



PRESS RELEASE

New USAID-Ethiopian Airlines Partnership to Source Food from Local Farmers for In-Flight Meals

Addis Ababa, October 16, 2020 - Today, Ethiopian Airlines and the United States announced a new partnership agreement that will enable the nation's flagship carrier to source locally grown produce and ingredients for preparing in-flight meals for global passengers.

Ethiopian Airlines Group CEO Mr. Tewolde GebreMariam and U.S. Ambassador Michael Raynor signed a memorandum of understanding in which the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) will provide Ethiopian farmers and food producers technical assistance and access to financing in order to ensure they are able to meet the airlines' standards of quality and volume to serve its customers. These new business linkages will help farmers and local agribusinesses reach a prominent new market and increase their revenue streams – with annual sales as high as \$10 million in total – while providing Ethiopian Airlines farm-fresh ingredients sourced directly from Ethiopia, reducing the need for foreign suppliers' processed foods for their catering services.

USAID support will help Ethiopian Airlines identify local suppliers for the list of catering materials the airline might potentially require, as well as provide support to farmer cooperative unions, youth groups, women groups and other local agriculture businesses to enable them to meet production requirements. A U.S. government loan facility also will expand access to financing for local companies, farmer cooperative unions, and others to expand their operations as needed to meet the Ethiopian Airlines quality and supply demands.

“We deeply value our relationship with USAID and extend our appreciation to USAID for all the support. The new partnership consolidates our effort to continue providing high-quality inflight meals to global passengers while intensifying our effort in creating an enabling environment for local farmers across the value chain. We would like to maintain our partnership with USAID on a range of spheres,” said Mr. Tewolde GebreMariam.

“The partnership we're launching today demonstrates what's achievable when prominent businesses like Ethiopian Airlines invest in other Ethiopian businesses and individuals, resulting in truly home-grown economic success that has the potential to be a model for other sectors,” said Ambassador Raynor.

This partnership agreement will run through December 2022 and will help pave the way for Ethiopian Airlines and local producers and farmers groups to continue these supply linkages and partnerships into the future.

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