new technologies for grading, quality control, and post-harvest handling.

The adoption of new technology, improved agricultural capacity, and a higher degree of business acumen bring in additional foreign currency, which is needed to finance the growth of the nation, and the food needed to nourish Ethiopia's rising urban population.

The Agribusiness Market Development activity also undertook a multi-year effort to increase financial management skills of farmer's cooperatives and small business owners.

When President Obama visited Ethiopia six months ago, he emphasized the importance of a new model of development assistance that leverages the private sector more than ever before.

And as you will see in today's five-year retrospective, private-public partnerships are crucial to transform the sector. Thanks to your hard work, multinational firms are now injecting powerful sums of money into Ethiopia's agribusiness sectors.

Coffee companies, seed providers, and honey traders have all put resources into filling the gaps in Ethiopia's agriculture and agro-processing industries.

And through cooperation and hard work, Ethiopian farmers and entrepreneurs are innovating, adding value and getting more money for their products. Maximizing production efficiency and adding value at all levels is critical for Ethiopia's agricultural sector.

The Government of Ethiopia can count on USAID and Feed the Future for sustainable partnerships in pursuit of AGP II objectives.

Today we may be celebrating the accomplishments of the Agribusiness Market Development activity, but this is not an end. This is the beginning, and I truly believe that the next five years will prove Ethiopia can meet its own food needs while impressing the world with high quality products.

Thank you and *amasegenalehu*.