

Press Release



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USAID Launches 500 Million Birr Activity on World Water Day to Boost Ethiopia's One WASH National Program

USAID Lowland WASH water interventions will reach 225,000 people and sanitation interventions will reach 750,000

Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, March 22, 2016 - On World Water Day, the U.S. Government, through the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), launched **USAID Lowland WASH**, a new water, sanitation and hygiene activity, to support the Government of Ethiopia's One WASH National Program in pastoral areas of Afar, Somali, and Southern Nations, Nationalities and Peoples regions. The new activity will increase the availability of improved sustainable drinking water sources, increase access to better sanitation products and services, catalyze enhanced sanitation and hygiene behaviors, and build capacity for enhanced knowledge and data management, while also expanding sustainable water use for agriculture.

In the near term, the activity will help respond to the current drought, while working to build long-term resilience by helping communities to better manage and use their water resources. Given the magnitude of the current drought, the activity will prioritize well rehabilitation in acutely affected *kebeles* (communities).

Ethiopia has made dramatic strides over the last 15 years to increase access to improved water and sanitation. In fact, Ethiopia achieved the largest decrease in the proportion of its population practicing open defecation globally, a reduction more than five times greater than the regional average over the same period.

Speaking ahead of the launch, Christian Holmes, Global Water Coordinator for USAID, highlighted the importance of the work the new activity will undertake, "Safe water and sanitation is what enables a child to grow, learn, and rise out of poverty. It is what keeps communities healthy."

USAID's lead partner, AECOM International Development, will implement the \$23.8 million dollar activity in cooperation with CARE USA and the International Rescue Committee.
