



**AMBASSADOR LEWIS A. LUKENS  
REMARKS  
POST-ELECTION ROUNDTABLE  
TERROU-BI HOTEL, MAY 30, 2012**

*(As prepared)*

Prime minister (or Minister of Interior),

UNDP country representative,

Representatives of Election Administration Bodies,

Leaders of participating Senegalese organizations,

Good morning.

A little over two months ago, Senegal held a historic election. When I arrived in August, the world already seemed to be holding its breath. Uncertainty gave many of Senegal's traditional friends and allies pause. International partners, including my own government, encouraged the Senegalese people and government to respect the country's democratic traditions.

But our fears and concerns were alleviated when – on March 25, the Senegalese people went to the polls and made their voices heard, peacefully and calmly. Some of my Embassy staff described feelings of euphoria and sheer joy as they watched democracy unfold.

It wasn't perfect – things that are hard and complicated are rarely perfect – and electing a new President has never been easy. But it was great!

Each of you deserves credit for the outcome of this election. If it were not for the commitment of dedicated champions of democracy like you, the results could have

been far different. Your participation helped ensure transparency and credibility in the electoral process. Your hard work ensured that voters were registered, the electoral code was updated, and that everyone you came into contact with knew how to exercise their vote.

We have seen stability threatened on each of Senegal's external borders when self-interested parties lost respect for the democratic process. Despite the instability and turmoil in the region, the people of Senegal upheld their longstanding tradition, demonstrating their commitment to political expression through peaceful, democratic elections. Every time a country does this, they make it harder for non-democratic forces to prevail.

What about us? What did the U.S. government do to ensure the peaceful transition of power in Senegal, our long-time friend?

For starters, we provided more than \$4 million to support the electoral process. With this investment, we were able to:

- Support the voter list audit, the electoral process, and the revision of the electoral code;
- Provide citizens accurate information on the electoral process through civic and voter education efforts that also increased the participation of women, youth, and people with disabilities;
- Support election administration bodies;
- Monitor and report on incidents that could lead to violence; and
- Observe and report on the voting process.

I'm very proud of my entire team at the U.S. Mission and all of you for the important and effective partnership that we developed during this time. Senegal's 2012 presidential election was a priority for each of us.

But our main focus today is to take the lessons we learned and glean from them best practices that we can apply to future efforts – not just in elections, but in all the work we do together.

One example of a best practice is the way that stakeholders united to meet the challenge of this election. All of Senegal's domestic observer groups worked together to develop mechanisms, processes, and a coherent plan to share information and inform citizens about electoral processes.

The Donor Elections Working Group was an unprecedented collaboration that helped pull resources together and led to improved communication and collaboration. Those same actors decided to organize today's workshop, acknowledging the importance of working as a team, and reaffirming their commitment to continue our common efforts.

The Senegalese people and the Senegalese government have a new challenge now as we look forward to the legislative elections in July. I hope that the conclusions you reach today ensure that the legislative elections will be as peaceful and credible as the presidential election.

The U.S. and the international community are rooting for Senegal to succeed. President Macky Sall and his government have expressed their intention to strengthen democratic institutions, improve transparency and accountability, fight corruption, and stimulate socio-economic development. By courageously implementing these plans, I believe we will see the country's political, economic, and social wellbeing improve.

As Senegal takes steps down this path the United States will be at your side – an ally, a friend, supporting you in whatever way we can to achieve your dream of a prosperous and democratic future.

I look forward to reading your post-election workshop report, and the United States looks forward to maintaining our strong partnership and close engagement with the people and government of Senegal.

Together, we will continue to strengthen democracy, peace, and prosperity in the region.

Thank you.