

Speech
USAID DIRECTOR SUSAN FINE

Opening of the AFRICOM Pandemic Response Exercise
Dakar
June 2, 2014

(As prepared)

Distinguished Republic of Senegal officials;

Distinguished guests;

Ladies and Gentlemen;

All protocols observed.

I am honored to be here this morning. Today's event recognizes an important phase of the Republic of Senegal's National and Senegalese Armed Forces Pandemic Disaster Preparedness / Response Plan and the Senegal Armed Forces Military Assistance to Civil Authority Disaster Contingency Plan, which will be the guiding documents to implement effective responses during a global pandemic emergency or other disaster you may face.

I want to highlight the importance of mitigating potential disasters through close cooperation between national military and civil authority leaders, as well as international organizations, non-governmental organizations, and other civil society groups. All of these actors play an important role in mitigating and recovering from a pandemic disaster.

Innovative collaboration between the United States Agency for International Development and United States Africa Command formed the basis of U.S. engagement with Senegal. We are celebrating today the efforts which culminated in these plans. They include wide and inclusive representation from the Republic of Senegal in several Pandemic Tabletop Exercises that were held in Ghana, Burkina Faso, Togo, Benin, Nigeria and in a 15 country Regional National Pandemic Response Validation Conference in 2012, culminating into this week's Whole of Government National Pandemic Disaster Plan Validation Exercise and Strategic Disaster Management Action plan development for future capacity and capability building disaster preparedness engagements with the United States Government and other international agencies.

I note also that the American people have supported this significant undertaking through the last four years with total contributions in excess of \$1,300,000.00 in program support including this event scheduled to take over the next several days.

The resulting innovative pandemic programming implemented by USAFRICOM's Disaster Preparedness Program is structured along the lines of a USAID project focused on long-term sustainable results. This program is an excellent example of President Obama's vision of expanded cooperation and coordinated efforts among American diplomats, military staff, and development professionals to promote effective results and service through programs sponsored by the American people for the Senegalese people.

Today's program will fine tune the work that has already been completed on these plans, while creating an opportunity for senior and mid-level civilian and military leaders to enhance their knowledge in disaster management, pandemic preparedness and enhancing civil-military disaster response coordination.

To the participants in attendance, I hope your experience in today's session and over the next several days will be informative and productive. I hope what you learn continues to build on the knowledge required to enhance your service to the great nation of the Republic Senegal and your 13.7 million fellow Senegalese. Your ministries and branches of service have selected you to attend this event because of your stellar performance and leadership potential.

I am now proud to witness the unveiling of the Republic of Senegal National Pandemic Disaster Contingency Response Plan and Armed Forces of Senegal Military Assistance to Civil Authority Disaster Contingency Plan. Best wishes for a successful week.