



USAID | ETHIOPIA

FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

ETHIOPIAN COMMODITY EXCHANGE (ECX) FAREWELL GALA REMARKS BY USAID ETHIOPIA MISSION DIRECTOR DENNIS WELLER October 30, 2012

It is a great pleasure and honor for me to be here tonight on behalf of U.S. Ambassador Donald Booth and the American People. Ambassador Booth asked me to convey his sincere regrets and best wishes, in particular for Dr. Eleni Gebre-Madhin as she takes on new ventures. I am new to Ethiopia but I am well aware of the importance of the Ethiopian Commodity Exchange (ECX) for the business of agriculture and, ultimately, for development, and Dr. Eleni's pioneering efforts to launch this important institution. Many farmers and producers have benefitted from the establishment of the ECX. Citing the example set by the ECX for markets in other countries around Africa, President Obama invited Dr. Eleni to the G8 Summit at Camp David in May of this year and the launch of the public-private New Alliance for Food Security and Nutrition. So it is a source of pride and satisfaction for me to be here and to be able to note USAID's contribution beginning back in 2006 to help make the Ethiopian Commodity Exchange a reality in 2008.

Through USAID's former Agribusiness and Trade Expansion Project, the U.S. Government provided roughly \$1.5 million dollars to assist with the creations of an organized marketplace for trading, which increased confidence among both buyers and sellers, promoted increased transparency in the pricing, and, ultimately, allowed farmers to earn a better living. Given the tremendous volume of coffee produced and traded by Ethiopia, USAID also sought to ensure that ECX operations and procedures were functioning at their highest level. USAID supported the recruitment of a team of high-caliber technical experts (local and long-term expatriates) including legal and compliance officers, warehouse receipts and inventory finance experts. These technical experts worked in the ECX for nearly two years to establish or refine systems and procedures for commodities trading.

USAID also worked closely with the ECX to develop and introduce a "Specialty Product Sales Platform," a system that allows specialty growers to sell directly to registered exporters and international buyers through a traceable and reliable trading mechanism.

Lastly, USAID worked with the ECX to pilot a variety of new technologies, including storage cocoons. These cocoons piloted the use of advanced technology for portable storage of oilseeds, pulses and coffee.



USAID | ETHIOPIA

FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

It's been a rich partnership and while much has been done – much more remains to be done. Looking ahead, USAID experts, including from our new Agricultural Markets Development and Expansion Project, (known as *AMDE* in Amharic) are engaging with incoming ECX CEO Antenah Assefa, to discuss how to continue our collaboration, including the need for improvements and expansion of the warehousing system – so important to the success of the ECX model.

In Ethiopia in general, USAID, through President Obama's Feed the Future Initiative, has combined commitments of over \$150 million towards Ethiopia's Agricultural Growth Program (AGP) and we expect the ECX to continue to play an important role in support of the AGP and the development of a vibrant private sector in agriculture that will benefit small producers and entrepreneurs.

In closing – let me say a special thank you to Dr. Eleni Gebre-Madhin– who not only provided the vision for the ECX, but who also demonstrated the diplomatic and management skills necessary to give life to this new, dynamic institution in Ethiopia. Her achievements further provide a strong, inspiring role model for any student, anywhere, and notably for young women entrepreneurs, academics, female executives and also mothers in Ethiopia and around the Diaspora. Dr. Eleni not only came up with innovative ideas but also maneuvered challenging waters, breaking through old patterns of thinking as to what is or is not possible – and breathed life into those ideas. Ethiopia and those who support and promote Ethiopia's growth and transformation owe Dr. Eleni a great deal of gratitude. Doubtless, we here all await with great anticipation your further ideas and accomplishments.

Thank you.