



**Remarks  
Ambassador Lewis A. Lukens  
Closing Ceremony DAART  
Dakar  
May 23, 2013**

*(As prepared)*

*Madame ou Monsieur le Représentant du Ministre de l'Enseignement supérieur et de la Recherche  
Monsieur le Directeur du WARC,  
Mesdames, Messieurs les Membres du personnel du WARC,  
Madame la Directrice du WARA,  
Mesdames et Messieurs les Membres du Comité de pilotage,  
Madame la Coordinatrice des Etudes,  
Chers Boursiers du programme DAART,  
Mesdames, Messieurs,*

Hello Dr. Sène, and thank you so much for having me here today. Visiting WARC is always a pleasure for me. Our relationship with WARC is an excellent example of US-Senegalese cooperation -- we benefit each other tremendously, and I really appreciate it.

I think that all of you know that the Dakar-American Applied Research Training Fellowship Program, or DAART, is a comprehensive capacity building program supported by the U.S. Government. DAART Fellows are comprised of a select group of young leaders who receive training and financial support for development projects, designed and led by West Africans.

As well as celebrating the DAART graduates today, we are inaugurating the new DAART Center, which is an initiative of the U.S.-based West African Research Association (WARA) and which is funded by the U.S. Department of State. Many thanks to Dr. Sène and the Dakar-based West African Research Center, who so graciously host the DAART Center. We are proud that we've been able to support this endeavor by equipping it with furniture and technology. Now, the DAART Center has a beautiful space from which to draw on the considerable wealth of academic and practical knowledge accumulated by U.S. and West African scholars and activists. This will reinforce development projects conceived and executed by youth, contributing to the economic development of this continent. We envision this as a hub for future youth training in West Africa, and see it as a strong sign of our strong and deepening partnership with WARC. I am looking forward to the results that the extension of this collaboration will produce.

In the U.S. Strategy Toward Sub-Saharan Africa which was released almost a year ago, President Barack Obama mentions at the very beginning that "Africa is a fundamental part of our interconnected world." The Strategy includes what we call the "four pillars:" strengthening

democratic institutions; spurring economic growth, trade, and investment; advancing peace and security; and promoting opportunity and development. DAART is an important program because it touches each of the four pillars, and it is very much geared towards maintaining and deepening Africa's ties with the rest of the world.

In hearing about your projects, I cannot help but be impressed by your creativity and your accomplishments. The thermal cooking basket (*panier termos*) project of Senegalese scholarship recipient Habibatou Fall has taken off. Congratulations to Habibatou for using her research to solve a community problem, and then for getting hired by a local NGO to continue it.

Also, two articles written by Cédric Kalissani of Burkina Faso were recognized by *Mutations* magazine with the second prize in an anti-corruption competition. This is a great accomplishment, and we wish you further public recognition for the great work you are doing.

I want to mention that I am so proud of each one of the eleven fellows for having gone out and done the work on your community projects. I know that for several of you, the process of conception to implementation was not a direct path. Many of you changed and refined your projects during the DAART training. I can say from personal experience that trial and error is often a component of some of the most successful projects and experiences -- so, congratulations to each of you for having taken the chance to discover, learn and expand yourselves, and for also creating something that will benefit your communities and your countries.

The network is growing, thanks to the participation of young leaders from Burkina Faso, Cape Verde, Côte d'Ivoire, Guinea, Niger, Senegal, and Togo. Your participation in this program makes you regional leaders, and I hope that you will stay in touch with each other, in order to continue the DAART experience, to share your successes and joys, to motivate each other to continue to conceive of projects and to encourage each other to succeed.

You were selected for this program because we have the utmost confidence in you. Now, with your newly-acquired training and professional experience, the sky is the limit. You are the future of development in Africa and I know that you will achieve all of your objectives.