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ETHIOPIA FACT SHEET

WATER, SANITATION AND HYGIENE

Agricultural activity is by far the largest consumer of water in Ethiopia. An estimated 93 percent of all surface water and groundwater is for agricultural use, much higher than the global average of 70 percent. While Ethiopia has relatively abundant water resources, it is considered ‘water stressed’ due to rapid population growth over the last decade. Natural variability in rainfall patterns and distribution, punctuated by recurring droughts, has thrust many regions of the country into conditions of extreme water scarcity, degraded water quality and chronic food insecurity. At the other extreme, flooding is a significant problem in some parts of Ethiopia. Compounding the unpredictable nature of the country’s rainfall is the shortage of existing water related infrastructure.

Ethiopia has made remarkable strides in ensuring access to safe drinking water over the past 20 years, but still faces challenges in overall water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) coverage. Inadequate sanitation services and poor hygiene practices negatively impact health and nutrition, and diarrheal disease is one of the leading causes of under-five mortality in Ethiopia.

In partnership with the Government of Ethiopia, USAID aims to increase access to safe water supply and basic sanitation in rural and urban areas, and encourages greater investments towards water-related infrastructure. USAID investments support the construction and rehabilitation of critical drinking water sources in rural areas of Ethiopia where water is scarce, where over the past five years, we have connected over 200,000 Ethiopians to sustainable sources of safe drinking water.

To improve sanitation and hygiene, USAID initiatives improve infrastructure, as well as enhance access to better quality sanitation and hygiene products and services. In addition, USAID programs promote healthy behaviors and educate families and communities in using safe sanitation and hygiene practices in the home to prevent illness and disease.

PHOTO: MICHAEL TEWELDEUSAID LOWLAND WASH

We also support the Government of Ethiopia's efforts by incorporating water, sanitation and hygiene activities into its health, education, humanitarian assistance and democracy and governance programs, and water resources management into its agriculture and food security activities.

KEY ACTIVITIES

- **The USAID Lowland WASH project** expands access to sustainable sources of safe drinking water by building and rehabilitating infrastructure in rural areas, while also expanding sustainable water use for agriculture. The project also expands access to better sanitation products and services, and promotes proper hygiene behaviors.
- **USAID's Transform WASH project** promotes the development and the marketing of WASH products in areas where residents have irregular access to water and sanitary goods and services. The activity takes an innovative, market-led approach to creating effective, consumer-centric products and services which are suitable for the conditions in which they live. Consumers use the products to improve their health, thereby reducing malnutrition and illness, particularly among women and children. Transform WASH also develops robust supply chains which provide economic opportunities to women and youth.
- **USAID's Feed the Future Growth through Nutrition** project uses sustainable, comprehensive, and coordinated interventions to improve the nutritional status of women and young children. Focuses on strengthening nutrition programs and policy, health care services, community-oriented nutrition and livelihood care and practices, access to clean water, and a rigorous learning agenda.
- Through **USAID's Development Food Security Activity** and the **Feed the Future Livelihoods for Resilience project**, and support to Ethiopia's **Productive Safety Net Program**, we invest in construction and rehabilitation of potable water sources and sanitation facilities through public works activities. These activities also promote hygiene education, provide water-harvesting technologies to smallholder farmers, and promote watershed management activities.