



USAID | **ETHIOPIA**

FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

Ethiopian Pulses, Oilseeds and Spices Processors and Exporters Association Conference

Opening Remarks

Mission Director Dennis Weller

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UNECA Conference Center

Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

It is an honor for me to represent USAID today at the Third International Conference on Pulses, Oilseeds and Spices.

As many of you know, under President Obama's \$3.5 billion Feed-the-Future Initiative, the U.S. Government is one of Ethiopia's largest partners in developing the agriculture sector.

Our projects touch nearly all aspects of Ethiopia's agricultural industry:

- from agribusinesses and business associations like EPOSPEA,
- to the numerous national initiatives of the Ministry of Agriculture,
- the Agriculture Transformation Agency (ATA); and
- the Federal Cooperatives Agency.

Our projects also extend across nine crop and livestock value chains and reach nearly all of Ethiopia's regions, particularly the high potential highlights and the livestock rich pastoralist lowlands.

We are supporting this great event today for the second consecutive year through USAID's Agribusiness Market Development project, which many of you know as AMDe, or pillar in Amharic.

It is one of the flagship projects under USAID Ethiopia's Feed the Future program and represents one of our largest contributions to the Government of Ethiopia's Agricultural Growth Program.

The chickpea and sesame value chains are an important focus of USAID's technical assistance because of Ethiopia's significant potential in these areas.

As the fifth largest producer of chickpea and the fourth largest producer of sesame in the world, Ethiopia holds exciting potential for export growth and is a growing source of foreign exchange.

To help reach this potential, USAID works closely with EPOSPEA as well as the ATA, farmer's cooperative unions, research centers and processors to accomplish four major objective (production, storage, exports, and finance). We're pleased with the results so far. Let me talk a little more in depth about these.

- First objective is to increase productivity and improve quality to meet international market standards. Assisted nearly 3,000 smallholder farmers to obtain 1,200 quintals of high-yielding kabuli chickpea seed in partnership with the ATA and the Debre Zeit Research Center.
- Second, to build capacity in good agriculture practices, post harvest handling, warehouse management and operations (Constructing four warehouses totaling 20,000 MT at a total investment of two million dollars funded by a USAID cost-share agreements and commercial bank loans);
- Third, to facilitate increased exports; Exporting nearly \$17M dollars from Amhara and Tigray regions;

- Finally, to facilitate greater access to credit and investment, including our cost-sharing innovation grants for new equipment and your marketing initiatives. A public-private partnership with Olam International, the ATA and the FCA to build the export capacity of sesame.

Over the next five years, USAID expects our partnership to benefit more than 300,000 chickpea and sesame farmers and increase exports by tens of millions of additional dollars per year for Ethiopia's small-scale farmers.

We have confidence that the Ethiopian Pulses, Oilseeds and Spices Processors and Exporters Association will continue to grow and thrive, culminating in better yields, increased export volume and foreign exchange earnings, thus contributing more to the livelihoods of the smallholder farmers.

I wish you a successful conference. I hope you all gain more insights into the opportunities of your exciting industry that result in new sales opportunities!

Thank you and I look forward to deepening our partnership and achieving even greater achievements in the year ahead.