

**Ethiopia Sustainable Agribusiness Incubator Graduation and Dairy  
Innovation Fund Award Ceremony**  
**Remarks by U.S. Ambassador to Ethiopia Patricia Haslach**  
**March 16, 2015**  
**Addis Ababa, Ethiopia**  
*(As prepared for delivery)*

*In-de-men a-de-ra-chu!* Good Morning! I would like to thank you all for being here this morning for this two-part ceremony. The first part is to celebrate the success of innovative entrepreneurs and the second is to award grants to dairy business entrepreneurs.

I especially want to thank His Excellency Dr. Gebreegzabher from the Ministry of Agriculture for his active support of the USAID-supported Ethiopia Sustainable Agribusiness Incubator project. He chairs the steering committee for the Dairy Innovation Fund and has invested his valuable time and expertise into the project, demonstrating the Ethiopian government's continued strong support for private sector development in the livestock sector.

I also want to welcome Minister Seán Sherlock T.D., Ireland's Minister of State for Development, Trade Promotion and North-South Cooperation to Ethiopia. We are honored to have you participate in this event during your visit. And of course, Ambassador O'Hara, without your leadership, the collaboration between the United States and Ireland last July to create the new Dairy Innovation Fund would not have been possible.

Today, we are here to commend the 14 entrepreneurs who have created new companies or introduced innovative ideas to already existing enterprises. Through their efforts, they have addressed some of the agriculture sector's challenges and created employment opportunities. During the morning break, these entrepreneurs will be available at their booths to describe how their businesses are now armed to help transform Ethiopia.

I would like to extend my congratulations to these entrepreneurs who are graduating from the Ethiopia Sustainable Agribusiness Incubator project today. However, the real work is only beginning and the challenge is to continue to grow. This USAID project has helped you, the entrepreneurs, to stand on your feet. It is now up to you to sustain your accomplishment and become leading examples and mentors for future innovative businesses.

Today's graduates are shining examples of the entrepreneurial spirit that is essential for Ethiopia to achieve its goals under the Growth and Transformation Plan.

We are all here today because we believe in an innovative and prosperous Ethiopia. Projects like the Ethiopia Sustainable Agribusiness Incubator demonstrate the potential of Ethiopian entrepreneurs to transform communities and individual lives.

And that brings us to the second part of today's celebration. Last July, Ambassador O'Hara and I signed an agreement in this very hotel to establish the Dairy Innovation Fund.

And this morning, 18 entrepreneurs will receive a grant through the fund, but I will let Minister Sherlock tell you more about this during his remarks.

For over two years, Precise Consult International has implemented the agribusiness incubator program that is now growing stronger with the new support from Irish Aid. Through President Obama's Feed the Future Initiative, the United States will continue to support the food security, nutrition and agribusiness development through its existing projects and by leveraging collaboration with other donor agencies and stakeholders.

We look to continue our excellent partnership with the Government of Ireland and the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia. To the graduates and the new grantees, again, congratulations!

Now, I would like to invite Henok Assefa, chief of party for the Ethiopia Sustainable Agribusiness Incubator project, to join me in handing out certificates to the first Ethiopia Sustainable Agribusiness Incubator graduates.