

Press Release



Embassy of the United States of America
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
2016/xx

For further information, call 011-130-7033
<http://ethiopia.usembassy.gov>

THE U.S. AND ETHIOPIAN GOVERNMENTS BREAK GROUND FOR A NEW BLOOD SERVICE CENTER

Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, May 4, 2016 – Ethiopian Minister of Health Dr. Kesetebirhan Admasu and USAID Ethiopia Mission Director Dennis Weller led a groundbreaking ceremony today to kick off construction for the National Blood Transfusion Service Center. The new center will provide the Ministry of Health with additional capacity to receive donations, screen and process blood products, and distribute life-saving products to serve approximately 26 million Ethiopians.

The 5,300 square meter facility will house the administrative headquarters for blood transfusion services, providing a permanent home for offices, training, meetings, and document storage. One of the primary reasons for strengthening and expanding blood transfusion services in Ethiopia is to reduce the prevalence of HIV in the blood supply. The new center will enable the staff to properly screen blood for HIV and other infections after it is collected.

Speaking at the event, Mr. Weller said, “A key reason for improving blood transfusion services in Ethiopia is to reduce the number of maternal deaths. Hemorrhaging continues to be one of the leading causes of maternal mortality in Ethiopia, and many of these deaths can be prevented through blood transfusions.” Weller commended the Ministry of Health’s contributions to the many months of planning, design, and the beginning of the construction of the new National Blood Transfusion Service Center.

The capacity of this facility will enable the ministry to meet more than 25 percent of the World Health Organization’s recommended annual blood collection goals for Ethiopia. Additionally, the center will oversee the distribution of blood products, which will expand access to blood transfusion services throughout rural and urban areas of Ethiopia.

The \$5 million construction cost is funded by the U.S. President’s Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR). USAID is expected to complete construction of the facility in two years.

###