

**JESH and Hello Cash Launch**  
**U.S. Ambassador to Ethiopia Patricia Haslach**  
**February 25, 2016**  
**Fafaan Village, Somali Regional State**  
*(as prepared for delivery)*

I am honored to be here today to witness these two historic launches.

The United States Government, through USAID, has been a long-term development partner of the Somali Region with investments in livestock and pastoral development, water access, vocational education and humanitarian assistance. Our support to the Jijiga Export Slaughter House (JESH) and HelloCash builds on this partnership.

Let me start with our hosts JESH: The opening of JESH is really a huge development for the livestock sector in this region. Previously, the nearest export-standard slaughter houses were located hundreds of miles from the primary source of animals here in the Somali Region. Now, with JESH opening, there is a slaughter house right here which will soon provide a reliable, year-round market for 250,000 households to sell their livestock.

JESH private investors put up \$6 million of their own capital to build this facility. Through President Obama's Feed the Future initiative, the United States provided an additional \$1.5 million to purchase equipment, including cold-chain facilities, and to provide technical assistance to ensure JESH would be able to meet *halal* requirements and export standards. In addition, the Somali Regional State has been a strong supporter of this initiative providing road access and electricity connections worth \$350,000.

We can all be proud that meat from the Somali Region will soon be exported directly from here to the Middle East, Asia and other locations in Africa, and I encourage all stakeholders including the private sector, government and the pastoral community to support JESH and similar ventures which can have such a positive impact on the economic development of Somali Region.

This partnership with JESH also highlights USAID's efforts to support resilience to climate-related shocks. As the efforts to respond to the current drought intensify over the coming months, JESH can potentially become a partner in buying excess livestock from vulnerable families—giving families the cash needed to provide for their children and to keep their core livestock fed.

The important work that our partner Mercy Corps is doing through USAID's Pastoralist Resilience Improvement through Market Expansion (PRIME) activity is increasing the capacities of households, communities and institutions to be more resilient during the current drought and to be even better prepared for future shocks.

Now, let me move on to HelloCash: To facilitate livestock trade, it is important to have finance available. As such, I think it is very fitting that, together with the Somali Micro Finance Institution and BelCash, we are also launching the first commercial mobile and agent banking service. I should mention here that USAID and its partner Mercy Corps helped with the establishment of the Somali Micro Finance Institution over five years ago.

HelloCash offers saving options, money transfers and mobile-based payments for transactions of goods and services. This new financial service for the Somali Region is an exciting innovation which will support entrepreneurship and increased incomes for tens of thousands of households. As we speak, over 300 people are opening mobile bank accounts each day, and already 55,000 individuals have opened HelloCash accounts with Somali Micro Finance Institution.

Over the next three years, the new service expects to have 780,000 mobile banking users with projected transactions of \$12 million annually through loans, savings, and money transfer services. HelloCash will also create employment opportunities for at least 2,000 households as agents, marketers, and service providers.

USAID provided \$350,000 to support the expansion of HelloCash services to hard-to-reach areas. Somali Micro-Finance Institute is investing over 3 million dollars, while the Belcash investment amounts to 1.8 million dollars.

The innovative investments we are marking today demonstrate how the Feed the Future initiative is working to leverage the significant technical expertise and financial resources of the private sector to help build household resilience. The importance of transformational partnerships like these—as a new model for development cooperation—was highlighted by President Obama during his visit to Ethiopia last summer.

JESH and HelloCash also demonstrate the innovation, creativity and focus of the people of Somali Region. I can say on behalf of the United States Government that we are proud to partner with you. Thank you again, President Abdi Mohamud Omar for your warm hospitality today.