



**Remarks
DCM Sandra Clark
English Language Fellow Mid-Year Conference
Hotel Al Afifa
April 23, 2014**

(As prepared)

Thank you very much for inviting me to your mid-year conference this year. It is a real pleasure to meet with you. I look forward to having a lively question and answer period following my remarks.

The English Language Fellow Mid-Year Conference is a wonderful occasion for you to gather from all corners of the continent to discuss issues relevant to the important jobs you are doing. Thanks very much for all of the hard work the RELOs, RELO Assistants and Washington support staff have put into organizing this fun and exciting event. We're proud that you've chosen to be here in Dakar for a second year running.

I would like to recognize the efforts of the English Language Fellows for your tireless dedication to improving the quality of English education in Senegal and on the continent. The job you are doing is invaluable to the promotion and progress of English language education which directly impacts the development of the countries in which you work.

I understand that you will be discussing U.S. policy – and your role in it -- during the workshop. In June 2012, President Obama outlined the Four Pillars of the U.S. Strategy toward Sub-Saharan Africa, which includes:

- (1) strengthening democratic institutions;
- (2) spurring economic growth, trade, and investment;
- (3) advancing peace and security; and
- (4) promoting opportunity and development.

I realize that not all of you are working in sub-Saharan Africa, but through your work as Fellows, you are accomplishing all of these tasks as you deepen our engagement with Africa's young leaders, empower women and marginalized populations and address the unique needs of fragile and post-conflict states.

And the work that you are doing is impressive.

- Working with government institutions to train the police and civil servants,
- Bringing English to large numbers of learners through radio programs,
- Introducing English to young learners,

- Presenting innovative new literacy projects, and the exciting prospect of equalizing higher education in Africa through Massive Online Open Courses.

You truly are upholding President Obama's four pillars.

It is heartening to see that increasing numbers of Africans are deciding to learn about America through English language study. Bringing Senegalese and Americans together through English Language learning is a major focus of our Public Affairs Section and Regional English Language Office at the Embassy. We have a number of highly successful English Language programs, including the English Access Microscholarship Program, the largest in Africa. I understand that you'll be visiting Access students today to celebrate Earth Day. I have really enjoyed meeting Access students in Senegal at summer camps, and look forward to meeting more of them. I hope that you have a good time with these vibrant young people today, and that you manage to make a connection with Access students in your host countries.

The work you have chosen to do in Africa is not easy. It is hard work, often done in challenging conditions. But the rewards are great for the people you serve, and ultimately for yourselves. So thank you, English Languages Fellows, for helping your students and teachers to learn English and American culture and for helping them to communicate with the world.

And thank you for inviting me to speak to you today. I wish you a very successful mid-year conference and look forward to seeing you at the reception tomorrow evening!

And now we'll have time for any questions you may have.