

**Opening Remarks**  
**Chargé d’Affaires, a.i. Sandra Clark**  
**Communication Workshop on Agricultural Biotechnology**  
**Radisson Blu Hotel, Dakar**  
**Tuesday, August 19, 2014**

Dear Minister of Environment and Sustainable Development,  
Dear President of the Economic, Social, and Environmental Council,  
Dear President of the National Assembly,  
Delegation members and speakers representing Benin, Burkina Faso, Côte d’Ivoire,  
Gambia, Ghana, Mali, Niger, Senegal, Togo, and the United States,

I am delighted to be here to open today’s communications workshop on agricultural biotechnology. The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) has funded the International Food Information Council (IFIC) Foundation to develop ways to better articulate agricultural biotechnology and food safety policy to you. We are so pleased that participants and speakers from nine West African countries have joined us for this workshop.

We trust that the workshop will provide you the opportunity to discuss aspects of agricultural biotechnology so that your countries can make informed decisions about your policy. New science and technology is only useful if it is understood and articulated. Therefore, we are pleased that stakeholders such as policy makers and regulators are participating in this two-day workshop. We look forward to welcoming journalists for a special half-day program on the third day, aimed at assisting the press to articulate the science of biotechnology to the public. This event is for all of you -- so that you can learn, discuss the issues with each other, and inform the public.

You will all be examining the important topics of:

- what agricultural biotechnology means,
- the terminology of biotechnology, and
- how science could benefit West Africa to battle drought, pests and climate change, and increase farmers’ profit.

Policy makers, legislators, civil society, farmers, and the public need to understand agricultural biotechnology and consult with one another as they develop policies and enact laws and regulations for their countries, including understanding the implications of the Cartagena Protocol. In addition, it is also vital to understand the responsibilities a country takes on, once it signs onto an international agreement. For example, signing onto the Cartagena Protocol may entail modifications to existing

legislation, or may obligate your countries to enact new legislation. This workshop will help in all these endeavors.

African countries are moving forward to facilitate trade of biotechnology products. The workshop comes at a perfect time for all sides to learn from each other.

On behalf of the U.S Embassy, I'd like to thank you for your participation, and I wish you an excellent workshop.