



AMBASSADOR LEWIS A. LUKENS

DAARA SEYDI JAMIL

REMARKS

MAY 12, 2012

Mosquée Moustapha Sy, Fass-Delorme, Dakar

(As prepared)

(Awaiting confirmation...).

Invited guests of honor:

Minister of Education, Mr. Ibrahima Sall;

Mayor of Dakar, Mr. Khalifa Sall;

Mayor of the communities of Fass-Colobane-Gueule Tapée, Mrs. Seynabou Wade;

Country Director Africare Senegal, Mrs. Gwendolyn Young;

Country Director Plan International, Mie Takaki;

Country Representative UNICEF, Giovanna Barberis

Parents

Asalaamu aleykum. Good morning. I am honored to have the opportunity to speak to you today.

The U.S. government is proud to support education in Senegal. One way that we do that is by supporting children and families who choose to study in modern Koranic schools.

Daara Seydi Djamil is one such school.

The U.S. Mission has been following the *Fondation Seydi Jamil's* efforts since they started this *daara* several months ago. As you know, the *daara* has been up and running for several months, while behind the scenes, its founders and administrators have worked hard to procure the office and educational equipment that will allow the school to maximize its efficiency and improve its results.

Supporting *daaras* is an important part of our overall friendship with Senegal as our two governments' discuss issues of social development, strong democratic institutions, and international security.

I am also here today to officially recognize the U.S. Embassy's role in assisting *Fondation Seydi Djamil*. The Foundation's mission to create a truly modern and functional *daara* here in the heart of Dakar aligns perfectly with the U.S. Embassy's goals to support modern Koranic schools. *Daara Seydi Djamil's* efforts to build character, values, and skills among young people are worthy of recognition. With this in mind, the U.S. Embassy decided to offer the school support in the form of laptops, access to wireless Internet, school supplies, printers, photocopiers, and other materials that enhance teachers' ability to teach, and students' ability to learn.

Daara Seydi Djamil has already begun to make use of these tools to advance its goals. This school is working to be a place not only to teach religious texts, but also to educate the whole child by teaching hygiene, self-discipline, and what it means to be a good neighbor, a good citizen, and a contributor to Senegal's future.

Each of you – founders, administrators and *ustaz* – has a role to play in the successful completion of this project. This is your opportunity to be a model for what quality, comprehensive alternative education *can* look like. It has been a pleasure visiting with you today. Congratulations on the excellent work. *Wa salaam.*