

Keynote address from the International Water Management Institute (IWMI)

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Your Excellency, Ato Sileshi Getahun, State Minister, Ministry of Agriculture, and distinguished participants.

It is a great honor for me to deliver, on behalf IWMI, a keynote speech and to welcome you all to this very important forum on the establishment of the Agricultural Water Management Platform (AWMP).

I would like to first congratulate the organizers for the excellent arrangements made for holding the workshop, and also trust that all the participants are enjoying their stay in the beautiful ILRI campus.

Saying this, let me start by providing a brief introduction on the activities of IWMI's East Africa and Nile Basin Office in Ethiopia. This regional office of IWMI has been responding to the need for improved AWM through its significant projects in collaboration with MoA, Ministry of Water, Irrigation and Energy (MoWIE), Ethiopian Agricultural Transformation Agency (ATA) and other partners. This body of work is aimed at increasing water and land productivity in a sustainable manner, which secures the provision of ecosystem services, improves food security, reduces poverty, and promotes gender and social equity.

Ethiopia has huge potential for agricultural development. However, this potential is overwhelmed by a number of challenges, including capacity building and provision of technologies. Today's gathering is one of various initiatives to overcome bottlenecks and improve agricultural water management in the country, based on the generation and sharing of data, and evidence to support changes in policy or practices.

The domination of smallholders in the agricultural system of the country makes small-scale irrigation crucial to ensure food security and increased prosperity beyond the household level. In this regard, AWMP is an essential instrument that contributes to accelerating and achieving SLM and other programs led by the Government of Ethiopia, and entertains innovative ideas and new research findings. Therefore, I consider the evolution of the current 'Small-scale Irrigation Task Force' into a multi-stakeholder platform with a broader focus on AWM to be very timely and appropriate. This kind of learning platform is a good opportunity to share experiences, trace constraints, and speedup the improvement of water management with a view to raising production and productivity to achieve food security and reduce poverty.

I hope that over the coming two days we will have successful meetings that will explore many fruitful ideas regarding improved water management.

To conclude, I wish to reiterate the commitment of IWMI in supporting the initiative, and also reaffirm to work actively with our partners and support the goals of the AWMP.

Thank you



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