****

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Event:** **Date:Time:**  | **USAID/Ghana Agriculture Policy Support Project (APSP) Knowledge Sharing and Learning Forum, Alisa Hotel, Accra****Wednesday, August 15, 2018****9:30 a.m** |

**Remarks by Steven E. Hendrix, USAID Acting Mission Director**

**Honorable Deputy Minister for Annual Crops, Dr. Sagre Bambangi;**

**Members of the Press**;

**Ladies and Gentleman;**

**Friends all:**

Good morning.

I am pleased to be here on behalf of the U.S. Agency for International Development to learn from USAID’s Agriculture Policy Support Project’s experience and celebrate their successes. Today I want to highlight the importance of advancing Ghana along its development journey.

With the following words, Ghana’s President, Nana Akufo-Addo, galvanized the nation to begin the journey to self-reliance, “The Ghana that I am seeking...is a Ghana Beyond Aid. A Ghana that will free herself from the mindset of handouts. A Ghana mobilizing her own resources to solve her own problems.”

President Akufo-Addo’s commitment to move Ghana beyond aid coincides with USAID’s efforts to help nations manage their own development. We believe two mutually-reinforcing factors determine a country’s self-reliance:

* **First, commitment**. This is the degree to which a country’s laws, policies, actions, and informal governance mechanisms -- such as cultures and norms -- support progress towards self-reliance; and
* **Second, capacity**: how far a country has come in its journey across the dimensions of political, social, and economic development, including the ability to work across these sectors.

As Ghana increases its capacity to plan, finance, and manage its own development, its level of self-reliance should also increase. At USAID, we believe this increase should evolve our partnership with Ghana from a recipient of U.S. development assistance to a U.S. strategic trade partner.

USAID leads implementation of the U. S. Government’s global hunger and food security strategy called “Feed the Future.” Country leadership is essential to achieving Feed the Future’s objectives and a core principle of the United Nation’s Sustainable Development Goals.

Evidence-driven and transparent policy agendas, capable and accountable institutions, and adequate public and private resources provide the foundation for country leadership. We are extremely pleased that Ghana has such strong country leadership and has prioritized agriculture high within its development agenda.

USAID recognizes effective policy activities hinge on partnering with the Government of Ghana, the private sector, civil society, universities, and development partners to advance shared policy priorities. Sustainability also requires a focus on strengthening the functioning of the institutions responsible for policymaking and accountability to fulfill commitments and use resources effectively.

Understanding the need for effective agricultural policy to increase Ghana’s food security, USAID designed and implemented the Agriculture Policy Support Project, or APSP.

APSP worked through Ghanaian universities and think tanks to answer policy questions and generate evidence to inform policymakers. It partnered with Ghanaian civil society and the private sector to effectively use their voices to express their needs during policy formulation. This helped policies, including the Land Bill and Irrigation Policy, to meet the needs of the intended beneficiaries and improve the enabling environment for agriculture investment. APSP also worked side-by-side with Government of Ghana staff, most notably the Ministry of Food and Agriculture, to formulate policy recommendations based on this empirical analysis and advocacy including lessons learned from the 2017 implementation of the “Planting for Food and Jobs” campaign.

A great example of APSP’s work to sustainably build capacity is the partnership it created between the Ministry of Food and Agriculture’s Policy Unit and the Institute of Statistical, Social and Economic Research or ISSER. This partnership created a coaching program in policy analysis culminating with the mentees producing policy briefs and presenting to senior management. Now ISSER’s mentees can identify and propose solutions to constraints to attract increased private investments in agriculture. ISSER expressed interest in forming such training and coaching partnerships with other ministries.

USAID looks forward to our continued strong partnership with the Government of Ghana, private sector, and civil society as we implement our new Global Food Security Strategy. Our strategy for Ghana presents a five-year evidence-based integrated approach for Ghana to reduce poverty, hunger, and malnutrition through agriculture-led growth, resilience, and nutrition.

To help Ghana bridge the North-South divide, strengthen its ability to manage and finance its own development journey, and position the country to transition from a recipient of U.S. development assistance to a U.S. strategic trade partner, Ghana’s Global Food Security Strategy country plan will adopt a two-pronged approach.

**First**, the strategy will continue to improve agriculture-led growth, resilience, and nutrition in the Northern, Upper East, and Upper West regions, where poverty and nutrition statistics are poorest. Critical to Ghana’s food security, we will also support protection of Ghana’s marine fisheries in the coastal areas.

**Second**, the strategy will make select investments targeting higher-value commercial crops across Ghana to support agricultural sector transformation through trade acceleration. This two-pronged approach will allow Ghana to address its sub-national poverty and nutrition challenges, while bolstering its ability to manage and finance its strategic transition to self-reliance.

As we focus on moving Ghana forward together, I want to conclude with a remark made by President Akufo-Addo during Ghana’s 61st Independence Day Celebration where he said, “Ghana Beyond Aid is meant to be more than a slogan. It is meant to propel us into the frame of mind that would quicken our pace of development. It is meant to change our mindset from one of dependency to one of achieving our destiny. It is meant to put us in charge of our own affairs, and make us truly independent. Above all, Ghana Beyond Aid will give us the respect and dignity we deserve. ”[[1]](#footnote-1)

Ghana deserves this respect and dignity and we look forward to partnering with you to realize this vision.

1. [https://www. ghanaweb. com/GhanaHomePage/NewsArchive/Akufo-Addo-outlines-policies-for-Ghana-beyond-aid-632060](https://www.ghanaweb.com/GhanaHomePage/NewsArchive/Akufo-Addo-outlines-policies-for-Ghana-beyond-aid-632060) [↑](#footnote-ref-1)