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FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

Shashemane Farm Service Center Opening

Remarks by USAID Mission Director Dennis Weller

June 12, 2014

Shashemane, Ethiopia

Attam bultannii

It is a pleasure for me to be here today to officially open the Shashemane Farm Service Center, one of six centers opened through USAID's Commercial Farm Service Program.

The role of agriculture in Ethiopia is essential to achieving national goals to maintain high annual growth. In pursuit of the Growth and Transformation Plan (GTP), the government committed to a number of agriculture initiatives including:

- the African Union's Comprehensive African Agriculture Development Program to provide a secure supply of food for families, communities and countries and to make exports more profitable;
- the Agricultural Growth Program to increase agricultural productivity and market access for key crop and livestock products with increased participation of women and youth; and most recently,
- the New Alliance for Food Security and Nutrition to bring private sector technology and know-how to achieve sustained agricultural growth and raise people out of poverty.

With these commitments come ambitious objectives for Ethiopian agriculture. At USAID, we are

optimistic about the future of Ethiopia's agriculture sector and its perspective on the important role of access to quality production inputs in agricultural growth.

The input sector influences farmers' access to and use of productivity enhancing high quality seeds, fertilizer, plant protection products, tools and equipment, and veterinary services and supplies.

To address the challenges in accessing improved inputs and improving the effectiveness of the agricultural sector, USAID's Commercial Farm Service Program developed a network of six locally-owned, private retail input supply and farm service businesses in the Oromia Region.

These farm service centers are now providing increased access to high-quality, reasonably priced inputs, training, technical advice and output market linkages for more than 30,000 smallholder farmers. These centers not only provide quality inputs, but also complement them with professional consultations and training by technical experts including agronomists and veterinarians striving to solve challenges of smallholder farmers in-terms of shortage of both supply and skills.

On behalf of USAID, I am proud to be part of this important event today, not only because it is the last of the six centers planned under this program, but because it is owned by Wezero Adanech Zewdie, a dynamic women entrepreneur.

Through the application of such quality inputs made available through this new farm service center, farmers in Shashemane and the surrounding area can achieve significantly higher productivity, contributing directly to income generation and household food security.

I congratulate Wezero Adanech and the CNFA staff, for your hard work that resulted in this opening today. I would also like to extend my thanks to our other partners of the farm service centers including the Federal Ministry of Agriculture, Oromia Bureau of Agriculture, Zonal and Woreda level government stakeholders and various private sector input supply companies. Your collaboration is essential and rooted in the same objective of alleviating poverty and

improving livelihoods of the Ethiopian people.

I hope this is not the last farm service center, but the sixth among many in the future that will provide much needed services to help transform the lives and livelihoods of many Ethiopian farmers.

Please accept my sincere congratulations for your efforts thus far and my best wishes for the success of the Shashemane Farm Service Center. On behalf of the U.S. Government and the American people, we are pleased and gratified to make this effort possible.

Thank you, galatooma, nagaan olaa.