

Remarks During a Tour of the FAFFA Food Factory in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
July 28, 2015

The President. So just really quickly, for the press who is here, one of the signature projects that we've been initiating is something called Feed the Future. And the goal is to drastically increase the productivity of small-holder farmers all throughout Africa. Because what we know is, is that a huge percentage of Africans are still getting their incomes from agriculture and most of them are very small plots and not a lot of technology and not a lot of inputs, but with just a few smart interventions, a little bit of help, they can make huge improvements in their overall yield.

So I don't know if everybody was able to hear, but one of our farmers who is part of this program increased her yields threefold. All right? So this used to be corn that she was able to produce; this is the corn she's producing now. With three times the yields, not only did she get enough income to build a new house and get some nice clothes, she also was able to buy a cow, which, in turn, obviously gives her additional resources to support her family. She's now able to send her children to school.

And what Feed the Future is doing is not just helping the farmer to increase their yield, now what we're also able to do is to then connect the small farmers to factories like this one so that they have a market and they're able to sell their products for a fair price. In turn, this factory is taking corn, soy, and other foodstuffs and able to package them into nutritious, low-cost meals that are actually then supplemented with vitamins and are enhancing the nutrition of low-income peoples all across Ethiopia.

So by some smart interventions, what we're able to do is not only increase the incomes of millions of people all across Africa, but we're also able to create new markets and food processing alongside the product—the foodstuffs themselves. And that helps grow the economy as a whole.

We were talking about how Ethiopia has been seeing significant growth, one of the fastest growing economies in the world; a lot of that is because of outstanding women like this who are out there and they triple their income, that's good for the entire country.

[At this point, the President greeted Gifty Jemal Hussein, one of the farmers participating in the Feed the Future program.]

The President. So it's so nice to meet you.

[Ms. Gifty greeted the President, and her remarks were translated by an interpreter as follows.]

Ms. Gifty. I'm glad that we met as well.

The President. I am glad that we met too. We need a good picture. Pete?

[The President posed for a photograph with Ms. Gifty.]

Come. We've got to get our translator and the whole team here. All right.

[The President posed for a group photograph.]

So just to give you a sense, so far about 7 million farmers have been impacted by Feed the Future so far. And we're going to continue to increase that in the years to come, and we've gotten terrific cooperation from governments all across Africa. It's one of the things I'll be talking about at the Africa Union today.

Thanks, guys.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:34 a.m. In his remarks, he referred to Chief Official White House Photographer Peter Souza.

Categories: Addresses and Remarks : Ethiopia :: FAFFA Food factory in Addis Ababa.

Locations: Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.

Names: Gifty Jemal Hussein; Souza, Peter.

Subjects: Africa : Agricultural production :: Improvement efforts ; Ethiopia : Economic growth and development; Ethiopia : Women, status; Ethiopia : Addis Ababa :: FAFFA Food factory; Ethiopia : President Obama's visit.

DCPD Number: DCPD201500534.