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FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

REAAP-REVIVE Launch

Remarks by USAID Ethiopia Mission Director Dennis Weller

March 18, 2015

Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

Good afternoon, everyone. I am pleased to represent the U.S. Agency for International Development and the American people today in launching not one, but two investments in resilience. I also wish to acknowledge Matt Davis, the country director for Catholic Relief Services and Walleigne Alemaw, the country representative for Project Concern International, our implementers for these new initiatives.

I especially wish to recognize that these two initiatives are funded by the Global Climate Change Initiative, Feed the Future Initiative and the Office of U.S. Foreign Disaster Assistance through the USAID mission here in Ethiopia, demonstrating that resilience cuts across many sectors.

These two new projects, Resilience through Enhanced Adaptation, Action-learning and Partnerships, or REAAP, and Restoring Vibrant Villages and Environment, or REVIVE, expand our long-enduring partnership with the Government of Ethiopia to build resilience to shocks and disasters.

Natural disasters, climate changes and market shocks can always trigger emergency needs, but recurrent factors within Ethiopia create and increase vulnerability to these extreme events. Land degradation, limited household assets, low levels of farm technology, lack of employment opportunities and population pressure all undermine efforts to maintain sustainable livelihoods in the face of crises.

A focus on resilience—the ability of people, households, communities, countries and systems to mitigate, adapt to, and recover from shocks and stresses—will strengthen development investments and enable sustainable growth. And these two projects will play key roles because there are still pockets of vulnerability.

Through these projects, USAID and Ethiopia's Disaster Risk Management and Food Security Sector Early Warning and Response Directorate will reduce risk, build local resilience to climate change, and facilitate economic growth.

The projects will support the new disaster risk management policy, which will help bring some of the Government of Ethiopia's innovative thinking to the community level.

REAAP and REVIVE are similar in that they both enhance resilience at the community, woreda and zonal levels through a community-managed approach. They both mainstream gender equality and have a robust learning and sharing component. Both projects strengthen community ability to adapt, reduce risk, and improve the ability to withstand shocks and stresses.

Over the next three years, REAAP targets 100 farming, agro-pastoralist, and pastoralist communities and 475,000 people in six vulnerable woredas of East and West Hararghe zones. The communities will design and implement action plans to decrease the risk of climate-related disasters and increase resilience to shocks when they occur.

REVIVE will work toward comparable goals over the same period of time while targeting 620,000 people living in the nine most vulnerable woredas of Bale Zone. As most households in the targeted region derive their livelihoods from activities that are adversely affected by the deterioration of land and water resources, Project Concern interventions will reverse the depletion and its effects and diversify livelihoods to include more adaptive and less climate-sensitive economic activities.

While I hope, of course, that Ethiopia will never face any significant climatic shock or stress, we know from experience that rural communities do face climate change challenges and we must make every effort to ensure that we are more adaptable to possible climate related disasters and shocks in the future.

In closing, when we prepare communities at all levels, we not only save lives today, but also ensure a future for this growing nation. I congratulate everyone here today for your commitment to enhancing resilience to climate change in this country.

Thanks to you, Ethiopia will be ready for the future.