



Pastoralist Areas Resilience Improvement through Market Expansion (PRIME)

'Resilience in Action: Creating Opportunities in Ethiopia's Dry-lands'

Remarks by USAID Ethiopia Representative Gary Robbins

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Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

I am greatly honored to be here today to participate in the 'Resilience in Action: Creating Opportunities in Ethiopia's Dry-lands' event. It is especially timely that USAID's PRIME activity is holding this event now—as the Government of Ethiopia and international donors are currently mobilizing resources to help mitigate the drought situation facing Ethiopia.

Supported by USAID, PRIME is a five-year activity that builds long-term resilience for Ethiopia's pastoralists. PRIME has done much over the past three years to help pastoralists to have the ability to withstand conditions like those they are facing today.

But before I go on, let me provide some context for the U.S. and Ethiopia's partnership in pastoralist's areas and the broader resilience and climate change agenda.

Over the past 10 years, USAID has invested nearly \$100 million in pastoralists' livelihoods programs through three major activities. Our hosts today, the Pastoralist Areas Resilience Improvement through Market Expansion activity, most commonly known as PRIME, are now leading our efforts to help pastoralist families to improve their livelihoods. As you know, droughts are a huge problem for pastoralists and unfortunately—they are also now all too common in the Horn of Africa.

Back when the drought hit in 2011, it served as an impetus for leaders throughout the region to take a longer-term look at how to withstand such shocks. A series of debates took place at the national and regional levels.

Under the leadership of the late Prime Minister Meles, the Inter-Governmental Authority on Development, heads of state and government officials met in Nairobi and agreed to try to bring an end to emergencies caused by drought through an initiative called 'Drought Resilience and Growth in the Horn of Africa.'

This initiative was championed in Ethiopia by the leadership of the Ministry of Agriculture and was also included in the goals outlined in the Government of Ethiopia's Growth and Transformation Plan.

USAID and our development partners have been working closely with the Government of Ethiopia on adaptation to climate change and resilience building by supporting efforts to create long-term economic opportunities in these areas, which can help provide insulation from seasonal conditions.

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Because we all know that no one can stop shocks such as droughts from happening, USAID is committed to working with our partners in countries like Ethiopia to build the capacities of households and communities to absorb, adapt, and transform in the face of shocks and stresses.

USAID has been at the vanguard of international efforts to build resilience to recurrent crises around the world as part and parcel of our development work. With this in mind let me come back to why we are here.

In 2012, the PRIME activity was born out of the belief that global hunger is solvable. It is supported through Feed the Future, the U.S. Government's global hunger and food security initiative, which works hand-in-hand with partner countries to develop their agriculture sectors and break the vicious cycle of poverty and hunger. The PRIME activity is a 57 million dollar effort implemented by Mercy Corps and a consortium of nine international and local organizations, which aims to reach 250,000 pastoral households and enhance their resilience to climate change through market linkages in Ethiopia's dry-land areas.

PRIME works through five main technical components—livestock productivity and competitiveness, natural resource management and climate change adaptation, alternative livelihoods and inclusive finance, nutrition, and learning and knowledge management. PRIME also includes what we call a crisis modifier component to deal with situations like drought as well as an investment and innovation fund.

So far PRIME has recorded some impressive results:

- The establishment and expansion of three micro-finance institutions in the Somali and Afar regions, which are now providing much-needed financial services for rural families
- The application of improved technologies or management practices on over 20,000 hectares
- The rehabilitation of the Haro Bake micro-dam, which now provides water for 15,000 households and their livestock in Oromia
- Six investments in private companies have leveraged 24 million dollars in private sector investments
- The establishment of the first mobile and agent banking service in the Somali Region, which is allowing pastoralists easier access to banking services, including loans and money transfers
- 50,000 additional people now have access to finance
- 70,000 households have been reached with nutrition activities targeted at improving household nutrition security
- More than 1,700 jobs have been created in pastoralist areas
- In 2015 alone, over 7.7 million dollars in value of increased sales for beneficiaries in livestock value chains, including dairy

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- 160,000 households now have access to veterinary medicine helping to keep their livestock healthy

These are just some of the achievements of PRIME—I'm sure you learned about others while talking to all of the experts here today.

Most importantly, PRIME's market systems approach, which facilitates and supports, rather than just providing goods/services directly, helps ensure that successes are achieved and owned by the benefiting communities. This makes these successes sustainable, and I am confident that their impact will continue long into the future.

Even now, in the face of drought conditions such as those we are currently experiencing in Afar and Sitti, we can see that households and communities are now better equipped to cope than they were just a few short years ago.

Nonetheless, to ensure that PRIME's development gains do not lose momentum, the project team has intensified its activities in Sitti and Afar, through commercial destocking (which helps pastoralists to sell the livestock which they will not be able to feed), the promotion of private veterinary services and by activating its crisis modifier for fodder distribution to the most vulnerable households.

As you can see, PRIME is a unique example of a resilience activity, which is flexible and adaptive to respond to the growth of pastoralist ecosystems while anticipating emergencies such as the current drought.

In the coming years, the team will continue to work with the federal and regional government agencies, implementing partners as well as the private sector and communities to achieve further resilience to climate change in Ethiopia's dry-lands.

As you continue implementation, USAID is committed to working with you all to ensure that the impact of this project the benefits for our pastoralist friends continue long into the future.

Thank you.