



Remarks

**Sandra Clark, Chargé d’Affaires,
Embassy of the United States, Dakar**

Launch of the National Family Planning Campaign

Dakar, Hotel King Fahd, September 6, 2013

Your Excellency the First Lady of Senegal

Madame the Minister of Health and Social Welfare

Honorable Deputies of the Parliament

Dear Representatives of the Diplomatic Corps and International Missions

Madame the Representative of the World Health Organization, representing the development partners

The Governor of Dakar

Members of the Press

Ladies and gentlemen and distinguished guests:

Good morning.

I am so honored to be with you today in my first public speaking engagement since I joined the U.S. Embassy in Dakar as the Deputy Chief of Mission. As a female, as a mother, and as somebody who cares personally and professionally about the welfare of Senegalese women and families, I am especially honored that this event is on the very important subject of family planning.

Statistics show that five women die every day in Senegal during pregnancy or in childbirth. This statistic is certainly tragic -- as are the significant challenges facing child and infant healthcare in Senegal.

But the reality is most Senegalese lack universal access to reproductive healthcare. Most Senegalese women lack access to choices over how to plan their families. Studies show that if women had access, they would use it. In other words, they are interested, but they just don't have a place to get the information and the products they need. Therefore it falls to us – the Senegalese government and its international partners who support the government – to help them get it.

Family planning reduces maternal mortality and poverty, and improves the health of mothers and children.

As stated in the United Nations' Millennium Development Goals, every dollar invested in family planning saves governments up to four dollars on health care, housing, water and other public services.

We commend the Government of Senegal's goal to more than double the rate of contraceptive use over the next two years. And we are so happy to be part of the Government's Family Planning Launch today. Through our Agency for International Development, USAID, we are contributing 400 million CFA francs.

Madame First Lady of the Republic, I congratulate your personal attention to this matter. We both understand that there is little more important than reducing maternal and infant mortality in Senegal.

I also congratulate the Ministry of Health and Social Welfare for its leadership in mobilizing the technical and financial partners to participate in this campaign, which represents an important step in maintaining momentum and achieving results for Senegal's national family planning program.

I am convinced that the family planning campaign will improve the health of the Senegalese people for generations to come.

Thank you for your kind attention.