

Administration of Barack Obama, 2015

Remarks During a Tour of the FAFFA Food Factory and an Exchange With Reporters in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

July 28, 2015

The President. So that's another important point about the work that we're doing with Feed the Future, is, we're also getting companies, some of the big international food processors, to make commitments to partner with local food processing so that we can start building capacity.

Historically, part of the problem is that even if you have food that's grown here, the processing is then done someplace else, it's higher up on the value chain, and you don't get the kind of integrated food industries locally that can be more affordable for people and can create jobs and industries here. And part of our goal is not just to provide food to countries that may have food scarcity, but to continually build up their capacity across the board. And so having strong corporate partners alongside local businesses can really make a big difference.

The President's African Aid Policies

Q. Is there enough money for this?

The President. We always want more, and we budgeted more. But what we're able to do is to leverage the dollars that we've got alongside efforts from other countries and from the private sector. And so every taxpayer dollar—every U.S. taxpayer dollar—that we're putting in, we're leveraging a bunch of other money. Of course, the needs still outstrip what we're able to provide, and hopefully, by having built models that we know succeed, we can accelerate this even faster.

But this has been one of the most—there have been questions before about what are some signature initiatives that really make a difference. This is making a difference in very concrete ways. And the goal here, as is true with Power Africa and all the initiatives that we're putting forward, is to make sure that we are not in the business of just donating, but we're in the business of creating entrepreneurs, opportunity, and capacity locally, so that over time, Africa—we want Ethiopia not only to be able to feed itself, we want eventually Ethiopia to be a food exporter as well.

Q. Do GMOs—

The President. Did you guys catch that though? Do you mind speaking for them again? You don't have to go through the whole thing, but just a quick summary.

FAFFA Food Senior Production Adviser Iman Abdulwassi Abubaker. Okay. So we believe in women empowerment especially at FAFFA, because we believe that women are the best candidates to know the real needs of mothers and children, so we try to incorporate them at all stages of the decisionmaking process because we value their opinions and their advice on how to—starting from the very top to all the way to the bottom.

The President. What percent of your employees would you say are—

Ms. Iman. Thirty percent of our employees are female, and 30 percent of those female employees have been working with us for over 30 years.

The President. Excellent. *[Laughter]*

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:40 a.m.

Categories: Addresses and Remarks : Ethiopia :: FAFFA Food factory in Addis Ababa;
Interviews With the News Media : Exchanges with reporters :: FAFFA Food factory in Addis
Ababa, Ethiopia.

Locations: Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.

Names: Iman Abdulwassi Abubaker.

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