

**Ambassador James P. Zumwalt**  
**Opening for the International Legal Training in Fisheries for Sub Regional**  
**Fisheries Conference Member States**  
**(+ Ghana and Liberia)**  
**Le Ndiambour Hôtel et Résidence**  
**Dakar**  
**July 27, 2015**

**(As prepared)**

Dear Minister of Fisheries and Maritime Economy (TBC),  
Participants,  
Dear guests.

I am delighted to join you to open the *International Legal Fisheries Training*. It is wonderful to have participants here from other West Africa countries. This training program represents a wonderful collaboration between the United States and the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization's Sub Regional Fisheries Commission (SRFC). Thank you to both of these partners.

I hope that this legal capacity training program will strengthen your understanding of international fisheries law. It will also enable you -- the members of the SRFC secretariat, the member countries, and regional collaborating governments -- to advise those fishing in your waters on their rights and obligations under international law. Lastly, it will enable your governments to enforce these rights.

Illegal fishing threatens ocean ecosystems, sustainable fisheries, and domestic and global economies. We share the concerns of West Africa about the impact of illegal fishing. Some have estimated the value of fish illegally taken from West Africa at over \$100 million annually. Illegal fishing also affects health and food security by diminishing food sources needed by a growing West Africa. And it affects the region's ecological balance, an issue that is also of critical importance.

Through National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, the U.S. Government is pleased to help regional experts to acquire new skills to combat illegal fishing. Working together as a region is the best way to address a large scale problem that cannot be resolved by any single nation alone.

In closing, I want to thank the Senegalese Minister of Fisheries and Maritime Economy for joining us here to open this training.

I thank all of you for participating. Your participation in this training strengthens protections for the Senegalese fishing industry -- an industry that is vital for your country's development and well-being.