

Press Release



Embassy of the United States of America
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American Farmers Offer Assistance to Ethiopia's Agriculture Sector

125 Volunteers to Work with Ethiopian Smallholder Farmers

Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, April 1, 2014. USAID Ethiopia Mission Director Dennis Weller announced that Catholic Relief Services (CRS) is joining the Farmer-to-Farmer (F2F) program at an event in Addis Ababa where one of the first new volunteers was introduced. The F2F program connects farmers in the United States with their counterparts in East Africa for training and technical assistance. In addition to Ethiopia, the CRS program will include volunteer assignments in Tanzania, Uganda, and Kenya.

With support from the government of the United States, through the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), CRS will place approximately 125 U.S. volunteers with farmer groups and organizations that assist local farmers in Ethiopia. The first CRS-led F2F project in Ethiopia aims to bring improvements in grains production and marketing. F2F will later target the horticulture value chains as well as others. This is the first time CRS has managed the F2F program which has been in existence for 28 years. Through the program, CRS will build on fifty years of experience supporting the development of more prosperous and resilient agricultural livelihoods for Ethiopia's smallholder farmers.

USAID Mission Director Weller, who noted he started his career as a farmer, explained the significance of the exchange activity: "The Farmer-to-Farmer program is a unique part of USAID's [Feed the Future Initiative](#) in Ethiopia in its ability to engage American farmers, agricultural business people, and educators, and link them directly with their Ethiopian counterparts. The fruits of this exchange are increased productivity and incomes, and a greater understanding of how we live and work in different settings that is mutually beneficial to Americans and to Ethiopians."

In East Africa, CRS' plans to develop and fulfill 500 volunteer assignments over the five-year life of the program, focusing on agriculture, food security and nutrition. U.S. volunteers will travel to East Africa for approximately 2-4 weeks, their expenses covered by a grant from USAID.

"One thing we are certain of is that this program will be beneficial not just to farmers in East Africa, but also to the volunteers from America," Bruce White, CRS director for the F2F Program, said. "It's going to make the world a little bit closer for everyone involved."

