



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

Eastern Africa Grain Council (EAGC), with support of USAID's East Africa Trade and Investment Hub, Hosts Trade Facilitation Forum in Addis, Ethiopia

Trade deals in terms of 51 contracts amounting to 275,000 MT estimated at USD, 55,000,000 were signed today at the Ethiopian capital for export of grains (maize and pulses) from Ethiopia to Eastern and the southern Africa. This took place at a Regional Grain Trade Facilitation Forum hosted by the Eastern Africa Grain Council (EAGC) in partnership with the Addis Ababa Chamber of Commerce & Sectoral Associations (AACCSA). The first multilateral grain trade facilitation forum was supported by USAID's East Africa Trade and Investment Hub.

The forum brought together over 40 sellers of maize and other commodities from Ethiopia and over 50 buyers of grain from Kenya, Tanzania, Uganda, Rwanda, Burundi, Mozambique, Zambia, Malawi and Zimbabwe. The sellers comprised of cooperative unions, commercial farmers and grain exporters; buyers included maize millers, grain trading companies and national food reserve agencies.

The forum also created a platform for knowledge sharing and networking among the participants on trade and investment program between Ethiopia and eastern & southern Africa countries, with a focus on increasing regional trade.

Presently, the eastern and southern Africa region is experiencing a scarcity of rainfall and drought conditions leading to a shortage in availability of food grains, including maize and pulses. The situation has concerned the authorities to the extent that some have initiated interventions restricting exports. Some grain traders and processors have also had their operations affected due to the shortage of grains. In the recent harvest season, Ethiopia experienced a bumper harvest estimated at over 4,000,000 MT of maize in addition to beans and other pulses.

"EAGC is gunning her efforts to ensure efficient and sustained trade amongst grain players within the eastern and southern Africa. This is through corporate engagement and facilitation of collaborative platforms of both governments and the private sector, which include Business-to-Business (B2B), Government to Government (G2G) and Business to Government (B2G) linkages," said EAGC Executive Director, Gerald Masila.

Preliminary estimates from the State Department of Agriculture (SDA) notes that imports from Uganda, Tanzania, and Ethiopia will be about 295,000 MT, 360,000 MT, and 1,400 MT, respectively, through June 2017, with imports from Uganda and Tanzania expected to be higher

than normal due to anticipated below-average 2016 short rains, and an average 2017 long rains harvest in Kenya.

Regionally, governments have notably observed increased benefits from trade competitiveness, which is evident through removal of cross-border trade barriers. Facilitation of cross-border trade is a key driver to national economic development.

Efficient and coordinated trade facilitation will ensure increased trade competitiveness amongst grain players at national, regional and international level. Consumers will as a result experience increased supply of grains from Ethiopia to meet the high demand. The forum held will also enhance economic cooperation and integration amongst the eastern and southern countries through trade.

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About Eastern Africa Grain Council (EAGC)

The Eastern Africa Grain Council is a regional organization with membership drawn from across the Eastern and Southern Africa. Membership is drawn from grain value chain stakeholders currently with presence in 10 countries across Africa including Burundi, Kenya, Uganda, Rwanda, Tanzania, Zambia, Malawi, South Sudan, DRC Congo and Ethiopia.

EAGC's key products and services include promotion of structured trading system (STS) through the warehouse receipting systems (WRS), and Regional Grain Trading platform (G-Soko), Market Information Systems (MIS) offered through the Regional Agricultural Trade Intelligence Network (RATIN- www.ratin.net) and evidence-based Policy Advocacy and Training and Capacity Building through the Eastern Africa Grain Institute (EAGI).

About The Addis Ababa Chamber of Commerce & Sectoral Associations (AACCSA) AACCSA

The Addis Ababa Chamber of Commerce & Sectoral Associations (AACCSA) Established in 1947, is a voluntary, non-governmental, business membership organization with more than 15,000 member companies. The chamber serves as a credible voice of business and advocates for the creation of a conducive business environment. It also promotes trade and industry, disseminating business information, consulting government and members on economic development and business issues, establishing friendly relationship with similar chambers in other countries, and exchanging information as well as engaging in arbitration in times of disputes among businesses.

About the East Africa Trade and Investment Hub (the Hub)

The USAID East Africa Trade and Investment Hub works to boost trade and investment with and within East Africa.

The goal of the Hub is to deepen regional integration, increase the competitiveness of select regional agriculture value chains, promote two-way trade with the U.S. under the African Growth

and Opportunity Act and facilitate investment and technology that drives trade growth intra-regionally and to global markets.

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