

Remarks – USAID

Agriculture, Health and Nutrition Conference

13:30-13:40, Crossroads Hotel, Lilongwe

- **Honorable Minister Peter Mwanza**
 - **Principal Secretary Erica Maganga**
 - **Ms. Elizabeth Higgins, The Irish Ambassador to Malawi,**
 - **UN Agencies, representatives of NGOs and civil society and other distinguished guests.**
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- **I am honored to address this conference and discuss the important contribution that the agriculture sector can play in improving human health and decreasing malnutrition in Malawi.**
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- **I would like to express my gratitude to the Ministry of Agriculture, Irrigation and Water Resource Development and the International Food Policy Research Institute for their vision and hard work in organizing this important and relevant conference to Malawi's development.**

- **The Government of Malawi continues to demonstrate exceptional commitment to food security and nutrition issues. Malawi has shown leadership on this issue, which is an example to many countries in Africa and throughout the world.**
- **These efforts are starting to show results. For example, the most recent Demographic and Health Survey showed substantial decreases in stunting in Malawi.**
- **With the recent national launch of the Scaling Up Nutrition (SUN) Initiative, Malawi is poised to make strides in reducing malnutrition and improving the health of all Malawians.**
- **Through this conference, we are again highlighting the important role that agriculture plays in the elimination of malnutrition and undernutrition.**
- **We all know that there are important linkages between health and agriculture. Global surveys show that, in aggregate, increased agricultural productivity directly leads to improved nutritional status.**

- **What is less clear to both policy makers and practitioners is how this process happens in individual countries, regions and villages.**
- **I am pleased to see such an experienced group of both Malawian and international presenters at this conference. Your experience and presentations will provide ideas and evidence that can be used to better design policies and strategies that accentuate agriculture's role in improving nutrition and human health.**
- **Malawi is a focus country for two of President Obama's important Presidential Initiatives: Feed the Future, which is our agriculture and food security initiative, and the Global Health Initiative.**
- **Both initiatives highlight nutrition as a priority objective and as an area for collaboration between the health and agriculture fields.**
- **We understand that for us to reach our overarching goal of achieving Millennium Development Goal 1 of halving**

malnutrition and hunger, the health and agriculture fields must work together.

- **In Malawi, the United States Government plans to support activities in value chains such as dairy and legumes that have the potential to both improve household income and also household nutrition through the increased consumption of these foods.**
- **We also plan to better integrate nutritional behavior change communication messages into agricultural development and business trainings. This approach is already being incorporated into our current food security projects and we hope to demonstrate results by monitoring improvements in dietary diversity and as well as such indicators as stunting and underweight in target communities over time.**
- **Finally, I would just like to take this opportunity to reaffirm the United States Government's commitment to assisting the Government of Malawi in both the agriculture and health sectors through our support of both the Health Sector Wide Approach (SWAP) and the Agriculture Sector Wide Approach.**

- **I am confident that our joint collaboration will contribute to a healthier, better educated and food secure Malawi, which will be poised to further the development of this great country.**
- **I wish you all the best in this conference and also the application of the knowledge and messages discussed here.**