

**Feed the Future Implementing Partner Meeting
Remarks by USAID/Ghana Mission Director Sharon L. Cromer
Alisa Hotel, Accra, Ghana
May 10, 2018 | 08:30 a.m.**

**Honorable Dr. Gyiele Nurah [*Jay'Lay, Nur-Rah*], Minister of State
for Agriculture;**

Ladies and Gentleman:

Good morning and welcome. Today, we gather to discuss how we can support Ghana's journey toward self-reliance through Feed the Future. I recognize that this is a big task and progress doesn't happen overnight. However, it's important that we build on successes to date and move forward in a different way in the second phase of Feed the Future.

Since its inception, Feed the Future has helped over 160,000 households to produce almost 400,000 metric tons of maize, rice, and soybean valued at over \$120 million. We leveraged \$38 million in new private sector investment in the agriculture sector and facilitated almost \$160 million in private capital to over 2,800 small, medium, and large enterprises. In 2017 alone, to boost household resilience, we established or supported 2,000 Village Savings and Loan Associations that helped over 66,000 individuals, mostly women, to collectively save over \$2.4 million and loan over \$700,000 to members.

We reach around 200,000 children under five each year, with nutrition-specific interventions. We were pleased to see an 11 percent drop in poverty from 2012 to 2015 and a 17 percent drop in stunting of children under five in Northern Ghana.

Feed the Future's achievements in Ghana would not be possible without you, our implementing partners. Your contributions are advancing sustainable development across the country. I have seen firsthand how your efforts are making a real impact. Our progress has been very encouraging and we must continue this momentum into the next phase.

The U.S. Government's vision is to drastically reduce hunger, extreme poverty, and malnutrition. We want to see a Ghana where women and youth are fully empowered. We want Ghana to finance its own development journey. Our ultimate goal is to see Ghana transition from a foreign assistance recipient to a strategic trade partner and a solid middle-income country.

Today, I want to discuss three priorities that will contribute to Ghana's self-reliance as we move to the next phase of Feed the Future.

First, we believe that women are at the heart of Ghana's strategy to move beyond aid. Over 40 percent of women are working in agriculture, forestry, or fishing. Smallholder farmers with five acres or less produce one-third of Ghana's total crops. 45 percent of these smallholder farmers are women.

The Women's Empowerment in Agriculture Index collected through our population-based survey in Northern Ghana in 2015 found that only 51 percent of women are satisfied that they have adequate control and ownership over assets such as land, livestock, and agricultural equipment, comparing to 94 percent of men.

Only four out of ten women have control over the use of their income. The other six have to consult their partners before using their money. In contrast, for every ten men, eight have absolute control over their generated income, as well as the expenditures of that income. This must change. Women must have greater access to critical inputs including land, finance, high-yielding seeds, and training in farming techniques.

Second, the Ghanaian youth possess the energy and creativity necessary to transform the agriculture sector. A challenge in smallholder agriculture is the aging farmer population. However, youth see little to no future in agriculture and are sprinting away toward urban areas. We must work to change this attitude by helping the youth overcome the systemic barriers in the agriculture, including access to land, skills, capital, and markets.

Agriculture is more than a way of life. It is a business and has the potential to address youth unemployment. It is important that we engage the youth in parts of the value chain that interest them most, including export, ICT, processing and marketing, agribusiness and entrepreneurship.

Third, Ghana was chosen as one of 12 Feed the Future countries for the next phase, because of its incredible potential. USAID Administrator Mark Green stated, “These are nations that have compelling needs. They represent great opportunities for progress and they have governments and private partners that have signaled that they are committed to doing their part to invest in their own development.” Meaning, to achieve long-term success requires local ownership, robust local systems, as well as private partnerships to sustain development outcomes.

President Akufo-Addo has a bold vision for Ghana’s future and prosperity. He envisions a “Ghana Beyond Aid,”—where all Ghanaians can lead healthy lives and thrive economically. Our new Country Plan supports this goal. This plan will help Ghana make concrete steps towards self-reliance. It incorporates input from *all* our partners. This includes all of you in this room, academic institutions, civil society, the Government of Ghana, and the private sector.

This new strategy will better position Ghana as a strategic trade partner. The Country Plan fosters stronger integration and collaboration across sectors including agriculture, nutrition, social protection, as well as water, sanitation, and hygiene. We will continue to promote agricultural growth, resilience, and nutrition in the three regions of northern Ghana, where poverty and nutrition levels are the highest. We will also continue rebuilding Ghana’s marine and coastal resources, which is on the verge of collapse.

We want to ensure all Ghanaians live healthier and more productive lives. Our efforts will promote improved nutrition practices and safe diets; so that infants and young children in Northern Ghana get the nutrients they need to thrive.

Much of this strategy and the majority of our programs will focus on empowering women and youth to achieve sustainable development outcomes and promoting a path to self-reliance.

Our country plan will accelerate and liberalize trade by attracting investment in high-value commercial crops. We will work with private institutions to take advantage of the African Growth and Opportunity Act and other trade agreements to help Ghana fully integrate into the global economy.

To complement these efforts, USAID will support the Government of Ghana to mobilize domestic revenue to sustainably finance its development. We will continue to strengthen government accountability and reduce corruption, while promoting private sector investment in agriculture. We believe this holistic effort will help Ghana move beyond aid.

Before I conclude, I want to thank all of our partners for their outstanding contributions. I am confident that our achievements today and tomorrow, will support Ghana's journey toward self-reliance. I look forward to working with all of you to achieve transformative results. Thank you.