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FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

Maize Alliance Purchase for Progress

Memorandum of Understanding Signing Ceremony

Remarks by Mission Director Dennis Weller

August 27, 2013

Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

It is a pleasure to be here today with you as we come together to sign an agreement to leverage resources that will assist smallholder farmers and their families. USAID is pleased to be part of this partnership, as we believe it offers a unique opportunity to help smallholder producers increase their market opportunities that will result in an enabling environment for improved production to a growing market.

The Memorandum of Understanding we are about to sign is an indication of the significance of our partnership and supports the enormous potential the World Food Program's Purchase for Progress program will have on improving the incomes of smallholder farmers in Ethiopia. The World Food Program's commitment to help Ethiopian smallholders improve their production and income potential is commendable and I am delighted to join you as a development partner in fighting poverty and food insecurity.

Under President Obama's \$3.5 billion global Feed-the-Future Initiative, USAID is the principal bilateral supporter of Ethiopia's agriculture sector and the Ministry of Agriculture's Agricultural Growth Program. Our 140 million dollar investment over five years in the Agricultural Growth Program is focused on developing the agribusinesses and markets of nine targeted value chains. USAID programs are working with the Ministry of Agriculture to improve productivity, reduce post-harvest losses and link smallholders to markets.

Because maize is such a critical staple crop in the Agricultural Growth Program for Ethiopia and

the region, USAID is investing significant resources in Ethiopia's agricultural research centers and farmer's cooperative unions on multiplication of high yielding varieties, postharvest loss and marketing.

The purpose of Purchase for Progress is to bring demand closer to producers and connect smallholder maize farmers to supply chain partners. USAID Ethiopia's assistance will connect more than 500,000 smallholder maize farmers to sell between six and 10 million dollars in value every year over the period of five years.

In closing, I wish to thank the Agricultural Transformation Agency and World Food Program for creative development through the Purchase for Progress program. This program not only helps farmers, but it will be one of the tools to help transform agriculture in Ethiopia.

I wish to thank the Federal Ministry of Agriculture, World Food Program, Agricultural Transformation Agency, Federal Cooperative Agency and the regions for your efforts to improve the income and livelihood of smallholder maize farmers in Ethiopia.

Finally, I would like to thank the technical staffs from each of these agencies as well as from USAID, ACDI/VOCA, Technoserve and the three regional bureaus. Without your commitment and flexibility to work together as a team, this would not have been possible.