



**Remarks
Ambassador Jim Zumwalt**

**Kolda Bridge Inauguration
Kolda, Senegal**

February 21, 2015

(As prepared)

Your Excellency, the President of the Republic, Macky Sall,
Messieurs les Ministres,
Monsieur le Maire de Kolda,
Distingués Invités,
Chers habitants de la ville de Kolda et des environs,

I am thrilled to join His Excellency, the President of the Republic of Senegal, to dedicate this bridge. It is much more than just a way to traverse the river. It is a bridge to a better future for Senegal, to the *Sénégal emergent* that affords new opportunities to every citizen of this country.

This bridge is also important because it will help strengthen the connections between the Casamance and the rest of Senegal. “*Un Peuple, Un But, Une Foi*”—that is the message that travels along this beautifully rebuilt highway and across this bridge.

Building roads and bridges connects people. That is why the United States invested in a joint venture with the government of Senegal to create new economic opportunities in the Casamance.

The U.S. Government agency, the Millennium Challenge Corporation, invests in projects that are best able to reduce poverty and encourage economic participation. We believe that the people and the community of Kolda will play a positive role in developing the Senegalese economy. But this bridge represents just one element of the United States’ investment in the Casamance. Soon we will also celebrate completion of the RN6 highway. This new road will unite people from Ziguinchor to Kounkane with the high-quality infrastructure they deserve – and need – in order to participate in the economy.

The Millennium Challenge Account program opened in 2010, and will finish in September of this year. Over the course of the program, the American people will invest \$540 million in Senegal’s highways and irrigation infrastructure, here in Casamance and in the Senegal River Project. Look at how much we can be proud of having accomplished together!

I would especially like to thank the team of Millennium Challenge Account-Senegal. Under the leadership of Director General, Papa Modou Ndiaye, the MCA team has endeavored these five long years to convert this dream into a reality. And I would like to equally thank His Excellency, President Macky Sall, for his commitment to the peace process which will benefit the people of the Casamance and all of Senegal.

Lastly, I'd like to express my gratitude to you, the people of the Casamance. Your clear support for peace and prosperity made this bridge – and all these investments in the Casamance – possible. It is my sincere hope that every time you cross this bridge, you remember the generosity and the friendship of the American people, who cross it with you and at your side.

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