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## **Ethiopian Pulses, Oilseeds and Spices Processors-Exporters Association**

### **Fourth International Conference on Pulses, Oilseeds, and Spices**

#### **Opening Remarks**

**USAID Ethiopia Mission Director Dennis Weller**

**November 12, 2014**

**Addis Ababa, Ethiopia**

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It is an honor for me to speak on behalf of USAID at EPOSPEA's Fourth International Conference Pules, Oilseeds, and Spices.

Ethiopia is the second largest sesame exporter in the world and sesame is second only to coffee in foreign exchange earnings. Ethiopia produces more than 400,000 metric tons of chickpea annually and is the sixth largest producer of chickpea in the world.

Though the oilseed and pulses industry has grown, more progress is needed to increase yields, improve farm gate prices, and increase income from exports.

With more than four million Ethiopian smallholder farmers relying on the production of sesame and chickpea for their livelihood, developing these value chains is an important part of our program.

Under the U.S. Government's \$3.5 billion Feed the Future Initiative, USAID provides more than \$50 million of annual assistance to Ethiopia's agriculture sector.

The Agribusiness Market Development, or AMDe, is the flagship activity under USAID's Feed the Future strategy for Ethiopia and is USAID's largest contribution to the Government of Ethiopia's Agricultural Growth Program. AMDe is working with stakeholders to realize the vision of maximizing commercial returns for Ethiopia's unique varieties of sesame and chickpea to both conventional and value-added international markets.

In order to expand markets and improve quality to meet international standards, USAID assisted efforts have focused on strengthening the sesame and chickpea value chains.

USAID constructed four 5,000 metric ton capacity sesame warehouses in Amhara and Tigray regions.

USAID also facilitated sesame sales of 42 million U.S. dollars at farm gate and sesame exports of 30 million U.S. dollars. This is in part thanks to business linkages resulting from last year's EPOSPEA conference and international trade shows, such as Gulfoods.

To increase productivity and competitiveness, USAID, through its implementing partners, has helped in four major ways:

- First, USAID introduced improved sesame and chickpea seeds, covering more than 18,000 hectares.
- Second, USAID collaborated with the Ministry of Agriculture, ATA, and Becho-Woliso Farmers' Cooperative Union to construct Ethiopia's first fertilizer blending factory. The facility has an annual production capacity of 100,000 metric tons and is expected to benefit 4.5 million smallholder farmers in Oromia alone.
- Third, USAID trained more than 21,000 smallholder farmers on practices to improve quality and reduce post-harvest loss and provided management best practices to 10 farmers' cooperative unions and farmer field demonstration days to popularize the new sesame and chickpea seeds.
- And fourth, USAID facilitated access to loans of 18.3 million U.S. dollars for agricultural value chains focusing on AGP *woredas*.

I hope the exchange of information, ideas and experiences over the next two days will result in more learning, dialogue, and transactions! This kind of opportunity, with representatives across the global oilseed and pulse sectors, is a key to overcome challenges, cultivate partnerships, and expand markets.

We are confident that the Ethiopian Pulses, Oilseeds and Spices Processors-Exporters Association will continue to grow and thrive. By improving yields, and increasing export volume and foreign exchange earnings, we are improving the livelihoods of smallholder farmers and their families across Ethiopia.

Thank you, amesegenalu.