



**USAID**  
FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

**Feed the Future Ethiopia Commercial Farm Services Project  
Bako Farm Service Center Opening  
USAID Ethiopia Representative Stephen Morin  
May 12, 2017  
(as prepared for delivery)**

*Akam bultan.* It is a pleasure for me to be here today on behalf of USAID to officially open the Bako Farm Service Center, the first of 20 centers that will open through our Feed the Future Ethiopia Commercial Farm Service Project.

Meeting Ethiopia's comprehensive and ambitious development agenda requires recognition of the critical importance of agriculture in the economy. However, access to quality agricultural supplies at affordable prices at the right time of the season is a significant challenge. An effective supply system is critical to a healthy and growing agriculture sector. An efficient system means farmers have access to high quality seeds, fertilizer, plant protection products, tools and equipment, veterinary services and supplies, as well as training and technical advice, which together, can dramatically increase farmers' productivity.

Our Commercial Farm Services Project, a pilot project implemented by CNFA from 2012 to 2014, established six locally-owned, private retail farm service businesses in the Oromia Region. The centers already serve more than 30,000 farmers; have leveraged more than \$3.2 million in new private sector investments and directly created more than 50 jobs. With the success of the pilot effort, we launched this expansion project with the ATA to open 20 additional farm service centers throughout Ethiopia.

Not only is the Bako Farm Service Center the first of the 20 centers to open, it also has the distinction of being owned by a woman. Addee Alemitu Hordora is a dynamic entrepreneur whose dream is to support smallholder farmers and improve their lives by helping to improve their productivity. Her center is expected to impact the lives of more than 10,000 smallholder farmers in Bako and neighboring *woredas* each year, and it has already created eight new jobs. This center is not only providing quality supplies, but also professional consultations and training by technical experts including agronomists and veterinarians.

I would like to applaud Addee Alemitu and the staffs of ATA and CNFA for all of the hard work that went into making this opening event, and the center, a success. I would also like to extend my thanks to other partners of the farm service centers including the Ministry of Agriculture and Natural Resources, the Oromia Bureau of Agriculture, zonal- and *woreda*-level government stakeholders and various private sector supply companies.

On behalf of the U.S. Government and the American people, I am very pleased and thankful that we could help make this effort possible. Please accept my sincere congratulations for your efforts thus far

and my best wishes for the success of this business and I look forward to seeing increased productivity from area farmers who take advantage of the supplies and services available here.

*Galatoma*