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**Closeout of Systems for Improved Access to Pharmaceuticals and Services**

**Remarks by USAID Representative BethAnne Moskov**

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*(as prepared for delivery)*

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*Good evening and indemin ameshachu!*

It is wonderful to join you all this evening as we celebrate the accomplishments of a USAID activity that is ending after five years—the Systems for Improved Access to Pharmaceuticals and Services activity.

As most of you know, in the last ten years, Ethiopia has made substantial progress in addressing key public health challenges including maternal and child health, HIV/AIDS and malaria. However, inappropriate use of medicines and wasted resources that result in poor patient outcomes and adverse drug reactions continued to be a challenge.

To address these challenges, we focused on issues of efficiency, accountability, transparency and quality of services at health facilities nationwide through this activity.

With our implementing partner Management Sciences for Health, we focused on improving access to quality pharmaceutical services that ensure the safe, appropriate and cost-effective use of medicines to achieve better health outcomes for Ethiopians.

In addition, we introduced an innovative and patient-centered approach that ultimately resulted in a continuous supply of essential medicines, optimal budget use, and improved pharmacy services. These services transformed the delivery of pharmaceutical services at health institutions and the Ministry of Health is implementing the system in all public health facilities nationwide. Furthermore, to address the lack of skills and high turnover, we trained nearly 8,000 pharmaceutical personnel.

Through the activity, our coordination with the Ministry of Health and other development partners has resulted in two major accomplishments. One, we strengthened the health systems of Ethiopia by introducing innovative approaches, technologies and building capacity of health professionals. And two, we increased access to essential drugs, health commodities and pharmaceutical services.

In the words of Dagnachew Hailemariam, a pharmacist at Bishoftu General Hospital, “We have come a long way. We have our own drug list now...The system is computerized, all the information we need is at our fingertips, whereas a few years before, we followed a tiresome and unreliable system of counting and tracking bin cards and prescription information manually.”

In conclusion, USAID’s Systems for Improved Access to Pharmaceuticals activity has significantly improved pharmaceutical governance and service delivery, provided pharmacy data for decision making, and optimized the use of financial resources.

Moving forward, the USAID Global Health Supply Chain Procurement and Supply Management activity will lead pharmacy services and related technical assistance in collaboration with other related USAID activities.

I would like to thank the Ministry of Health; the Food, Medicines and Health Care Administration and Control Authority; the Pharmaceutical Fund and Supply Agency; regional health bureaus; and other stakeholders for the spirit of partnership and unreserved support extended to our implementing partner Management Sciences for Health. Let us continue our efforts to build a stronger health system in Ethiopia.

Thank you very much, *ama-se-ge-na-lew!*