



**USAID**  
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**ETHIOPIA**

**Guts Agro Chickpea Product Launch Event**  
**Remarks by USAID Official Gary Robbins**  
**April 10, 2014**  
**Yod Abyssinia Bole Cultural Restaurant**  
**Addis Ababa, Ethiopia**

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I am happy to be here today on behalf of the U.S. Government, to celebrate the accomplishments of Guts Agro Industry and their new and innovative chickpea products.

In Ethiopia, chickpea is a very important crop for both income and nutrition with more than 800,000 smallholder farmers producing over 322,000 metric tons making it the sixth highest in the world and first in Africa.

That is why the U.S. Government, through its Feed the Future Initiative, is one of Ethiopia's largest partners in developing the agriculture sector, a fundamental cornerstone of the Ethiopian economy.

In support of the U.S. Feed the Future program to end hunger and malnutrition, in 2012, donors, governments, and private sector companies joined together to sign the New Alliance for Food Security and Nutrition, an agreement that commits all three entities to invest to improve food security and nutrition in their respective countries. Guts Agro is a signatory under the New Alliance for Food Security & Nutrition, and one of the first to complete its commitment.

USAID's Agricultural Growth Program-Agribusiness Market Development (AMDe) activity, funded by the U.S. Feed the Future initiative, works in six value chains to provide increased income to over one million smallholder farmers. I want to thank them for their work on the Guts Agro chickpea project we celebrate today.

I also want to acknowledge our partners in this project and so many others across the agriculture sector: the ministries of trade and agriculture, the farmers' cooperative unions whose members grow the chickpeas, government agencies like the Agricultural Transformation Agency and the Federal Cooperative Agency, and the private agribusinesses, such as Guts Agro Industry.

USAID assisted Guts Agro Industry with market linkages, innovation grants and technical assistance to develop three new nutritious chickpea products, including two whose launch the commercial market we are celebrating today:

A new ready to cook chickpea shiro powder branded as "*Yanet Shiro*"; and dry roasted chickpea snacks, or *kolo*, which are the first of its kind to be produced in Ethiopia.

There is a third product, that will be launched in the future, with support from the PepsiCo Foundation, which is a chickpea-based Ready-to-use-Supplementary food (RUSF) that was successfully developed for the World Food Program to use for malnourished infants and children between 6 and 59 months of age.

But what is perhaps most significant about this public-private partnership with Guts Agro is that under a USAID facilitated agreement with chickpea producers, Guts Agro Industry sourced 4,000 metric tons of local chickpea for

processing from 52,000 smallholder farmers, mainly from Becho Woliso, Lome Adama, and Erer cooperative unions. Growing domestic and export markets for agriculture, improving the livelihoods of small holder farmers, and, so, the food security and wellbeing of their families and communities are the shared objectives of this collaboration.

I am also proud to say that USAID assisted the chickpea farmers to multiply and produce the improved Kabuli variety and farmers have gained up to 100 percent yield increases and higher market value as a result.

We expect the new products processed and packaged by Guts Agro to set a trend in value addition for farm produce, increased exports, and contribute to the growth of jobs related to agriculture.

I look forward to enjoying these delicious and nutritious products as well as their market success, which will result in a greater demand for chickpea in Ethiopia and positively impact smallholder chickpea farmers and all Ethiopians.