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FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

## HEAL TB/CHALLENGE TB Transition

Remarks by USAID Ethiopia Mission Director Dennis Weller

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*(as prepared for delivery)*

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*Indemin wallachu!* I am delighted to be here this evening for this wonderful event.

As you've already heard from Dr. Suarez and Michael Kimerling, this event is not really an end to our HEAL TB activity. Rather, it is a transition to our new TB activity, Challenge-TB.

Building upon the accomplishments achieved through our previous TB activities—like HEAL-TB and CARE TB—our partners KNCV and MSH have joined forces to implement Challenge TB.

As you know, USAID has forged successful global partnerships to fight TB, and our partnership with the people in this room is one of the best. Our TB control approach integrates Ethiopia's innovative "Health Sector Transformation Plan" with the U.S. Government's "Global Tuberculosis Strategy" and the World Health Organization's "End TB" Strategy.

Our strategy in Ethiopia focuses on expanding access to TB diagnosis and treatment using WHO-recommended TB control strategies. It also focuses on maximizing use of the health extension program, addressing the challenges of MDR-TB, and enhancing TB/HIV collaborative activities and health system strengthening.

USAID's HEAL TB activity has operated in the Amhara and Oromia regions of Ethiopia since July 2011 and is coming to a close after five successful years of implementation. The activity focused on expanding implementation of new TB laboratory diagnostics and quality assurance systems and establishing a model MDR TB program.

Through HEAL TB, we achieved remarkable results in the fight against TB, MDR-TB and TB/HIV using evidence-based and innovative strategies. I would like to take a minute and highlight some of these.

- A quarter of a million TB cases were detected
- 95 percent of patients who enrolled in treatment were successfully cured
- 24 Multi Drug Resistant (MDR)-TB treatment initiation facilities were established
- And 75 percent of those MDR-TB patients were successfully treated; which is well above the global average of 50 percent!

- Finally, 27,000 Ministry of Health staff trained in all aspects of TB control program implementation

We also built the capacity of providers by covering 100 percent of the functional TB laboratories with external quality assurance services.

We could not have achieved these results had it not been for our strong partnership and collaboration with the Ministry of Health and regional health bureaus. I would like to commend MSH and their partners who tirelessly worked to register these favorable results.

However, despite the tremendous effort and favorable results, Ethiopia is still a high burden country for TB, TB/HIV, and MDR-TB. Low case notification rates, the emergence of MDR/XDR-TB, and the HIV/AIDS epidemic highlight the critical challenges to defeating TB in Ethiopia. To address these challenges, a comprehensive and concerted effort is still required.

That brings me to the second reason of our celebration today; the launch of Challenge-TB. The activity will expand support to the Ministry of Health at national and regional levels through its TB program activities. Challenge-TB will sustain the gains of HEAL-TB in the Amhara and Oromia regions, while also expanding to the Benishangul, Gambella, SNNP and Tigray regions, as well as Addis Ababa and Dire Dawa. Implementation will focus on meeting the 2020 “End-TB” targets and strategic objectives set by the Ministry of Health.

In addition, our TB interventions will focus on improving quality, establishing centers of excellence for MDR/XDR-TB diagnosis, and managing and ensuring that there are well-trained staff to face the remaining challenges.

On behalf of USAID, I am delighted to officially transition from our successful HEAL TB activity to our Challenge TB activity. These TB activities demonstrate USAID’s support and continued commitment to the people and the Government of Ethiopia as we all work together end TB.

I would like to thank the Ministry of Health for the spirit of partnership and unreserved support extended to our implementing partners as we jointly continue our efforts to end TB in Ethiopia.

*Amasagenalehu* and thank you very much!