

**Remarks for James P. Zumwalt
U.S. Ambassador to Senegal
Inauguration of KASEC Seed Treatment Center
Kaolack, September 2, 2015**

(As prepared)

Monsieur le Gouverneur de la Région de Kaolack,
Monsieur le Maire de Kaolack
Monsieur le Directeur Régional du Développement Rural,
Monsieur le Représentant de la Chambre de Commerce et d'Industrie
Monsieur le Directeur Général du KASEC
Mesdames et messieurs les représentants des producteurs de céréales du Saloum
Chers invités
Mesdames messieurs

Selam Alekum!

I am pleased to mark the inauguration of the Kaolack Semences et Cereales Sarl [KASEC] seed processing facility today.

Kaolack lies at the intersection of many routes and has always been a trading point for cereals and commodities.

We also have a city like that in the United States. It is called Chicago – also a trade hub for farmers. Like Kaolack, a lot of corn is traded in Chicago. But I must admit farmers in Chicago are still behind Kaolack in millet production.

I wish to thank the Governor of Kaolack for inviting me to this important event, which demonstrates the dynamism of this region, which has led Senegal in overall cereal production.

I also wish to congratulate the Managing Director of KASEC for his commitment to invest in a facility that will provide quality maize and millet seed to farmers in the region.

In addition, I applaud the collaboration between KASEC and the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Equipment to certify those seeds for the benefit the rural population.

Mr. Governor, the KASEC seed cleaning facility we inaugurate today is a private initiative that benefited from the support of the U.S. government's "Feed the Future" initiative.

Feed the Future aims to reduce poverty and malnutrition with a focus on small farmers.

In Senegal, Feed the Future is aligned with the objectives of the Government of Senegal's Plan Sénégal Émergent (PSE) and its agricultural component, le Programme de relance et d'accélération de la cadence de l'agriculture sénégalaise (PRACAS).

In particular, it is aligned with the creation of Cereal Corridors that will boost cereal production and farmer incomes in this region.

This installation completes a set of three seed cleaning centers, one in Richard Toll, one in Kolda, and now here in Kaolack.

Quality seed is the backbone of agricultural productivity. This new facility can process 3,000 tons of quality maize and millet seed per year. That amount is enough to cover the needs of more than 50,000 maize farmers.

I have learned that since Senegalese farmers have adopted quality certified seeds, maize and millet yields have more than doubled. Farmers will now harvest three tons more per hectare.

Quality seeds also help crops to be more resilient against capricious rains. Last year was a good example despite late-coming rainfall, farmers were still able to complete their harvests because of this drought-resistant seed stock.

A large population of small farmers working on fewer than two hectares each achieved these impressive results.

We are also very happy to observe more women producing commercial maize and millet.

Tomorrow, I will be visiting maize fields and meeting some of these farmers. They are hard at work building a strong cereal industry in Senegal.

The United States is proud to support an initiative that will contribute to the Government of Senegal's vision of inclusive growth.

We are also very encouraged by the leadership role the private sector has taken in contributing to this vision.

Feed the Future's/Senegal's *Naatal Mbay* the new agricultural project launched in May by USAID, will collaborate with the farmers of the Kaolack region. In this way the largest possible number of farmers can access this new opportunity to improve their incomes.

As the proverb says, *Soo jiwul, doo góob. Yalla Yalla bey sa toll¹*.

Thank you.
