

**Remarks DCM Sandra Clark**  
**School Feeding Launching Inauguration Ceremony in**  
**Saint Louis**  
**Tuesday, April 19, 2016**

*(As prepared)*

Honorable Serigne Mbaye Thiam, the Minister of Education  
Mr. Moussa Sy, President of Education Commission at the National Assembly  
His Excellency, Alioune Aidara Niang, Governor of Saint Louis Region  
Mr. Aissata Tall, Mayor of Podor  
Mr. El Hadj Malick Gueye, Mayor of Bokhol  
Mr. Amadou Mam Diop, Mayor of Richard Toll  
Mr. Abdoulaye Daouda Diallo, Mayor of Boke Dialoube  
Mr. Cheikh Oumar Hanne, Mayor of Ndioum  
Mr. Abdoulaye Racine Kane, Mayor of Galoya  
Mr. Desire Yameogo, Counterpart International  
Mesdames, Messieurs,

Distinguished leaders and guests, it is a pleasure to be here this morning, and to participate in this event.

Over the last several years, under, the Department of Agriculture's McGovern-Dole School feeding program, the United States has been assisting Senegal to develop and strengthen its educational system.

The key objective of the program is to reduce hunger while improving literacy rates and access to education, especially for girls. In support of the key objective of reducing hunger and improving literacy rates and education, USDA has awarded about \$16 million worth of aid to support school feeding programs in Senegal over the past five years.

Last year, a program similar to the one we are inaugurating today, concluded in the Matam Region and benefitted an estimated 20,000 pupils. We expect about 43,000 students to benefit from the program in Saint Louis during this school year and more over the next few years.

Our expectation also is that the school feeding programs we are launching here today in Saint Louis will also significantly boost school enrollment and retention, improve student's health and support community farms who will supply the meals.

The premise is simple. If children are hungry, they cannot learn. By providing school meals and related support, this program help boosts school enrollment and academic performance. At the same time, the program also focuses on improving children's health and learning capacity.

The program focuses on providing an incentive to send children to school, improving the learning environment at the school, and creating parent-teacher associations and other community-support mechanisms. Meals in school and take home food rations are proven incentives to increase school attendance.

There is no more important part of the population than youth, especially those between 3 and 14 years old, who represent a large percentage of Senegal's citizens. They are the future of this country. As Senegal works to increase access to education, improve nutrition, and expand opportunities for Senegalese youth, the U.S. government stands ready to support these efforts.

Thank You.

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