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FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

**Inauguration of Finchawa Health Center
Remarks by USAID Representative Sophia Brewer
May 26, 2017
Finchawa, SNNPR, Ethiopia**

(as prepared for delivery)

Indemin aderachu

For many of you here, seeing a mother walking for three hours in the sun with a sick child on her back to get the nearest health center is a reality. As a parent, I cannot imagine having to walk this great distance with a sick child to see a doctor. But to get medical care, long walks like this were typical for the people of this community before the construction of this health center. This is why I am grateful to be here on behalf of USAID to participate in the inauguration of the Finchawa health center.

Over the past 25 years, Ethiopia, with the assistance of the donor community, has made a concerted effort to improve health outcomes for all Ethiopians. We have seen the number of health centers grow from 520 to more than 2,800 in just ten years. More importantly, we have seen Ethiopia successfully reduce maternal deaths by one-half and child deaths by two thirds. The number of HIV infections has also declined. These are incredible achievements for Ethiopia!

For our part and through the U.S. President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief, known as PEPFAR, we have constructed more than 22 health centers in Ethiopia. Let me put this into perspective, even if the number seems small, these 22 health centers are mostly constructed in remote regions of the country and are vital to the communities they serve. They give access to mothers that have to walk for an average of three hours or more to reach the nearest health center.

So, it is my absolute pleasure to inaugurate the Finchawa health center that will serve more than 25,000 people, not just in the Finchawa area, but also in neighboring communities. The health center will provide lifesaving and essential health services such as immunization, child delivery, HIV care and treatment services and more. The construction of this health center took two years to complete and faced some major hurdles along the way. However, through hard work of local officials and determination of this community, we have successfully completed the construction.

As we celebrate this inauguration, I would like to call on the Government of Ethiopia, especially the Ministry of Health, to facilitate an expedited process for providing power to newly constructed health centers. Building a health center is a big achievement, but without electricity, a health center will not be able to provide all the essential health services to the community it serves. Let us build on this success for the community of Finchawa!

Ama-sege-nalehu!