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FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

Gubadley Water Point

Remarks by USAID Mission Director Dennis Weller

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Jijiga, Somali Region, Ethiopia

I am pleased to be back to the Somali Region, particularly in Gubadley village, to open this newly constructed water facility.

On several occasions, the Somali Regional Government has stated clearly that water is priority number one, priority number two, and even priority number three. The American people, through USAID, are helping the Somali Regional State achieve their aspiration of availing water to its own people.

In September 2011, USAID launched its WATER project, one of USAID's key projects to strengthen resiliency in drought-prone regions of Ethiopia to improve health, hygiene, and livelihoods.

Our implementing partner, the International Rescue Committee, has drilled and constructed nine productive borehole-based water supply systems and rehabilitated another 12 water schemes in the Somali Region—providing a safe and sustainable water supply for more than 157,000 people.

By the end of 2015, the project will reach an additional 28,000 people in the region through six additional borehole-based schemes in the Fafen and Jerer valleys.

To accomplish this, USAID and the IRC have worked closely with Radar Technologies International to locate the most promising drilling sites based on remote sensing technologies piloted by the U.S. Geological Survey. This partnership has proven to be very fruitful.

The new borehole-based water scheme here in Gubadley is providing a year-round access to a safe water supply for more than 2,000 community members.

Before this borehole was drilled, community members collected water from unprotected rivers used by humans and animals. Drinking contaminated water can cause illness, with children and the elderly being the most vulnerable. However, the only other option was to walk long distances to collect clean water from the well in a neighboring kebele.

Now, for the first time, Gubadley has its own safe and sustainable water supply within easy walking distance.

In addition, the Gubadley borehole is also one of four pilot sites under the USAID WATER project to install solar-powered pumps. This is relatively new equipment being tested in the Somali Region, and holds great potential as a clean, sustainable technology with very low operational costs.

In Gubadley, as in all of the other sites benefitting from the USAID project, providing safe and sustainable water goes hand-in-hand with sanitation and hygiene education. The project promotes the use of latrines and safe hygiene practices, and provides knowledge to improve natural resource management. This action is vital for preventing rangeland degradation.

I would like to thank the Somali Regional Government for the leadership and assistance extended to this project.

By means of water, we give life to everything.

Thank you and **me-HAD SEN-eed** (thank you in Somali).