



OPENING REMARKS BY DENNIS WELLER
Mission Director

Launch of the Land Administration to Nurture Development Program: LAND
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Excellency Ato Sileshi Getahun, State Minister of Agriculture
Representatives of regional land administration agencies and the Ethiopia Mapping Agency
Representatives of Haromaya and Bahir Dar Universities

It is an honor and a pleasure to be here to mark another milestone in USAID collaboration with the Ministry of Agriculture in support of Ethiopia's land administration and land tenure.

USAID under the US Feed the Future Initiative supports the Government of Ethiopia's Agricultural Growth Program with the goals of raising agricultural productivity, improving income earning opportunities for women and the rural poor, and spurring growth in rural areas. The attainment of these goals is to a very large extent, dependent upon the development of policies and systems that encourage resiliency and adaptation to climate changes, private-sector participation and investment, good and transparent governance, and none of these can happen without secure land tenure and property rights.

The issue of land tenure and property rights is a cornerstone for Ethiopia's growth and transformation plan as it is linked to peace and good governance, to agricultural productivity and food security, and to conservation and best uses of natural resources. Land governance and land tenure is of great importance to the majority of Ethiopians who reside and farm around the country, and especially to women who are heads of households.

The Government of Ethiopia and USAID implemented two land tenure and administration programs from 2005 to earlier this year. These projects brought tangible results by improving the legal framework for rural land administration; by demonstrating cost effective, modern surveying methods for rural land mapping; by increasing the awareness of multiple stakeholders about rural land administration and land use laws and regulations; and by strengthening the institutional capacities of the federal and regional land administration agencies. Over the last eight years, these two USAID projects helped land administration institutions of Amhara, Oromia, SNNP and Tigray regions to survey over a million parcels and to prepare maps leading to the certification of about 200,000 parcels of land.

At USAID, we are pleased and proud that our support helped lay the groundwork for the overall land administration program of the country. With the work done in land surveying, registration and certification, regions and woredas have been encouraged to invest in and scale up land administration activities. Best practices learned from these projects were used by the Government to craft a national Land Administration and Land Use Development Program (LALUDEP). The Government of Ethiopia has also committed to extend land use certificates to



farmers in the Agricultural Growth Program woredas, among others, to further the shared objectives of the G8 New Alliance for Food Security and Nutrition in Ethiopia.

Now USAID in consultation with the Government of Ethiopia has designed and funded a third consecutive program called Land Administration to Nurture Development (LAND). In developing this program, USAID conducted extensive consultations with regional and federal level land administration officials, academia, researchers and other partners—many of whom are here today.

LAND will work at the national and regional levels of government to further deepen the legal and regulatory framework related to land tenure and property rights and to expand capacity building for land administration and land use officials. As a complementary activity, the program will work with Ethiopian universities to train government officials and professionals who are needed to create a more robust land governance sector and also engage in research and policy analysis of land issues. In addition, LAND will clarify and strengthen management and use of communal land rights for pastoralists and agro-pastoral communities. This activity will help to improve governance at the local level by providing communities with decision making rights over their natural assets—land, water and other natural resources—so often the source of conflict.

With the US Feed the Future Initiative providing US\$11 million, USAID's LAND program will work with Ethiopian federal and regional government partners in six regions, and with universities, notably, Haromaya and Bahir Dar, over the next five years. This two-day meeting provides a great opportunity to launch LAND operations in consultation with all stakeholders. I wish you productive and stimulating sessions and discussions.

In closing let me reiterate that transparent and well-planned administration of land is critical to investments in food production, to equitable growth in the agriculture sector, to conservation of natural resources, and, last but not least, to peace and progress for the majority of Ethiopian women and men who reside and work in rural areas. Ethiopia is fortunate to have an abundance of land and natural resources that need to be developed judiciously, equitably, and sustainably to foster development for generations to come. On behalf of the American people, USAID is proud to join with the Ministry of Agriculture and all of you in the launch of LAND.

Thank you.